

**JACÓ GUINSBURG, EDITOR AND TRANSLATOR:
REFLECTIONS ON DOUBLE AGENCY**

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ABSTRACT: Recent sociological research in Translation Studies has addressed the cultural, political, and literary role of agents involved with the practice of translation, which include commissioners, publishers, editors, proofreaders, and the translators themselves (Milton and Bandia, 2009; Kinnunen and Koskinen, 2010). On occasion, certain agents accumulate more than one role in a translation project, a phenomenon which may reveal individual conflicts regarding the specific demands and constraints of each role, as well as enhanced power struggles with other agents. This article introduces such a “double agent”: Jacó Guinsburg, a Bessarabia-born Jewish immigrant who arrived in Brazil at the age of three and went on to become one of the country’s leading figures in editing, translation, and theatre and literary criticism. The case study here presented offers an overview of Guinsburg’s agency in the Perspectiva publishing house and how it introduced many classical works of international scholars to the Brazilian academic community.

KEYWORDS: Translator, Agency, Agents, Jacó Guinsburg, Debates series

1. Introduction

Sociological research in translation, which is a relatively recent trend within Translation Studies (TS), has sought to shed light on the socio-cultural, historical, and political role of translators and other agents involved in translation practices, among them commissioners, publishers, authors, proofreaders, and institutions (this trend is very well illustrated by Milton and Bandia, 2009 and by Kinnunen and Koskinen, 2010). Such agents affect translations to some extent, either by effecting changes to reigning styles of translation or by selecting new works to be translated and therefore introducing new concepts and ideas into a given social and epistemological context (Milton and Bandia, 2009, p. 2).

On occasion, however, certain agents accumulate more than one role in a translation project, a phenomenon which may reveal individual conflicts regarding the specific demands and constraints of each role, as well as enhanced power struggles and negotiations with other agents. This article presents a case study on such a multitasking agent.

Jacó (or Jacob) Guinsburg (1921-) is widely regarded as one of the leading Brazilian intellectuals of the twentieth century due to his enduring and extensive work in various fields of knowledge. Having worked as an academic, a researcher, a literary and theatre critic, a publisher, and a translator, as well as written many essays and fictional works, Guinsburg achieved one of his major ambitions in the founding of the Perspectiva publishing house in 1965, an endeavour largely responsible for introducing major works of international renown to the Brazilian readership. Perspectiva, over which Guinsberg still

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presides to this day, directly stems from his personal notions of translation and editing acquired over the course of his professional trajectory.

Nevertheless, despite Guinsburg's considerable standing in the Brazilian academic milieu, a result of his pioneering role in the editing and translation of classical essays from the humanities, his work as a translator has not been researched by translation scholars. This possibly derives from his multiple professional activity, according to Mello (2016, p. 311, my translation):

Perhaps we are so accustomed to approaching him as a publisher, a theatre critic, an essayist, and an academic that his translation work inevitably retreats to the shadows. Perhaps this is due to the fact that his editorial and translating activities are often intertwined: in addition to having translated well over a hundred literary and theoretical works, most of them for *Perspectiva* but some for other publishers, he has reviewed and reformulated the translation of countless others in his role of publisher-reader.

Therefore, (re)introducing Guinsburg to the taskforce of producing a history of translation in Brazil is crucial, especially in view of growing efforts in recent historical research (Pym, 1998, p. ix; Chesterman, 2009, p. 14) to recover the human figure of the translator from behind the text. In line with Mello's reasoning, it is important to map Guinsburg's hybrid and often simultaneous work as both translator and editor, as well as the way it is linked to his personal notions regarding these activities. Thus, this article attempts to shed light on the double agency effected by Guinsburg within *Perspectiva* and particularly within the *Debates* series, in which he acts as chief editor. This series, which currently comprises 340 books, summarises the cultural project outlined by Guinsburg at the founding of *Perspectiva* and its importance to the Brazilian academic community is widely acknowledged (Patriota, 2013, p. 15; Sá, 2017; Werneck, 2013).

This study sought to provide answers to the following questions:

- 1- How many books in the *Debates* series have been translated by Guinsburg?
- 2- To which fields of knowledge do the translated works belong to?
- 3- Is Guinsburg's translation practice individual or collective?
- 4- In what way does Guinsburg's role as chief editor of the *Debates* series influence his work as a translator?
- 5- Does Guinsburg's actual translation role in the *Debates* series confirm or disprove his personal notions of editing and translation?

