

Abstract: This article approaches the translation of concentration camp testimony through the optic of secondary witnessing in order to consider how translation, as an act of listening, might impact the preservation and transmission of the survivors' account. A case study on the initial translation and retranslation of David Rousset's *L'Univers concentrationnaire* in English will serve as the basis for exploring how the translators have attended to the survivor's representation of the camps. It will also scrutinize paratextual material and translation reviews as a means of retracing some of the socio-cultural conditions of production of the two target texts, paying particular attention to how Rousset has been understood and received.

Key words: ethics; paratext; pragmatics; retranslation; Rousset; secondary witnessing; translation

Retranslating Rousset: English-language mediations of *L'Univers concentrationnaire*

David Rousset's *L'Univers concentrationnaire* (Éditions du Pavois, 1946) was one of the earliest testimonial accounts of life in the Nazi concentration camps to reach a wider post-war audience and details the political prisoner's passage through Buchenwald, Porta Westphalica, Neuengamme, Helmstedt and Wöbbelin. Arrested in October 1943 for his involvement in the French resistance movement and deported to Germany in January 1944, Rousset spent the next sixteen months experiencing first-hand the relentless brutality of these main and satellite camps until his liberation by the Americans in May 1945. However, *L'Univers concentrationnaire* does not fit readily into the model of Holocaust survivor accounts that would later become established for it is less a work of personal and troubled memory, and more a detached observation of the hierarchical, dehumanizing machinations of the system. Viewed predominantly through Rousset's Trotskyite lens, this depiction of the "vie intense des camps [qui] a des lois et des raisons d'être" (1946, 43) and where "tout est possible" (ibid., 181) bears witness to the daily sufferings of the prisoners, maps their relative (un)privileged positionings within the camps, and records the nature of their interactions with each other and the SS. In keeping with his political convictions, Rousset also warns that the "fondements économiques et sociaux du capitalisme et de l'impérialisme" (ibid., 187) on which the Nazi system was constructed might occasion subsequent instantiations of this barbaric sphere under new and comparatively dreadful guises.

Inasmuch as Rousset presents a politicized conception of that world, he also incorporates an aesthetics of intertextuality into his writing, invoking Alfred Jarry's pre-absurdist plays *Ubu Roi* (1896) and *Ubu Enchaîné* (1898), the Bible, Kafka, Céline, Shakespeare and Dante in an attempt to transmit some indication of the mercilessness of life in the camps. In this respect, Rousset's work evidently does not subscribe to arguments of the ineffability and uniqueness of the concentrationary universe as posited by other Holocaust survivors, for, as Colin Davis remarks, the intertextual references "give the camps a point of comparison outside themselves, thus anchoring them in a culture shared by readers who did not experience them directly. [...] There are no pieties about the unspeakable here." (2003, 1049-1050; see also Bornand 2004, 116; Pollock and Silverman 2011, 21) The literariness of the text thus serves to collapse some of the distance between the reader and life in the camps, and to communicate some of the extremes and perverse novelties of that experience to those who were on the outside.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that readerly access to, and understanding of, the concentrationary universe has not solely been granted through Rousset's original French text. Rather, the act of translation has also served to extend the reach of the survivor's testimony into other linguistic and cultural spaces. Two translations are available to English-speaking readers; the first appeared in the US in very quick succession to the original under the title *The Other Kingdom*, having been translated by Ramon Guthrie and published by Reynal and Hitchcock of New York in 1947. This was followed in 1951 by a second translation, i.e. a retranslation, carried out by Yvonne Moyses and Roger Senhouse and published in London by Secker and Warburg as *A World Apart*.

James E. Young has pointed out that “[w]hat is remembered of the Holocaust depends on how it is remembered, and how events are remembered depends in turn on the texts now giving them form” (1988, 1). In this respect, translation opens out Rousset's representation of the concentrationary universe to alternative modes of mediation and remembrance that necessarily reframe the source text, inflect its telling and shape its circulation within the receiving system. To date, though, there has been no scrutiny of how translation has re-encoded the distinctive contours of Rousset's testimonial account, and no consideration of how translation has promoted or obstructed the transmission and reception of his work.

