

# Translation and the Authorial Image: the Case of Federico García Lorca's *Romancero gitano*

## La traduction et l'image de l'auteur : le cas du *Romancero gitano* de Federico García Lorca

Stella Linn

Volume 16, numéro 1, 1er semestre 2003

Controverse en traductologie  
Controversy in Translation Studies

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/008557ar>  
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/008557ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Association canadienne de traductologie

ISSN

0835-8443 (imprimé)  
1708-2188 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Linn, S. (2003). Translation and the Authorial Image: the Case of Federico García Lorca's *Romancero gitano*. *TTR*, 16(1), 55–91.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/008557ar>

Résumé de l'article

À l'encontre de l'affirmation de Barthes voulant que l'auteur soit mort, laissant place à son oeuvre, délivrée de ses origines personnelles, je soutiens que l'image de l'auteur est loin d'être absente de la pratique de la traduction littéraire. D'une part, l'image de l'auteur dans un système littéraire et social donné peut déterminer quels ouvrages sont traduits et comment ils sont traduits. D'autre part, il est probable que certaines caractéristiques d'une personne soient mises en valeur plus que d'autres, selon le choix des textes originaux traduits et la présentation faite de l'auteur et de son oeuvre dans les préfaces et autres commentaires accompagnant les traductions. De plus, les stratégies de traduction vont souvent dans le sens des tendances dominantes de réception et contribuent ainsi à réaffirmer une certaine perception de l'auteur dans la culture d'arrivée. Dans le cadre de cet article, j'explorerai ces hypothèses en prenant l'exemple de l'auteur espagnol Federico García Lorca et de quelques traductions de son *Romancero gitano* (1929) vers le français, l'anglais et le néerlandais. J'examinerai la corrélation possible entre l'image « folklorisante » de Lorca dans les premières études critiques et l'emphase mise sur le côté romantique, naïf et mythologique dans les traductions de son oeuvre, et inversement la corrélation entre l'image plus sombre et complexe présentée de l'auteur plus tard et les stratégies de traduction qui font ressortir les éléments qui correspondent à cette vision.

# Translation and the Authorial Image: the Case of Federico García Lorca's *Romancero gitano*

**Stella Linn**

## *1. Introduction*

One of the most influential trends in translation studies over the past two decades, represented by scholars such as André Lefevere, Gideon Toury and Theo Hermans, is to study translations as part of a socio-cultural and ideological framework or, more formally, as part of a system rather than in a linguistic vacuum. In applying this approach, Lefevere (1992) focuses on the ideological role of translation, which is conceived of as one of various possible forms of “rewriting” a source text. The concept of rewriting covers not only translation, but also commentaries, reviews, adaptations for children or TV, etc., “in short any processing of a text whether in the same or another language or in another medium” (Hermans 1999: 127; cf. Holmes 1988: 24). Of all these types of rewriting, however, Lefevere (1992: 9) states that translation is potentially the most influential “because it is able to project the image of an author and/or a (series of) works(s) in another culture.” Like other forms of rewriting, translation reflects a certain poetics as well as an ideology, understood by Lefevere (1992: 14) as “the dominant concept of what society should (be allowed to) be.” The ideological level is controlled by patronage: powers – represented by influential people, but also educational institutions, political parties, publishers, the media, etc. – that can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature. Poetics, “the dominant concept of what literature should (be allowed to) be” (ibid.), operates at a secondary level within the ideological framework that

encompasses society as a whole. Instead of intervening directly in this subsystem, patrons tend to delegate control of the literary field to groups that operate within it, i.e. professionals such as critics, translators, teachers and anthologists. From this system-based perspective, the broader ideological context together with literary forces exert a decisive influence on what is being published and distributed, in translation or otherwise. What does not fit into the system is subject to repression from above, either from patrons (e.g. the withdrawal of subsidies or job offers), or professionals (e.g. in the form of critical reviews or exclusion from anthologies). More often though, instead of being censored or prohibited, literature is manipulated, rewritten to suit the dominant poetics and, in a wider perspective, the social system.

Since translation is nowadays also generally considered to be a social rather than a purely linguistic activity, it is supposed to be governed by social norms, indicating constraints of variable force. During the translation process, these norms are converted into translational norms, understood as “internalised behavioural constraints which embody the values shared by a community” (Schäffner 1999: 5). We can of course only speak of norms in a situation in which translators have different options and are not restricted by the rules of the linguistic system. Toury (1995: 58-61) distinguishes three basic types of translational norms operating at different stages of the translation process. Preliminary norms precede the act of translation. They are concerned with factors that determine the very selection of texts for translation into a specific language, culture or historical period, and also with social tolerance towards basic decisions such as the use of an intermediate language instead of translating directly from the source text. The initial norm involves a general choice made by translators, which is essentially either source or target system oriented. Operational norms direct the decisions made during the translation process itself. These comprise both matricial norms, referring to modifications of the overall structure of the text, and textual-linguistic norms, which govern the selection and presentation of linguistic material on a micro level, such as stylistic features and lexical items. Of Toury’s three sets of norms, the most relevant for my investigation are firstly the preliminary norms that rule the selection of source texts, and secondly the text-linguistic norms operating during the act of translation. The problem is that the norms that prevailed during the translation

process cannot be observed directly but only tentatively reconstructed by investigating the result of that process – the target text. Another, albeit less reliable source of information about this type of norms is, in Toury's view (1995: 65), an examination of extratextual sources, such as statements made by translators, editors, publishers and other participants involved in the translation act (or, in Lefevere's terms, professionals operating in the literary field).<sup>1</sup> For my purposes, I will use textual as well as extratextual sources. To be more precise, as Hermans (1999: 85) observes, we should distinguish here between paratexts, such as prefaces and footnotes included in the translated volume, and metatexts, which also comment on the work and/or the author (or the translator) but which are presented independently.

Moreover, when studying the interaction between the text level and the extralinguistic context, I will focus on one aspect in particular: the authorial image. The image of the author is here conceived of as the selective presentation of traits attributed to the author by collective or individual agents, especially literary professionals. It would seem that the image created of the author plays a role at both the ideological level (to which social norms does the construction of the authorial image conform?) and the level of poetics (how does the authorial image comply with the dominant literary norms and conventions?). In the first instance, Lefevere (1992: 15) states that we are dealing mainly with representatives of patronage, and in the second, with literary experts. Of course, the authorial image is not shaped by external forces or agents alone; the author also plays a part in this process, indirectly, e.g. by self-presentation through his or her works, or directly, even physically, through appearances in public, in the media, etc. Although some influential 20th-century literary critics and scholars have made a plea for separating the literary work from the author's personality and intentions (we could think here of Roland Barthes's concept of the "death of the author" or of Wimsatt's "intentional fallacy" (1954: 5)), it has since been argued that the image readers form of an author almost inevitably influences the reception of his or her work. When it comes to translation, the target audience tends to be even more dependent

---

<sup>1</sup> In fact, Toury does not make a distinction between the various type of participants, whereas Lefevere ranges the category of publishers under the representatives of patronage.

on external information supplied about the source text author, thus increasing the role of literary experts from the target culture in particular in this image-shaping process. It seems fair to assume that this is not a unidirectional movement, in which the authorial image influences the selection of source texts, and possibly the translation strategy as well; the translation of a writer's works within a particular social and literary system may, in turn, enhance the prevailing tendencies within interpretation and reception, and thus contribute to a certain image of the author in the target culture. I will investigate these connections in the following sections of this paper, using the example of the most famous Spanish poet and playwright of the twentieth century, Federico García Lorca (1898-1936).

While Lorca's oeuvre has been extensively translated and commented on since the 1930s, translations of his work have received relatively little attention; to my knowledge, not a single monograph has been published on this subject, and there is no up-to-date bibliography of the translations.<sup>2</sup> I am interested in the relationship between the authorial image, as evidenced in reviews and biographies and especially in paratexts accompanying the translations on the one hand, and the translation strategy as revealed in a number of translations of the *Romancero gitano* on the other. Published in 1928, this is Lorca's most famous volume of poetry, and has been widely translated and discussed. Using various sources of information, I estimate that there are thirty to forty translations of this work in French, English, and Dutch alone. Confining myself to the translations available in the Netherlands and Belgium, I have compiled a corpus of nineteen translations of the first poem in the volume, "Romance de la luna, luna," in these three languages, with publication dates ranging from 1945 to 1997.

My aim is to investigate the translations made in the first few decades after Lorca's poetry was published and to relate the norms underpinning the translations to the authorial image that prevailed until about the 1980s, inasmuch as it can be deduced from extratextual discourses by translators, critics and biographers. Within this last category, my main source will be the artist's biography by Ian Gibson (1989). Following the same procedure in

---

<sup>2</sup> The most recent primary bibliography in book form that includes translations is, as far as I know of, by Colecchia (1982).

the case of the later (post-Franco) translations, I will attempt to compare the dominant early and recent images of Lorca insofar as they have been shaped by the translation and presentation of his poetry. To analyse the translation strategies, I will use the “priority model” described in Linn (1998), which was designed to discover retrospectively a translator’s priorities when rendering elements of the source text. Since the corpus is incomplete, any conclusions drawn are of course tentative, although I expect them to give a fairly representative indication of the overall translation strategy.