This article is structured as follows: Sections 2 and 3 provide an overview of the theoretical and methodological framework adopted for this study; Section 4 briefly presents Guinsburg's biography; Section 5 brings forth the collected data and a discussion of results; Section 6 indicates further research possibilities regarding Guinsburg's agency.

2. The sociological paradigm in TS

In the wake of the "cultural turn" proposed by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere in the early 1990s, there has been a growing interest in viewing translation as a social and cultural practice. Underlying such an interest is the need to acknowledge the translator as a person

endowed with beliefs, values, ideology, and interpretive horizons. In this sense, Lefevere is widely regarded as a precursor of the sociological approach to translation, since his notions of rewriting (Lefevere, 1992, p. 9) – as a manipulative textual practice carried out by translators, historians, critics, anthologists, and publishers – and patronage (Lefevere, 1992, p. 15) – a form of control effected by people, groups of people or institutions with the aim of promoting or hindering forms of literary writing and rewriting – acquire meaning only in the social context.

Many researchers in TS acknowledge a “social turn” (Wolf, 2010, p. 341) as a direct development of the cultural turn, a trend which reinforces the researcher’s need to distance him/herself from the virtually absolute dominion of text-based analyses and to address extratextual factors that influence translation practice. To this day, the social turn is subject to debate, particularly on the part of those who advocate the non-dissociation between social and cultural practices, as well as between their respective theoretical and methodological frameworks. Following this stance, the social turn would be a part of the cultural turn, the latter being an “umbrella term”, i.e. which covers a wide spectrum of themes and notions. According to Wolf (2010, p. 342), what is most important is that “the questions pertinent to translation viewed as a social practice be placed at the core of the discipline”, that is, that they are approached systematically.

Guided by a more effective and non-random consideration of the social aspects of translation, a growing group of scholars has sought to establish a proper sociology of translation¹ within the ever-expanding boundaries of TS. It encompasses three major research trends: the sociology of the agent, which addresses the translator as an individual involved in socially defined practices; the sociology of the process, in which translation is viewed as a set of discourses and norms; the sociology of the product, in which translation refers to a socio-cultural product that helps to construct identities, images, and ideologies (Wolf, 2007, p. 13). Since these trends converge in several ways, many studies with a sociological orientation combine two or even all three in an attempt to produce a more accurate scenario of translation as a sociological phenomenon. The present study focuses primarily on the first sociological trend, that of the agent, since Guinsburg’s biographical data and translational choices have contributed to shedding light on his agency.

Particularly in the last decade, the diversity of sociologically-oriented research that investigates the translator’s role, work routines, and decision-making processes, among other topics, may be symbolised by Chesterman’s call for studies that specifically address the translator (TranslaTOR Studies), i.e. the real human individual found in the backstage of the text (Chesterman, 2009, p. 13). This call is a response to a long-standing tradition of textual analysis which relegated the translator to the abstract domain of translation – a figure devoid of materiality and context.

¹ According to Simeoni (1995), the sociological status of translation also applies to the translation researcher, since he/she is a human agent who carries out socially defined practices, just like the translator. The researcher’s agency stems, therefore, from his/her “*inevitable* involvement (...) in the act of research” (Simeoni, 1995, p. 448, emphasis in the original).

This project of “humanising” the translator is further extended to the field of translation history. For Pym (1998, p. ix), the main object of such an investigation should not be the translated text or its linguistic and contextual aspects, but “the human translator, since only humans have the kind of responsibility appropriate to social causation” (Pym, 1998, p. ix). Based on such reasoning, only by considering the people involved with a given translation – including clients, patrons, and other collaborators, as well as translators themselves – does it become possible to understand why it was carried out in a given time and space.

The projection of the translator as a historical figure must distance itself from the “abstract anonymity” (Pym, 1998, p. 161) with which he or she is often viewed by scholars – whether as “a discursive product of the translation” (p. 160), whether as a professional with technical knowledge “who is supposed to abide by the reigning norms, and who is worth paying some kind of standard rate for translating” (p. 160). The translator that interests Pym is that of the material body, a biological being who “tend[s] to be more mobile than any norm, purpose or system” (p. 161). Moreover, the translator is an individual who has occasionally performed several other work-related activities, not only translation; according to Pym (1998), this contradicts the notion of “monoprofessionalism” devised by institutional discourses concerning the professional standing of translators and interpreters. History offers several examples of translators who performed other professional activities and enjoyed high social status: “some translators gain considerably more social and intellectual power than they would otherwise have as just translators. (...) If this is so, ‘translation as a profession’ (...) could paradoxically restrict the ability of translators to challenge power structures” (Pym, 1998, p. 164). This view ultimately challenges the notion that human creativity is essentially individual; for Pym (1998, p. 165), the kind of creativity inherent to translation is “by nature profoundly shared, if only with an author”.