But such a lack of critical thinking about translation as a substantive articulation of Holocaust memory might almost be viewed as indicative of a wider trend within the fields of Memory Studies and Holocaust Studies. There have indeed been previous points of contact between notions of translation, trauma and remembering the Holocaust, although, as Piotr Kuhiwczak has pointed out, “language is viewed [t]here as an abstract code, unrelated to any particular linguistic reality” (2007, 68). This figurative approach has done little to encourage more direct encounters with the actual mechanisms of interlingual and intercultural translation and could well be explained by a deliberate reticence to expose survivor testimonies to the inevitable discussions of accuracy, loss and betrayal that shadow reflections on translation. What is more likely, however, is that the gap points to a widespread unconcern about translation in the first instance, thus lending credence to Translation Studies scholar Lawrence Venuti's assertion that the complexities and partialities of translation have become veiled in an “illusion of transparency” (1995, 21). It is only through a detailed confrontation with translation as a concrete, constructed and potentially fragmented “site of memory”, to borrow Pierre Nora's term, that we can then begin to understand how original acts of bearing witness to the Holocaust have been imparted to others.

The present study hopes to instigate such a confrontation by exploring how the first English translation and subsequent retranslation of *L'univers concentrationnaire* have reconstructed the world of Rousset's original text. It is primarily a focus on the task and the position of the translator that will prove revelatory when attempting to retrace the processes and repercussions of transmitting testimonial accounts beyond their immediate point of production. The situatedness of any given translator has been lucidly summarized by Jeremy Munday who views:

the translator/interpreter as an active participant in the communication process, one who “intervenes” not as a transparent conduit of meaning but as an interested representer of the source words of others and in a communicative situation constrained and directed by extratextual factors (2012, 2).

In other words, the translator will leave their own interpretative mark on the original, which will, in turn, be subject(ed) to the exigencies of the publisher and the expectations of the intended readers in particular.

However, the very intervention of the translator in the transmission of a Holocaust testimony raises important questions around the ethics of their engagement with the source text and the survivor. For every testimony proceeds from a certain pragmatics of witnessing, described by Marie Bornand as communicative situation in which the author “s’exprime en tant que *témoign* et, simultanément, *prend le lecteur à témoin*, l’implique dans sa cause” (2004, 9, original emphasis). The pragmatics of witnessing thus invites a response from the reader; but in the context of translation, the target text reader can no longer be the direct object of the original call to participate in that act of witnessing. Instead, the reader’s response will be predicated on the translator’s initial response and on the ways in which they have functioned as an intermediary.

It is on the basis of this communicative model that we can conceive of the translator as a secondary witness. This figure was initially defined in relation to the interviewees who participated in the recording of Holocaust survivors’ oral testimonies for the Fortunoff Video Archive, a locus in which “a special responsibility is conferred on the listener, who must be willing to share the testimony and become a co-witness or secondary witness of the memory that he or she helps to extend in space and time” (Assmann 2006, 265). The secondary witness has since come to be understood in a larger sense as any individual engaged in carrying the survivors’ stories forwards in any medium, and I would suggest that there is merit in rendering explicit the presence of the translator in their number. I am not alone in employing the language of ethical responsibility in order to contemplate the role of the translator of Holocaust writing, an area of research that has recently gained more momentum in Translation Studies. One very prominent example is to be found in the work of Jean Boase-Beier who argues that “[t]here is a moral accountability in translating Holocaust poetry, in deciding what and how to translate” (2015, 150). Similarly, Anneleen Spiessens has interrogated the “mediator’s agency and ethical responsibility” (2012, 15) in the textual and paratextual treatment of perpetrator testimony, bringing the subjectivities of both translators and editors into view. What secondary witnessing in particular can contribute to a continued ethical line of enquiry is, first, the idea of listening as a useful analytical lens through which to ascertain how attentive the translator has been to the form and content of the survivor’s original telling.

Furthermore, the notion of secondary witnessing brings with it an inherent disquiet about the dangers of misappropriation and over-identification that can readily be applied to the context of translation. As Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer have argued, the secondary witness “must allow the testimony to move, haunt and endanger her; she must allow it to inhabit her, without appropriating or owning it” (2010, 402). Accordingly, engagement with the testimony ought to be premised on an empathic stance that preserves the distance between the self and the other, and this basic tenet of secondary witnessing can then function as an essential criteria of evaluation in respect of whether the translator sensitively attends to the survivor’s account of his or her experiences, and whether the discrete subject positions of teller and listener remain intact. If, as Munday reminds us, “the translator or interpreter brings his/her own sociocultural and educational background, ideological, phraseological and idiosyncratic stylistic preferences to the task of rendering a source text in the target language” (2012, 2), then we must approach translated testimonial accounts with some degree of critical circumspection, mindful of the fact the conscious or unconscious choices made by the

translator, at any moment in a given text, subsume, refigure or maintain the subjectivity of the survivor's account.