## 2. *A changing image*

Let me begin with a clear example of patronage by Spanish educational institutions. *Literatura española* by Lázaro & Tusón (1984), officially approved by the Ministry of Education and Science,<sup>3</sup> was a course on literature used in Spanish secondary schools in the 1980s. There is a popular pin-up of Lorca on p. 397 of the text book: all the slight flaws of nature have been airbrushed away by the illustrator. Lorca smiles at the reader, the very image of a sun tanned film star. Just as many “flaws of nature” have been removed from the accompanying chapter about his life. There is no mention of his homosexuality, nor his bouts of depression, which stemmed at least in part from his failure to be socially accepted, and to succeed both financially and in his love-life. As far as his work is concerned, there is no reference to either his play *El público* (The Public), with its openly homoerotic themes, or the collection of poems *Sonetos del amor oscuro* (Sonnets of Dark Love), just as controversial and also published posthumously. While his murder at the start of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) is described rather vaguely as “one of the most painful episodes of the Civil War,” the book is silent about the fact that the perpetrators were Franco supporters, and that Lorca’s homosexuality, as became evident later, was one of the reasons he was killed.

This kind of selective representation of Lorca’s life and work for students is typical of the way that the writer was viewed in Spain until well into the 1980s (cf. Laurenson 1998). Of course,

---

<sup>3</sup> The approval, which was registered in the Boletín Oficial del Estado (official gazette), is mentioned in the book on p. 503.

Lorca had himself contributed to this one-sidedness by giving in to the dominant social and religious norms: “[the] intolerant environment well explains Lorca’s fears and deliberate concealment of his homosexuality both in his personal life and in his work” (Soto 2003: 2). The cheerful and charming side of Lorca’s personality is stressed in almost every biographical sketch, such as this comment by his friend and fellow poet Pedro Salinas: “We always followed him around, because where he was, there the fun always was; the atmosphere would suddenly cheer up, and we could not help but be part of it.”<sup>4</sup> For decades the Spanish authorities have preferred to be somewhat vague about Lorca’s political significance. Outside Spain, on the other hand, Lorca (who was never politically active)<sup>5</sup> was adopted by progressive circles as embodying the forces of anti-fascism, at least in the decades that followed the war. It is interesting to point out national differences in this image building: Lorca’s heroic role as a “martyr for freedom” is emphasised much more in the French paratextual discourse than in the English and Dutch part of the translation corpus. Here is a representative example, taken from a French study preceding a translation in the 1950s:

C’est dans ce silence [following the Civil War] qu’a grandi la légende du poète fusillé, que son nom n’a cessé de croître. Ce nom qui symbolise, et avec quelle noblesse! le héros de notre temps, le camarade qui est tombé près de nous. (Parrot 1954: 8-9)

[In this silence, the legend of the executed poet has been magnified, his fame has continued to grow. The name that symbolises so nobly! the hero of our time, the comrade who fell near us.] [my translation]<sup>6</sup>

What follows is a eulogy of the poet and all his talents. Once again, there is not a single word about the tendencies or problems

---

<sup>4</sup> This comment is quoted (in my translation) in Jorge Guillén’s foreword to Lorca’s *Obras Completas*, Madrid, Aguilar, 1960, p. XXVIII (originally from *Federico en persona*, 1959).

<sup>5</sup> In a polemical contribution to an otherwise rather hagiographical special issue on Lorca, Roger Wolfe calls the poet “probably one of the least politically and socially conscious writers of his time” (1997: 25).

<sup>6</sup> Unless otherwise specified, all the translations in this article are mine.

that Spanish *macho* society tended to be so disparaging about in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are many signs that this heroic and romantic image constructed after Lorca's death has persisted for almost five decades. As late as 1983, for example, in his foreword to the first English translation of a selection of Lorca's letters, David Gershator again makes much of the fact that the poet became "a worldwide symbol of the Republican cause" after his death (1983: vii). Naturally, negative observations do not fit into this picture. Thus the only time that Gershator quotes a negative comment from one of Lorca's friends, he immediately tries to explain it away. Sebastián Gasch, the Catalan literary critic quoted in Gershator's foreword, accuses Federico of a number of weaknesses, including "exasperating egotism," on which the translator comments by way of apology:

These are hasty judgements based on the limited number of letters found in the edition collected by Sebastián Gasch. Most of the letters are the normal interchange to be expected between literary friends. From the wider perspective of letters we now possess, Lorca's outstanding personality characteristics emerge: he was supportive, sympathetic, generous, demanding, devout, whimsical, insecure, sensitive, and, since he was an Andalusian, punctilious regarding the formalities. (1983: vi-vii)

Not until about 1990 do we observe a change in this "positive" image of Lorca, which consistently endowed the author with such characteristics as charm, heroism and charisma. With Häusgen *et al.* (2000), I feel that the publication in English in 1989 of the most authoritative biography of Lorca to that point (a Spanish version had been published several years earlier) has played a crucial role in the widespread lifting of the taboo on Lorca's "dark side". The author, Ian Gibson, deals for the first time at length with the role of Lorca's homosexuality in his life and work, and shows the numerous parallels between the two. The huge success of the book both in Spain and abroad indicates that the post-Franco Spanish audience was eager for complete and unbiased information rather than hagiographic biographies, such as those by Lorca's friend José Luis Cano (1962) or by his brother Francisco García Lorca (1980).



Prior to Gibson's study, while literary criticism recognised that there was an undeniably nostalgic or frustrated side to Lorca's personality, this was either made light of or seen as secondary to the cheerfulness and the irresistible charm that so many people have borne witness to. J.L. Gili, for instance, who discusses Lorca in his introduction to an early English translation, draws a parallel between the personal and the national level, thus depersonalising Lorca's "darkly sombre" side: "This [Lorca's] gay, irresistible personality was in part due to his histrionic temperament, which did not exclude his darker moods. (...) This duality in his character reflects the character of Spain itself, at once gay and darkly sombre." (García Lorca 1960: xvi). As for his work, while even the earlier critics usually detected a tragic element of sorrow or frustration, this was either seen as a secondary element or its cause was manipulated to take on more socially acceptable dimensions. For example, in his foreword to a French translation (following Gili's analogy), Jean Cassou suggests that the theme of sterility, which later critics view as a projection of Lorca's frustrated desire as a homosexual to propagate, is a reference to Spain:

Voilà ce qui est dit, confessé, proclamé, non seulement dans l'œuvre lyrique de Lorca, mais dans son œuvre dramatique dont l'un des thèmes principaux, sinon le principal, est le célibat, le célibat mélancolique, désespéré de la femme espagnole, de l'Espagne elle-même, la noce ensanglantée, la terre stérile, l'enfantement impossible. (Cassou, in García Lorca 1966: 11)

[This has been said, confessed, proclaimed, not only in Lorca's poetry, but also in his plays, in which one of the fundamental themes, perhaps the most important of all, is celibacy, the melancholic, desperate celibacy of the Spanish woman, of Spain itself, the blood wedding, the barren field, the impossible birthing.]

In the pre-Gibson period, Spanish literary critics tended to react strongly when enlightened foreign Lorca specialists dared raise the homosexual aspect of Lorca's work. In a 1956 study, Jean-Louis Schonberg, the French expert on Spanish literature, criticised the general silence surrounding Lorca's homosexuality, a situation to which he believed (1956: viii) the translations had contributed. He reinterpreted Lorca's work from this perspective, one that was new for its time. As recently as 1982, Miguel García-Posada, who was

responsible for a well-known critical edition of the complete works, put aside his academic impartiality and commented in his introduction that a number of literary experts, led by “el miserable señor Schonberg”, were completely wrong in drawing a relationship between the “oscuro” in the *Sonetos del amor oscuro* and Lorca’s sexual preferences! García-Posada then goes to great lengths to show that a reference to death is more likely (*Obras, II*, 1982: 131-132).

