THE PLACE OF UMBERTO ECO’S WORKS IN THE TURKISH TRANSLATIONAL LITERARY SYSTEM: HOW THE OPEN WORK BECAME “CLOSED” IN ITS TURKISH TRANSLATIONS?

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to describe the place of Umberto Eco’s works in Turkish translational literary system. The author has a wide spectrum of identities and works in his own country and Europe. This study tries to demonstrate to what extent these identities have known in our country and, which works are translated into Turkish. Are those works in Turkish representative for his “authorial intentions”? Who translated them? Which publishing houses are interested in translating his works? When those works are translated into Turkish? With which motivations are they translated? With these questions which seem to be adequate also for a translation history research, I aimed to present Umberto Eco’s translational adventure in Turkey and in our language. I described the situation considering Eco’s works as products which are supposed to transfer some new ideas, their translational adventure as process, the publisher’s politics as editorial norms and their decisions as actions, which create some values and effects in the target culture. In addition I tried to describe The Open Work’s very interesting translational adventure in Turkish as a case study because of the existence of its three different translations in Turkish. I focused on publisher’s decisions about choosing translators and the process of proofreading, and the advertising campaign the book as the publisher’s translation politics. I used for description Toury’s preliminary norms, Vermeer’s skopos theory and Chesterman’s approach to translation ethics as conceptual tools.

Key Words: Umberto Eco’s Works in Turkish, The Open Work’s Turkish Translations, Translation Ethics.

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ÖZET


Anahtar Sözcükler: Türkçe Umberto Eco’nun eserleri, Açık Yapıt’ın Türkçe Çevirileri, Çeviri Etiği.

Translation and its functions

Translation is a complex issue to define. Translation Studies literature offers various definitions for translation: it is a product, a process, a research area, and a metaphor often used within the realm of human sciences to achieve different goals. Briefly, it is a fruitful concept with a comprehensive semantic area like many other similar concepts.

As a product, the consumers (readers, listeners) often evaluate it according to the target culture’s expectancy norms. It definitely has an economical value as a product for its producers, commissioners and consumers. It also has a moral value within the target culture. If the texts in question are literary or philosophical, their moral value is undeniable owing to their target culture since they transfer new ideas, new models, and new authorships to the target cultural sphere. Specifically, they transfer new authorities to refer to and
to imitate for whom there is thought to be a need in the target culture in a given time.

Itamar Even Zohar\(^1\) and Gideon Toury\(^2\) as pioneering Translation Studies scholars with their concepts of polysystem and norms emphasized in their writings that translations were indispensable empirical data for understanding the formation of a given target culture. Translations usually have either intentional or accidental key roles for the formation of a target culture and are intentionally used by dominant cultural powers for the cultural planning of any target culture. Lawrence Venuti analyses some translational choices in terms of theories of imperialism, colonization, nationalism, economic issues and power struggles among cultures. Nevertheless, some institutional powers have great effect on translational decisions and there always is this tension between the centre and the periphery. That was why the process of cultural planning through translation could not always turn out as the culturally dominant powers planned it to be. The cultural formation of a society, nation, community etc. can be seen as a complicated process with some unforeseen results, and we should remember that the process of cultural formation of a nation or a group always depends on norms, which were defined by Bartsch as the “social reality of correctness” (1987:76)\(^3\).

**Aim of the study: methodological and conceptual framework**

In this paper, which can be seen as an individual analysis of a translational journey of a contemporary writer in the Turkish literary system, the concepts of literary polysystem and norms will be used with regard to Andrew Chesterman’s approach to Translation Ethics\(^4\). In his approach, translation is a form of action describable in terms of strategies, which are themselves governed by norms, and the objective of norms is to promote certain values. His argument is that translation ethics can be explained in terms of four fundamental values each relating to one of the main types of norms (172).


As Chesterman underlines, “the norms to which translator seeks to conform (or to which they are required to conform) set them under obligations to act within a certain range of acceptable behavior”. His clear and detailed argument demonstrates how a translational act can be explained in action-theoretical terms (175). Briefly, the aim of the act is promoting or preserving a particular value, i.e. a translational action can be or productive, or preventive.

He puts forth the four fundamental values as clarity, truth, trust and understanding arguing that they also govern other modes of communication and other forms of human behavior. According to Chesterman, clarity is the value governing the expectancy norms because it is the most important linguistic value and this value has two general kinds of effect on the translator’s action:

It may prompt both preventive and productive action. Preventively, a translator normally seeks to translate in such a way as to avoid the opposite of clarity: obscurity, unintended ambiguity, illogicality, confusion etc. in most kinds of texts, these characteristics are reasons for changing and refining a tentative translation, for selecting a transediting strategy etc. They also play an obvious role in translation assessment in all its modes. Productively, in the case of most text-types, a translator usually seeks to translate in such a way as to attain optimum clarity (177).

Truth is a relation norm defined as follows: a translator should act in such a way that an appropriate relation is established and maintained between the source text and the target text. Traditionally, this norm has been explicated in terms of fidelity/loyalty. In Chesterman’s view, fidelity is an inappropriate conceptualization of the value governing translational relation norm. As he emphasizes “translations relate to their source texts in a wide variety of acceptable ways, depending on a whole host of intratextual and extratextual reasons. The point is that all these relations must be “true” to the original, in one way or another, as required by the situation” (178-179). As he says, definitions of what counts as a translation are, surely, culture-bound, and specifically target-culture-bound:

…The truth of source-target relation is something that must be established and maintained. … After all, if we assume that a target-language text bears no relation whatsoever to a source text, we do not call this text a translation. There must, then, be a relation, and it must be a true one. What this true relation can be will depend on what the situational conditions deem to be relevant (179-180).
The third value that Chesterman suggests is trust, which is the value governing the accountability norm, which was formulated as stating that a translator should act in such a way that the demands for loyalty are met with regard to the various parties concerned. “Loyalty” is a term used by many Translation Studies scholars with diverse emphasis. For example, Anthony Pym argues that translators, in fact, ground their accountability in each other; translators collectively check and assess each other’s work as a community. According to Chesterman translators,

in order to survive as translators, must be trusted by all parties involved, both as a profession and individuality. They must therefore work in such a way as to create and maintain this trust. The default position is perhaps that this trust is deemed to exist unless something happens to dispel it. Trust is typically lost rather than gained (182).

