

Creativity, Memory, and Translation: The Impact of World War II on Post-War Literature and Culture

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Abstract

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This study explores the profound impact of World War II on post-war creativity in literature, culture, and popular media, with a particular focus on the mediating role of translation. While the war produced widespread trauma and destruction, it also served as a catalyst for literary and cultural expression, shaping works ranging from Heinrich Böll's fiction to Anne Frank's diary, as well as veterans' memoirs, films, and video games. By adopting a qualitative and descriptive methodology, the paper examines how trauma and memory were transformed into cultural narratives and how these narratives circulated globally. Drawing on theoretical frameworks from translation studies—including Lefevere's concept of patronage, Toury's translation norms, and Venuti's notion of translator invisibility—the research highlights the ideological and cultural functions of translation in transmitting war-related texts beyond their original contexts. The analysis demonstrates that translation was not a neutral transfer but an active practice that shaped the global reception of trauma narratives, amplifying some voices while marginalizing others. Ultimately, the study concludes that post-war creativity cannot be understood without acknowledging the central role of translation as a mediator of memory and ideology. Together, literature, memoirs, films, and their translations illustrate how the cultural afterlife of World War II became part of a shared global memory.

Keywords: World War II, Cultural Memory, Trauma and Creativity, Post-War, Translation Studies.

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INTRODUCTION

World War II, which could be considered among the most tragic incidents throughout history, caused serious destruction, sorrows, and traumas all over the world. Its destructive effects were so profound that today, despite the decades that have passed after such an incident, many artists and authors are still being inspired by the effects of World War II. From novels to movies, monuments to video games, it is possible to see the inspiring impact of World War II.

In addition to its devastating political and social consequences, World War II profoundly reshaped not only the ways in which creativity was expressed but also how these expressions circulated globally. Literary works, personal diaries, and cultural productions that emerged from the war did not remain confined to their original linguistic and national contexts; rather, they reached international audiences largely through translation. As translation studies scholars such as Lefevere (1992) and Toury (1995) emphasize, translations are not neutral

transfers but culturally and ideologically mediated acts. Lefevere argues that 'rewriting — translation, anthologization, historiography, criticism, editing — influences the reception and canonization of works of literature' (Lefevere, 1992, p. xx). In a similar vein, Toury maintains that 'translation activities should (...) be regarded as having cultural significance' (Toury, 1995, p. 53), and warns that the verbal formulation of norms may carry 'other interests, particularly a desire to control behaviour' (Toury, 1995, p. 55). Thus, translation is deeply embedded in ideological frameworks.

The post-war circulation of works like Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl* or Heinrich Böll's novels illustrates how translation functioned as a bridge that transformed individual and national trauma into global memory. Thus, analyzing the impact of World War II on creativity also requires attention to the role of translation as a cultural and ideological practice that shaped the reception, interpretation, and remembrance of war across borders.

In examining the cultural and literary consequences of World War II, it is essential to recognize that memory does not operate as an exact representation of the past. As Halbwachs (2005, as cited in Balabanov & Karaman, 2021, p. 396) observes, “historical memory presents us with the past only in an abbreviated and schematic form.” This perspective frames the post-war works analysed in this study—ranging from Anne Frank’s diary to Heinrich Böll’s fiction—as cultural reconstructions of trauma rather than direct records of reality.

This study explores the profound influence of World War II on creativity in literature, culture, and popular media, while also highlighting the crucial role of translation in transmitting these works across linguistic and cultural boundaries. The first part of the research examines how German authors such as Heinrich Böll, as well as survivors and witnesses like Anne Frank and Wolfgang W. E. Samuel, transformed personal and collective trauma into literary expression. The analysis then turns to veterans’ narratives, post-war memoirs, and popular culture—including films and video games—that reimagined wartime experiences, often shaped by propaganda or commercial interests.

Building on theoretical frameworks from translation studies, the paper further demonstrates how translation mediated the global circulation and reception of these cultural products. Works such as *The Diary of Anne Frank* or Böll’s novels reached international audiences largely through translation, which functioned not only as a linguistic transfer but also as an ideological practice. Drawing on Lefevere’s concept of patronage, Toury’s translation norms, and Venuti’s notion of invisibility, the study shows how translation actively shaped which voices were amplified and how memories of war were framed for global readerships.