To return to the specific case of Rousset, the analysis that follows will draw on the conceptual framework of secondary witnessing as a means of examining how the translators of the English versions of *L'Univers concentrationnaire* have attended to the two predominant discourses that characterize the survivor's work: the politically-driven observation of the concentrationary system and the use of intertextual references to facilitate the reader's insight into that world. A broader view of context also reveals that translators are not the only agents to have a part in the transmission of testimonial narratives. Rather, Translation Studies has long been alert to the fact that texts, as material and symbolic objects, circulate in specific and shifting constellations, where multiple stakeholders, not least publishers, can intervene in matters of when, where and how those texts appear, and to what ends they are used. Accordingly, signs of the ways in which Rousset's translated testimony has been framed and received can be sought in paratextual and extratextual material.

Rousset as observer of the concentrationary universe

Although the very notion of the "concentrationary universe" is central to Rousset's source text, it is striking that neither of the English translations explicitly signal this epithet in their titles, *The Other Kingdom* (1947) and *A World Apart* (1951), respectively. Rather, it appears as though the translators have turned to Rousset's description within the text itself that "[c]'est un univers à part, totalement clos, étrange royaume d'une fatalité singulière" (1946, 30) as inspiration for their titular choices. But in so doing, they both conceal a neologism that points to the ruthlessness of that universe, while also marking its evolutionary roots in the pre-existing model of the concentration camp. Griselda Pollock and Max Silverman have already noted that these choices result in the English translations "losing the visibility and acoustic force of *concentrationnaire*" (2011, 18, original emphasis), and in this sense, it might be suggested that the translators have not borne adequate secondary witness to the pragmatic significance of the term as an expository and cautionary concept. However, the extent of that loss can be nuanced in light of additional textual and extratextual factors. To begin, the initial translation shows itself to be highly attentive to Rousset's original terminology, making frequent reference to the "concentrationary universe" (e.g. 1947, 55; 100; 168; 173) and to the "concentrationees" (e.g. *ibid.*, 31; 73; 169), with only isolated slips in cohesion where more general references to "the camps" (*ibid.*, 154), "the prisoners" (*ibid.*, 38) and "the men" (*ibid.*, 169) have been made. Contrary to conventional thinking about retranslation, which views subsequent translations as corrective improvements on those which have gone before (see, for example, Berman 1990), it is the retranslation that obscures the originality and impact of Rousset's terminology, preferring instead the more established, recognizable phrases of "the concentration camp world" (e.g. 1951, 58; 98; 112) and "the internees" (e.g. *ibid.*, 4; 36; 105), while several allusions to the "world apart" of the title are also made (*ibid.*, 64; 111). Consequently, the retranslation reader has comparatively less opportunity to hear the uniqueness and horror signalled by the "concentrationary" adjective.

That said, direct translation has not been the only vehicle for the transmission of the adjective itself or Rousset's conceptualization of the camps. Many scholarly readers who write in English have, of course, come to Rousset's universe through the original source text itself and then perpetuate the "concentrationary" by means of their own partial translation of key terms and quotations. Others have accessed Rousset through the work of Hannah Arendt in particular who regarded *L'Univers concentrationnaire* as "indispensable for an understanding not only of the concentration camps, but of the totalitarian regime as a whole" (1948, 743-744). But, while Arendt does reference the initial translation, *The Other Kingdom*,

in her seminal work *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), this ensures visibility for neither the target text nor Rousset himself. As Samuel Moyn has remarked, Arendt's "many commentators have failed to note [that she] depended very largely on Rousset's interpretation as a source on the nature and significance of the camps" (2010, 55). In this context, the symbolic capital of Arendt as scholar seems to have eclipsed both original and secondary acts of witnessing. Put differently, the break in the survivor's voice is due less to the manner in which it is conveyed abroad in translation, and is a corollary instead of the reach and volume of the voice of another who, in re-articulating Rousset's observations, all but muffles their origins.