He discussed the value of trust with all components and possible objections. There is a detail which he did not take into consideration in his discussion: Trust is the main value of all human relations, especially professional relationships. Translators may, and in some conditions should have trust in their employers, commissioners, transeditors and revisers to improve and to correct their works, to help them for clarifying some “ambiguities”. Because of their visibility in cases of obscurity, the translator can be seen as the least trusted among all parties involved in the translation process. In the following pages, I will present just such an example, where trust was lost not with the responsible publishing house, but with the translator.

Understanding is the last value suggested by Chesterman, because the initial goal of communication is understanding. He discusses this value in terms of hermeneutic tradition and action theory. We know that perfect understanding is impossible and can be seen as a myth. The goal of the act of translation should be the elimination of misunderstanding:

The value of understanding, then, can be construed in two ways of relevance to the translator: (a) minimizing misunderstanding of the text among included readers, and (b) minimizing the number of potential readers who are excluded from understanding. Both ways manifest the translator’s preventive action (186).
The scope of the case study

In this paper, with which I aim to present Umberto Eco’s translational adventure in Turkey within the limits of a descriptive methodology, I will use the above-mentioned terms as defined by Chesterman for describing and evaluating the case study. I will try to describe the situation considering Eco’s works as products which are supposed to transfer some new ideas, their translational adventure as process, the publisher’s politics as editorial norms and their decisions as actions, which create some values and effects in the target culture.

There are several reasons for studying Eco’s translated works where the Turkish culture is the target culture. One is to see the writer’s authorial position in the target culture and, his representative identity created by publishers. As is known, Umberto Eco is an academician, philosopher, semiotician, novelist, translator, and foremost a contemporary intellectual who thinks and writes about all cultural aspects of our contemporary “global” culture. Therefore, it is important to see to what extent Turkish readers know him and by which of his identities he is better known. He has written several books and many of them were translated into English, and into other languages⁶. If we want to make comparisons with other cultures, we should ask these questions:

- How many of his books were translated into Turkish?
- Which ones?
- When?
- Who translated them?
- For whom? (who are his intended readers?)
- Which publishers preferred to publish the translations of his works?

These questions seem to be adequate and necessary for a “historical” or diachronically translation research project but I do not pretend to conduct a historical translation research, as our academic literature defines it, by reading the empirical data, with some conceptual tools like dominant powers, centre and periphery etc. These concepts are certainly useful to demonstrate some decisions about translation in a historical perspective. But in this case study, I

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think we do not need to construct a historical understanding basing on our synchronic stand in relation to his authorial production. I simply want to describe his translational identity in Turkey with the answers given to above-mentioned questions in order to present the position of his works in Turkish target cultural system. I will use only key questions of translation history research as a method. After this, I will focus on The Open Work’s translational adventure in Turkish as a case study. Because, in Turkish, there are three different translations of The Open Work, and the publisher pulled one of them from the shelves after receiving sharp criticisms about the quality of the translation. This case will be evaluated according to the translation policy and the skopos\(^7\) of publisher.

**Turkish translations of Eco’s works**

**In the light of preliminary norms**

As is seen above, norms are also useful concepts in Translation Studies for describing some translational events and decisions. In order to describe Eco’s works in the Turkish translational literary system, Toury’s preliminary norms will be adequate and helpful:

**Preliminary norms** have to do with two main sets of consideration which are often interconnected: those regarding the existence and actual nature of a definite translation policy, and those related to the directness of translation.

*Translation policy* refers to those factors that govern the choice of text types; or even of individual texts, to be imported through translation into a particular culture/language at a particular point in time. Such a policy will be said to exist inasmuch as the choice is found to be non-random. Different polices may of course apply to different subgroups, in terms of either text-types (e.g. literary vs. non-literary) or human agents and groups thereof (e.g., different publishing houses), and the interface between the two often offers very fertile grounds for policy hunting.

Considerations concerning directness of translation involve the threshold of tolerance for translating from languages other than the ultimate source language: is indirect translation permitted at all? In translating from what source languages / text-types/periods (etc.) is it permitted / prohibited / tolerated / preferred mediating languages? Is there a tendency/obligation to mark a translated work as having been mediated or is this fact ignored / camouflaged/denied? If it is mentioned, is the identity of the mediating language supplied as well? (202).

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The absence or presence of a writer in a translational target literary system depends on the translation policy that governs that culture. That policy, of course, has effects on the choices and products of transfer and translation. The formation of a translation policy depends on economical gains as well. The directness of a translation, in my opinion, could be seen as a decision related to the dominant translation policy and this is surely effective at the micro-level, i.e. the textual level. Yet, at the macro-level, the decision about the directness of a translation can be seen as a trustworthy attitude of publishers and editors towards the readers.

**Eco’s representative and authorial identity in Turkish**

The interest of the Turkish readers in the famous writer, semiotician and philosopher Umberto Eco began with the Turkish translation of his first novel *The Name of the Rose*. It was translated into Turkish in 1986, six years after its original publishing date in his native country. Probably after seeing its economical value, Turkish publishing houses decided to cash in on the same popularity in the target culture. The intellectuals in Italy and many other European countries’ readers have already known the author through his previous writings. In Italy, the popularity of the writer was twofold; the readers of weekly magazines, journals and reviews have already known him from his columns in weekly publications like *Il Verri* and *L’espresso*. The academic and cultural circles have known him by means of his theoretical works of 1958, and especially of 1962, which was the publication date of his very controversial book, *The Open Work*. His identity as a novelist was new for the European readers, but, the Turkish readers have known him since 1986 only by this aspect of his identity because of the lack of interest of Turkish publishing houses towards his other works. We can discuss his absence in the Turkish literary system from 1962 to 1986 because of an intentional or unintentional translation policy.