However, a couple of years later, in the same post-Franco 1980s – and possibly as a reaction –, a number of well-documented studies appeared that were exclusively dedicated to a homosexual reinterpretation of Lorca’s work, such as Paul Binding’s *Lorca, the Gay Imagination* (1985) and a 1986 Spanish thesis by Angel Sahuquillo entitled *Federico García Lorca y la cultura de la homosexualidad*. Whereas until 1980 various critics still regarded the feminine lover addressed in *Libro del poemas* as “evidence” of Lorca’s heterosexuality (quoted in Sahuquillo 1986: 217), these new writers detected signs of exactly the opposite. Both books were relatively well received in Spain, as demonstrated by a review in *Cuadernos de Música y Teatro* (no. 1, 1987). The review also refers to a change in mentality at the international level: “The repressed homosexuality in Lorca and the effect of this on his work are receiving an increasing amount of attention outside Spain (though not yet so much within Spain).” Spanish resistance to these ideas faded with time, prompted by the new publications, together with Gibson’s irrefutable biographical documentation, and probably also, at a broader level, the growing post-dictatorial openness and contact with foreigners who were more tolerant in matters of sex. The increasingly liberal social climate also allowed the modest emergence of an urban gay movement, which in turn may have favoured homoerotic publications.<sup>7</sup> Be that as it may, at least García-Posada admits – in Part VI of the continuing series of the *Obras* – that the “dark love” sonnets were addressed to Rafael Rodríguez Rapún, one of Lorca’s lovers, although he fails to acknowledge that he owes this insight to the Schonberg he had so maligned (*Obras, VI*, 1994:

---

<sup>7</sup> According to Eisenberg (1990: 13), a recriminalisation of so-called “homosexual acts” in 1970 produced an embryonic gay movement in Spain. The first Spanish gay march took place in Barcelona, just after Franco’s death: in 1976 (Crapotta 1994: 2).

12). In 1998, the year in which Spain celebrated the centenary of Lorca's birth, the commotion about this aspect of his personality still hadn't disappeared completely, although "[Spanish] people speak about Lorca's homosexuality with fewer problems and less annoyance than before" (Gibson 1998: 65).

### 3. *Innocence versus taboo*

If it was so important to maintain the sexual taboo in the early years of reception, what did the critics find to talk about in Lorca's work? These were mainly "innocent" themes: the inspiration provided by gypsies and children, Lorca's return to traditional *romances* (the Spanish ballads of the Middle Ages), the mythological, folkloristic and anecdotal elements, the importance of dreams, or in the later poetry, the influence of surrealism. The English critic, J.B. Trend, is a good example: he insisted on the importance of the children's songs and folk poetry sung by maids as a source of inspiration (one, incidentally, that Lorca himself had mentioned). In doing so, Trend rather naïvely linked the poet's life and work:

García Lorca described this [i.e. children in Andalusia hearing ballads, songs and stories from their earliest years] to an audience at Havana with such simplicity and conviction that it must have been what happened in his own home at Fuente Vaqueros, in the country near Granada. (Trend 1956: 9)

Spanish publishing policy has been completely in tune with the "positive" image upheld of the author by literary critics (and the press, for that matter). Several years after the Civil War, when Lorca's works could not be printed in Spain, there was a gradual loosening of restrictions. Nevertheless, the previously mentioned controversial play *El público*, written in 1930, was not included in its entirety in the *Obras Completas* until 1972, after being published in the United Kingdom (Sahuquillo 1985: 76). According to the critics, this was because Lorca's family had difficulty accepting the undisguised sexuality of the play. More than a decade passed before *El público* was performed in Spain for the first time, in 1987, over half a century after it had been written. Apparently, following the success of Gibson's biography, which appeared in Spain in 1985, there was no longer any real reason for Lorca's heirs to maintain the censorship. As for the *Sonetos del*

*amor oscuro*,<sup>8</sup> the Lorca family did not give permission for publication in book form in Spain until after the translation had appeared in the French *Œuvres complètes*.

There are indications that the same policy applied to Lorca's personal letters to his friends and family. Not surprisingly, the first collected edition by Christopher Maurer, published in 1983, included only the most respectable. This edition comprises several letters to two good friends, written in August and September 1928, in which Lorca says that he has just gone through a terrible summer (without giving any further details) and is in a deep "crisis sentimental" (1983: 107-109). In his commentary, Maurer discusses only the technical aspect of dating the letters, and not the contents. A number of letters to the same and other friends, in which Lorca again refers in similar terms to his emotional malaise, were added to the second and greatly expanded edition of 1997. In a footnote reference to Gibson's biography, which had since been published, Maurer now explains that the crisis arose out of problems in Lorca's relationship with Emilio Aladrén, a young sculptor. As a collector of private material, Maurer was, of course, partly dependent on the goodwill of Lorca's family (who apparently succeeded in keeping a substantial part of the correspondence hidden<sup>9</sup>), and this may explain why he refrained from making compromising observations in the first edition.

As far as the translations are concerned, this publishing policy entails that the more concealed aspect of Lorca's character did not become apparent until much later (although of course a small number of readers may have become aware of revelations

---

<sup>8</sup> The poems, initially published in a pirate edition in the Spanish newspaper *ABC* on 17-3-1984, were never collectively named as such by Lorca himself. The name that Vicente Aleixandre gave them after the author's death was taken over by the literary critics.

<sup>9</sup> Virtually none of Lorca's letters to his lovers – who included Salvador Dalí, Emilio Aladrén and Rafael Rodríguez Rapún – have been found (Gibson 1989, 1998: 66, Santos Torroella 1987: 105). It is of course possible that Lorca himself played a part in their mysterious disappearance, as Gibson (1989: 361) suggests. García-Posada thinks that Lorca's family still has a good many bundles of his letters in their archives (1994: 13).

about the author through other sources). We may therefore assume that the preliminary norms concerning the choice – or rather, the very availability – of texts for translation influenced the author’s reception abroad. The *Sonetos del amor oscuro*, for example, did not appear until 1989 and 1990 in a Dutch and a German translation respectively. Thus, given the rather folkloristic representation of Lorca’s oeuvre that I mentioned previously, particularly in Spain itself, translations helped to construct for decades a more respectable, more romantic and more unproblematic image of Lorca than his complete works would seem to justify. In the same line, concerning the case of the English translations, Keenaghan claims (1998: 279) that “Lorca’s English-language translators as well as his critics often chose to be silent about the homoerotic elements in his texts, resulting in the distillation of homosexuality from readings of his work. When it was mentioned, it was devalued.” And in Germany, where Enrique Beck had for years been the only authorised translator,<sup>10</sup> even Lorca’s heirs have recently started complaining about Beck’s translations: with their archaic style and corny vocabulary, these were now said to “hamper an adequate reception of Lorca” and to be “in keeping with the false, kitschy image of Spain that the majority of Germans unfortunately still have” (Schwietert, 1998: 16).

Generally speaking, it thus seems clear that for about fifty years after Lorca’s death both representatives of patronage (mainly publishers and educational institutions) and professionals from the literary field (such as critics, translators, and anthologists) collaborated to create an authorial image which consistently stressed socially acceptable aspects of the author’s personality; an image to which the author himself may also have contributed. As for Lorca’s work, we have already seen some indications – and more will follow – that folkloric and romantic elements received considerably more attention than homoerotic themes, which have been systematically denied in Spain in particular.

---

<sup>10</sup> Probably for this reason, Beck’s translation (García Lorca 1953) was the only German one I have been able to find. As I could not make a comparison with other German versions, I have chosen not to include this version in the corpus.

I have already pointed out that the translation of a previously censured work can in turn lead to publication in the original language, and thus change the reception and perception of the author in the source culture. An essential factor that helps shape an author's image in the target culture is indeed the representation of the author and his or her work through translations and metatextual or paratextual commentaries, such as prefaces and notes by the translator, the editor, or another authoritative source. Is it not plausible that the translator's strategy is affected by the perceived image of the author? For their part, translators (like other rewriters) may influence the construction of the author's image, not only by selecting and presenting certain source texts while excluding others, but also by conforming to textual-linguistic norms, for example by highlighting or manipulating semantic or stylistic features. In the remaining sections, I will investigate the interaction between these factors in the translation of a much discussed poem from Lorca's most popular and most frequently translated collection of poetry, *Romancero gitano* (originally published in 1928).

In this case, too, it can be argued that the selection of precisely this gypsy volume for translation by such a wide range of foreign publishers reveals a preliminary norm that was in favour of spreading the folkloristic image of the author, whereas the popularity of the *Romancero gitano* both in Spain and abroad will in turn have reinforced this aspect; to the great annoyance of Lorca, who wrote to Jorge Guillén, his friend and fellow poet, after the very successful pre-publication of some of the romances: "That gypsy *fiction* that has built up around me is really starting to annoy me. They're getting my life and my fictional character mixed up. Under no circumstances do I want that. The gypsies are a theme. There's nothing more to them than that." (*Epistolario completo*, 1997: 414).

Let us now turn to the micro-textual level. The first poem in this volume, "Romance de la luna, luna," is interesting in that it has not only been translated but also interpreted dozens of times; a rough calculation reveals between 30 and 40 versions in French, English, and Dutch alone. Since I am not attempting to give an exhaustive overview of the translations, I have confined myself here to the nineteen translations available in the Netherlands and Belgium. Based on my analysis so far, I have divided these into

two periods. The first eleven translations (5 into French, 3 into English, and 3 into Dutch) were published between 1945 and 1966 and therefore belong to the period of early criticism. The second part of the corpus covers a further eight versions (one into French, 4 into English, and 3 into Dutch) published between 1979 and 1997, thus more or less corresponding to the modern period of Lorca studies.

