BRIDGE
Trends & Traditions in Translation & Interpreting Studies

The analysis of paratext in two English translations of Pushkin's novel in verse *Eugene Onegin*

Anna Ponomareva
University College London
anna.ponomareva.13@ucl.ac.uk

Ponomareva, Anna. 2024. The analysis of paratext in two English translations of Pushkin's novel in verse *Eugene Onegin*. In: *Bridge: Trends and Traditions in Translation and Interpreting Studies*. Vol. 5, No. 1: pp. 61-82.

Abstract

Two translations out of the existing list of twenty-seven English translations of Pushkin's novel in verse *Eugene Onegin* (1830s) are analysed in my article. They are by Douglas Hofstadter (1999) and Stanley Mitchell (2008). The focus is on the paratextual issues of their book covers, such as illustrations and text, and on the translators' supplementary materials which are usually published as additional chapters to their translations, either part of the translation volume or separately. Genette's terminology (1997) is lightly used in my article. However, points which are discussed there exemplify and maintain his ideas related to the other types of manifestation – illustrations, material and pure factual – have a paratextual value. It will be shown that paratext is conceptually related to other issue in translation studies, i.e. the translator's visibility.

1. Introduction

The first time English-speaking audiences heard about Pushkin's novel in verse *Eugene Onegin* was nearly two centuries ago, when a short article was published in *The Foreign Literary Gazette, and Weekly Epitome of Continental Literature, Sciences, Arts &c.,* no.5, Wednesday, February 3, 1830. The publication gave information on the first parts of the novel published in Russian periodicals. One phrase in the concluding paragraph of the review may explain the long love-affair between English-speaking readers and the novel: it is "a lively and attractive sketch of the external face of that capital [here is Moscow – AP]" (Anon 1830, 69). This liveliness, lightness and external cultural insights into Russian life, initially noticed by the reviewers of *The Foreign Literary Gazette*, might be responsible for the longevity of *Eugene Onegin* in English.

The original novel was written between 1823 and 1831 by Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837), one of the famous Russian poets. It was first published serially in several journal issues in the early 1830s. It is a romantic love story in which happiness, betrayal, death, sadness and boredom are essential components. The main heroine of the novel is called by her first name, Tatyana. The hero's name is Eugene Onegin, in many instances called simply by his surname, Onegin. Pushkin contributes to the development of the plot as author, narrator and, in some places, also as a character. His pro-active position creates a novel in verse which can be read as a multi-layered text in which light humour, bitter sarcasm, deep observation and high intelligence are mixed.

Two translations out of the existing list of twenty-seven English translations of *Eugene Onegin* (Ponomareva, 2018) provide data for my article. The first one is by Douglas Hofstadter (1999), an American academic, a professor of cognitive science, physics and comparative literature; *Eugene Onegin* is his only work which he has translated from Russian. The second translation is by Stanley Mitchell (2008). He was a British academic, a professor who specialised in Russian literature and art, comparative literature, history and cultural studies, and a well-established translator from Russian, in particular.

These two works are chosen as they exemplify Venuti's agenda on the visibility of translators (1995/2008) and illustrate the perspective of 'cultural turn' in Translation Studies in detail. The focus will be on the paratextual issues of their book covers, illustrations and text, and the translators' supplementary materials which are usually published as additional chapters to their translations, either part of the translation volume or separately, but not in the text of their translations.

2. The physical appearance of the books: Book covers

The physical appearance of the translations is addressed in this section. According to Harvey (2003), O'Sullivan (2002) and Sonzogni (2011), they can be assessed as multimodal texts in which textual, metatextual and visual data contribute to the overall perception of a foreign text. My focus is on the comparative analysis of the visual and verbal information embedded in the two book covers, front and back, with their illustrations. The problems of the translator's visibility and the decoding of the cultural messages of chosen images and styles are targeted here.

Genette's terminology (1997) is more complex as he tries to categorise several features of the printed work, its elements from outside and inside. His 'please-insert' (Genette 1997, 8), 'the durable peritext', 'the precarious peritext' and 'the extratextual epitext' (Genette 1997, 110) are attempts to group textual features under invented titles and to build the taxonomy of paratext. For the sake of clarity and simplicity of arguments my analysis of the physical appearance of the two translations is light in using Genette's paratextual terminology. However, points which are discussed below exemplify and maintain Genette's ideas related to the other types of manifestation – illustrations, material and pure factual – which have a paratextual value (Genette 1997, 7).

Figure 1. Hofstadter's *Eugene Onegin* (1999) (front and back covers)

2.1. Hofstadter's translation: Book cover

The cover of Hofstadter's translation bears a sketch of the Peter and Paul Fortress. It is a symbol that can be interpreted in many different ways: from the perception of the fortress as the first established settlement of what later became known as Saint Petersburg to its role as the high security prison in which opponents of the tsar's regime were incarcerated. Whatever explanation is chosen, the sketch points to strong military and political control. In this sense, the drawing symbolizes the place and time of the novel: *Eugene Onegin* was being composed in Russia in the era of the Decembrist uprising of 1825. On the other hand, the choice of the image of the Peter and Paul Fortress for the book cover is not entirely appropriate. Firstly, the novel is not about the harsh regime, and it might be too trivial to use a metaphor for military power and oppression whenever Russia is mentioned in a Western publication. However, to use such established and recognized associations and images might help to sell the book.