Can Yayınları (Can Publications), a well known, prestigious, serious and trusted Turkish publishing house published the translation of his first novel, and then became the legal publisher of his works in Turkey taking his copyrights. If we consider the editorial success of Eco’s first novel in Turkish, it was a real editorial phenomenon. It sold beyond the editorial expectations and
was republished many times; in fact, it is still being republished. The legal editor of his first novel, Can Yayınları, took into consideration this enormous interest towards *The Name of the Rose*, and their editorial board decided to publish the translations of Eco’s other works. Obviously, they began with his other literary works. We can say that Turkish readers have known him as a novelist. After having seen this editorial success and the great interest of Turkish readers in the writer, Can Yayınları decided to publish the translations of some of his other works. Nevertheless, these works are mainly selections of the writer’s essays that were already published in his columns of Italian weekly magazines as mentioned above. The second representative identity of the writer seems to be a contemporary columnist or essayist and critic because of this editorial selection.

If we want to see his intellectual production more closely in a chronological order, we can say that he has began to publish his writings with *Il problema estetico in San Tommaso* which was his PhD dissertation [1956] and has been writing ever since. He wrote more than forty books in his own language, Italian, and three children’s books. He has more than twenty books in other languages; most of them are selections from his different books that are collections of his essays written on different occasions. Some of them were written originally in English because they were first given as lectures and were rewritten in Italian afterwards. Among these, *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* and *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, which were translated into Turkish from their English versions. As everyone can imagine, it is very difficult to do a thorough inventory of his works in all languages. Apart from his books, he has many other essays in some selections edited by different authors and, he is the editor of some selections created with the contributions of different authors. He wrote many prefaces for other books and, finally he edited many selections.

His writings have a wide spectrum of subject from philosophy (of language, of politics) to literary theories, from ontology to empirical research methods, from semiotics to translation studies. It is almost impossible to say exactly how many books he has written and how many of them (especially his contributions) were translated into Turkish.

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8 Its last republication date is 2007. See also the main page of publishing house: [http://www.canyayinlari.com/BookDetails_GULUN-ADI-ciltli_2123.aspx](http://www.canyayinlari.com/BookDetails_GULUN-ADI-ciltli_2123.aspx) [16.06.2009].

9 But this site can help to have an idea and make a comparison between the Turkish translations of his works and their translations in other languages: [http://www.umbertoeco.it/CV/BOOKS.htm](http://www.umbertoeco.it/CV/BOOKS.htm)
In Turkish, there are twenty-one translations of his works: all of his novels, one children’s book, and some selection of essays from some collection in Italian like *Diario minimo*, *Secondo Diario Minimo*, *Dalla periferia all’impero*, *Il costume di casa*. We also need to mention the three different translations of *The Open Work* and, the translation of *Postscript to The Name of the Rose*, which was inserted in revised editions of the related novel in Turkish.

His legal publisher until 2001 was Can Yayınları, as we mentioned before. This publishing house began publishing his translations in 1986 with his first novel and published 12 of his works including two different translations of *The Open Work*. Can Yayınları published his first three novels, four selections of his essays collected from different books mentioned above, a lecture, and the complete translation of *Arte e bellezza nell’estetica medievale*. Finally, Can Yayınları had decided to publish the translation of *The Open Work*, thirty-eight years after it was first published in Italy (1962). The translation published in 2000 caused the publishing house to lose the legal copyrights of the author. Surely, it was not the only publisher that was interested in Eco’s works. After *The Open Work*’s success, Bompiani had started to work with Doğan Kitap, whose editorial board published three of Eco’s books, two of them being novels, *Baudolino* and *La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana* which were translated by Şemsa Gezgin Griseri, who lives in Italy. Doğan Kitap also published *History of Beauty* with the translation of Ali Cevat Akkoyunlu. Two other books: *La ricerca della lingua perfetta nella cultura europea*, and a selection of his essays bearing the Turkish title “Günlük Yaşamdan Sanata”, first published by Afa Yayınları, then published by Adam Yayınları, both translated by Kemal Atakay. We also know about another translation of *The Open Work* published by Kabalcı Yayınları in 1992, translated by Yakup Şahan. A children’s book, *Gli gnomi di Gnu*, published by YPK Yayınları, was translated by Eren Cendey. His lecture titled “Appunti sulla semiotica della ricezione”, translated from French the version, *Notes sur la sémiotique de la reception*, was published in 1987. Moreover, in Turkish there is a translation of *Belief or Disbelief*, which was written with Carlo Maria Martini, published by 1001 Kitap, translated by Cem Şen, probably from the English version.

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10 I will mention about this case in next pages.
11 *Postille al nome della rosa*
For the empirical data, I prepared a list which demonstrates Turkish translations of his works’ along with a table that demonstrates all works by the writer in Italian\textsuperscript{12}. In addition, if we want to see the translations of his works’ into other languages, two internet resources present them in a chronological order\textsuperscript{13}. Examining the list and the table can easily give an idea about his authorial presence and his representative identity in the Turkish literary system. After detailed comparisons, I can say that his legal publishing house, Can Yayınları, from 1986 to 2001, did not exert any notable effort to represent other identities of the writer such as a semiotician, academician, and philosopher in Turkish. Turkish readers did not have any opportunity to understand his arguments completely which are implicitly or explicitly the basis of his novels. The editorial board of the publishing house had introduced him to Turkish readers as a novelist, specifically as a writer of historical novels. With growing reader interest, they preferred to publish some other books, especially selection of his essays, but none of his theoretical works. Eco’s novelist identity contributed to the sales of essay selections. Meanwhile, some concepts of Eco like “open work”, “model reader”, and “model writer” began to be used by some Turkish academicians and intellectuals. Finally, the editorial board has decided to publish the translation of *The Open Work*, the adventure of which I will mention in the following pages.