4. “*The Ballad of the Moon, Moon*”: from fairy tale...

Let me begin by presenting the original text of the first poem in *Romancero gitano*, in Miguel García-Posada’s edition (1982), together with my translation that is as literal as possible:

**Romance de la luna, luna**

[dedication] *A Conchita García Lorca*

1. *La luna vino a la fragua*
2. *con su polisón de nardos.*
3. *El niño la mira mira.*
4. *El niño la está mirando.*
5. *En el aire conmovido*
6. *mueve la luna sus brazos*
7. *y enseña, lúbrica y pura,*
8. *sus senos de duro estaño.*
9. *Huye luna, luna, luna.*
10. *Si vinieran los gitanos,*
11. *harían con tu corazón*
12. *collares y anillos blancos.*
13. *Niño, déjame que baile.*
14. *Cuando vengan los gitanos,*

**Ballad of the moon, moon**

To Conchita García Lorca

The moon came to the  
forge/smithy  
with [>in] in her bustle  
of spikenard.  
The child looks [and]  
looks at her.  
The child is/keeps  
looking at her.  
In the disturbed air [or:  
agitated breeze/wind]  
the moon moves her  
arms (about)  
and shows,  
lubricious/lascivious  
and pure,  
her breasts of hard tin.  
Run away, moon,  
moon, moon.  
If the gypsies came,  
they’d make with [>of]  
your heart  
white necklaces and  
rings [or: n. and white  
rings].  
Child, let me dance.  
When the gypsies  
come,

15. <i>te encontrarán sobre el yunque</i>	they'll find you on the anvil
16. <i>con los ojillos cerrados.</i>	with your little/tiny eyes shut.
17. <i>Huye luna, luna, luna,</i>	Run away, moon, moon, moon,
18. <i>que ya siento sus caballos.</i>	for I [can] already hear their horses.
19. <i>Niño, déjame, no pises</i>	Child, let me [>leave me alone], don't tread upon
20. <i>mi blancor almidonado.</i>	my starched whiteness.
21. <i>El jinete se acercaba</i>	The horseman was approaching
22. <i>tocando el tambor del llano.</i>	beating the drum of the plain.
23. <i>Dentro de la fragua el niño,</i>	Inside the forge/smithy
24. <i>tiene los ojos cerrados.</i>	the child has his eyes shut.
25. <i>Por el olivar venían,</i>	Through the olive grove [they] were coming,
26. <i>bronce y sueño, los gitanos.</i>	bronze and dream, the gypsies.
27. <i>Las cabezas levantadas</i>	The [>their] heads held up [high]
28. <i>y los ojos entornados.</i>	and the [>their] eyes half closed.
29. <i>Cómo canta la zumaya,</i>	How the nightjar [or: tawny owl] sings,
30. <i>¡ay cómo canta en el árbol!</i>	oh, how it sings in the tree!
31. <i>Por el cielo va la luna</i>	Through the sky goes the moon
32. <i>con un niño de la mano.</i>	with a child by the hand.
33. <i>Dentro de la fragua lloran,</i>	Inside the smithy [they] weep,
34. <i>dando gritos, los gitanos.</i>	wailing [or: crying out loud], the gypsies.
35. <i>El aire la vela vela.</i>	The breeze/air/wind keeps guard (2x) over it.
36. <i>El aire la está velando.</i>	The breeze/air/wind is keeping guard over it.



For a brief analysis of the Spanish text, I will adopt Ramsden's approach (1988) in particular, since he claims to be little inclined to interpretation and to base his arguments on obvious textual features (vi-vii). To classify the different aspects into various patterns, I will use the so-called "priority model" (Linn 1998), which is designed to reconstruct the translator's priorities. The model allows the researcher, using a checklist of features, to work out in which linguistic categories (at the formal, phonological, pragmatic and semantic, stylistic and syntactic levels) particular devices occur. On the basis of this classification, the researcher can try to determine what poetic functions they fulfil in both the translation and the original text. Then, using a comparative checklist, the researcher may establish the degree of correspondence between the source and target texts, thus allowing deductions about which aspects of the source text have been given priority in the target text. Ideally, this analysis of priorities will then enable a reconstruction, at least partially, of the translation strategy, and give a fair idea of the translator's interpretation of the original text.

From a formal point of view, the text clearly manifests itself as a poem, which is dedicated to Lorca's oldest sister. Taken together, the first twenty lines form one long stanza, followed by four stanzas of four lines each, which serves to increase the tempo and heighten tension. The poem is tightly structured: it has an isosyllabic metre (eight syllables in each line), and an assonant rhyme in the evenly numbered lines. Both devices are typical of traditional Spanish *romance* poetry. Repetitions (*mira, luna, niño*), which evoke the dreaminess of a trance or a lullaby, constitute another significant phonological – as well as stylistic – aspect. This repetition is also the note on which the poem closes.

At a pragmatic and semantic level, the moon is shown as playing a double role. She is depicted on the one hand as a seductive woman (in 2, 6, and 7/8) and, on the other, as a symbol of cool indifference (white, hard, cold). This duality, which also contains a stylistic aspect (personification), is summed up in *lúbrica y pura* (7). In this connection, Ramsden (1988: 1) mentions that the poem is a reference to an Andalusian superstition prevalent at the time that the moon, with the wind as her accomplice, would often kidnap and murder children who look at her. Gypsies, traditionally associated with metalwork, and here initially only

present in the background, have terrifying connotations for the child (10-12). According to Ramsden (1988: 4-5), just like the moon herself, the *jinete* mentioned in 21 represents a mythical herald of death. The iconic significance of the rider's arrival is heightened by means of rhythm and alliteration (*tocando el tambor*, 22), thus having a phonological component as well.

In syntactical terms, the threat of approaching death is highlighted by the use of the past tense (the *pretérito imperfecto*) in 21. Like the tenses, the speech acts vary: warnings and reactions (from the moon and the child respectively, in the first stanza) follow one another in accelerating tempo and, as with the shorter stanza form, have the effect of increasing the tension. The fact that the threat turns from a surreal possibility into a likelihood and then actual reality is assisted at a grammatical level by the respective use of *Si vinieran* (line 10, a conditional tense), *Cuando vengan* (14, indicating future reality) and *que ya siento* (18, a present tense).

From a stylistic point of view, the metaphors are significant, just as they are throughout the *Romancero gitano*. The moon is personified as a dancer of death, the wind as a satyr and an accomplice of the moon, and gypsies are characterised by the terms "bronze" and "dream," an example of the stylistic economy that is common with Lorca, whereby people or events are denoted by suggestive words, no concrete details being given. Another example of this occurs in line 19, in which *no pises...* creates the impression that the moon wants to push the child away. There is a connection between this and the use of the indefinite article in *un niño* in 32: whether this is the child mentioned earlier, or is a less specific reference, is left up in the air.

How can we now interpret this poem? Lorca himself stated in a lecture that the poem was inspired by a tale in which the dancing moon brings death along with her and the wind plays the role of satyr (*Obras*, VI, 1994: 361). In an atmosphere heightened by musical, dream and trance-like elements, the tension is built up by various means during the course of the first stanza: the child, obsessed by the moon, warns her to watch out for the gypsies, but as things turn out, the moon herself is a threat to the child. A fatal climax, built up step-by-step, is hinted at by means of shorter stanzas and the alternating use of present and past tenses, a climax in which the moon and the

wind together kidnap the child and kill it. The final formulaic and ritualistic repetitions suggest that calm has returned.

We should bear in mind, however, that the author's explanation is not necessarily the meaning conveyed by the work<sup>11</sup> and that the poem leaves room for other readings. Lorca's poetry is a good example of this, since it has given rise to so many different interpretations in different periods. Thus, for instance, modern interpreters of the *Romancero gitano* focus on psychoanalytical elements (Ramond 1986),<sup>12</sup> taking in particular an oedipal line (Cobb 1983), or highlighting gender-related issues (Laurenson 1998), or even the political dimension of the poems (Wahnón 1995). In the early years after the publication of the volume, however, the same poems tended to be viewed in the folkloric and naive terms I have mentioned. To take one example, the introduction to the 1953 translation by Rolfe Humphries highlights the key role played in the collection by the theme of "witchcraft and magic". The interaction between the moon and the boy in the "Romance de la luna, luna" is described in the following terms: "The moon bewitches the little boy who made fun of her" (1953: 14).

The extent to which interpretation and translation follow on from one another is illustrated by a French translation from the 1950s by Albert Henry, who also provides an extensive commentary on the poem. In the bilingual edition of *Les grands poèmes andalous de Federico García Lorca*, Albert Henry identifies the theme of this poem in the following words: "the kidnapping of a child by the moon, as in a romantic ballad" (1958: 218), and later as:

---

<sup>11</sup> Thus the New Critics, for instance, point out that the meaning of a work should be viewed separately from the original intention with which the author imbued it (Wimsatt's "intentional fallacy").