The concentrationary universe was the realm of the political deportee and criminal; a different fate befell those transported to the extermination camps and Rousset was indeed aware of a certain divergence, insisting that "[l]es camps ne sont pas tous identiques ou équivalents" (1946, 44). However, he then goes on to claim that "[e]ntre ces camps de destruction [Auschwitz and Neue-Bremm] et les camps 'normaux', il n'y a pas de différence de nature, mais seulement de degré" (ibid., 51). According to Moyn, "the erasure of the distinction between life and death in the concentration [camps] [...] led him [Rousset] to see camps devoted to actual killing as fundamentally similar" (2005, 54). Nevertheless, there is still a risk that this universalizing observation might be read as an affront to the victims of the extermination camps, not least as it appeared in a post-war France where the genocide of the Jews was eclipsed by a narrative of "résistancialisme". Interestingly, it would appear that the translators of both versions have used similar strategies that, deliberately or otherwise, go some way to circumventing the potential ambivalence of Rousset's classification. While the initial translation and retranslation echo the source text that "the difference is not one of nature but only of degree" (1947, 61) and that "there was no fundamental difference; only a difference in degree" (1951, 27), they both seem to have subtly altered Rousset's remark that "[s]ur d'autres parallèles [de l'univers concentrationnaire] se situent les camps de représailles contre les Juifs" (1946, 48). Through the addition of intensifying adverbs in the assertions that "[the] reprisal camps [...] are situated in quite different latitudes" (1947, 58) and that "[in] utterly different latitudes lay the reprisal camps" (1951, 25), the English translations stress that, although aligned, the degrees of separation between the concentration and the extermination camps are vast; the language is more one of contrast and differentiation as opposed to comparison and similarity.

In a sense, then, the (re)translators might be found wanting in their respective roles as secondary witnesses since their choices, in small part, misrepresent Rousset's interpretation of the concentrationary universe. By effectively widening the gap, they undermine Rousset's agenda, namely the homogenization of all camps in order to denounce not only the whole Nazi regime, but the USSR gulags as well. Nevertheless, if we read the (re)translations from today's perspective, the (re)translations' emphasis on differentiation might also be framed in a more positive light. As many commentators have noted, Nazi crimes have now come to be almost exclusively associated with the persecution of the Jews, with the result that the stories of other victims have been overlooked. Pollock and Silverman thus stress that "it is vital for the honour of the victims of both systems [...] that we open up the fold that overlays the concentrationary and the exterminatory, for these have become conflated in recent years" (2014, 12). If the (re)translators are viewed as resisting that conflation (not to be confused with Rousset's alignment), they can also be viewed, circumstantially at least, as secondary witnesses who restore the original focus on the persecution of political prisoners.

Rousset as communicator of the concentrationary universe

Patricia A. Gartland comments on *L'Univers concentrationnaire* as follows: "Probably because it was written so soon after his liberation, Rousset's work is not a fully realized reconciliation of the imaginative problems posed by re-creation of the camp experience, especially as that experience lives in survivor memory" (1983, 50). However, Gartland's criticism is perhaps somewhat overly eager to make Rousset's style fit with tropes that would emerge later regarding the unspeakability of life in the camps. Rather than an attempt to overcome obstacles to expression and memory, the literary devices to which Rousset has recourse are, first and foremost, a mechanism through which to share his lucid observations and understanding of the concentrationary universe. One notable characteristic of Rousset's work is that it is "un texte gorgé de références littéraires" (Coquio, 2000, 53); and, as mentioned earlier, these references serve as external, fixed points on which readers can hang their own understanding of that cruel and senseless world.

The attentive translator as secondary witness would thus be led to preserve these references, allowing, in turn, the English reader to find some footing amongst the unknown. In point of fact, each and every literary and (more broadly) cultural reference in the body of the source text remains intact in both the initial translation and the retranslation. For example, we read that the camps "are the realm of King Ubu" (1947, 29), and that the SS were "ministers of a cult of burlesque Justice. UBU was their God" (1951, 64, original emphasis). Similarly, both translations reference "the Dantesque corridors of Bartensleben" (1947, 48; 1951, 18), while the world of the camps is depicted in reference to Céline and Kafka (1947, 74; 1951, 36). A certain degree of explicitation appears in the treatment of Rousset's assertion that "[je] ne sais rien qui puisse rendre, avec une égale intensité, plastiquement, la vie intime des concentrationnaires, que la Porte d'Enfer et les personnages qui en sont issus" (1946, 64-65). The translators of both English versions render the cultural allusion to the sculpture in more concrete, attributive terms as "Rodin's *Gate of Hell*" (1947, 74, original emphasis) and as "Rodin's *Gates of Hell*" (1951, 37, original emphasis), respectively. Although the initial translation is somewhat less accurate in terms of the accepted English title of the work, following the French singular designation, the two target texts nevertheless demonstrate that secondary witnessing can serve both the original witness and the reader concurrently. By ensuring that the reader can fully grasp the significance of the reference, the translators also ensure that Rousset's world is communicated as thoroughly as possible, in all its horror.