In short, recent attempts to humanize the translator within TS and, more broadly, to consolidate the sociological approach to translation aim to highlight this professional’s decision-making power and multifaceted (social, cultural, historical, political) identity. The concept of agency has become a frequent ally to such attempts, as will be briefly discussed in the following section.

2.1 Agency and agents of translation

Not surprisingly, the sociological approach to translation has incorporated a number of theoretical, methodological, and terminological frameworks from the social sciences. One of the borrowed concepts is that of agency, whose endorsement by translation scholars has not been accompanied by systematic efforts to define it. The literature shows some exceptions to this rule. Kinnunen and Koskinen (2010, p. 6) offer a definition formulated collectively with other researchers: that of agency as “the willingness and ability to act”, in that the first term refers to the individualistic and psychological domain, while the second evokes issues of power (or its absence) connected to social constraints and norms. Khalifa

(2014, p. 14) considers agency as “being practiced in specific socio-historical conditions, as part of the interplay of power strategies and influence attributed to the agents involved, and hence it is always a site of multiple determinations and actions”.

Both definitions relate to the dual nature of agency, at the same time individual and collective, a phenomenon which only comes into effect in a given context and social group. According to Paloposki (2009, p. 190, emphasis in the original), both extremes are compatible since translation can be studied “*both* from the point of view of the individual translators’ choice and decision processes and the effects of these in the target culture, *and* from the point of view of the norms and constraints surrounding translators”.

The notion of agency necessarily implies the consideration of the person or institution that sets it in motion: the agent. One of the first attempts to conceptualise the agent of translation is proposed by Sager (1994, p. 321), according to whom such an agent “is in an intermediary position between a translator and an end user of a translation”. Grounded on communication theory, Sager offers a four-tier classification which describes the various agents involved in the production and reception of written messages: a) text producers; b) mediators (editors, translators, revisers, etc.), who effect some kind of modification in a given text; c) communication agents (commissioners, officials, advertising agents, etc.), who motivate or initiate the production of texts for specific purposes; d) text recipients. Sager’s classification is reasonably flexible since the four functions are viewed as interchangeable and may be performed by a single person at a time, except those of producer and recipient. Although Sager concedes that all four categories include functional agents, the agent of translation per se is the one who ensures the conversion of potential messages into real ones: “There must be someone entrusting the translator with a task. We call this person an agent” (Sager, 1994, p. 140).

Milton and Bandia (2009) attempt to broaden the scope of Sager’s definition by encompassing collective agents (like newspapers, magazines, publishers, and institutions) and assigning agents not only with a functional capacity but also with the ability to promote change. These authors distinguish between two kinds of agent: those who effect stylistic changes through translation and those who select new texts to be translated, thereby introducing concepts and ideas in a certain socio-cultural context (Milton and Bandia, 2009, p. 2). For the latter kind, Milton and Bandia highlight agents’ contributions as a means of disseminating knowledge and culture.

It should be noted at this point that research on agents of translation, as illustrated by Milton and Bandia’s collection of papers, tends to focus on agents of literary translation. Examples of such a trend include the works by Nóbrega and Milton (2009) regarding the role of the Campos brothers in introducing international literary movements to Brazil; by Paloposki (2009) concerning the work routines and decision processes of two Finnish literary translators; by Jones (2009) on the work of translators of Bosnian poetry into English. As a consequence of this trend, there is a research gap with regard to agents of translation working with non-literary genres, such as those associated with academic texts. By analyzing Jacó Guinsburg’s predominantly academic agency, despite its multiple

resonances, this case study aims to contribute to the literature in TS in the sense of overcoming – at least partially – such a gap.

This study focuses on the individualistic aspect of Guinsburg's agency and not on the collective aspect represented by translation norms, a choice guided by the very nature of the research corpus in question. Guinsburg's work has certainly been affected, directly or indirectly, by specific social and editorial constraints, but the nature and force of such constraints can only be speculated for the time being in view of the data collected.