<sup>12</sup> One reason that Ramsden gives to justify the publication of his own text-based commentary on the *Romancero gitano* is "that one should counter... a recent tendency to eccentric interpretation" (1988: vi); the psychoanalytical mode of interpretation had taken on such dimensions that Ramsden ironically commented: "Here nothing is safe. Anything that sticks up is likely to be seen as a breast or phallic symbol; anything that recedes or closes, as a womb signal." (1988: vii)

le contenu d'un rêve d'enfant... Lorca vise à créer un mythe: il nous lance dans la fable... L'acte poétique par excellence chez le Lorca du *Romancero*, c'est la fusion d'éléments réels et d'éléments magiques en vue d'ériger un monde cohérent... (1958: 221)

[the content of a child's dream... Lorca seeks to create a myth: he launches us into a fable... The essential poetic act by Lorca as author of the *Romancero* is the fusion of real and magical elements with a view to creating a coherent world...]

As though emphasising that it is a child's dream about an imaginary kidnapping, Henry translates *niño* [child] in line 23 as an innocent *bambin* [toddler] (1958: 123). Along similar lines, he also tones down a sinister and potentially foreboding message earlier in the poem, when the moon in lines 15/16 predicts how the gypsies are going to find the child. In Henry's version, this becomes *ils te trouveront sur l'enclume, / et tes petits yeux dormant*<sup>13</sup> [they will find you on the anvil/ sleeping with your little eyes shut] (1958: 121).<sup>14</sup> His interpretation has thus been "superimposed" on the translation: it has become a reference to sleep, to dreaming, and not – at least not directly – to death, which was the connotation Lorca preferred. Perhaps the reason for the semantic shift that Henry engineers can be found in the tight rhyming pattern that is clearly given priority in his translation strategy, and according to which the *dormant* rhymes nicely with the *gitans* referred to two lines previously. Whether or not the manipulation is a conscious one, it is predominantly the dreamy and fairy-tale aspect that is highlighted in the translator's interpretation of the "Romance de la luna, luna", thus inviting the French-language reader to think along the same lines. This interpretation is in keeping with the essentially romantic authorial image presented by the translator (1958: 236):

Il serait facile de montrer que nous retrouvons dans le *Romancero gitano*, avec la charge poétique la plus andalouse, la personnalité littéraire de Lorca désormais

---

<sup>13</sup> All of the underlining of the words in this paper is mine.

<sup>14</sup> A French target audience might appreciate here an intertextual reference to Rimbaud's sonnet "Le dormeur du val", whose second quatrain reads as follows: "Un soldat jeune, bouche ouverte, tête nue, / Et la nuque baignant dans le frais cresson bleu, / Dort; il est étendu dans l'herbe, sous la nue, / Pâle dans son lit vert où la lumière pleut."

fixée, manifeste dans tous les recoins et sous tous ses aspects: sensualité, y compris la sensualité verbale [citation], sensibilité pathétique, don d'enfance, vitalité dionysiaque, imagination ardente, angoisse et allégresse, sens du drame, goût pour l'action violente, multiplicité des contrastes dans l'attitude affective comme dans l'expression stylistique, mais aussi maîtrise romano-andalouse [citation], qui permet la sublimation des éléments régionaux et anecdotiques et la fusion, typiquement hispanique, du populaire et du *culto*.

[It would be easy to demonstrate in the *Romancero gitano*, together with a very Andalusian poetic content, the confirmation of Lorca's literary personality, which by now is evident in even the remotest corner and in all its forms: sensuality, including verbal sensuality [quote], pathetic sensitivity, gift of childhood, Dionysiac vitality, burning imagination, anguish and cheerfulness, sense of drama, liking for violent action, multiplicity of contrasts in both affective attitude and stylistic expression, and Roman-Andalusian mastery [quote], allowing for the sublimation of regional and anecdotal elements as well as the typical Hispanic fusion of the popular and the *culto*.]

There is another early French translation by J.L. Noest from about 1963 (discussed extensively in Linn 2001). Here we perhaps see most clearly the intention – again, conscious or otherwise – of presenting Lorca's *romance* as an innocent dream: by introducing a number of literary devices that normally appear in fairy tales, the French reader is presented with a poem from which the death symbolism that Lorca suggested is virtually absent. For example, Noest adds to the translation a story-like beginning *Un jour* [one day], as many as seven exclamation marks, and it is explicitly stated that the gypsies appear in a dream. Moreover, thanks to the addition of various descriptive qualifiers, the relationship between the mother and child is represented as more affectionate than in the source text. Although the frequent shifts at the stylistic, semantic and pragmatic levels may well be due to the translator's formal and phonological priorities, the resulting omissions, additions and other changes are by no means neutral, since they steer the target reader systematically in the direction of a poetic story for children. In this case, too, the translation strategy is in keeping with the image of the author evoked in the paratext: in the introduction to his selection of poems (1963: 5), the translator draws our attention to Lorca's capacity for

enthusiasm, as well as to the “spontaneity” and “sincerity” of his poetry.

In many respects the first Dutch translation in the corpus under study, by Jac. van Hattum (1954) and containing no paratext, resembles Noest’s version. Not only does it reveal similar formal and phonological priorities, such as a tight rhyme scheme in the uneven lines, but the resulting pragmatic and semantic shifts as well as the frequent additions also strongly suggest an innocent children’s story.<sup>15</sup> For example, a “playing child” has been added in line 3, and in lines 15-16 the moon announces that the child will, in a literal translation, “sleep on the anvil/ a pink cloud’s sleep” [*dan slaap je op het aambeeld/ de slaap van een rose wolk*], which is resumed in the translation of lines 23-24: “the child was sleeping on the anvil/ tired of playing with the moon” [*het kind lag op ’t aambeeld te slapen./ moe van zijn manespel*]. As in Noest’s version, the moon’s attitude towards the child is represented as being more affectionate; for example, instead of the warning uttered in lines 19-20 (“Child, let me [be], don’t tread upon/ my starched whiteness”), Van Hattum has the moon propose dancing for the child [*Kind, laat me voor je dansen/ in witte gestevenheid*]. The numerous additions throughout the target text have led to an amplification of 8 lines, while the translator has also intervened in the verse structure by rearranging the original scheme into 11 regular four-lined stanzas. The translation strategy thus appears to be not only affected by norms on the textual-linguistic level, but also by matricial norms, dealing with the macro structure, which even in the early translations is rather exceptional.

The only clear exception to the “positive” and, in the two cases mentioned above, even infantilizing tendency found in my corpus is the French translation by André Belamich (García Lorca 1966). In this version, lines 23/24 are translated as follows: *Dans la forge silencieuse/ gît l’enfant, les yeux fermés*, which retains the multiple meanings and even justifies an interpretation that highlights the death aspect (*ci-gît*, “here lies,” is a common formula on tombstones). On the other hand, Cassou’s foreword that

---

<sup>15</sup> Although this does not offer sufficient explanation, it is interesting to point out that Van Hattum published a volume of fairy-tales a couple of years before this volume of poetry containing his Lorca translations (*Sprookjes en vertellingen*, Graveland: De Driehoek, 1942).

accompanies the translation makes much of Lorca's cheerful and charismatic side.

An interpretation's general tenor may be seen all the more clearly if the translator has not been hampered by the need to make things rhyme or by other phonological or formal priorities: in other words, a translation in prose. In general, we can distinguish two categories of prose translations. Those in the first category aim to help the reader read the original text, and this intention is made clear in the foreword or a translator's note. Two examples of this extremely source-oriented strategy<sup>16</sup> are the more or less literal translation into Dutch by Esteban López (1956) and into English by J.M. Gili (1960). Both even retain the syntactical structure of the source text, e.g. "Heads high and eyes half-closed" (Gili's translation of lines 27-28). In his foreword to the latter, the editor, J.M. Cohen, explains that the translation is solely intended as "a sound base from which to make further explorations" (1960: v) for readers who are not fully conversant with the original language, while in the translator's note that accompanies the Dutch version (1956: 54), López emphasises that he has limited his role so as not to unduly influence interpretation of the original poem.

In the second category of prose translations, literal considerations are of minor importance, which makes them more interesting for my research. I will take an example from *The Oxford Book of Spanish Verse*, a version that was quoted in a study by J.B. Trend (1956). As a source of inspiration for the poet, in addition to songs sung by children's nannies, Trend emphasises the importance of dreams. The interpretation that emerges from this translation matches Trend's interpretation in several crucial respects. Shortly after the moon announces where and in what state the child will be found by the gypsies when they arrive (translation of lines 13-16), there follows the statement that, as the horsemen approached, "[i]n the smithy, the small boy was waiting with eyes shut tight." At the end of the poem, the boy takes charge of the situation instead of being taken away as one of the moon's victims: "Through the sky the moon was marching, while a small boy held her hand." Another shift involves the addition of not only a "small boy" but also a "little owl". In such an innocent children's tale, as in the versions by Noest and

---

<sup>16</sup> I will avoid Toury's term "adequate translation" here because of its confusing ambiguity (see also Hermans 1999: 76-77).