The burgundy colour of the cover was unusual for a book, but it is part of the red spectrum, a colour considered in many cultures to be associated with warmth and beauty. All the textual material is in yellow or orange. The title of the novel and the name of its author are at the top of the front cover above the sketch. 'A novel versification by Douglas Hofstadter' printed underneath the Peter and Paul Fortress is unique, as the message highlights the translator's presence and his intention to share the authorship and responsibility for creating a version of the original. It could also be interpreted as a typically Hofstadterian word play: in other words, the translator is not only visible but even draws attention to himself. Moreover, Pushkin's name and Hofstadter's name are in the same font. This makes the author and the translator look equally important. The position of the following two lines above the picture:

A NOVEL IN VERSE

BY ALEXANDER SERGEEVICH PUSHKIN

is mirrored by the two lines beneath it:

A NOVEL VERSIFICATION BY

DOUGLAS HOFSTADTER

This layout and Hofstadter's classification of his work on *Eugene Onegin* as versification signal the translator's visibility and suggest a novel approach to translation.

The back cover is also unique and untraditional, as it is all about Douglas Hofstadter.

There is a photo of Hofstadter's workplace. Pushkin is just represented by his portrait on the wall of Hofstadter's office. The "blurb" celebrates the work (positive quotes from reviews of the translation are listed) and Hofstadter's academic career (his most significant achievements are mentioned). A place is also allocated for naming the publisher and inserting his emblem and the weblink as well as naming the illustrator and photographer of the edition. In other words, all requirements for honouring the authorship of the translation have been carefully implemented.

The book cover demonstrates the high publicity level of Hofstadter's team. It is unlikely that its choice has been made by the publisher[1]. Hofstadter's co-producers are distinguished academics and his friends. For instance, Greg Huber, Hofstadter's photographer, is an Adjunct Professor of Physics, and a Deputy Director at the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics at the University of California in Santa Barbara. Achille Varzi, Hofstadter's illustrator, a Professor of Philosophy at Colombia University in New York; his main research interests are in logic and metaphysics. This team does require visibility to emphasise its extraordinary abilities in thinking and working creatively and innovatively. Russian literature, in particular Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, provides unique opportunities for them to introduce the novel from a different perspective to the 21st century audience. The team sends a clear message to the reader: the importance of being curious. Driven by his interest into the unknown, Hofstadter builds his team and works on a new versification of the Russian masterpiece in order to share its novelty and wonders with his readers.

So, from the start of the project, the focus is on introducing something culturally new, rare and unique, in which the reader will be in the hands of TT intellectuals. By offering the help of his team to the reader Hofstadter sees himself and his friends as mediators of difficult Russian culture for the English-speaking audience. It looks as if, for Hofstadter (and his team), translating *Eugene Onegin* is an opportunity to bring several elements of Russian culture to the attention of readers in English; this is his way of showing his intelligence in a new field and also an opportunity to emphasise that this project is achievable and is not exotically foreign. For example, Hofstadter confesses in his

1 The verso of the title page of this book, where is information related to copyright issues, has the following information in support of my statement: "Design and composition by the translator, using FullWrite 2. Cover art and sketches by Achille Varzi; chapter heads by the translator" (Hofstadter 1999, iv).

introduction to *Eugene Onegin* that it has been necessary to work on both his Russian and his understanding of cultural issues before rising to the challenge of translating Pushkin's novel in verse. Thus, from the start, he underlines that the translation is a demanding and thought-provoking endeavour.

A publicity notice, which Hofstadter's work receives, is also used as a promotion for the novel. His celebrity status in the academic world helps elevate *Eugene Onegin* to the new higher levels of appreciation by English speaking audiences. Two quotes from reviewers, the *Wall Street Journal* and *Comparative Literature Studies*, emphasise the uniqueness of Hofstadter's translation in which the mood and style of the original are reincarnated (Hofstadter 1999, back cover):

> "Mr. Hofstadter gives [this translation] a bubbling excitement very much in the fashion of the original." – *Wall Street Journal*
> "Akin to the spirit of Pushkin's original in its playfulness, … Reading Hofstadter's translation is … a rewarding experience…" – *Comparative Literature Studies*

They make no false statements: Hofstadter's short biographical notes that follow are evidence of the reliability of their arguments. There is nothing listed there which points to Hofstadter's profound knowledge and experience of Russian literature. This makes his translation look like the extravagant experiment of a distinguished professor.

Overall, the book cover of Hofstadter's translation is a document in itself which consists of several important statements. First of all, it is related to another culture which, to the English-speaking reader, is both foreign and exotic. Secondly, it is a versification, a special type of translation. Thirdly, it might be a strange experiment conducted by a translator who is a well-known name in Cognitive Science and Computer Science and who has also invited his academic friends to participate in the project as its illustrator and photographer.

To the list of statements already described, more information is added – the name of the publisher, Basic Books. This is a publishing house that regards itself as a renowned publisher of serious non-fiction by leading intellectuals, scholars, and journalists. It seems that this publishing house is a magnet for English-speaking audiences who like to read literature in translation and enjoy its verbally and culturally unusual contexts. So, the same combination of extravagance and establishment decoded in the name of the publisher helps introduce this new *Onegin* to the reader.

Well-educated English-speaking audiences in the West are the focus of Hofstadter's translation. The time of its publication has been carefully calculated: his *Eugene Onegin* appears in 1999, a special year for Pushkin

scholars since it was the bicentenary of his birth. That particular date, therefore, provides unique opportunities to develop the existing interest and understanding of one of the charismatic pieces of Russian literature. The high visibility of Hofstadter and his team also contributes to promoting the new translation of the novel.