**The Translators**

Can Yayınları always hires translators for Eco translations, as well as most of other translations, following the principles of its “direct translation policy”. I can say that the directness of translation is one of the translation policies in Turkey, which is supposed to be an indication of the seriousness and trustworthiness of a publishing house. Can Yayınları always indicates the translators’ names on the front covers of the translated books and they inform the readers, implicitly, about whether they are direct or indirect translations. If it is a direct translation, we can easily see that phrase on the cover before the translator’s name: “translated from the original by…”. However, if it is not a direct translation, before the name of the translator, we see the expression

\textsuperscript{12} Included in this study is a list and table of his works in Italian and Turkish.
\textsuperscript{13} These two internet resources can help to have an idea and make a comparison between his works’ Turkish translations and theirs translations in other languages:
http://www.umbertoeco.it/CV/BOOKS.htm
“translated into Turkish by…”. In this case, the language of the source text is not mentioned. Can Yayınları usually prefers to work with translators who can translate directly from the source texts’ languages. They worked with famous translators (Italian-Turkish) for Eco's works as well. These translators, such as Şadan Karadeniz and Kemal Atakay were already known for their other successful works for other publishing houses. Şadan Karadeniz translated the first two novels by Eco. She also wrote a book about her translation process. 

Kemal Atakay, another famous translator from Italian into Turkish, translated five other books by Eco for Can Yayınları. One is a novel: The Island of the Day Before (1995); the others are Art and Beauty in Medieval Aesthetics (1996), Five Moral Pieces (1998), Six Walks in the Fictional Woods (1995) and, Interpretation and Overinterpretation (1996). The dates in parenthesis indicate their publication dates in Turkish. Between the years of 1995 and 1998, Can Yayınları published five books by Eco. As we pointed out, Atakay translated all of them. This data suggests that Atakay had been translating Eco's books intensively before the years of 1995-1996. In addition, he was doing his work very fast because, Bompiani published the novel in 1994 and Can Yayınları published its translation within a year, in 1995. Six walks and Sei passeggiate were published in 1994, and their translations came out in 1995. Atakay might have translated two books simultaneously. We can say the same thing about two other books, L'arte e bellezza (1996) and Interpretazione e sovrainterpretazione (1996), the original publication dates being 1987 and 1995 respectively. However, we have to remember that Cambridge University Press first published The Interpretation and Overinterpretation in 1992 in English and it was translated into Italian in 1995. Among these books, Art and Beauty in Medieval Aesthetics was a relatively old book and might have been translated earlier but published later.

Atakay’s translations made in this period demonstrate his professionalism and impetus to translate. At first glance, the reader thinks that Atakay translated all of them directly from Italian because of his perfect knowledge of Italian language and his professionalism as a translator following direct translation policy as a principle. However, as mentioned before, front covers of the books indicate implicitly if they are direct or indirect translations. On the front cover of Sei passeggiate nei boschi narrativi we see the expression: “translated into

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15 English and Italian versions of the same book.
Turkish by…” The book was published in Italian and in English in 1994 and it was translated into Turkish in 1995. I think, the publisher might have bought the copyright from Harvard College (Harvard University) but the translator could have had both of the copies when he had been translating the book, since it was indicated inside that it was translated from its Italian original(p.3)\textsuperscript{16}. There is another interesting detail about *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*. On the front cover, there is that phrase “translated from its Italian original by…”, yet, it is stated in the book that the English original was used as a source for the translation. The last two book’s copyrights seem to have been taken directly from Cambridge University Press. Perhaps, the publisher wanted to demonstrate to the readers how much they value the direct translation policy but, from a legal point of view, if the copyrights were taken from Cambridge University Press, the books should have been translated from English.

We can say that Atakay is the most productive and diligent of Eco’s translators, translating seven books between 1991 and 1998. We have to add that Atakay had also translated two other books by Eco for other publishers. One of them is *The Search for the Perfect Language*\textsuperscript{17} for Afa Yayınları, and he translated a book by Eco for Adam Yayınları. Its Turkish title is *Günlük Yaşamdan Sanata* (From Daily Life to Art). It contains a preface of the translator in which he emphasizes the importance of direct translation policy for him, and he explains explicitly that he also used a German selection of writer’s essays translated by Burkhart Kroebber with the title *Über Gott und die Wilt, Essays und Glossen* to clarify some points in his translation. This attitude of the translator proves again that he is a trustworthy professional who respects other colleagues’ translations despite the established convention about translator’s invisibility. In the same preface, he points out the need for translations of Eco’s theoretical works in Turkish. Inside the book, on the fourth page, there is information about the sources of the essays: *Dalla periferia dell’impero, Il costume di casa, Sette anni di desiderio*. Yet, on page 196, Atakay only gave the titles of essays taken from *Dalla periferia dell’impero* and *Sette anni di desiderio*. He did not mention any essay taken from *Il costume di casa* and when we check the translated essays, we cannot find the one taken from above mentioned selection. *Travels in Hyperreality*, which was translated into English by William Weaver, has something in common with that translation, both of

\textsuperscript{16} I tried to get information about these details from publishing house responsibilities and the translator but they did not respond.

\textsuperscript{17} *La ricerca della lingua perfetta nella cultura europea*
them contain some important essays like “Travels in Hyperreality”. The translation by Weaver is mostly based on Sette anni di desiderio; it includes several other essays taken from the earlier untranslated works in English as Il costume di casa (1973) and, Dalla periferia dell’impero (1977) as well as an essay written in 1975 on the American subculture of hyperrealism called “Faith in Fakes”. This essay retitled “Travels in Hyperreality” is the longest essay in the book, and provides the collection with a new name\(^{18}\).