By analysing both creative and translational dimensions, this paper concludes that post-war cultural production cannot be understood without acknowledging translation’s role as a mediator of trauma, memory, and ideology. Together, literature, memoirs, films, and their translations reveal that the cultural afterlife of World War II was forged through a complex interplay of creativity and translation, ensuring that individual and national experiences of the war became part of a shared global memory.

In this paper, the main point to focus on is creativity, which was shaped thanks to World War II and all those who suffered from it. The first chapter of this paper is about the creativity in the post-war literature, art and culture in Germany. The main reason for Germany to be chosen is its particular lieu among the other participant countries in World War II due to its regime and policies. The second chapter of the paper is rather related to the global reflections of World War II and especially the Nazi invasion in Europe and its victims and survivors. In this chapter, several movies, TV series, and even video games which could be considered as products of the creativity shaped by the war are briefly introduced and their purpose to be created is discussed by giving academic references like journal articles and other studies as well as non-academic ones like diaries and memories of the victims and survivors of the war. The third chapter deals with the role of translation as a mediator of

trauma, memory, and ideology, drawing on Toury’s notion of norms, Lefevere’s concept of rewriting under ideological patronage, and Venuti’s discussion of translator invisibility to show how works such as Anne Frank’s *Diary* and Heinrich Böll’s novels reached global audiences and shaped the cultural afterlife of World War II.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative and descriptive methodology to explore how World War II shaped creativity in literature, culture, and translation. The analysis focuses on a combination of textual interpretation and contextual examination, seeking to understand how trauma, memory, and ideology informed cultural production in the post-war era.

The study draws on representative case studies: German post-war literature (e.g., Heinrich Böll’s fiction), personal testimonies (*The Diary of Anne Frank*, Wolfgang W. E. Samuel’s memoirs), veterans’ novels (Sven Hassel), and cultural productions in film and video games (e.g., *Schindler’s List*, *Wolfenstein* series). These examples were selected because they illustrate the intersection of individual experience, collective trauma, and cultural creativity.

In addition, the research incorporates a translation studies perspective. Building on Lefevere’s (1992) notion of patronage and ideological manipulation, Toury’s (1995) concept of translation norms, and Venuti’s (1995) discussion of translator invisibility, the study investigates how translation mediated the circulation and reception of war-related works across different cultures.

As Venuti (1995) asserts:

A translated text ... is judged acceptable ... when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer’s personality or intention ... the translation is not in fact a translation, but the ‘original’. (p. 1)

This framework enables an understanding of translation not merely as linguistic transfer but as a cultural and ideological practice that shaped the global memory of the war.

Primary sources include novels, diaries, and memoirs written by survivors, witnesses, and post-war authors, while secondary sources consist of scholarly articles, biographies, and theoretical works from literary and translation studies. The aim is not to generalize across all creative outputs of the war, but rather to highlight exemplary cases that reflect how war experiences were transformed into cultural and transnational narratives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on the cultural consequences of World War II has long emphasized its impact on literature, art, and collective memory. Scholars of German post-war literature, such as Aytaç (1995) and Koşmak (2011), have examined how authors like Heinrich Böll transformed the trauma of wartime destruction into narratives of moral responsibility and human

resilience. Memoirs and testimonies, including Wolfgang W. E. Samuel's *German Boy* (2000) and Anne Frank's *Diary* (1995), illustrate how individual experiences of loss and exile became cultural texts that resonate beyond their immediate historical contexts. These works highlight the role of creativity as a response to trauma and as a means of reconstructing identity in post-war societies.

Theories of trauma and memory further illuminate this process. According to scholars in memory studies, individual testimonies and cultural artifacts act as carriers of "collective memory," ensuring that wartime experiences are preserved and transmitted (Assmann, 2010, as cited in Balabanov & Karaman, 2021, p. 399). Literature and cultural production thus become modes of working through trauma, balancing between remembrance and representation. Studies on Holocaust literature in particular have stressed both the ethical imperatives of bearing witness and the challenges of representing unspeakable suffering (Caruth, 1996).

The literature on cultural memory emphasizes its inherently political dimension. Balabanov and Karaman (2021) argue that historical memory is being politicized, turning into an instrument of political struggle, into a politics of memory – an element of state and party politics. (P. 402) this insight is particularly relevant to post-war cultural production, where translations and adaptations of wartime narratives often served ideological ends, reinforcing dominant interpretations of the conflict while marginalizing others.