2.2. Mitchell's translation: Book cover

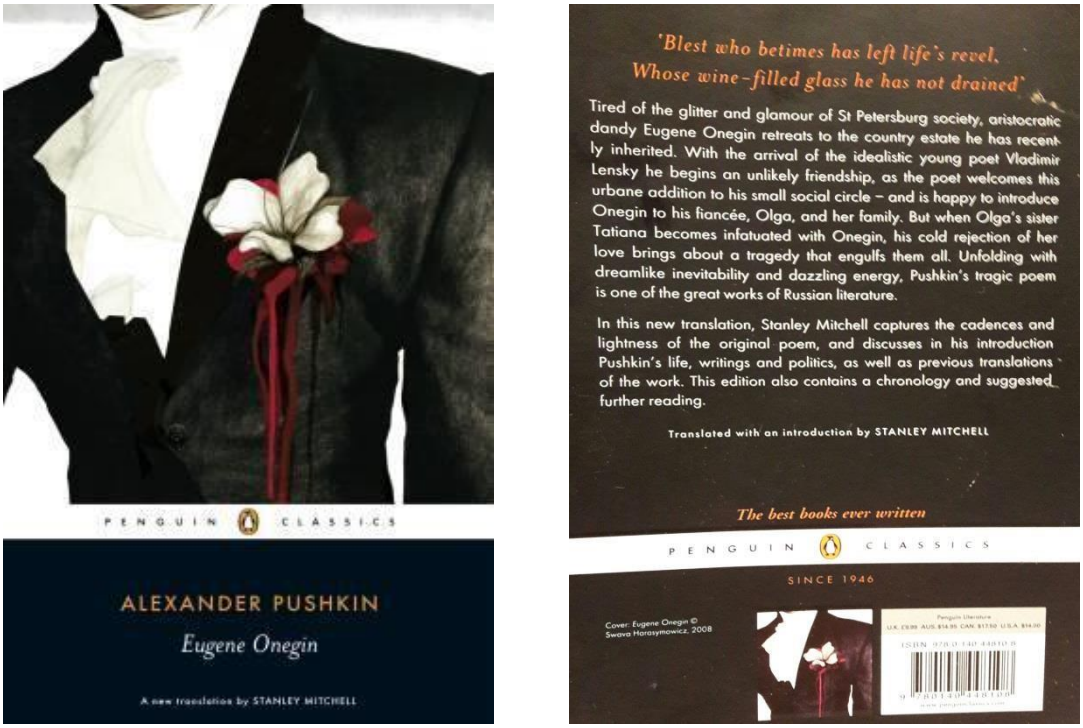

Figure 2. Mitchell's *Eugene Onegin* (2008) (front and back covers)

Mitchell's translation figures among more scholarly works rather than amateur translation projects. The evidence here is the name and logo of the publishing company, Penguin Classics, which is placed on the front cover of the book above the author's and translator's names and the book's title. As discussed above, the choice of the publishing house is a symbol in itself and Mitchell's case contributes to supporting this idea.

Over Penguin Classics is a larger publishing enterprise, Penguin Books, a subsidiary of Pearson PLC, a multinational publishing and education company with its headquarters in London. These names stand for tradition, success and quality in publishing. In addition to publishing a work of classical literature in English, their activities are focused on the translation of world literature into English. Moreover, given the emphasis placed on the English language and on traditions of literary translation it is reasonable to expect a domesticating translation from this publisher.

The company's identity is also maintained in its own style code for book covers. The publications are known as 'Black Classics', as the background of their covers is black. For a work to be appropriate to its period and topic is another requirement of the Penguin style. Mitchell's work follows these standards. It has a black cover and the image of a dandy on the front. Orange, another traditional Penguin colour, is only used for Alexander Pushkin's name.

The back cover also has a stylish black design with some orange. The glamour of the bright colour is visible at the top of the page, where there is a quotation from Pushkin, and the name of the publishing house is underneath. The colour here symbolizes the wise life ("Blest who betimes has left life's revel, Whose wine-filled glass he has not drained"), quality publishing ("The best books ever written") and tradition ("since 1946") (Mitchell 2008, back cover). This intelligent use of a bright colour is an opportunity to promote the new translation of *Eugene Onegin* using the established prestige of Penguin Classics.

The theme of glamour and glitter introduced by the front cover illustration is developed in the "blurb" on the back cover. Its text is a short summary of the novel and a description of the publication's contents. The name of the translator and his contribution to the edition are mentioned but only inconspicuously.

The name of Swava Harasymowicz, the illustrator, appears at the bottom of the cover with a small copy of her illustration on front cover. Next comes the information about price, expressed in three currencies, UK pounds, Canadian and American dollars. This shows that the publication is planned to be distributed internationally to English-speaking countries of both the Old and the New Worlds.

The illustrator's name is also linked with success. After Harasymowicz had won a Student Prize in the 2005 V&A Illustration Awards, she was engaged by Penguin Classics to create cover artwork for its books. A few years later her work received further recognition. This time it was associated with *Onegin*, for which she won the 2009 V&A Book Cover Award and V&A Editorial Award.

Meanwhile Harasymowicz's artwork is unusual. She describes it online, as a "semidramatic image of a dandy's 'badge of honour'" (Victoria and Albert Museum 2009). However, it might be understood differently, as a potential invasion of the readers' private space since they might prefer to imagine the main character for themselves. The prize judges, however, felt that she had dealt with this obstacle cleverly as the figure's head is not included in the image. That notwithstanding, it is not in any way incomplete. It is a drawing of an elegant man's torso wearing a snow-white shirt-frill and a black tailcoat with a buttonhole in which a white and red flower had been inserted. The red petals look more like the drops of blood on the strong chest. One detail of the torso is the evidence of a particular

period style: the frilled front fashionable in 18th-century Europe. It was likely also to have been the fashion in Russia in the early 19th century, corresponding to the time framework of Pushkin's novel.

All visual and textual elements of the book cover of Mitchell's translation contribute to its impressive image, a work of exceptional quality that fits the international standards of Penguin Classics. In comparison with Hofstadter's publication, it is unlikely that Mitchell oversaw images and style of his book presentation. In his case, it was rather the responsibilities of his publisher[2]. However, there is a chance to believe that Penguin Classics has consulted the translator and asked to approve its choices as Mitchell was a specialist in Russian literature and its translations into English.