The chapter titles of *L'Univers concentrationnaire* also operate by means of a referential framework in which the reader can share. Central to this framework are Biblical allusions that Rousset frequently subverts in order to stress the destruction and ruination of the camps. For instance, as Bornand has pointed out in her analysis of chapter two, 'Les premiers-nés de la mort', Rousset has taken story of the liberation of Israeli people and reframed death as "la puissance génératrice des premiers-nés", thereby undermining "toute idée de puissance supérieure salvatrice" (2004, 118-119). Elsewhere, more direct allusions include "Dieu a dit qu'il y aurait un soir et un matin" (chapter three) and "les eaux de la mer se sont retirées" (Chapter seventeen) stand in stark contrast to the harsh reality of the events depicted therein: creation is supplanted by destruction, deliverance by persecution. The translators demonstrate a high degree of attentiveness to Rousset's rhetoric of inversion. The initial translation incorporates the chapters: "First-born of death"; "Man does not live by politics alone"; "And God said Let there be night and day"; and, "And the water of the sea were abated". The retranslation closely follows suit but does go on to differentiate itself from the initial version by restoring one of Rousset's more metaphorical title choices. Dealing with the division between the political deportees and the common criminals, chapter six is entitled "Il n'est pas d'embouchure où les fleuves se mêlent". The initial translation foregoes this

imagery of disunity, opting instead for “The red and the green”, a more concrete reference to the coloured triangles used to identify those different categories of prisoner. Although the reader of the initial translation is able to recover the significance of this title with the help of a footnote and a more detailed explanation in the translator’s introduction, the chapter title nevertheless goes some way to destabilizing Rousset’s attempt to create a shared framework for comprehension. It is only in the retranslation, where the chapter title reads “In no estuary is there true confluence”, that the original symbolism is retained and the reader is afforded some insight into this additional level of discord in the concentrationary universe. In this case, the retranslators as secondary witnesses apply a mode of telling that is comparable to that of the original witness, namely orienting the reader towards the reality of the camps via the recognizable.

(Re)translation in context

How a given translation bears witness to the witness is shaped not only by the textual decisions of the translator, but also by external factors, including whether and how the reputation of the source text author has reached the target culture, how the translator(s) and publisher have framed the translation, and how market, cultural, social, political etc. forces have had an impact on supply and demand. All are elements that might determine the way in which a survivor testimony arrives in the hands of a certain readership, and how, in turn that readership understands and responds to the translated text. Since the two target texts in question here appeared some seventy years ago, it has not always been possible to retrace empirical evidence as to the motivations behind the translations, how they were marketed and received. However, several material indicators do remain, not least paratexts and translation reviews which allow the emergence of a clearer picture as to how the act of secondary witnessing inherent in the translation has been affected by its place and time of (re)production, as well as its means of circulation.

It is reasonable to assume that the decision to translate *L’Univers concentrationnaire* was made on both sides of the Atlantic in light of the fact that Rousset’s work was awarded the Prix Renaudot in June 1946. The prestige of this literary prize undoubtedly raised Rousset’s profile in France and abroad, bringing him thus to the attention of translators and publishers alike. While no explicit pronouncements seem to have been made by any of the translators involved as to why they decided to engage with this particular source text, Guthrie’s introduction to the initial translation hints at a personal experience of the French Liberation. There he provides an anecdotal account of the return of French survivors to Paris: “most of the prisoners, when you saw them at close range, looked as if they were beyond feeling thrills of any kind” (Guthrie, 1947, 10). Conversely, it is more challenging to discern such a direct connection between the retranslators, Yvonne Moyse and Roger Senhouse, and Rousset’s work; the pair had previously collaborated on the translation of two novels by Simone de Beauvoir, but there is a distinct absence of any direct statement as to the impetus behind the translation of *L’Univers concentrationnaire*. However, the fact that Senhouse co-owned Secker and Warburg explains why the publishing house became an outlet for the translation and perhaps also points to some degree of personal motivation.