Van Hattum discussed above, it is almost impossible to sustain any interpretation involving an ominous threat of death.

##### 5. ...to fatal song

Let us now compare these early versions with the eight modern translations included in my corpus, those published from the 1980s onwards: one in French, four in English and three in Dutch.<sup>17</sup> To confirm my hypothesis, it would of course be convenient to find in the paratexts an authorial image which discusses – or at least does not smooth over – the author’s complex and “problematic” side, and to discover textual evidence in the translations of a strategy that fits that image. Although there are some indications that point in this direction, reality has proven more stubborn, and the correlation between paratextual discourse and translation is less obvious. However, there is unmistakable evidence of a shift in presentation of both the author and his work.

As for the reception of Lorca’s poetry, the bias towards a child’s dream type of interpretation in post-Gibson introductions and commentaries accompanying translations has largely been abandoned in favour of a “fatal” reading. This change in paradigm, already present in Cobb’s 1983 study and translation, is most explicitly shown in the following extract from Robert G. Havard’s extensive note on his own translation into English of the *Romancero gitano*:

As a lullaby drama the poem depicts the moon as the mysterious agent of sleep who comes to close the eyes of the resisting child. There is a sense of the child being abandoned to the evil forces of the night, while the caring gypsies never arrive in time to effect a rescue... At the same time the poem has a mythic quality... the myth may be described as the seduction or corruption of innocent youth by the fatal attraction of the moon. The latter represents death and, more particularly, sterility (line 8). The theme of metaphorical death (loss of the self) through sexual abduction/corruption would soon be treated more directly in *Poet in New York*. (1990: 127)

---

<sup>17</sup> I have classified Spillebeen’s 1979 version among the modern ones.



The translator's interpretation is also summarised on the back flap of the book, linking the poetical themes to the authorial image: "Dr Havard argues that the fatalism and tribalism of the gypsy settings relate to Lorca's own subjective dilemma and sexual anxieties, and that they ultimately make a deeply personal statement." The translation of the "Romance de la luna, luna" matches the "dark side" of the author presented in the paratext. Havard's version is marked by (irregular) rhymes, mainly vowel rhyme. This self-imposed phonological constraint is bound to cause shifts on the semantic level. While most of the shifts I found are rather neutral paddings, at least one of them, by heightening the atmosphere of violence, has a definite ominous effect. This is the translation of lines 10-12, in which the boy warns the moon of the threat the gypsies constitute to her. A literal translation would be: "Run away, moon, moon, moon. If the gypsies came/ they'd make out of your heart/ white necklaces and rings." Havard translates this as follows: "Run away, moon, run away, moon, moon,/ if the gypsies catch you/ they'll cut your heart in two/ for necklaces and silver rings." This more specific translation, apart from producing assonance in *moon – two*, also implies a more aggressive characterisation and active role for the gypsies in the poem, thus making the child's fear all the more understandable.

A similar example is found in the only recent French version of my corpus, by Michel Mouret. It comes from a collection with the suggestive title *Lorca ou la passion obscure* (1992). Like Henry, his French-language predecessor, Mouret places the conveying of formal and phonological characteristics high on his list of priorities: the target text is set within a tight octosyllabic metre and alternating rhyme. Although we still encounter some subtle shifts at the pragmatic and semantic level, contrary to Henry's translation, these have the effect of actually heightening the original threat (lines 9-12):

*Enfuis-toi, lune, lune, lune.  
Si jamais venaient les gitans,  
de ton coeur, sans pitié aucune, [ruthless]  
feraient colliers et anneaux blancs.*

In his introduction to this translation, Max Pons highlights, among other themes, the importance of death in everyday Spanish life and the "dark forces" (*pouvoir noir*) of the Andalusian gypsy in particular as a context for the creation of Lorca's poetry. The

translation strategy can be said to be in keeping with this representation. As an additional, non-verbal signal, I would also like to mention Michel Desvèrité's illustration that accompanies this poem, depicting the moon standing next to a rather adolescent gypsy lad (1992: 25). This explicit visual addition makes an innocent toddler interpretation, such as the one suggested in Henry's 1958 version, highly unlikely, and also contributes to the ominous tenor of the poem.

There are, however, some exceptions to this trend. For example, the latest translation into English of a collection of Lorca's poetry, including the "Romance de la luna, luna," appeared in an American edition intended for use in a stage project (Forman & Josephs, *Only Mystery*, 1992). In their introduction, the authors explain that they have been guided by "the sense of mystery that inspired Federico García Lorca" (1992: 8), and that they have chosen to convey this sense of mystery in their theatre project and to show Lorca's "otherness". As Forman and Josephs put it, "it is difficult to find a great artist more radically divergent from our own cultural norms than Lorca" (1992: 5). The exoticising authorial image that emerges from their introduction is reflected in their equally foreignizing translation strategy: "We have not tried to make the poet sound like an Anglophone and have left many recognizable words or phrases in Spanish on purpose. Lorca is often rightly called the most Spanish of artists, so we did nothing to adapt or de-emphasize his cultural heritage." (1992: 5-6). Josephs's translation, "Ballad of the Moon, Moon," has indeed kept the original Spanish form of *niño* [boy] (lines 13 and 19) as well as the interjection *ay* (30). The fact that several metaphors have been translated more concretely is perhaps due to the theatrical perspective; for instance, "my starched white train" is used instead of "my starched whiteness" (*mi bláncor almidonado*, line 20). Apart from this kind of stylistic shift, no other significant translation choices have been made, thus leaving the interpretative possibilities of the source text more or less intact. In this case, however, we could say that the exoticising image of the author and the somewhat folkloristic translation strategy fall back on the typical early representation of Lorca.

Moreover, in the case of the contemporary Dutch translations, there is no obvious correlation between the strategy

applied and the authorial image evoked in the paratext. The interpretation of Lorca's poetry presented in the epilogue to the most recent Dutch version of the *Romancero gitano*, by the Flemish translator Bart Vonck (García Lorca 1997), is definitely a modern one. The translator does not provide detailed biographical information, confining himself to a discussion of Lorca's poetics, in which he identifies "the evil influence of this nightly star [the moon goddess, SL] – the death dancer" as one of the main themes of the *Romancero gitano* (1997: 60, my translation). Vonck's basic translation strategy (or, in Toury's terms, the initial norm) proves to be highly source-oriented, imitating, among others, a number of syntactical features of the source text that do not match Dutch poetic conventions. As in Esteban López's Dutch translation, published some forty years earlier, the rather literal translation keeps the original interpretive options largely intact.

We can therefore conclude that half the corpus of eight modern translations shows subtle indications of a violent or negative nature that match the more complex and problematic image of the author evoked in the paratext or that at least show a "non-folkloristic" translator's interpretation of the source text. For the remaining four cases, there is no clear evidence of a translation strategy that points in one direction or another. This may be partly due to a change in translational norms over the years. Generally speaking, the modern translations are more faithful to the source text than those classified in the period of early criticism, where I identified a number of rather drastic shifts, such as the addition or elimination of characteristic elements (pointing to the influence of textual-linguistic norms) or even a rearrangement of the verse structure (revealing matricial norms). This type of shift, mostly resulting from the preservation of a tight rhyme scheme, is bound to produce more radical changes in poetical themes and other important aspects than in the case of the more respectful translation strategy that seems to prevail today. It seems likely that Lorca's growing stature has also played a part in this attitude: a re-creative translation strategy is more easily accepted in the case of a less famous author than "the most translated Spanish author in history" (back flap of Gibson's biography, 1989). The first translation of Lorca's collected poems into English, edited by Christopher Maurer (García Lorca

1991), appears to confirm this modern translational approach. In his preface to this bilingual edition, Maurer points out that

[t]he [twelve] translators have taken a variety of approaches. Almost all of them have sacrificed rhyme and assonance to the silent counterpoint of poetic meaning, and have shunned “poetical” speech. “Faithful, literal translation” may be impossible to define, but that ideal seemed worth pursuing in this first “total” view of Lorca’s poetry.

##### *5. Tentative conclusion: a reciprocal effect?*

In this paper, I have compared the image constructed of Federico García Lorca in a number of Spanish editions of his poetry, in particular *Romancero gitano* (1928) with a corpus of translations of this volume into French, English, and Dutch. It emerges that the “bright side” of Lorca’s personality, incorporating traits such as charm, cheerfulness, and heroism, was highlighted in the initial decades after his death. On the other hand, indications of the author’s “dark side” (in particular, references to his homosexuality and frustrations resulting from repression of this sexuality) were systematically obliterated or manipulated in order to conform to early twentieth-century social constraints. This authorial image was sustained by both representatives of patronage (mainly publishers and educational institutions) and Spanish as well as foreign literary professionals, such as critics, anthologists and translators. As for Lorca’s work, there was a tendency to highlight folkloristic, fantastic and dream-like aspects. National differences account for changes in the way the authorial image was shaped: whereas Spanish editions of Lorca’s work commonly censored references to the author’s homosexuality, French studies and paratexts accompanying the translations tended to stress Lorca’s heroism and his role as a martyr for freedom. English and Dutch commentaries, for their part, mostly highlighted his genius and charisma.