The design and the images also serve to heighten the expectations of the readers. What is also interesting is that being printed in the first decade of the 21st century, the book does not have any of the features traditionally associated in the West with Russia, such as its cold and hostile climate. Perhaps by suggesting a slightly untraditional cover for this *Eugene Onegin* the publishers aimed to signal a gentle break with the existing stereotypes regarding Russian culture and to promote a new perception of this piece of literature, in which the reader would be moved at least a little close to the author. Accepting this paradigm Mitchell's work concentrates more on the style and high quality of the novel.

3. Supplemented chapters as paratext

3.1. Hofstadter's translation: Accompanied chapters as paratext

Hofstadter vividly separates his paratext from the main body of the text which consists of his translation of the Pushkin novel. The Table of Contents lists eight items in addition to the eight translated chapters of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. He uses Roman numerals to signpost his supplements: there are sixty-six pages, compared to the one hundred and thirty-seven pages of his translation. The introductory materials – Translator's Dedication, Table of Contents, Translator's Preface and Author's Dedication – are twice the size of his concluding remarks – Notes, Bibliography, Permissions, and Words of Thanks. All these convey a clear message to the reader that this is not an anonymous English version

2 After stating that this is a publication by the Penguin Group and listing addresses of its world offices, the verso of the title page of this book mentions that Stanley Mitchell has translation and editorial copyright. There is nothing there related to design and illustration issues. However, the back cover of the book includes information on the copyright of the cover of this volume: it belongs to Swava Harasymowicz.

of *Eugene Onegin* but the joint production of two creative people, the author and the translator. Moreover, the Translator's Dedication foreshadows the rest of the text. It is possible to explain the unusual position of Hofstadter's Translator's Dedication by reference to his later work. In his epilogue *Translator, Trader: an Essay on the Pleasantly Pervasive Paradoxes of Translation*, the memorable part of his other translation work, Sagan's *That Mad Ache* (Hofstadter 2009), Hofstadter suggests a metaphor that links the author and his translator. In his opinion, the author is a dog-owner, and the translator is his or her dog (Hofstadter 2009, 31). In this sense, Hofstadter's Translator's Dedication illustrates the particular situation in which a dog leads his or her owner. This is not a canonical interpretation of the task of the translator. Moreover, nearly everything in Hofstadter's work on *Eugene Onegin* signals his new vision of translation in which the original loses its sacred power and opens itself up to the translator's personal agenda.

Hofstadter's use of Pushkin's ideas starts from the very beginning: in the Translator's Dedication he borrows the Onegin stanza to express his enthusiasm for the new translation of the novel. Two names are mentioned in the dedication: Nabokov and Falen. The first name is used to argue from its very beginning that his work is entirely antiNabokov; Hofstadter is not aiming to produce his translation to satisfy Nabokov's monde (Hofstadter 1999, v). The appearance of the second name can be explained differently.

Hofstadter is very fond of Falen's translation of *Eugene Onegin*, and he is moved by the kindness and hospitality of the Falens; now is the time to express his gratitude to them. The rest of the stanza exemplifies the significance of the novel in Hofstadter's life. Its final four lines are evidence of his intimate relationship with *Eugene Onegin* in which he points to his firsthand experience of the text, on both an emotional and a cognitive level. The presence of the first-person possessive pronoun my excludes impartiality from the translator's thinking as he happily admits his expropriation of the original and his satisfaction in making it his own. Thus, the translator's presence is declared from the outset. In addition to this, Hofstadter re-creates Pushkin's dedication to *Eugene Onegin* (Hofstadter 1999, xli) by substituting his own friends and feelings in place of Pushkin's.

The next page is the contents page. Here the firm partnership of the translator and the author is portrayed even more clearly as the contributory chapters are endowed with two different authorships: that of the translator and that of the author. The Author's Dedication, the translation of Pushkin's first stanza, appears after the thirty-two pages of the Translator's Preface, Hofstadter's own Introduction to the novel. So, the translator's view of Pushkin's novel is given significance at the very beginning.

According to Arnold McMillin's review, which appeared in *The Slavonic and East European Review* (McMillin 2001), Hofstadter's preface is "garrulous". However, there is a chance to understand it differently. It might be that Hofstadter's approach to add more subjective information to the text of his supplementary chapters might be classified as autoethnography, a method, in which personal experience and reflexivity are used to examine a different culture. On the other hand, it represents a unique opportunity to look inside the translator's mind and to see how his or her ideas have been generated. This might not be entirely objective as there is a chance that Hofstadter's revelations are written bearing his audience in mind but in any case, they provide valuable and unique insights into the translator's thinking. The reader also has a chance to benefit from thinking or even working alongside the translator. In this way, Hofstadter's reader is his "co-worker" who is capable of understanding the novel and of challenging his translation into English in detail. Moreover, Hofstadter also comments on the previous scholarly work on *Eugene Onegin*, comparing and contrasting his ideas with the views of several of his predecessors. In this way, he sets his work in perspective and, to some extent, develops the studies of the English versions of Pushkin's novel.

The preface incorporates Hofstadter's earlier work on *Eugene Onegin* (Hofstadter 1996 and 1997) and makes his previous arguments more substantial. Before translating *Eugene Onegin*, Hofstadter has familiarised himself with the existing versions of the Pushkin novel in English. The results of his thorough research are published in his comparative review of the four translations of the novel by Arndt, Johnston, Falen, and Elton/Briggs in The New York Times of 8 December 1996 and in its expanded version in chapters 8 and 9 of his book *Le Ton beau de Marot* (Hofstadter 1997). Hofstadter also shared the results of his research on *Eugene Onegin* with students at a seminar on verse translation in Indiana University in spring 1997. So, the Translator's Preface is a polished version of Hofstadter's previous declarations.