Translation played a key role in transmitting texts that have become central to Europe's shared historical identity. As Balabanov and Karaman (2021) assert, the memory of World War II and the Holocaust remains central to the European project, functioning as a cornerstone of its shared historical identity. (p. 400) the global circulation of Anne Frank's diary through translation exemplifies how personal testimony was transformed into a universal symbol of trauma, thereby contributing to both global and European memory politics.

At the same time, translation studies provide a crucial framework for understanding how these creative and testimonial works circulated globally. Lefevere (1992) highlights how translation and other forms of rewriting are shaped by ideological and cultural patronage, influencing the reception and canonization of works. Toury (1995) emphasizes the role of translational norms in determining how equivalence is established, arguing that translations are embedded in socio-cultural constraints.

Venuti (1995) critiques the tendency toward "invisibility" in Anglo-American translation culture, showing how translation practices often domesticate foreign voices. Applied to post-war cultural production, these theories reveal how translation not only transmitted trauma narratives across borders but also mediated their ideological framing. For example, the global prominence of Anne Frank's diary owes much to translation, which enabled it to become a universal symbol of wartime suffering rather than a strictly national or linguistic document.

Recent studies have also examined the role of popular culture and media in shaping collective understandings of the war.

Hollywood films such as *Schindler's List* and *The Pianist*, as well as video games like the *Wolfenstein* series, have been analysed as products of both creative imagination and ideological construction (Insdorf, 2003). These cultural products, once translated or localized, further demonstrate how wartime narratives are continuously reinterpreted for global audiences.

Taken together, the existing literature shows that post-war creativity is best understood at the intersection of trauma studies, cultural history, and translation studies. While much research has examined the literary and cultural responses to World War II, fewer studies have explicitly connected these outputs to the mediating role of translation. This study seeks to contribute to that gap by highlighting translation as a central factor in the cultural afterlife of World War II.

I. Creativity Shaped by World War II in the Post-War German Literature

It is undeniable that Germany has a special importance among all the other participants of World War II due to its politics and socio-economic conditions. Shortly after its foundation in 1920, NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party), also known as the Nazi Party, rose rapidly thanks to the support of the people of Germany, as well as the ambition of Hitler. After being imprisoned for an unsuccessful attempt of a coup d'état in 1923, Hitler wrote a novel called *My Struggle* (*Mein Kampf*), which is mainly based on his political theories and future ambitions, which would shape the destiny of Germany and thus the German people during World War II and the post-war era. According to Historian Oral Sander, the main reason why the NSDAP and Hitler gained its success and were supported by the people is the research carried out by the members of the NSDAP on the people who are not pleased with the order in Germany and using –namely abusing them. (Sander, 2010, p.21).

Here is the list of the "unpleased groups" detected by the member of the NSDAP: Former military officers, lower middle class which is consisted by a majority of bureaucrats (they were suffering from hyperinflation and negative economic conditions, as well as being jealous of the dominations of the Jewish in the economy), teachers (they were missing the old glorious days of Germany) and employers of the mining and textile sector (whose profits had decreased because of the social laws). (Sander, 2010, p. 21)

Such supporters and their reasons for supporting the NSDAP explain the conditions of Germany and the German society in the pre-World War II era, as well as the rise of the Nazi Party and Hitler. Such kind of hatred in society caused an incredible tragedy, resulting in the deaths of 593,000 civilians and the destruction of 3.37 million dwellings from 1930 to 1945. (Samuel, 2002, p.3). That means, the collapse of countless families with desolation and loss of family members as well as a lifetime-long trauma for those who survived World War II.

Inspiration caused by such an incident is obviously distinguishable in many artworks of German literature in the post-World War II era. As an illustration, author Heinrich Böll

(1917-1985), who was born in 1917 in Cologne and experienced all the processes of the Hitler era and the war, is one of the major literary figures to study in order to understand the effects of war to one's creativity. According to Prof. Dr. Gürsel Aytac:

Böll is the author of his era and his generation. He experienced World War II and considered as a duty to become spokesman of the humanity who had been targeted by the material and moral destruction of the war. He also defines himself as an author who is engaged to humanity on the ground that he claims that art has its own missions and responsibilities. (Aytac, 1995, p. 18)