Furthermore, the paratexts of the initial translation and retranslation suggest that they had rather different readerships in mind. Guthrie’s introduction goes on to provide an extensive overview of the goals, tone, style and content of Rousset’s work, including explanations as to the intertextual reference to *Ubu Roi* and the (non-translated) titles of camp officials, as well as a chart designed to “enable the reader to grasp the relative rank of these officials at a glance” (1947, 21). His introduction is also prefaced by a blurb which claims that it “is not a book for the light of mind nor the faint of heart”, and characterizes the work

as “a brief, explosive sociological report” on the concentration camps, which are portrayed as sites of “death, sadism, homosexuality, and cannibalism” (1947, n.p.). With a blurb that borders on the sensationalistic and an introduction that supports the reader, the initial translation seems to be angled towards a more general audience. In contrast, the retranslation eschews the incorporation of marketing material and there are no direct reflections on the part of the translators, but it does frequently provide footnotes throughout the body of the target text. These are succinct and serve, as was the case with the initial translation, to clarify Rousset’s references to SS and prisoner functionaries, but also to explain specific camp terminology such as “Selections” (1951, 26), “*Sonderkommado*” (ibid., 27, original emphasis) and “the ‘musulmans’” (ibid., 28), as well as to provide brief biographical information on several French and British fellow prisoners to whom Rousset’s alludes. It follows that the retranslation is comparatively more muted than the initial translation in terms of how it interacts with the reader, and, while there is a high degree of explanatory support for this reader, the use of footnotes in particular lends scholarly feel to the edition, thereby suggesting that it was aimed towards a comparatively more specialized audience.

It also seems as though the initial translation garnered more attention in the press on its appearance, generating numerous reviews. Conversely, the relative scarcity of discussion in the public arena about the retranslation once again hints at a more niche readership and perhaps, accordingly, at less rigorous advertising endeavours. But the general reach of the initial translation did not necessarily lead directly to an increase in Rousset’s visibility or a willingness to engage with the concentrationary universe, with one critic from *Kirkus Reviews* concluding that “[u]nfortunately, the market for this sort of material is hard to find” (1947, np). Nor did the inclusion of an extensive translator’s introduction guarantee that readers would indeed fully understand the work since another reviewer conflates the translator’s words with those of the author; when Irving Kristol writes that “[t]he following sentiments, quoted by Rousset from one of his fellow inmates, are only too familiar to our ears” (1947, 390), he is in point of fact misrepresenting a quote given by Guthrie from a survivor of Belsen who he met in Paris. This misstatement can also be interpreted as a breakdown in secondary witnessing, not on the part of the translator, but rather on the part of the receiver, and further stands as example of how paratextual content might detract from the original testimony in the hands of an inattentive reader.

Agir pour le bien

Tzvetan Todorov writes in praise of Rousset that he has “illustré dans sa vie la meilleure forme de mémoire: celle qui permet d’agir pour le bien dans le présent” (2000, 71). On balance, Guthrie, Moyse and Senhouse have all afforded the written instantiation of Rousset’s memory the opportunity to act as a force for good in a new linguistic and cultural setting, not least as secondary witnesses who have attended well to the pragmatic functions of the source text. With the exception of their titles, the text of the initial translation and retranslation reinforce the presence of the concept of the concentrationary; with it, they also place focus on political prisoners and promote Rousset’s warning that the camps are not in effect an isolated aberration. By and large, the preservation of Rousset’s intertextual and metaphorical allusions, which are occasionally supported by paratextual explanations, ensures that the reader is also guided through the concentrationary universe with some recognizable markers.

And yet Moyn has remarked that “[s]o interesting a figure and so significant in his time, [Rousset is] now largely forgotten, notably in the English-speaking world” (2005, 52). In other words, the presence of two separate translations has done little to guarantee that the survivor’s voice continues to be transmitted through the years. But this apparent discontinuity

of secondary witnessing is more an artefact of context than one of translation strategies; Holocaust consciousness has turned towards Auschwitz, to trauma and tropes of unspeakability, placing Rousset's testimony outside of these prevalent discussion points. A lack of attention to Rousset has then commuted into a lack of interest in the English (re)translations; neither target text has appeared in a re-edition, a clear sign that there has been no demand, while in more practical terms, the physical ageing of existing copies means that the texts have become much harder to locate.

However, while the status of an author within a given field of discourse can have an impact on the presence or absence of translation, the lines of influence can also be reversed, with a translation bring to prominence a previously overlooked or forgotten author. It is in this latter sense that a new retranslation could serve to restore the significance of Rousset's work to contemporary debates, reframing it as an interesting counterpoint to claims regarding the ineffability of traumatic experiences, and as a reminder of the breadth of Nazi persecution. In this sense, retranslation becomes a matter, not of correcting previous versions, but of reinstating the voice of the original survivor through a textually and contextually aware act of secondary witnessing.

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