Hofstadter's attitude to his predecessors' translations of the novel is very positive. For instance, Hofstadter praises Arndt's astuteness in spotting the novel's symmetry and understands the translator's leaning to the side of "too much classicism and formality" (Hofstadter 1999, xxiii). Hofstadter's comments on the other translations of *Eugene Onegin* such as those of Deutsch (1936), Johnston (1977), and Elton-Briggs (1995) are also constructive, as he underlines their valuable contributions to the scholarship of the Pushkin novel in English and makes it clear how much he admires Falen's translation (1990). According to Hofstadter, the merits of Falen's work on *Eugene Onegin* inspired him to prepare his own version of the novel (Hofstadter 1999, xxix).

In the cluster of translations which are in the focus of Hofstadter's attention, only Nabokov's work stands apart from the others. Hofstadter describes Nabokov's translation as being a "repellent wooden crib" (Hofstadter 1999, xxvi). He strongly disagrees with Nabokov's idea of "making a dainty mimic" (Hofstadter 1999, xxiv) of the novel and criticizes his work in a number of ways.

There is no evidence to confirm that Hofstadter has read Venuti's book, *The Translator's Invisibility* (Venuti 1995), but his comments on several previous English translations of the Pushkin novel lead me to conclude that Hofstadter's view of the translating process is similar to Venuti's. This similarity can be identified in several ways. Firstly, in Venuti's agenda there is no room to discuss equivalence: his domestication and foreignization are beyond this concept. Hofstadter sees this slightly differently and admits that he has applied "poetic lie-sense" to his work on *Eugene Onegin* (Hofstadter 1999, xxxiii).

Secondly, Hofstadter is in favour of one's personal translation in which the character of the translator is transparent; he calls his work on the Pushkin novel not a translation but a 'versification', i.e. a verse rendering, which is his way of expressing his personal responsibility for the text. He also raises the issue of marginal translation. This came to his attention when he analysed Nabokov's authoritative voice and work on Pushkin. He claims (Hofstadter 1999, xxvi) that Nabokov's translation of *Eugene Onegin* (Nabokov 1964) is overpowering as it has been produced by the famous author of *Lolita* (Nabokov 1955). Moreover, it is clear to Hofstadter that translation is more than conveying simply the literal meaning of an original: it also includes the apprehension and preservation of its author's style. That is why Hofstadter works extensively on his vocabulary in order to express "how unconventional and startling Pushkin's language must have seemed to readers in his day" (Hofstadter 1999, xxx). His verse rendering is not an attempt to copy the Pushkin novel but to express some of its qualities in English and in particular "its unprecedented manner of intermingling lightness and seriousness" (Hofstadter 1999, xi). Thus, in this way only – by virtue of Hofstadter's peculiar style – Pushkin's grace, associated largely with the culture of the 19th-century Russian nobility, can be conveyed to new reading audiences.

Hofstadter understands his work as being complementary, not as superior or as alternative to other translations of the novel into English. He is fully aware that he can be easily accused of distorting some original meanings in order to preserve the message, but for Hofstadter it is his right occasionally to be flippant.

What is surprising is that Hofstadter does not use the word 'foreign' in his preface. To him, a different culture is not strange but peculiar or special. He sees cultural differences as being "subtle nuances", and he

is happy to decode them, using his mastery of English (Hofstadter 1999, xxxiv). In this sense, for Hofstadter Russian culture is something unknown, but not hostile and foreign. This provides opportunities for interpreting the culture of the other differently and also supports the categorization of the foreign as unfamiliar by Eco and Robinson (Eco 2003 and Robinson 2008).

Hofstadter is not adverse to admitting that his Russian is not perfect, as he has many other transferable skills to contribute to the translation process. In addition, he states that it is very important both to like and to be able to resonate instinctively with an author's style in order to produce a good quality translation. He ends his preface with an additional stanza which is not part of the original novel. It is another declaration of his appropriation of Pushkin's text and further evidence of his deep appreciation of Pushkin's style. "So off I push for unkent brine, // And take my leave from Pushkin mine" (Hofstadter 1999, xl) enunciates the same possessiveness as that one expressed by Pushkin in the last line of his last stanza in which Pushkin admits that *Onegin* belongs to him. Hofstadter's words have an echo effect, as he acknowledges that Pushkin belongs to him.

The Author's Dedication follows next. Readers who like to read introductions are familiar with the stanza; they have seen it before, as the Translator's Dedication. Now they are in a position to understand that Hofstadter's Dedication as a translator is his own rendering of Pushkin's Dedication. The two dedications are printed below in a tabular format:

The Translator's Dedication (Hofstadter 1999, v)	The Author's Dedication (Hofstadter 1999, xli)
Not aiming to amuse the folk in Nabókov's *monde*, but just my friends, I'd hoped to tender you a token, Dear Falens, worthier of the blends That make your souls so rich and precious, So rife with sacred dreams, and with Poetic lines that e'er refresh us, And lofty thoughts, and charm and pith; Oh, well… Take what will henceforth mesh us: This suite of chapters, one through eight – Half-droll, half-sad, sometimes romantic, But down-to-earth and ne'er pedantic, The careless fruit I've born of late – The tossing, turning inspirations From greener and from grayer years: My mind's chilled white-wine decantations, My heart's red wines, distilled from tears.	Not aiming to amuse the folk in The haughty set, but just my friends, I'd hoped to tender you a token More worthy of mingled trends That make your soul so captivating, So rife with sacred dreams, and with Such clear poetic life, pulsating With noble thought and humble myth; Oh, well… With your discriminating Fine hand, please take my chapters eight – Half-droll, half-sad, at times romantic, They're down-to-earth and ne'er pedantic, These careless fruits I've born of late – My sleepless nights' bright inspirations, Through callow and through fading years, My mind's detached, cool observations, My heart's sad words, distilled from tears.