Before he wrote his best-known novel *Billiards at Half Past Nine* (*Billiard um halb Zehn*) in 1959, he wrote several short stories about the war in the late 40s. For instance, his first short story which is published in 1947 and is called *Breaking the News* (*Die Botschaft*), which is about a soldier who is tasked with reporting the death of his soldier friend with whom he fought the same front to his wife, could be considered as a pioneer which enables him to write all the others works published until his death. (Koşmak, 2011, p.25). According to Dr. Fesun Koşmak: "Descriptions about the town which emphasize how deserted and desolated it is, reveal how World War II changed the life of the people, who once had a peaceful life. (...) In the last sentences of the story, the inner world of the author becomes unveiled: 'At this time, I understand that I will be imprisoned for a lifetime' " (Koşmak, 2011, p.25). Another Story of Böll called *My Precious Foot* (*Mein teures Bein*) is about a veteran who lost his foot in the war and demands a higher veteran salary from the government. After the refusal of his demand, the veteran rebels to his fate and thinks that it's much more honourable to die. (Koşmak, 2011, p.26). Both stories could be considered as reflections of the post-war German society in literature.

Böll's 1972 Nobel-winning novel, *Billiards at Half Past Nine* (*Billiard um halb Zehn*) could be considered not only as one of the best examples of the products of the creativity shaped by the trauma of War but also as a portrait of Germany from the very beginning of the 20th century to the late 50s. The novel tells the story of a definite day (September 6, 1958) of a German family, members of which are architects for three generations (Grandfather Heinrich Fähhel, his son Robert Fähhel, and his grandson Joseph Fähhel). Despite, it is a 24-hours period novel, by using flashbacks and symbols, Böll gives dramatic messages about the Nazi era and the post-war society. The main conflict in the society, as depicted through the symbols of the 'lamb' and the 'buffalo', is the struggle between the individuals who think and act independently and the opportunistic majority (Böll, 2013). According to Jessica Jazexhiu: "It is not only a struggle of self-determinism versus Nazi brainwashing, but also a struggle of creating a defining line between good and evil. Böll demonstrates that even good people could do bad things, and that the division between the two is not black and white" (Jazexhiu, 2001, p.2).

Besides those fictions, some non-fiction books are also published by the real victims, witnesses, and survivors of World War II, who also wrote their memories. For instance, Wolfgang

W. E. Samuel, a 1935-born German refugee living in the USA, published his first book, titled *German Boy: A Refugee's Story* in 2000. The book details the war years and the author's post-war life. While he tells something related to the process while he writes his book in the "Foreword and Acknowledgements" part, Samuel enables us to understand how drastic the effect of the war in creativity is:

Once I sat down and started to write, it was as if I were stepping back in time and reliving it all. I was there again. The pain was real. The smells came back, and were at times overpowering. The pictures in my mind's eye were vivid and clear, the conversations true and urgent; everything tumbled out as if it were on videotape. (...) I struggled with the difficulties of recreating those days of death and chaos, of lost hopes and shattered innocence. (Samuel, 2000, xiv)

His second book, *The War of Our Childhood: Memories of World War II*, which contains the narratives from some German, Polish, and Czech survivors of World War II who were children like Samuel while the war was going on, could be considered a comprehensive work to see and understand the creativity to express sorrows and traumas caused by the War.

II. Creativity Shaped by World War II in the Rest of The World

a. Non-Fiction Works Created After World War II

Due to the fact that World War II is a universal process and a hot war, its victims are not limited to those who were in Germany. Throughout Europe, which is suffered due to Nazi invasion and other fascist dictatorships in that era, many people faced and experienced such kind of sorrows, either when they are hiding or escaping from the invasion in order to save their lives or forced to die in concentration camps or fighting against the enemies in order to defend their motherland or had to become expelled or immigrate in order to recreate a new life for themselves. Such kind of real-life experiences could be read in diaries, memoirs, and other compilations related to such people and such experiences in order to see the creativity in the way post-war traumas are expressed or reported.