In summary, the translation, which was done by using different works of the writer as a source, was titled in Turkish in a way that did not evoke any of the titles of the writer’s books either in Italian or in English but his famous essay about American subculture included in Günlük Yaşamdan Sanata. Another detail which seems to be related to the above mentioned selection is a book of Eco titled Ortaçağı Düşlemek (Dreaming of the Middle Ages) in Turkish published by Can Yayınları in 1996 and translated by Şadan Karadeniz. This is an indirect translation and on page 4, we read that it is a collection of essays taken from Dreaming of the Middle Ages as if it were the title of a book, Sette anni di desiderio, and, Sugli specchi. Nevertheless, “Dreaming of the Middle Ages” is the title of an essay written in 1988 and was included in the volume titled Travels in Hyperreality in English; the editorial board of Can Yayınları preferred to use it as the title of the Turkish translation. On the back cover of the book, the mistake made on the fourth page was corrected. There, the translator points out that the book is a selection of Eco’s writings that have been published in Sette anni di desiderio, Sugli Specchi and Travels in Hyperreality. This book includes ten essays; two of them were taken from Sette anni di desiderio, four of them from Travels in Hyperreality. I think, we can say that the last two translations that I have mentioned completed each other in the target culture. Although it seems that they have used the same source texts, they contain different essays in a way as to complement each other. In summary, we have to say that Turkish readers who want to read the translations of these selections will not be able to reach them in Turkish with a simple search by the Turkish titles since the titles of the two translations in question represent different subjects and do not suggest the titles of the original books. Certainly, as a translation policy, this attitude is diffusive and it has some reasonable motives like attracting readers’ interest, creating a wide market etc. Surely, the decision to change titles in a target language and culture depends on the norms

and expectations of publishers. If the readers are keen on reading back covers or initial pages of books, they have the chance to discover the source texts. However, that is not enough to identify the originals of the translations mentioned above, because the information given inside and on the back cover is not the same.

Another book by Eco also published by Can Yayınları is *Misreading*, but inside the book on page 4, there is information about its original in Italian: *Diario minimo*. Its Turkish title is *Yanlış Okumalar*, which also means *Misreadings* (Harvest Books, 1993). So, this is also an indirect translation. Its translator, Mehmet H. Doğan, who passed away in 2007, was a famous translator who may or may not know Italian. It was originally published in 1963 as *Diario Minimo* and was revised in 1975. It is a collection of writings culled from Eco’s monthly column in the Italian literary magazine *Il Verri*.

Another indirect translation is *How to Travel with a Salmon*. It is interesting to see the information inside the book on page 4: Original title is *Il secondo diario minimo* as if it were a direct translation. Its translator is İlknur Özdemir who was the chief editor of the publishing house until 2000s. The main principle of Can Yayınları seems to be remaining trustworthy in front of their readers at least by implying if the translations are direct or indirect on their front covers. However, I think the last two books, mentioned above, are not the same as their Italian originals. Because the title in English is *How to Travel with a Salmon & Other Essays* and it is a partial English translation of *Il secondo diario minimo*, 1994). However, in Turkish publishers’ traditions we cannot see that trustworthy attitude to indicate explicitly the source text used for translations. If the text is an indirect translation, to mention its translator and its source text title can be important from the point of translation ethics. This is very important with regard to Eco as well, because all of his books have reprints and they are still being republished with revisions. If we do not know which originals were used for the translations we would be puzzled as readers especially if we wanted to use the book as a reference.

In summary, we can say that Can Yayınları was the most productive publisher between 1986 and 2001 for Eco’s work in Turkish. Their editorial board always preferred to work with expert Italian-Turkish translators, even for the indirect translations like *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, and

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19 For translation ethics and trust value, see Andrew Chesterman, *Memes of Translation*, pp.169-189.
Dreaming of Middle Ages. However, when they could not manage that policy, they preferred to work with other trustworthy translators for the indirect translations but unfortunately, they did not give enough information about the original books, the source of the translations and the translators of source texts in indirect translations. It seems to be important for the publisher to always mention the “Italian original” as a sign of trustworthiness.

**How The Open Work became “closed” in its Turkish Translations**\(^20\)

As I mentioned before, the translation of *The Open Work* caused the publishing house to lose Eco’s copyrights in Turkey. It was a polemical translation withdrawn from the market with the promise to be revised, but, several months later, it was republished as a retranslation.

When the editorial board of Can Yayınları decided to publish the *Open Work*’s translation, they searched for a translator who could translate it from the original language in accordance with their direct translation policy. They wanted to work with Kemal Atakay again but he refused due to his intensive work schedule\(^21\). They decided to work with a new translator, Nilüfer Uğur Dalay who would translate it from the original. Her translation was published in November 2000. It was the right time to publish such an important book, because, the readers would see it for the first time in TUYAP Istanbul Book Fair (the most important book fair in Turkey). Actually, it was not the first translation of *The Open Work* in Turkish. Yakup Şahan had translated it from French\(^22\) as an indirect translation for Kabalcı Yayınları in 1992. To tell the truth, Can Yayınları used that old indirect translation for their advertorial campaign of *The Open Work*’s direct translation. They had presented Dalay’s translation as a complete translation implying that the first one was incomplete. After two months, some readers began to complain about the translation’s quality. One of them was M. Salih Polat, a journalist from NTV-MSNBC. In his article published on December 20, 2000, he criticized *The Open Work*’s translation severely.

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\(^20\) I discussed *The Open Works*’ translations as a case study in a paper presented at Akşit Göktürk Conference. (See the bibliography for detail).