This one-sided image prevailed roughly from Lorca’s death (1936) until well into the 1980s. The turning point seems to be marked by two events: firstly, a growing tolerance and permissiveness at a social and political level following the end of Franco’s regime (1975), and secondly, within the literary system, the publication of Ian Gibson’s best-selling biography of Lorca (1985, English version 1989). From the 1980s onward, Spanish

society became increasingly liberal, giving rise in the literary field to a flow of new editions, reinterpretations and translations of Lorca's homoerotic work. Following Gibson's biography, critical editions and reviews as well as paratexts accompanying translations now pay considerable attention to Lorca's "dark side." This attention has probably helped create a more complex and gloomy authorial image in which "negative" features like sexual and social frustration are not only no longer concealed, they may even predominate.

What about the influence of these ideological changes on the textual level of rewriting, particularly translation? As Toury (1995) argues, one might expect social norms to be reflected in the translation and thus become translational norms. To verify this hypothesis, I have analysed a corpus of nineteen French, English and Dutch translations of the first poem from Lorca's *Romancero gitano* (1928) with their accompanying paratexts. That so many foreign publishers chose to have precisely this gypsy volume translated may in itself reveal a general preliminary norm that was in favour of spreading the unproblematic, folkloristic image of the author. As far as the operational norms are concerned, there is, of course, a speculative element in this type of study, since it presupposes that the translator's interpretation is somehow reflected in the target text; this cannot always be demonstrated, especially in the case of a single poem. Inasmuch as I have been able to find textual evidence of a translator's strategy revealing an interpretation, two general tendencies can be distinguished:

1. In cases where the translator attempts to follow the original text closely at the semantic, pragmatic and syntactic levels, the translator refrains from conveying a specific interpretation. As a consequence, the original interpretive options of the poem, including any "fatal" content they may have, remain more or less intact.
2. If, on the other hand, the strategy adopted by the translator prioritises another aspect, especially phonological and formal constraints, then the subsequent shifting of the elements from which meaning is derived allows more room for a translator's individual interpretation to manifest itself. This situation may also apply to prose translations, as the translator can take more liberties with the text. Four of the nine early translations of this type fail to show a clear indication of a translator's interpretation on the textual-linguistic level. In four of the five versions that do reveal interpretative traces, however, fairy-tale and dream-like elements are to a great extent highlighted. Such a choice of translation strategy will, in turn, have heightened the

perception of the author already coloured by naive and folkloristic elements. It therefore seems plausible that the effects mutually enforce one another. An examination of the modern translations confirms this mechanism to a certain extent, albeit in reverse direction: in four of the eight contemporary versions, the paratextual construction of a complex authorial image is combined with a translation strategy which retains or slightly stresses possibly ominous elements of the poem, thus giving rise to an interpretation that leaves threatening connotations intact. Since the remaining cases show no clear textual traces of a translation strategy that points in one interpretive direction or another, we find no counter-evidence of this tendency.

In general, the translation strategies found in the corpus match, or at least do not contradict, the changing paradigm in the construction of the author's image evoked in the paratextual and metatextual discourses. In the early translations, where the translators tend to manifest themselves more clearly, this correlation emerges as stronger than in recent years. This may be due to the modern tendency to produce more faithful translations of literature, particularly in the case of authors who enjoy a high status in the literary system. Translation thus appears to be the result of a complex process in which social, literary and psychological norms are intertwined. To prove such a relationship convincingly, more research would have to be conducted in all the areas outlined here, research that present-day Lorca specialists have urged:

In addition to the many facets of Lorca as individual and artist, there are also the many and varied recreations of Lorca that each age and even each reader manage to bring into being according to individual perceptions... It is as important to look at both *what* we read at any given moment as it is to *how* we are permitted to read it, not only from the point of view of political restrictions, but also taking into account access to unknown texts, new editions, and at an international level, more and better translations that are able to gradually incorporate change within the interpretative context of the œuvre. (Monegal 1998: 78-79)

In the same book, *Federico García Lorca (1898-1936)* (1998), Ian Gibson lists those issues that have not been raised, or only rarely, in relation to this much-discussed author. High on his list are the missing biographical elements. I hope to have shown that further

diachronic examination of the translations, as a source of information on the changing image of Lorca, also deserves a place on that list.

**University of Groningen**

## **References**

### **Primary sources**

French, English, and Dutch complete or partial translations of *Romancero gitano* (including at least “Romance de la luna, luna”) available in the Netherlands and Belgium.

#### French

GARCÍA LORCA, F. (1945). *Romancero gitan*. Paris: La Nouvelle Edition. (Traduit par Paul Verdevoye, préface de Jean Camp.)

PARROT, Louis (1954). *Federico García Lorca*. Paris: Pierre Seghers. (Traduction Mathilde Pomès et al.)

GARCÍA LORCA, F. (1958). *Les grands poèmes andalous de Federico García Lorca*. Gand: Romanica Gandensia. (Traductions françaises, études et notes Albert Henry.)

— s.a. [1963?]. *Poèmes*. S.l. [Bruxelles]: Ed. Paul Verlaine. (Avant-propos et traduction par le Dr J.L. Noest, postface par Vallobra, traduit par le Dr J.L. Noest.)

— (1966). *Poésies 1921-1927. Chansons, Poèmes du Cante Jondo, Romancero gitan*. Paris: NRF/Gallimard. (Traduction André Belamich et al., préface de Jean Cassou.)

— (1992). *Lorca ou la passion obscure. Choix de poèmes*. Châteauneuf: Wallada. (Ed. bilingue, introduction Max Pons, traduction Michel Mouret.)

#### English

— (1953). *The Gypsy Ballads*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (Translation Rolfe Humphries, introduction R.L. Lind.)

— (1956). *Lorca and the Spanish Poetic Tradition*. New York: Russell & Russell.

— (1960). *Lorca*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. (Selection, introduction and translation by J.L. Gili.)

COBB, Carl W. (1983). *Lorca's Romancero gitano. A Ballad Translation and Critical Study*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

GARCÍA LORCA, F. (1990). *Gypsy Ballads*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips. (Introduction, translation and commentary Robert G. Havard.)

— (1991). *Collected poems. A bilingual edition*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux. (Edited and with an introduction and notes by Christopher Maurer.)

FORMAN, Sandra & Allen JOSEPHS (1992). *Only Mystery. Federico García Lorca's Poetry in Word and Image*. Gainesville etc.: University Press of Florida. (Introduction by Sandra Forman & Allen Josephs, introductory essay and translation by Allen Josephs.)

### Dutch

HATTUM, Jac. van (1954). *Verzamelde gedichten*. Amsterdam: Van Oorschot. [No paratext.]

GARCÍA LORCA, F. (1956). *Romancero gitano*. Rotterdam: Ad Donker. (Translation and notes by Esteban López.)

— (1959). *Romancero Gitano*. Brussels: Willy Godenne. (Translation by Albe.)

— (1979). *Gitaanse romancero & Divan van de Tamarit*. Gent: Masereelfonds. (Translation, footnotes and epilogue by Willy Spillebeen.)

— (1985). *Gedichten*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff. (Translation and epilogue by Dolf Verspoor.)



— (1997). *Zigeunerromances*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff.  
(Translation, epilogue and notes by Bart Vonck.)

### Secondary sources

AMOSSY, Ruth (2001). “Ethos at the Crossroads of Disciplines: Rhetoric, Pragmatics, Sociology.” In *Poetics Today* 22:1, pp. 1-23.

BASSNETT, Susan & André LEFEVERE (eds). (1990). *Translation, History & Culture*. London/New York: Pinter.

BINDING, Paul (1985). *Lorca, the Gay Imagination*. London: GMP Publishers.

CANO, José Luis (1962). *García Lorca*. Barcelona: Destino.

COLECCHIA, Francesca (ed.). (1982). *García Lorca. An Annotated Primary Bibliography*. New York/London: Garland Publishing.

CRAPOTTA, James F. (1994). “Hispanic Gay & Lesbian Issues.” In *Community News*, April. New York: GABLES-CU.

*Cuadernos de música y teatro*, reviews by Binding (1985) and Sahuquillo (1986), no 1, p. V.

EDWARDS, Gwynne (1998). “Lorca in the United Kingdom.” In *Donaire* n°. 10, pp. 23-30.

EISENBERG, Daniel (1990). “Spain.” In *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality*, ed. Wayne Dynes. New York: Garland. Online: <http://users.ipfw.edu/jehle/deisenbe/encylopedia/spain.pdf>

GARCÍA LORCA, Federico (1953). *Zigeuner-Romanzen*. Wiesbaden: Insel Verlag. (Übers. Enrique Beck.)

GARCÍA LORCA, Francisco (1980). *Federico y su mundo*. Madrid: Alianza.