3. Methodology

In order to establish Guinsburg's agency in the Debates series and to position it within the wider framework of a double agency, the selected method is the case study. According to Saldanha and O'Brien (2014, p. 206), the term "case study" is often used "as a label to describe any study focusing on a single unit of investigation" and, at the same time, to describe a specific methodological tool. This tool consists of investigating a real-life phenomenon instead of abstract facts, such as hypotheses or topics. A case may be an individual, a text or even an institution, but it does not aim to make generalisations regarding the larger population being researched – which does not prevent the researcher from predicting similar developments for that population, even if only in a (initially) speculative way.

According to Saldanha and O'Brien (2014, p. 208), a case study is "complete and interesting on [its] own merit". As a qualitative methodological tool, it has the potential to contribute to the construction of knowledge in three different ways: by exploring how and why a given phenomenon takes place; to generate hypotheses instead of testing them; to test the viability of a theoretical framework. The present case study relates to the second scenario since the research topic in question has not yet been explored by TS scholars.

As regards analytical scope, both temporal and spatial boundaries were set for this case study. The former is longitudinal in the sense that Guinsburg's role as translator in the Debates series was mapped from 1968, year of its launch, to 2016, year of the most recent addition to the series. The latter is institutional in view of the fact that Guinsburg's agency is analysed within the domain of a Brazilian publishing house and, more specifically, of one of its book series.

Data collection involved mapping all works translated by Guinsburg in the Debates series, i.e. all those in which his name appears in the translation credits, whether on its own or together with other translators. The survey covered several electronic sources, such as the translator's curriculum vitae (whose accuracy was verified through triangulation with other sources) and the websites of the Perspectiva publishing house² and Brazil's National Library. In addition, the analysis included other written sources that address Guinsburg's personal notions of translation and editing, such as interviews published in newspapers and

² In spite of a thorough presentation of its catalogue which includes the front cover, cataloging descriptors, summary, and table of contents, the publisher's website does not list the names of the translators, which proved an additional difficulty during the data collection stage.

magazines (Brumer, 2012; ‘Jacó Guinsburg: o editor’, 2013; Sá, 2017), an encyclopedia entry (‘Jacó Guinsburg’, 2017), a research article (Patriota, 2013), and a theoretical essay by Guinsburg himself (Guinsburg, 1997). From Guinsburg’s biographical information to a set of testimonies (his own and those of others) concerning people and facts that influenced his work, the assembled corpus sought to produce as accurate a sociological and historical image of this agent of translation as possible, as shown in the following sections.

4. Who is Jacó Guinsburg?

Born in Riscani, Bessarabia (present-day Moldova) to Jewish parents, Guinsburg migrated to Brazil at the age of three. Following a brief stay in the coastal city of Santos, São Paulo state, he moved with his family to the state capital in 1930 and settled in the Bom Retiro neighbourhood, which at that time housed a large Jewish community from Eastern Europe. Guinsburg, whose first language was Romanian,³ learnt Portuguese but spoke Yiddish – a Hebrew dialect derived from German – at home. He disliked school and often skipped classes while appreciating history and reading in general, the latter being an integral part of Jewish education:

I come from a group to whom reading is a part of being (...) every religious person, regardless of social class and occupation, must have authorized and acknowledged access to the Book in order to practice their Jewish creed (‘Jacó Guinsburg: o editor’, 2013, my translation).

Hence Guinsburg, having lived in a context of immigration and amidst several linguistic and social identities, became self-taught as far as language learning is concerned.

In his youth, Guinsburg became interested in politics as he came into contact with members of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) and began to attend the Jewish-oriented Youth Club. It was in this environment that he first came to know works of philosophy and literature by European writers that had been translated into Yiddish. Cinema and theatre also attracted his attention at that time.

In the 1940s, Guinsburg became familiar with the publishing milieu and, motivated by his wish to introduce to the Brazilian public books which depicted the political reality of Jews in the wake of the Holocaust, he founded the Rampa publishing house together with friends Edgar and Carlos Ortiz in 1947. Rampa was short-lived as a result of financial hardships faced by the trio and published only four books, all of them from Jewish literature. Following this failed enterprise, Guinsburg worked at Difusão Europeia do Livro (Difel), a publishing house founded by French engineer Jean-Paul Monteil, where he was able to delve deep into the French editing tradition and translate major works from that country, such as Maurice Crouzet’s *History of Civilisation* and classics from the Garnier series. In addition to working as a translator, Guinsburg also reviewed translations.