\(^22\) The book’s initial page’s information is translated from French version but when I compared all *The Open Work*’s translations in Turkish, I had impression that it was translated from English.
His sharp criticism was focusing mainly on the incomprehensibility of the translation. As a reader, he was expecting more than what he found in the text which was presented as a complete translation. He, as an amateur translation critic, confused the two different translation evaluation criteria: to be comprehensible and, to be complete. Indeed, his critique’s key sentence proves this confusion “Umberto Eco’s The Open Work which is announced that now in Turkish with complete translation seems to be translated unfortunately with poor Turkish knowledge and without the editorial control”. He asked more than once in his article how a translation could be so bad, if it were really complete and he asked himself if it were a complete translation indeed, as if the incomprehensibility of a text could depend solely on its completeness. Surely, the completeness is necessary to understand all contextual components but it is not the primary condition of being comprehensible. It seems that Polat saw the completeness of a text as a primary condition of its comprehensibility. Polat gave three phrases as examples of “bad” translation; this was enough for him to demonstrate the quality of the translation to his readers. According to him, the translation was the same in quality as the writing exercises of a French man who might have recently begun to learn Turkish. According to him, the translator knew Italian but she did not know Turkish and Can Yayınları left her alone by not giving her any editorial support. In addition, he pointed out that Can Yayınları had won the Prize for another translated book a few months ago, but now it needed a rescue campaign for The Open Work. Finally, he connected this event with the absence of an effective translation criticism in Turkey.

The chief editor of the publishing house has replied to him with an e-mail and said that they withdrew the translations of The Open Work from all bookstores and they were working on the translation to revise and republish it in a short time. However, after seven months, an article and an interview appeared in Hürriyet, a Turkish daily newsletter, about The Open Work’s Turkish translation. The title of the report was “Poor Translation was Rejected by the Reader”. This time, another journalist, Sefa Kaplan, was interested in the subject. He conducted an interview with İlkınr Özdemir who was the chief editor of the publishing house at that time. In the interview, the emphasis was on the responsibility of the publisher, and, Can Yayınları accepted their

responsibility. As a responsible publishing company, they took the first translation back and they decided to retranslate it instead of revising it. This time they chose a new translator and they produced a new translation. They changed the front cover’s photo as well. They added the information that it is a “new translation” on the front cover where we can see easily the phrase: “translated into Turkish by Pınar Savaş”, indicating that it is an indirect translation. The interview’s main point is that this time we as readers have a readable and comprehensible text in our hands. We can notice easily that the norm for accepting a text as a good translation is its readability, fluency and, comprehensibility in target language. If we say it with Chesterman’s terms, clarity value was dominant in that evaluation. If the publisher knows that why they did not notice that the translation which they have published was far to be clear? As being trustworthy, it was their responsibility.

In the same interview, İlknur Özdemir mentioned the process of looking for a “right” translator and she explained why they preferred to collaborate with Dalay. The main reason was her knowledge of Italian and Özdemir was convinced that Dalay has already studied Eco’s other theoretical work. For these two reasons, she was an adequate candidate for the publishing house. They had seen that she had worked with maximum attention but when she began to translate, she had to return to her active work life, which was very intensive and exhaustive. She did not have enough time for this translation and she took a long time to finish it. Unfortunately, the editorial board could not find enough time for the revision because of their intention to participate in the Tüyap Book Fair with a prestigious book such as this.

We can easily see that Özdemir confessed that they spent less time than it was necessary for the editing process. Still in the same interview, she said to Kaplan that they also had some positive comments about the book but when they began to have negative feedback from some “trustworthy” readers like Salih Polat, they stopped its distribution and they decided to take all translations back from the bookstores to which they previously delivered. In the beginning, their aim was to revise and, to re-edit the “old” translation. Yet, after a while, they decided to retranslate it, in Özdemir’s words, as a better solution. This time they chose a person who could translate, revise and edit it all at the same time. In spite of this comment by Özdemir, we can see the names of the chief editor and the proofreader in the new translation, which did not exist in the old one. In the same interview, the new translator Pınar Savaş declared that they wanted to correct the first translation but finally they understood that it would be better to
retranslate it and did not explain the rational for this decision. Pınar Savaş said that she retranslated *The Open Work* using English and Italian texts.\(^{25}\) In that interview, she said that in the beginning, she did not consider herself competent enough to translate Eco, but after a while, she had seen that it could be managed with hard work and “beautiful” Turkish. She added that she had not used the old translation because she wanted to bear all the responsibility for the new one with its faults and merits. According to Pınar Savaş, the challenges of translating Eco can be solved through broad cultural knowledge:

> Because he talks about subjects from thermodynamic to quantum physic and he refers to many other sources, it is necessary to read more about these subjects and to find right concepts. I am a chemical engineer and I have never used my professional knowledge in my life before this translation.\(^{26}\)

We can easily see that Savaş does not talk about linguistics, semiotics, poetics, philosophy that are the main research areas and themes of the writer. In addition, she says that Turkish is a poor language because there is not enough conceptual vocabulary that is necessary for such translations\(^ {27}\). At the end of the interview, Kaplan gave some examples from the old and new translations for the readers who wanted to compare their translation quality.

Kaplan, as a responsible journalist decided to conduct an interview with the translator accused of producing the poor translation.\(^ {28}\) In this interview, Dalay explained how she got the job of translating *The Open Work*, in June of 1999: Eren Cendey (another famous Italian-Turkish translator who often works with Can Yayınları) gave her four or five pages from Eco’s *The Open Work* and, told her that the publisher could not find anyone for its translation. Cendey asked Dalay to translate it in name of the publisher but they wanted to see a proof translation of these five pages. When chief editor, Özdemir read the proof translation, she said to her “ok, the book is yours”. According to Dalay, they talked about the basic principles; Özdemir wanted her to be loyal to original form of the book and, not to deform writer’s style. Dalay explains herself and her feelings sincerely in this interview:

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25 I made a detailed comparison of all of *The Open Work* translations in Turkish. The translation by Pınar Savaş seemed to have been based only on the English translation.