These two stanzas might be interpreted as another element of Hofstadter's peculiar style and his deep understanding of Pushkin. Like Pushkin, Hofstadter leaves a quote from a private letter untranslated from French; its translation into English appears at the end of the book in the Notes.

One element of the style of the Notes is very unusual; this is a small paragraph entitled 'A Note on the Notes'. Hofstadter uses this space to explain his commentaries, a mixture of his translation of Pushkin's notes and additional comments by Hofstadter himself which provide information on unfamiliar Russian concepts, quotes, places, names and so on to English-speaking readers. One paragraph of Hofstadter's explanations can be interpreted as being anti-Nabokovian. In it he admits: "…I am, however, perfectly capable of using an encyclopaedia, of reading other people's notes, and paraphrasing" (Hofstadter 1999, xliii). It is not a criticism of Nabokov's extensive commentaries on *Eugene Onegin* but rather a criticism of his style of writing them – offensive from time to time, self-referential and pretending to be extremely original.

Not all the notes which Hofstadter adds are culture specific. He uses the commentary as a chance to provide insights into Pushkin's mind and style. Nevertheless, spotting and maintaining the peculiarities of Pushkin's style is the distinctive feature of Hofstadter's vision of his work on *Eugene Onegin*. For instance, Hofstadter adds his explanation of one particular phrase which includes the first person singular possessive pronoun mine in Stanzas 19 and 20 of Chapter Five:

> "She's mine!": In Russian, the last two words of V.19 are "Moë! Moë!", and the first one of V.20 is "Moë!", which makes three consecutive occurrences of one word. This is the only place in the novel where I have noticed a word occurring thrice in a row. Moreover, this is not a random word – leaving aside inflectional changes, it's the very word that both begins and ends the novel – and this rat-a-tat trio of occurrences comes very near the novel midpoint, to boot. I hasten to add that I seriously doubt that Pushkin did this deliberately, but still, I find it a provocative pattern (Hofstadter 1999, liii).

Hofstadter is correct in suggesting that it is very unusual for one word to be repeated three times and immediately one after the other; Russian does not like to repeat words; it prefers to use synonyms instead. English cohesive patterns also tend to suppress repetition. Without Hofstadter's note, the reader might not be able to understand that this word mine has a symbolic connotation and points to a particular pattern which marks the novel's beginning and end.

The Notes are followed by a page of Bibliography. In addition to the translations of *Eugene Onegin* into English and the original in Russian,

a number of other translations are mentioned which are into French and German. The rest are dictionaries, one contemporary biography of Pushkin in English, Seth's novel *The Golden Gate* (Seth 1986), Nabokov's book *Strong Opinions* (Nabokov 1973/1990), Wilson's review of Nabokov's translation (Wilson 1965), a source on Machine Translation and two works by Hofstadter. The list looks more like references rather than a bibliography and provides detailed information on the sources listed in Hofstadter's preface.

Following this, a page entitled Permissions appears. It shows Hofstadter's understanding and respect for copyright. The edition ends with two pages of Words of Thanks where various people's names are mentioned and in which Hofstadter expresses his gratitude for their contribution to his translation. Again, this chapter starts and ends with mine. When the book is finished, it leaves the reader no room for doubt that he or she has been reading Hofstadter's verse rendering of the Pushkin novel. This is a new version of *Eugene Onegin* in English, in which the translator is enjoying himself in sharing its authorship with Pushkin. Ten years later, translating Sagan (Hofstadter 2009), Hofstadter would state his intention to be clearly the co-author:

> It's my suspicion that we translators of novels are all would-be novelists ourselves… We select some favorite book and we then take its small scale local components – sentences, images, thoughts – and one by one we recast them, using our love for our native language's special ways of phrasing things, into our own personal mold (Hofstadter 2009, 31).

Hofstadter expresses in detail his views on the role of the translator and the culture of the original text in the supplementary chapters of his translation of *Eugene Onegin*. It is obvious that he is happy to be visible in his work. It is also noticeable that he has a strong intention to reproduce the novel in English so that his personal views on its original are reflected, the presence of his intelligence is acknowledged, and the style of the author of the original text is maintained.

It also looks as if by offering his help as a mediator between the Russian-speaking author and the English-speaking reader Hofstadter is expressing confidence in his abilities to transform the foreign and culturally challenging text into a great piece of literature in English by applying not domestic literary standards, but largely his own vision of literature in translation.

3.2. Mitchell's translation: Accompanied chapters as paratext

Mitchell's introductory material is even more lengthy than Hofstadter's preface, but this time reviewers do not regard it as a negative point of the translator's work. There are thirty-nine pages that are devoted to informing his readers about the main events in Pushkin's life (Chronology Section). In addition, there are crucial facts about the novel (Introduction), advice on bibliographical resources (Further Reading), in which several major critical publications on Pushkin and his novel in verse are listed, and two Notes, one on Translation and the other on a map of the places referred to in the original text. This concludes Mitchell's preliminary remarks. Like Hofstadter, Mitchell also points to the therapeutic aspects of translating *Eugene Onegin*. He adds some remarks about his private life and makes a few confessions, not in his preface, but in a separate, online publication, *On Finishing My Translation of Eugene Onegin*, which can be categorised as the private epitext in Gennette's terminology. According to Mitchell, he was suffering from bipolar depression and was seeking for a harmony, balance and proportion which he believed he could find in a literary project of this kind. In fact, he found that working on translating the novel from time to time gave him the comfort and help which he needed in order to recover (Mitchell 2010).