³ Information extracted from an interview (as yet unpublished) to Simone Homem de Mello as part of an event commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Perspectiva publishing house, held at Casa Guilherme de Almeida, São Paulo, in 2015. I express my gratitude to Mello for giving me access to the recording of the interview.

The 1960s proved decisive for Guinsburg as regards the consolidation of his various intellectual activities. In 1962, he spent a year in France doing an internship in publishing and attended philosophy courses at Collège de France. Following his return to Brazil, he continued to work as a translator and an editorial producer. In 1964, he was invited to teach theatre criticism at São Paulo's School of Dramatic Art (EAD), which was incorporated into the School of Communications and Arts (ECA) of the University of São Paulo (USP) three years later. However, it was in 1965 that Guinsburg fulfilled his most ambitious project, with the help of his wife Gita and some friends from the literary and theatre milieus, including poets Haroldo⁴ and Augusto de Campos: the founding of the Perspectiva publishing house, characterised from the onset by a clear editorial concept.

The first book series, entitled *Judaica*, comprises thirteen works, all of them edited, translated, and prefaced by Guinsburg. But it was with the *Debates* series, launched in 1968, that he established the contours of the cultural project he had nurtured since his time in France: "(...) the idea of a series like *Debates* always accompanied me. It had been there since the beginning of my objective; I took it up again, materialising it with the founding of *Perspectiva* (Guinsburg, 1997, p. 32, my translation). The *Debates* series, which focuses on publishing "cutting-edge essays from the various fields of arts, literature, philosophy, linguistics, human sciences" ('*Histórico*', 2017, my translation), now includes 340 books and has been responsible for introducing to the Brazilian readership classic works by scholars like Umberto Eco, Tzvetan Todorov, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Roman Jakobson, and Fernand Braudel, a feat which has made it a constant reference among academics.

Guinsburg has received major awards, including the Jabuti Prize (in the "Literary personality of the year" category in 1991 and in the "Translation" category in 2015, having shared the prize with Newton Cunha and Roberto Romano for the work *Spinoza – obra completa*) and the Shell Theatre Prize in 2009, for his contribution to the critical study of the dramatic arts in Brazil. In 2001 he became a professor emeritus at USP, ten years after having retired from the university.

4.1 Translation and editing according to Guinsburg

For Guinsburg, the *Perspectiva* publishing house has always represented a cultural project with clearly defined aims. Since his time as a scholarship holder in France, during which he established contact with French (and European) trends in theatre, editing, and essay writing, Guinsburg had nurtured the intention of introducing to the Brazilian readership a wide range of ideas and concepts that already circulated on the international stage. This editorial project would not conform to economic interests, but to the intellectual and cultural instruction of readers:

⁴ The role of Haroldo de Campos as "an editor of a prestigious publishing house, *Perspectiva*" is cursorily mentioned by Nóbrega and Milton (2009, p. 274).

Although the circulation of what is produced is an undeniable concern, our chosen criterion, for better or worse, has always been that of an intellectual, scientific or artistic qualification of the selected book. (...) the aim has always been to offer the public the best of the established heritage, as well as the current debate surrounding important issues and avant-garde incursions. ('Jacó Guinsburg: o editor', 2013, my translation)

Guinsburg's several testimonies reveal his extensive knowledge of the Brazilian publishing scenario of the time and of the position the future publishing house would occupy in it. According to him, publishers like Zahar and Difel (having worked in this one for some years) "were the ones that began to provide for the academic community in the field of humanities" (Guinsburg, 1997, p. 30, my translation) during the 1950s and 1960s, whereas others like Guanabara comprised book catalogues in the fields of medicine and engineering. Many of the books published by these companies were translations, a phenomenon which Guinsburg sees as beneficial for the academic community, since such texts "sought to overcome the fragility of the teaching of foreign languages in secondary education, which did not enable students to read books in the original languages" (p. 30, my translation). Another growing niche then was that of university publishers, which first appeared in the 1960s and whose production served mainly the academic community. It was precisely this profile that conformed to Guinsburg's cultural project:

(...) we practically perform the role of a university press. Ninety per cent of our catalogue has an academic vein. It was not a deliberate choice, we did not seek any messianic project, but based on the kind of option and the kind of process that we established for the publishing house, that is what we ended up doing and we do not regret it, quite the contrary. (Guinsburg, 1997, pp. 38-39, my translation)