26 See the interview mentioned above.

27 This excuse is used generally by translators who have not studied linguistics or philosophy in Turkish, if they try to do a detailed terminological research, they can see easily that this excuse is ridiculous.

In 20 or 25 days, I finished the first chapter, I sent it to her, and I asked her some questions about the problems that I encountered in a long letter. She told me to continue my work. Actually, I was waiting for her confirmation to continue my work. After the confirmation, I continued to translate it and I gave it to the publisher at the beginning of March. When I consigned it, I insisted to revise and edit carefully and after that, I suggested it be sent to some scholars who have enough knowledge about the subjects and main conceptual areas of the essays.

According to Dalay, nobody could claim to translate without mistakes. She says that after a month, the editorial board called her to show the page order and they gave her another book by the same writer to translate. They did not call her again for the revising and editing process. Later she heard about *The Open Work* from one of her friends who had read by chance in a newspaper’s book review that *The Open Work* would be ready for the Book Fair. After this report, she called the publishers to ask why they did not call her and who was revising the text. They informed her that Fulya Tükel was but the readers cannot find this name in Dalay’s translation. Finally, the book was published without any editorial control.

After the critiques of Polat, Özdemir had sent an e-mail to Dalay and she informed her that they were revising the book again. When she learned this, she felt relieved because she was thinking that it was certainly necessary because they did not spend enough time to revise it. However, after having learned that the editorial board of publisher had chosen another translator and they had published a retranslation, she felt very upset and disappointed. She blamed the responsible personnel of the publishing house and she said that she tried to do her best. She defends herself saying that it is not easy to read and to understand Eco; it is difficult to read him in Italian, too. She does not accept that her translation has great problems. According to her, Eco has to be translated into Turkish in his own style and Eco’s style makes it difficult to read it. She emphasizes it is more important to protect Eco’s style rather than to produce an understandable (readable) text, i.e. clear text in Turkish. The last question to Kaplan in the interview is significant. If Turkish readers will not understand it, why do we translate it? This question and the criticism about this translation are significant signs for expectancy norms. However, her answer is more

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29 TUYAP Book Fair is held annually in Istanbul in November.
significant: she says that one cannot simplify the book to produce an understandable text for Turkish readers.

By means of these two interviews, we learn all the details of the event from all of the parties involved. If we look at this story with all of its components, we can easily see that the publisher wanted to get the book ready for the Book Fair and the translator insisted on having it revised and was prepared to edit it more seriously. On the other hand, we can also notice the translator’s self-confidence through her intention of doing her best with the excuse of preserving the writer’s original style. Dalay emphasized more than once that she tried to do her best. One can easily see that the publisher left her alone during and after the translation.

What conclusions can we arrive at here? What is the role of the actors such as publishers, editors, translators, critics and journalists who are effective in cultural network in promoting some value judgments in this event? In addition, with which values and norms did they act in this case?

**From the point of view of translation ethics**

To respond to these questions, I will use Andrew Chesterman’s views on translation ethics as a conceptual guide. Firstly, we can say again that Polat as an amateur translation critic sees the readability and comprehensibility as preconditions of a “complete translation”. He confuses the truth-value, namely being complete, with being understandable. The first one is a quality related to truth-value but the second one is a quality related to clarity, which are the value governing expectancy norms. As we all know, expectancy norms are the most effective ones when we read a translated text. All we need as readers is to read a fluent, transparent and understandable text. This almost traditional conception of “good translation” certainly caused critics to react against Dalay’s translation quality; they started to criticize her work harshly. However, Polat’s argument was a mistaken one because of the above-mentioned confusion.

Surely, Dalay’s translation has many problems. It is incomprehensible; nevertheless, its incomprehensibility does not arise from trying to find new conceptual equivalence or neologism in Turkish for some concepts. It also does not result from trying to create Eco’s style in Turkish, as she claims. Firstly, its main reason is the translator’s incapacity to distinguishing denotative and connotative semantic areas of some words, terms and concepts. She did not
Betül PARLAK

notice that some collocations, some phrasal verbs have their own meanings. For that reason, she used vocabularies as an amateur translator, or a beginner translation studies’ student. Another problematic aspect of her translation is a mistaken conception of loyalty, because she rendered the text into Turkish with a close imitation of syntactical sequence, and this approach unfortunately created a text that could hardly be readable. According to her “conception of loyalty”, she acted in accordance with truth-value. Her understanding to transfer and to preserve the style of the writer seems to mean transferring text’s syntax as closely as possible. She did not notice that the arguments that she used to defend herself were not acceptable from the point of translation studies concepts. She insisted that her first loyalty was to writer, and her “skopos” was to preserve Eco’s style in Turkish. *The Open Work* is full of conceptual discussions and it is a hard text to understand compared to other works translated into Turkish. However, it is easy to notice the writer’s ironic and argumentative discursive level in his essays as signs of his style. Dalay’s translation does not contain these features, either.

Despite all these negative aspects, she did not produce a translated text that is impossible to be corrected. Moreover, she insisted that it be revised and she wanted it to be read by scholars for some corrections. She trusted her publisher to get her work improved; the publishers trusted her knowledge of Italian. Unfortunately, the publishers neglected her text’s revision although they had enough time to do it. Their main aim was to participate to Istanbul Book Fair of 2000 with *The Open Work*. They used it as an excuse for not having enough time for the translation’s revision. Their initial trust in each other created a bad situation for both parties. Her translation was “poor” and “complicated” and did not mean much in Turkish. The publisher with the decision of retranslation and republishing the book won the trust of readers, which was lost with first translation. However, I do not know if they gave the new translation free to the readers who have already paid for the old one.

If we continue to trying to see this event from the point of trust as a value, editorial personnel who had to be more careful from beginning to end did not fulfill their responsibility. That negligence caused the publisher to lose the copyrights of Eco. The new translation was not enough for the writer and his Italian publisher.