Mitchell's brief review, which forms part of his section A Note on Translation, touches lightly on Elton's (1937), Nabokov's (1964), Johnston's (1977) and Hofstadter's (1999) works as well as on Falen's revised translation of 1995. He analyses these translations from the point of view of their quality and the variety of language used. It appears that he aims to reproduce Pushkin's language in his English and, in particular, Pushkin's "simplicity, tangibility and precision" (Mitchell 2008, xliv). His goal in producing a new *Eugene Onegin* is defined slightly differently and more precisely in his online article. His aim is "to get the translation as 'right' as possible in terms of style, vocabulary, rhyme and metre" (Mitchell 2010). His intention to prepare the 'right' translation of the Pushkin novel persuaded Mitchell to cast aside the entire scholarship on *Eugene Onegin* in English where the translator's task had been seen to produce an equivalent copy of the original or, at least, of its versification. Perhaps the concept of 'rightness' was Mitchell's tribute to his Marxist past.[3] It can also be understood as his own personal take on equivalence.

3 It is possible to draw parallels with Vladimir Lenin's statement about Marxism: "The Marxist doctrine is omnipotent because it is true" («Учение Маркса всесильно, потому что оно верно»). – *Lenin's Collected Works* (1977, 21-28).

Nevertheless, in two obituaries Mitchell's *Onegin* is highly praised. Jacobs writing in The Guardian states that it "was the finest" (Jacobs 2011). In *The Independent* Chandler is slightly more cautious, describing it as "one of the finest of all verse translations into English" (Chandler 2011). Similar to Hofstadter Mitchell felt it appropriate to cheer himself up (2010). On finishing the work, he expresses his joy by borrowing from Pushkin the vivid expression: "Well done, you son-of-a bitch!" This sounds extremely Russian, and its style is certainly authentically Pushkinian.

Introductory materials, the online article and the information from both obituaries contribute to a better understanding and create a bigger picture of Mitchell's work on *Eugene Onegin*. Firstly, it was, to some extent, a team project. It was initiated back in 1960s, at Essex University. In its early stages, it was supported by Isaiah Berlin and John Bailey. Mitchell's work on his translation was interrupted in the 1970s; he returned to it only at the turn of the 21st century. It took him seven or eight years to complete the translation. Mitchell's work on this key Russian cultural text had been largely supported by the key figures in translation and Russian literature in today's Britain: Professor Angela Livingstone (she was also part of the group who started the project) and Robert Chandler. Mitchell could not have hoped for a better team.

It is interesting to read what Hofstadter and Mitchell have written about the outcome of their work. Hofstadter's answer is contained in the title of the article which appeared in *The New York Times* of 1996 before his translation of the Pushkin novel: it is *What's Gained in Translation*. Meanwhile, Mitchell's reply is different. His article, which was written after he had completed his *Eugene Onegin*, is focused on voicing his successful graduation from Pushkin's poetry 'school' and his firm intention to start writing his own poetry rather than doing something else. These two attitudes highlight the differences in the approach of the two translators and in their ways of translating the novel. Hofstadter's ground-breaking vision of the novel, in which he treats its text as the source of empirical data and presents his translation as a scientific experiment, helps him as a translator to communicate to his audience several discoveries relating to Russian culture. In his turn, according to the views of several reviewers of his work, Mitchell's idea to learn from Pushkin and his poetry while he is undertaking his translation of *Eugene Onegin* results, in a presentation of true Pushkinian Russian culture. But does this claim not look a little like Nabokov's style?

Mitchell's translation also has Notes at the end of volume. Like Hofstadter, Mitchell seizes an opportunity in providing an extensive commentary to expand his readers' experience of the novel and to contribute to their deeper knowledge of Russian culture. Mitchell's notes are a mixture of Pushkin's notes which he has translated, and comments borrowed from three major commentators on the novel,

Brodsky (1932), Nabokov (1964) and Lotman (1980/2009). What makes these notes different from his other translation work is his confession that he has reduced their length and removed some excessively detailed information from several items. He writes that Pushkin's comments in their entirety might be interesting only to a tiny minority of readers (Mitchell 2008, 215). This shows the high level of discretion which a contemporary translator believes he or she has in dealing with the original.

Overall, Mitchell's supplementary chapters to his translation of *Eugene Onegin* signal translator visibility and highlight opportunities for a gentle, non-abrupt relocation of the reader closer to the author. It looks as if Mitchell intends to foreignize in his work, but it will not be an exotic foreignization in any way as his specialist knowledge and years of experience in translating Russian literature in general and *Eugene Onegin* in particular are the guarantees of finding subtle solutions to translation problems and embedding Russian cultural messages in English text in full.

4. Concluding remarks

This article illustrates just part of my research on English translations of Pushkin's novel in verse *Eugene Onegin*. It is dedicated to analysing and comparing only paratext and book covers of two translations of this novel made by Hofstadter and Mitchell. Their translations are not discussed here. In the future, it might be a good idea to publish another article in which several links between visual and paratextual elements and the text of translations are identified and explained. However, the current publication has several significant findings.

The visual and textual information encoded in the two book covers, other mentioned items of paratext and epitext tells us two different stories. It might also be decoded in various ways. Firstly, there is the question of culture; what culture does each edition intend to represent? Is it the culture of the original source or the target culture or one seen through the prism of the other? Secondly, if translators and their teams involved in the publication are the mediators of this culture, how much could or should they contribute to the decoding process, and in what way? Thirdly, the question of style is evident; in some cases, it might not be the translator's decision (and the illustrator's choice) but the publishing house's established style; however, the translator and the illustrator would have been aware of this and willing to accept the requirements.

The evaluated data shows that there is a range of approaches to encoding cultural messages. These individual contributions are stronger when the translator and his or her team are well-known names in the academic world. In this particular case, the translation becomes visible on the market in proportion to the fame of the translator. So,

it seems that Venuti's notion of the translator's visibility is turned upside down in the case of contemporary English translations of *Eugene Onegin.* Moreover, the translator's visibility produces a significant impact on delivering specific cultural messages and makes foreignization responsible for revealing itself through the whole range of translation styles from exoticism to individualism.