— (1982). *Obras, II. Poesía, 2* (ed. Miguel García-Posada). Madrid: Akal.

— (1983). *Epistolario* (ed. Chr. Maurer, 2 tomos). Madrid: Alianza.

— (1991). *Primer romancero gitano* (ed. crítica de Christian de Paepe). Madrid: Espasa-Calpe.

— (1993). *Romancero gitano. Poeta en Nueva York. El público* (ed. Derek Harris). Madrid: Santillana.

— (1994). *Obras, VI. Prosa, I* (ed. Miguel García-Posada). Madrid: Akal.

— (1997). *Epistolario completo* (eds A.A. Anderson & Chr. Maurer). Madrid: Cátedra.

GIBSON, Ian (1985/1987). *Federico García Lorca* (2 volumes: 1. *De Fuente Vaqueros a Nueva York, 1898-1929*, 2. *De Nueva York a Fuente Grande, 1929-1936*). Barcelona: Grijalbo.

— (1989). *Federico García Lorca. A Life*. London: Faber & Faber.

— (1998). “Ausencias lorquianas.” In *Federico García Lorca (1898-1936)*. Madrid: TF Editores, pp. 65-67.

GUILLÉN, Jorge (1959). *Federico en persona. Semblanza y epistolario*. Buenos Aires: Emecé.

— (1965). *Mein Freund Federico García Lorca. Ein Briefwechsel*. Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag (übers. Hildegard Baumgart & Enriquer Beck).

HÄUSGEN, Ursula (mit Beiträgen von Michi Strausfeld und Luis Antonio de Villena) (2000). *Namenlose Liebe. Homoerotik in der spanischen Lyrik des 20. Jahrhunderts: eine zweisprachige Anthologie*. München: Lyrik Kabinett München (Übers. von Horst Weich).

HAVARD, Robert (1998). “Rhyme and its Reasons in the Translation of Lorca’s *Romancero gitano*.” In *Donaire* n°. 11, pp. 38-46.

HERMANS, Theo (ed.) (1985). *The Manipulation of Literature. Studies in Literary Translation*. London/Sydney: Croom Helm.

— (1999). *Translation in Systems. Descriptive and System-oriented Approaches Explained*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.

HOLMES, James S. (1988). *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

KEENAGHAN, Eric (1998). “Jack Spicer’s Pricks and Cocksuckers. Translating Homosexuality into Visibility”. In *The Translator* 4:2, pp. 273-295.

LAURENSEN, Helen (1998). “Frocks, flowers and flounces: “Agitanización inglesa” in the translations of Romancero gitano.” In *Donaire* n°. 11, pp. 61-68.

LÁZARO, Fernando & Vicente TUSÓN (1984). *Literatura española 2*. Madrid: Anaya.

LEFEVERE, André (1992). *Translation, Rewriting & the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London/New York: Routledge.

LINN, Stella. (1998). *Dichterlijkheid of letterlijkheid? Prioriteiten in de Spaanse vertalingen van Nederlandstalige poëzie* (Poeticism or Literalism? Priorities in Spanish Translations of Dutch Poetry). Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers. [With an English summary.]

— (2001). “Fairy tale or fatal song? The translator as director of meaning in Lorca’s translated poetry.” In Thelen, M. & B. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (eds.), *Translation and Meaning. Part 5*, Maastricht: Maastricht University Press, pp. 273-283.

MONEGAL, Antonio (1998). “Releer a García Lorca en el fin de siglo.” In *Federico García Lorca (1898-1936)*. Madrid: TF Editores, pp. 77-81.

MUNDAY, Jeremy. 2001. *Introducing Translation Studies. Theories and Applications*. Routledge: London/New York.

RAMOND, Michèle (1986). *Psychotextes. La question de l’Autre dans Federico García Lorca*. Toulouse: Ed. Eché.

- RAMSDEN, H. (1988). *Lorca's Romancero gitano. Eighteen Commentaries*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- SAHUQUILLO, Angel (1986). *Federico García Lorca y la cultura de la homosexualidad*. Stockholm: Stockholms universitet.
- SANTOS TORROELLA, Rafael (1987). *Salvador Dalí escribe a Federico García Lorca (1925-1936)*. Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura.
- SCHÄFFNER, Christina (ed.) (1999). *Translation and Norms*. Clevedon (etc.): Multilingual Matters.
- SCHONBERG, Jean-Louis (1956). *Federico García Lorca. L'homme – L'œuvre*. Paris: Plon.
- SCHWIETERT, Sabine (1998). "Blust, Zasern und Springborn. Der Fall Federico García Lorca". In *Börsenblatt* 43, 29. Mai, pp. 15-16.
- SMITH, Paul Julian (1998). "Black Wedding: García Lorca, Langston Hughes, and the Translation of Introspection". In *Donaire* n°. 10, pp. 48-54.
- SMITH, Paul Julian (2000). "New York, New York: Lorca's Double Vision." In *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 169-180.
- SOTO, Francisco (2003). "García Lorca, Federico." In *glbtq: an Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Culture*. Ed. Summers, Claude J. Chicago: New England Publishing Associates. Online: [www.glbtc.com/literature/garcialorca\\_f.html](http://www.glbtc.com/literature/garcialorca_f.html)
- TOURY, Gideon (1995). *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- VENUTI, Lawrence (1995). *The Translator's Invisibility*. London/New York: Routledge.
- (1998). *The Scandals of Translation. Towards an Ethics of Difference*. London/New York: Routledge.

WAHNÓN, Sultana (1995). “La recepción de García Lorca en la España de la posguerra”. In *Nueva revista de filología hispánica* 43:2, pp. 409-431.

WIMSATT, W. K. (1954). *The Verbal Icon. Studies in the Meaning of Poetry*. The University of Kentucky Press.

WOLFE, Roger (1997). “Federico García Lorca: un fósil en busca de acomodo”. In *Hélice, revista de poesía* n°. 10, pp. 25-26.

**ABSTRACT: Translation and the Authorial Image: the Case of Federico García Lorca’s *Romancero gitano*** — Despite Barthes’s claim that the author is dead, leaving the scene for his work, freed from its all too personal origin, I would like to argue that the author image is far from absent in the practice of literary translation. On the one hand, the author’s image within a particular literary and social system may determine which work is translated, and even how it is translated. On the other hand, it seems likely that some characteristics of a persona will be highlighted more than others, depending on which source texts are selected for translation and on how the author and his or her works are presented in prefaces and commentaries accompanying the translations. Moreover, the translation strategy may enhance the prevailing tendencies within reception and thus contribute to a certain perception of the author in the target culture. In this paper I will investigate these hypothetical connections, taking as an example the Spanish author Federico García Lorca and a number of translations of his *Romancero gitano* (1928) into French, English, and Dutch. I will examine a possible correlation between the prevailing “folkloristic” image of Lorca in the early literary criticism, and the emphasis on romantic, naïve and mythological aspects in translations of his work, and conversely, the later, more complex and gloomy image presented of the author, and translation strategies which highlight elements that correspond to that view.

**RÉSUMÉ : La traduction et l’image de l’auteur : le cas du *Romancero gitano* de Federico García Lorca** — À l’encontre de l’affirmation de Barthes voulant que l’auteur soit mort, laissant place à son œuvre, délivrée de ses origines personnelles, je soutiens que l’image de l’auteur est loin d’être absente de la pratique de la traduction littéraire. D’une part, l’image de l’auteur dans un

système littéraire et social donné peut déterminer quels ouvrages sont traduits et comment ils sont traduits. D'autre part, il est probable que certaines caractéristiques d'une personne soient mises en valeur plus que d'autres, selon le choix des textes originaux traduits et la présentation faite de l'auteur et de son œuvre dans les préfaces et autres commentaires accompagnant les traductions. De plus, les stratégies de traduction vont souvent dans le sens des tendances dominantes de réception et contribuent ainsi à réaffirmer une certaine perception de l'auteur dans la culture d'arrivée. Dans le cadre de cet article, j'explorerai ces hypothèses en prenant l'exemple de l'auteur espagnol Federico García Lorca et de quelques traductions de son *Romancero gitano* (1929) vers le français, l'anglais et le néerlandais. J'examinerai la corrélation possible entre l'image « folklorisante » de Lorca dans les premières études critiques et l'emphase mise sur le côté romantique, naïf et mythologique dans les traductions de son œuvre, et inversement la corrélation entre l'image plus sombre et complexe présentée de l'auteur plus tard et les stratégies de traduction qui font ressortir les éléments qui correspondent à cette vision.

**Keywords :** authorial image, reception, ideology, Federico García Lorca, translational norms.

**Mots-clés :** image de l'auteur, réception, idéologie, Federico García Lorca, normes traductionnelles.

**Stella Linn: Romance Department, RUG-Faculty of Arts, P.O. Box 716, 9700 AS GRONINGEN, Netherlands**  
**Courriel: s.i.linn@let.rug.nl**