As has been previously mentioned, even though *Perspectiva's* opening series was *Judaica*, the actual stage for consolidating the essay genre in Brazil was the *Debates* series. Guinsburg thus summarises the motivation for launching the series:

We intended to open the way for a new bibliography which was not being edited here in Brazil in certain fields of knowledge. It would be unfair to state that this happened in all areas, since both *Civilização Brasileira* and Zahar, as well as Difel, published books by Brazilian writers and translated foreign authors who were representative of modern trends in the academic and political scenarios. Even so, the essayistic literature, the philosophical and aesthetic debate taking place in the 1960s and 1970s were seldom rendered to our readers. It seemed a marginal source, restricted to selected intellectuals. This was the case of Umberto Eco, for instance, whose work was known only to a handful of people, including [poet, translator and literary critic] Haroldo de Campos. And it was to promote the dissemination of works by this and other writers that we devised the *Debates* series. ('Jacó Guinsburg: o editor', 2017, my translation)

Debates, whose standard visual layout "enabled the reduction of the individual costs of each book" (Guinsburg, 1997, p. 33, my translation), was launched in 1968 with the collection of essays entitled *A personagem de ficção* [The fictional character], a seminal work in Brazilian literature studies. Even though the series' opening book was written by

Brazilian authors, a considerable part of its catalogue is made up of texts originally written in other languages, in connection with Guinsburg's editorial and cultural project. In many of the sources included in the present research corpus, Guinsburg clearly positions himself with regard to what constitutes a good translation – or, to use his own expression, the “problem of translation” (Guinsburg, 1997, p. 34, my translation) – and to the qualifications required of a translator working for *Perspectiva*. Given that he acknowledges a direct relationship between the latter and university publishers, translations to be published by *Perspectiva* should be in line with those carried out for academic and scientific purposes and, in principle, under institutional rigour:

The problem of translation is a very serious one, and even more so for university presses, since they have a responsibility to the quality of the translated text, in some cases an even bigger one than that of the private editor. Not because the latter is allowed to commit atrocities, as occasionally happens. But, in fact, such atrocities cannot take place in university presses because the institutional responsibility is enormous and, since they deal with quite difficult texts, the costs of preparing originals may increase even more. (Guinsburg, 1997, p. 34, my translation)

The “atrocities” alluded to by Guinsburg often stem, from his point of view, from the lack of specialised knowledge on the part of translators of academic texts, even if they are proficient in both source and target languages. Having himself specialised in the translation of works related to his areas of expertise, such as Jewish studies and theatre criticism, Guinsburg believes that certain texts require from the translator a broad conceptual grasp of a given field of knowledge:

Depending on the nature of the text, the work is insane and, for this reason, in certain areas of expertise, one cannot and should not rely completely on a translator like the commercial translator, a professional who translates anything, given that all sciences involve highly specialised areas. (...) Therefore, what is involved is not only the attention paid to the text by the editor or the publisher. It is eventually also the problem that certain texts may only be the products of translators who are intimately connected with them. (Guinsburg, 1997, pp. 35-36, my translation)

In short, Guinsburg (1997, p. 36, my translation) considers it “imperative” for a publisher with a cultural project to weigh the implications of the decision to publish a translation. Such a decision “involves the payment of authors' rights, translation, revision” (p. 36, my translation), in other words, the activation of a network of editorial collaborators that considerably increases book production costs. Since such an investment may prove unfeasible for small publishers, Guinsburg (1997, p. 37, my translation) believes “it is up to the university press [and consequently to *Perspectiva* and its academic profile] to bear the costs, because then it will really be at the service of culture”.

Notwithstanding such costs and other linguistic and terminological problems, Guinsburg (1997, p. 36, my translation) views translation as an essential activity: “To translate or not to translate? It is preferable to have an unavoidable coefficient of loss,

which is never considered from the standpoint of journalistic criticism". Without elaborating further on the kind and scope of the loss referred to in the quotation, it is a fact that Guinsburg invested heavily in translations in the Debates series from distinct perspectives, as will be discussed in the following section.