References:

The primary source and translations

Pushkin, Alexander. 1950-1951. *Полное собрание сочинений в 10-ти томах.* [The Complete Collection of Works in 10 volumes.]. Moscow/Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk USSR.

Deutsch, Babette. 1969 (1936). *Alexander Pushkin. Eugene Onegin. A Novel in Verse.* A New Revised Edition Translated by Babette Deutsch. Edited with an Introduction by Avrahm Yarmolinsky. Baltimore: Penguin Books.

Elton, Oliver. 1937. *Alexander Pushkin, Evgeny Onegin*. Translated by Oliver Elton. London: The Pushkin Press.

Elton, Oliver and Briggs, Anthony. 1995. *Alexander Pushkin, Yevgeny Onegin.* Edited with revised translation by A. D. P. Briggs based on a translation by Oliver Elton [1861–1945]. London: J. M. Dent and Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle.

Falen, James E. 1995 (1990). *Alexander Pushkin, Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Verse.* Translated and with an introduction by James E. Falen. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Hofstadter, Douglas. 1999. *Eugene Onegin: A novel in verse by Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin.* A novel versification by Douglas Hofstadter [1945-]. New York: Basic Books.

Johnston, Charles. 1977. *Alexander Pushkin, Eugene Onegin.* Translated by [Sir] Charles [Heburn-Johnston [1912-1986]. London: Scolar Press.

Mitchell, Stanley. 2008. *Alexander Pushkin, Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Verse.* Translated with an introduction and notes by Stanley Mitchell [1932-2011]. London: Penguin Books.

Nabokov, Vladimir V. 1964. *Eugene Onegin. A novel in verse by Aleksandr Pushkin.* Translated from the Russian with a Commentary by Vladimir [Vladimirovich] Nabokov [1899-1977]. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Critical Literature

Anon. 1830. Evgeni Onegin: a Poetic Novel, Review. In: *The Foreign Literary Gazette*, *and Weekly Epitome of Continental Literature, Sciences, Arts &c.,* no. 5. Wednesday, 3 February 1830. pp. 68-69.

Brodsky, Nikolai. 1932. *Комментарий к роману А.С. Пушкина "Евгений Онегин"* [*Commentaries on A. S. Pushkin's novel Eugene Onegin*]. Moscow: Mir.

Chandler, Robert. 2011. Stanley Mitchell: Scholar whose greatest work was his translation of 'Eugene Onegin'. In: *The Independent,* 7 November 2011.

Eco, Umberto. 2003. *Mouse or Rat? Translation as Negotiation.* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Genette, Gérard. 1987. *Seuils*. Paris: Editions du Seuil. [*Paratext: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997). Foreword by Richard Macksey, Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press].

Harvey, Keith. 2003. 'Events' and 'Horizons': Reading Ideology in the 'Bindings' of Translations. In: Calzada Pérez, María (ed.). 2003. *A Propos of Ideology: Translation Studies on ideology, ideologies in Translation Studies*. Manchester: St. Jerome. pp. 43-69.

Hofstadter, Douglas. 1996. What's Gained in Translation. In: *The New York Times: Book Review,* December 8.

Hofstadter, Douglas. 1997. *Le Ton beau de Marot. In Praise of the Music of Language*. New York: Basic Books.

Hofstadter, Douglas. 2009. *Translator, Trader: an Essay on the Pleasantly Pervasive Paradoxes of Translation.* New York: Basic Books.

Jacobs, Nicholas. 2011. *Stanley Mitchell obituary.* https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/nov/30/stanley-mitchell-obituary.

Lenin's Collected Works. 1977. translated by George Hanna, vol. 19: pp. 21-28. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Lotman, Yuri. 1980 (2009). *Pushkin Biografiya pisatelya. Stat'i i zametki. "Evgenii Onegin". Kommentarii*. Sankt Peterburg: Iskusstvo-SPB.

McMillin, Arnold. 2001. Review of "Eugene Onegin": A Novel in Verse. A Novel Versification by Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin, by Douglas Hofstadter. In: *The Slavonic and East European Review*. 79(2): pp. 313-315.

Mitchell, Stanley. 2010. *On Finishing My Translation of 'Eugene Onegin'*. http://www.stosvet.net/12/mitchell/. Accessed on: 14 January 2017.

Nabokov, Vladimir. 1955. *Lolita.* Paris: The Olympia Press.

Nabokov, Vladimir. 1973 (1990). *Strong Opinions.* New York: Vintage Books.

O'Sullivan, Carol. 2002. Picturing Characters: Zazies *à gogo.* In: Kemp, Simon and Saxton, Elizabeth (eds.). 2002. *Vision, Perception, Interpretation in French Studies*. Bern: Peter Lang. pp. 263-279.

Ponomareva, Anna. 2018. *Translation Methods and the Notion of the Translator's Visibility: Evaluation the Latest Translations of Alexander Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin" into English*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. London: University College London.

Robinson, Douglas. 2008. *Estrangement and the Somatics of Literature: Tolstoy, Shklovsky, Brecht*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Seth, Vikram. 1986. *The Golden Gate.* New York: Random House.

Sonzogni, Marco. 2011. *Re-Covered Rose: A Case Study in Book Cover Design as Intersemiotic Translation*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Venuti, Lawrence. 1995 (2008). *The Translator's Invisibility*: *A History of Translation*, 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge.

Victoria and Albert Museum. 2009. *Book Cover Illustration Award Swava Harasymowicz, Cover to 'Eugene Onegin' by Alexander Pushkin.* http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/v/v-and-a-illustration-awards-2009/. Accessed on: 26 August 2016.

Wilson, Edmund. 1965. The Strange Case of Pushkin and Nabokov. In: *The New York Review*, July 15 1965.