One of the best-known examples in this issue is the *Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank, a 1929-born Jewish German girl who had to migrate to Amsterdam shortly after his father, Otto Frank, who had already migrated in 1933 because of boycotts to Jewish businesses. After the Nazi invasion of the Netherlands in 1940, she had to hide and lead an isolated life for almost 2 years in the "secret annex" of his father's office with another Jewish family. What changed her life is a blank cloth diary which she received as a birthday gift. According to Anne Frank's biography in the Salem Press Biographical Encyclopedia, this diary was the only opportunity for her to express herself as well as overcome her hopelessness:

For the next two years, Anne wrote in her diary to an imaginary friend she named "Kitty." After everyone moved to the secret annex, Anne commented that she did not want to simply write down the bare facts about her life; she wanted the diary itself to

be her friend. To overcome her loneliness, she confided her hopes and fears about the war, created vivid character sketches of everyone who lived in the secret annex, and recorded her gradual transformation from a child into a young woman. (Salem 2014)

Here is an example of her self-expression about the Nazi invasion and Jewish victimhood in Amsterdam:

In the evening, when it is dark, I often see rows of good, innocent people accompanied by crying children, walking on and on, bullied and knocked about until they almost drop. No one is spared –each and all join in the march of death. (Frank, 1993, p.48)

Entries and letters in Frank's dairies are not only the narrative of personal pain and sorrows, but also informative about the conditions and incidents during the invasion, as well as Frank's hopes as a young girl. As an illustration, in an entry dated Saturday, 20 June 1942, some information about the invasion and several restrictions for the Jewish in Holland were given objectively:

After May 1940, good times rapidly fled, first the war, then the capitulation, followed by the arrival of the Germans, which is when the suffering of us Jews really began. Anti-Jewish decrees followed each other in quick succession. Jews must wear a yellow six-pointed star, Jews must hand in their bicycles, Jews are banned from trams and are forbidden to drive, are allowed to do their shopping between three and five o'clock, and then only in shops which have a placard as 'Jewish Shops.' (Frank, 1993. p.4)

In another entry dated Monday, 9 November 1942, she expresses her hopes about the war:

'This is the beginning of the end,' everyone was saying, but Churchill, the British Prime Minister, who had probably heard the same thing in England, said, 'This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.' Do you see the difference? There is certainly reason for optimism. Stalingrad, a Russian town, which they've already been defending for three months, still hasn't fallen into German hands. (Frank, 1993, p. 47)

The diary, which has been published since 1947 and translated into over fifty-five languages so far, has always been one of the most popular and argued non-fiction works about World War II. When the sentences quoted above are analysed, one could ask this question in a righteous doubt: "Are these sentences really products of Frank's her own creativity, or is this diary partly or totally fake and fiction?" There is an answer given by the Salem Press Biographical Encyclopaedia to this question:

To answer doubts raised in the 1950s and 1960s about whether Anne really wrote the diary, experts in documentation for the state of the Netherlands carefully examined the manuscript and confirmed it was authentic. These findings and more details about the different diary versions appeared in *The Diary of Anne Frank: The Critical Edition*, published in the United States in 1988. A definitive edition, restoring nearly 30 percent

of the original diary contents previously deleted by Anne's father, was published in an English translation in 1995. (Salem, 2014)

Whether fact or fiction, Frank's diary is so adequate to see the tragedy caused by World War II from the point of view of a young girl.

Besides diaries, some post-war novels written by the veterans of World War II, like Sven Hassel (1917-2012) could also be counted among the non-fiction works owing to the fact that they contain real-life memories and traces from the author's military service during the war. Hassel, who is originally from Denmark, migrated to Germany to join the army in 1937. In 1939, he drove a tank in the invasion of Poland and was imprisoned by the Red Army after the fall of Berlin and released in 1949. (Vat 2012) This imprisonment could be considered as an initial point in his career as an author. According to a brief biography extracted from a news report related to him published in the Guardian:

"While a prisoner, he started work on his first and best-known book, *Legion of the Damned*, which was published in Danish in 1953 and in English in 1957. Its success enabled him to recruit his wife as an editor and rewriter. Hassel fell victim to a rare paralyzing disease from which he recovered fully after nearly two years in 1959, when he resumed his writing career. Five years later, the family moved to Barcelona." (Vat 2012).