5. Results and discussion

The survey of translated works published in the Debates series shows that Guinsburg's name appears in the translation credits of 21 of them, from 1970 to 2016. Thirteen works (61.9%) were published for the first time in the 1970s; three (14.3%) in the 1980s; two (9.5%) in the 1990s; and three (14.3%) in the 2000s. The data indicate Guinsburg's greater involvement with translation in the initial years of the Debates series, launched in 1968. However, it should be pointed out that several of these works have been successively reedited and reprinted over the years – one of them is currently in its fourth edition and fourth reprint.⁵

Moreover, the diversity of areas of knowledge of the translations conforms to Guinsburg's multiple roles in various fields of academic expertise. The most recurrent areas in the survey are philosophy (six works – 28.6%), history (four works – 19%), art (three works – 14.3%), and theatre (two works – 9.5%). The remaining areas (linguistics, aesthetics, architecture, social sciences, leisure, and criticism) are represented by one work each (28.6%).

As regards the individual or collective standing of translations attributed to Guinsburg, in nineteen of them (90.5%) he collaborated with at least one translator. Moreover, his name usually appears first in the credits to multiple translators. The markedly collaborative nature of the translations under analysis – collaborative since they involve the interaction of two or more translators, as well as of translators and other editorial agents –, in addition to exposing a common practice throughout the history of translation (O'Brien, 2011, p. 17), suggests that Guinsburg possibly performed the role of reviewer or supervisor of translations in these books, rather than having actually translated them. This would explain, for instance, his considerable productivity in 1971 (three works) and 1972 (four works), for he would have had to balance his roles as publisher of *Perspectiva* (which, needless to say, has other book series) and as chief editor of Debates (which includes presiding over meetings of the editorial board and hiring translators and other professionals) with the task of translating several works linked to distinct and highly specialised bodies of knowledge. As has been previously mentioned, Guinsburg was also a university professor and a literary and theatre critic, both professional activities which would have hindered exclusive dedication to translation. Confirming this hypothesis lies outside the scope of this article, but it could certainly be addressed by further research on Guinsburg's agency in *Perspectiva* as well as in other contexts.

⁵<https://www.editoraperspectiva.com.br/index.php?apg=detalhe&idc=289&uid=03192018134447147227093095> (Accessed: 19 March 2018).

Furthermore, one may infer from the data that Guinsburg's role as chief editor of the Debates series conditions his translating practice in the sense that it is up to him (together with the editorial board members) to make the final decision regarding which works produced in other languages will be rendered into Portuguese and by whom. The options for the latter requirement include: a) himself, working individually; b) another translator/other translators; c) himself, working with another translator/other translators. Recurrent names of translators show a close and constant collaboration between these professionals and *Perspectiva*, a finding which appears in line with Guinsburg's conviction regarding specialised knowledge as a precondition for the translator of essays. In this sense, his personal opinion concerning the activities in question and his actual role in the Debates series converge. Therefore, superimposing Guinsburg's editorial function on his translational practice evokes Pym's claim that multitasking translators enjoy greater power and status in comparison with those who work only with translation.

In summary, the survey, Guinsburg's biographical data, and the other written sources which make up the research corpus provide clues regarding the multi-tiered performance of this agent of translation in the *Perspectiva* publishing house. Such a performance is summarised in Figure 1.