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30 Ülker İnce evaluated the same case from the framework of Skopos Theory. See the bibliography for details.
If we continue to consider this event from Chesterman’s point of view, we can say that the publisher did not act in accordance with truth-value that governs the relation norm. Dalay translated *The Open Work* from the 1976’s edition of the book, although its first publication date was 1962. From 1962 to 1976, many things were changed. Eco wrote all of the changes in his thoughts and the adventure of original book in prefaces of all the new reprints of *The Open Work*. These prefaces are included as main essays of *The Open Work* from 1976. In addition, it is possible to see his conception of the open work clearly in the prefaces above mentioned. While the first translation contains all the prefaces of the *The Open Work* (those of 1962, 1967 and 1976), the second one has none. However, in the advertorial campaign for *The Open Work*, the main emphasis was placed on presenting the most important work of Eco to the Turkish readers as a complete translation. Completeness was emphasized many times in their advertorial campaign as we said before implying that translation of 1992 made from 1967 French edition was not complete. When Can Yayınları republished *The Open Work* as a new translation, they seemed to act according to trust value, but with the decision not to translate those prefaces they did not act in accordance with the value of truth.

**Conclusion**

As can be seen in the table, the most important theoretical works of Eco are yet to be translated into Turkish. For example, *Lector in Fabula, Trattato di Semiotica generale, Apocalittici ed integrati, La filosofia del linguaggio, Sulla Letteratura, Kant e ornitrionco, Dire quasi la stessa cosa* cannot be read in Turkish, yet. These works are main sources to refer to when it is necessary to speak or write about literary criticism, semiotics, cultural theories and media studies, translation studies, philosophy and language, ontology. Publishers' decisions can be related to hypothetical absence of the reader interest. The global publishing industry generally focuses on the best-seller i.e. on the economical success of a book which makes the best sellers attractive to the publishers.

We should not forget that translation is a product for publishers and translators who always remain as the determining actors in the creation of a cultural repertoire. Especially the publishers who invest in a translation, for its publication, for its raw material, for copyrights etc. want to gain at least the amount they invest in the process and the product. In Turkey, in the last 20
years that is why the publishers preferred books that could help them profit economically. In our global era of consumerism, the main point of all cultural products is to obtain a popularity that can bring back what is invested in them at least. If we look at the place of Umberto Eco’s works in Turkish literary system, we cannot consider them as tools chosen intentionally for creating a cultural repertoire. They were chosen for translation since they were thought to have had a greater economical value than most of other theoretical works by the author in the target “cultural” market.

After these descriptive conclusions, I still want to emphasize that it is very important and necessary to know and to understand a writer’s “authorial intentions” in the larger context. Because when an author’s work is transferred into a target culture as an authority to refer to for certain concepts, there will always be some misunderstanding due to the lack of an evaluation of his/her works chronologically in their total context. However, it would not make much sense to say that a translation policy should aim at doing that in any target culture. Such a prescriptive approach would not contribute to translation studies. If we consider the above statement as a descriptive observation, it might demonstrate to what extent a target culture reader (in this case Turkish reader) is able to understand an author with the works by him/her available in the target culture.

REFERENCES


**Internet Sources**


**APPENDIX 1**

The list of Eco’s works translated into Turkish


11. Eco, Umberto. *Il second diario minimo, Somon Balığıyla Yolculuk*, Translator: İlknur Özdemir, İstanbul: Can Yayınları, indirect translation from How to travel with a salmon


### APPENDIX 2:
Eco’s Complete Works and Turkish Translations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication date</th>
<th>Title of the original work</th>
<th>Turkish Translation and its publication date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> 1956</td>
<td>Il problema estetico di San Tommaso</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> 1959</td>
<td>Sviluppo dell’estetica medievale</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> 1963</td>
<td>Diario minimo</td>
<td>Translated as selection of essays:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong> 1964</td>
<td>Apocalittici ed integrati</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong> 1965</td>
<td>Le poetiche di Joyce</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong> 1966</td>
<td>I tre cosmonauti</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong> 1966</td>
<td>La bomba e il generale</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
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<td><strong>9</strong> 1967</td>
<td>Appunti per una semiologia delle comunicazioni visive.</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong> 1968</td>
<td>La struttura assente</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>11</strong> 1968</td>
<td>La definizione dell’arte</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12</strong> 1971</td>
<td>Le forme del contenuto</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>13</strong> 1973</td>
<td>Il costume di casa</td>
<td>Partial translation in some selections of essays</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>14</strong> 1973</td>
<td>(II) Segno</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>15</strong> 1975</td>
<td>Trattato di semiotica generale</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>16</strong> 1976</td>
<td>Il superuomo di massa</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>17</strong> 1977</td>
<td>Dalla periferia dell’impero</td>
<td>Partial translation in some selections of essays</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>18</strong> 1977</td>
<td>Come si fa una tesi di laurea</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>19</strong> 1979</td>
<td>Lector in Fabula</td>
<td>Not translated</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Title</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Il nome della rosa</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Postille al nome della rosa</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Sette anni di desiderio</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Semiotica e filosofia del linguaggio</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Sugli specchi e altri saggi</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Arte e bellezza nell’estetica medievale</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Il pendolo di Foucault</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Lo strano caso della Hanau 1609</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>I limiti dell’interpretazione</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Stelle e stellette</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Vocali</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Il secondo diario minimo</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>La ricerca della lingua perfetta nella cultura europea</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Sei passeggiate nei boschi narrativi</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Interpretazione e sovrainterpretazione</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Stampa e il mondo politico di oggi</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Cinque scritti morali</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Kant e l’ornitorinco</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Tra menzogna e ironia</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>La bustina di Minevra</td>
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<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Baudolino</td>
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<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Dire quasi la stessa cosa. Esperienze di traduzione.</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Sulla letteratura</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Storia della bellezza</td>
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