Until his death at the age of 95, he wrote fourteen novels which are related to World War II and the Nazi soldiers. It is not difficult to understand that all of his works are reflection of his memories and experiences throughout war years, even only when the names of the books (*The Legion of the Damned*, *Comrades of War*, *Assignment Gestapo*, *SS General* and such) and names of the characters –namely the nicknames of the soldiers like *The Old Man*, *Legionnaire* and even the author himself. When Hassel's works are studied, a specific question, which is related to both his talent and his career as an author, reveals: If Hassel had not done his military service in Germany and in World War II era, would he have had the same creativity to write such type of novels regardless of having such experiences and memories? Would it be possible for him to end up as such an author? Undoubtedly, the main element that shaped his creativity is not only World War II, but also his own desire for military service. According to the biography on his official website, after having completed his compulsory military service in Denmark and served in the German Army, he also had intended to join the Legion of the Foreigners of France.

In brief, the war itself is such an inevitable force that compels people to create, whether they are professional or not.

b. Creativity Shaped by World War II in Propaganda Works, and Popular Culture

Products of the creativity that are shaped by World War II are not limited to only literary works by the victims. Technology and entertainment opportunities, which have been



getting more and more developed throughout the decades that followed World War II, enable people to express their creativity or use the war incidents for propaganda for their own political views by using cinema, television, and even video games.

Namely, post-World War II movies, which are related to Holocaust and the Hitler era, especially Hollywood-made ones, aim to highlight the tragedies of the Jewish people by using scenarios and decorations that are constructed with dramaturgical intensity, rather than inform people or express tragedies objectively. Most of the post-World War II movies, particularly well-known and contemporary ones –made in the 1990s or 2000s like *Schindler's List* (1993), *The Pianist* (2002), *Hitler: Rise of Evil* (2003), *Downfall* (2004) are all about the Holocaust or Nazi Era are based on the victimhood of the Jewish people, despite of the fact that none of the movie's producers or directors are Jewish originated nor a war victim.

The creativity in such a type of commercial post-war cinema is totally different from the creativity of the authors mentioned in the previous chapters. The main difference is that the creativity of the movie producers depends more on the economic interests. Namely, the producers and movie companies limit themselves and focus on the Jewish victimhood more, due to the fact that they know that their ratings would be lower if they made movies related to anti-Semitism or the German victimhood.

However, a computer game released by an American Software Company, Id Software in 2014 called *Wolfenstein: the New Order* breaks such kind of clichés with its story, which is based on an alternative history. The game is set in the 1960s, two decades after World War II had ended, and Germany had won the war and the Nazi regime had taken over the world. The player controls a World War II veteran, William "B.J." Blazkowicz, who fights against the Nazis. Despite the fact that the game has the same consequences as the Hollywood propaganda movies, at least it could be considered more creative compared with them, due to its scenario as well as futuristic and a bit surreal views about the Nazi Regime and the post-war era.

This is the most recent and developed one of the eight games in the *Wolfenstein* series, which have been released by the same company since 1981. The third and the best-known game of the series, which was released in 1992 and called *Wolfenstein 3D*, has the same character as protagonist, William "B.J." Blazkowicz, and the story of the game is Blazkowicz's trial to escape from Castle Wolfenstein, a German Prison. In both games, Blazkowicz struggles with Nazi soldiers and kills them in order to survive and win the game; otherwise, he dies, namely shares the same destiny as the many victims and veterans of the real World War II.

These two games are only two of the many World War II-related games produced so far. It is worth questioning and discussing whether such games that are played particularly by children and adolescents, are adequate to express the terror of the real war, or whether it decrease the value of the memories

of veterans, witnesses, and other victims, as the propaganda works like Hollywood movies do?

III. The Role of Translation in Post-War Cultural Creativity

While the creative outcomes of World War II have predominantly been studied in terms of literature, art, and popular culture, translation also played a crucial role in shaping how these works were circulated, received, and reinterpreted across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Translation Studies provides valuable insights into how trauma narratives, war memories, and ideological discourses traveled beyond their original contexts and became part of a shared global memory.

Firstly, translation functioned as a means of transmitting trauma literature into the international sphere. The case of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, translated into over fifty-five languages, demonstrates how translation allowed an individual testimony to become a universal symbol of wartime suffering (Frank, 1993). Similarly, Heinrich Böll's works, which addressed the moral and social devastation of post-war Germany, reached a wide international readership largely through translation. Without translation, such texts would have remained limited to their national literary systems, but their global impact illustrates the translator's mediating role in transforming individual and national memory into collective cultural heritage.