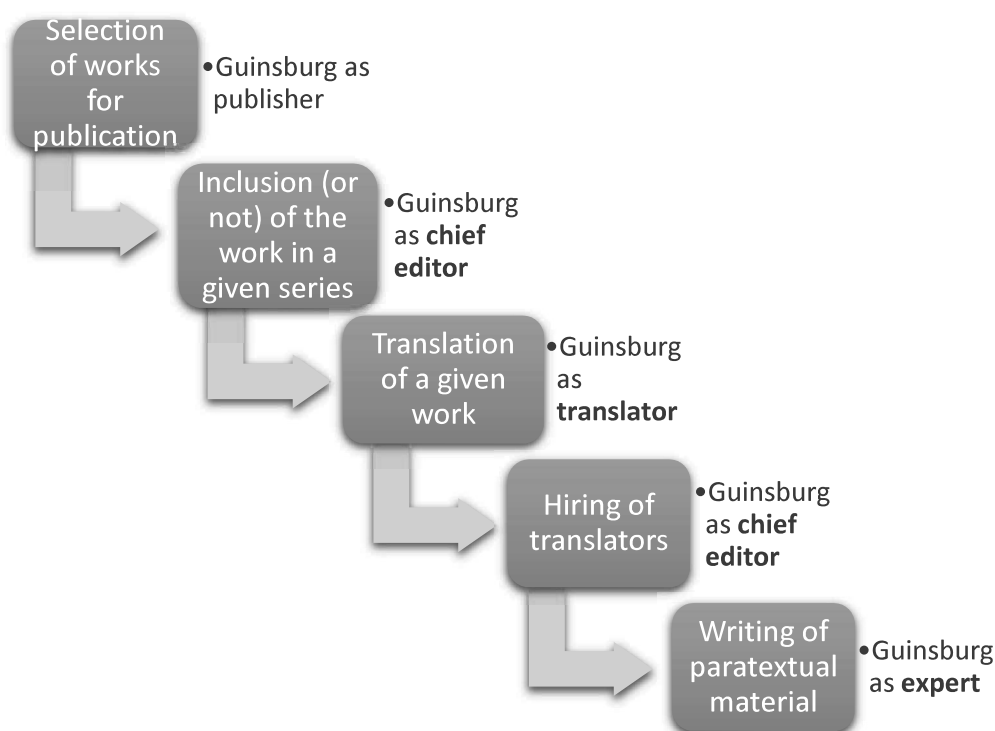


Figure 1. Jacó Guinsburg's levels of agency in the *Perspectiva* publishing house.

Figure 1 depicts, in addition to the levels of agency already addressed in this article, yet another that lies outside the present scope but may be subject to future investigation: the writing of paratextual material (prefaces/afterwords, translator's footnotes, back cover texts), whose materiality sheds light on Guinsburg's role as an expert in a given field of

knowledge.⁶ The study of paratexts complements textual analyses and ultimately reveals translational and editorial norms that are in place in a specific time, location, and social group.

6. Final remarks

Researching the agency of individuals and institutions connected with translation constitutes a major trend in both sociological and historical studies in TS. It reflects an attempt to restore to the translator and other agents of translation the visibility of the socio-cultural, historical, and political role they perform by rendering texts from one language to another. In the case of agents like Jacó Guinsburg, who relate to translation through diverse, though correlated, perspectives, this role is even more complex and subject to multiple interferences.

Guinsburg's personal history is filled with fragments that have gone on to make up his intellectual and editorial trajectory: his immigrant status; his precocious and spontaneous relationship with languages; his self-teaching and suspicion of the school's compartmentalised knowledge; his affinity with reading and books, boosted by family and religious issues; his interest in theatre and cinema. Understanding the almost encyclopedic nature of such a personal history, criss-crossed by various cultures, languages, bodies of knowledge, and influences, is therefore "crucial to understand aspects of the Brazilian culture from the second half of the twentieth century onwards" (Patriota, 2013, p. 16, my translation). Furthermore, such a personal history has enabled Guinsburg to establish an active and constant dialogue with several cultural movements and trends, hence driving him to an action – an effective agency – that still resonates today with the Brazilian intelligentsia.

Far from attempting to exhaust the analytical possibilities of Guinsburg's agency in the Debates series, this case study sought only to fill a gap within translation history research in Brazil and to set the foundations for further in-depth investigations on this topic. In addition to assessing the validity of the hypothesis mentioned in the previous section (i.e. regarding Guinsburg's possible role as reviewer of translations) and to addressing paratexts produced by him in the Debates series as well as in other book series published by Perspectiva, other aspects of possible interest for translation researchers include: the languages he translates from; the works he translates (individually or not) in the series supervised by other editors; the way his translational decisions conform to the publisher's norms; the degree of negotiation established with other editorial agents. Regardless of the analytical scope, the aim of studying individuals like Guinsburg consists of understanding how and why his professional activity has contributed to disseminating knowledge and forming a specialised readership.

In summary, the legacy built by the Debates series over the past fifty years represents a landmark for generations of Brazilian university students of the humanities. Much of this

⁶ Cf. Mello (2017) for the major role played by paratextual elements in *Textos*, another of Perspectiva's book series.

legacy owes its existence to Guinsburg's personal efforts in introducing to this particular audience a vast array of concepts and debates circulating in essays at both national and international level. Not always the most conspicuous figure amidst renowned intellectuals like the Campos brothers, Guinsburg "is the one who reads, selects and reveals; and in this dynamic, translating may acquire distinct meanings" (Mello, 2016, p. 311, my translation). From such an inclusive perspective, one may state that he has been, for many decades, a proponent of translation in its broadest sense: as a child he used it to interpret the world and, as an adult, to help others do the same.

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