Secondly, translation in the post-war era was embedded in ideological and political frameworks. As André Lefevere (1992) argues, translations are subject to patronage systems, ideological pressures, and cultural constraints. In the context of World War II, publishers and institutions often prioritized the translation of works that aligned with democratic, humanistic, or anti-totalitarian values. Conversely, some narratives—particularly those presenting German civilian victimhood—were marginalized or selectively translated. This demonstrates how translation actively shaped the global narrative of the war by amplifying certain voices while silencing others.

Thirdly, translation contributed to the dissemination of propaganda and popular culture. As Lawrence Venuti (1995) highlights, translation can either render foreign voices visible or erase cultural difference through domestication. The subtitling and dubbing of Hollywood Holocaust films such as *Schindler's List*, *The Pianist*, or the localization of video games like *Wolfenstein* illustrate how translation not only enabled global consumption but also reinforced particular ideological readings of World War II. These translated cultural products, while often commercially driven, influenced younger generations' perceptions of the war, raising questions about whether translation in such contexts preserved historical memory or diluted its gravity.

Moreover, Venuti (1995) accentuates that: "Translation is the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target-language reader.... Whatever difference the translation conveys is now imprinted by the target-language culture, assimilated to its positions of intelligibility, its codes and ideologies." (p. 18)

Moreover, examining translation within this framework demonstrates the importance of cultural transfer in war-related creativity. As Gideon Toury (1995) emphasizes, translation norms are shaped by socio-cultural conditions. Post-war translation choices reveal how traumatic experiences were selectively reconstructed and canonized within world literature and cultural industries. Thus, translation emerges not only as a linguistic act but also as a cultural and ideological process that mediates the memory of World War II for subsequent generations.

Last but not least, integrating translation into the analysis of post-war creativity highlights how the circulation of trauma narratives, the politics of publishing, and the global spread of cultural products were inseparable from translational activity. Translation Studies provides the theoretical tools to understand how war, memory, and creativity were not only expressed but also transmitted, transformed, and reinterpreted across borders.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of post-war creativity demonstrates that World War II was not only a political and military catastrophe but also a powerful catalyst for artistic, literary, and cultural production. German authors such as Heinrich Böll transformed personal trauma and social devastation into narratives that questioned morality, memory, and responsibility. At the same time, personal testimonies like *The Diary of Anne Frank* and memoirs by survivors and veterans illustrate how individual experiences of loss, exile, and resilience became enduring contributions to world literature. Popular culture—through cinema, television, and video games—further reimagined the war, often shaped by ideological and commercial interests.

This study has shown that post-war creativity and translation not only preserved memories of World War II but also actively shaped their reception across generations. As Balabanov and Karaman (2021) argue, memory is not only about the past; it is a powerful tool for constructing the present and projecting the future. (p. 399) Translations of wartime literature thus ensured that trauma narratives were not confined to national contexts but became integral to the formation of a shared global and European memory.

A key dimension that emerges alongside these cultural outputs is the role of translation. Without translation, post-war literature and testimonies would have remained confined to their original linguistic and national contexts. The global recognition of works such as Anne Frank's diary or Böll's novels, as well as the international reach of Holocaust cinema and war-themed video games, illustrates how translation mediated the transmission of trauma, ideology, and cultural memory. Translation also functioned as a site of power, where ideological choices determined which narratives would be amplified and which would remain marginal.

Ultimately, creativity in the post-war era—whether in literature, memoirs, or popular culture—cannot be separated from translation. Both processes reflect how memory is constructed, negotiated, and disseminated across borders. Together, they reveal that the cultural afterlife of World War II has been shaped not only by those who created original works but also

by those who translated them, ensuring that the pain, sorrow, and resilience of wartime experiences became part of a shared global memory.

Despite the fact that the effects of World War II on creativity are not limited to the examples so far given, such artwork expresses the way that creators use his/her inspiration caused by World War II. Thus, such type of artworks and their purpose to be created in terms of World War II leads one to the same conclusion: One's creativity caused by war is shaped thanks to politics and the geography he/she lives in, as well as the ideology by which he or she was educated. However, undoubtedly, the common side of all those artworks created in the post-war era is pain and sorrow.

Whether fiction or non-fiction, memorial or commercial, realistic or utopic, works which have been created thanks to World War II shows, at least the ones which are studied in this paper, demonstrate the dramatic effects of the war and the violence and the way they shaped the creativity of contemporary and the next generations. People will continue to create by utilizing the inspiration caused by World War II, alas, the ones who lost their lives in the war shall not be recreated.

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