

THE CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL IMPLICATIONS AND EFFECTS OF
THE THREE ARMENIAN TRANSLATIONS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE'S *THE RAVEN*

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Presented to the
Department of English & Communications
In partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

American University of Armenia
Yerevan Armenia

May 24, 2018

Abstract

This research is an analysis of the three Armenian translations of *The Raven* by Edgar Allan Poe. Through the content analysis of the concepts proposed by multiple translation theorists and researchers, this comparative analysis aims to reveal the reasons behind multiple translations of the same work in the same language and how the socio-political and historical contexts can impact the (re)translations and vice versa. The analysis reveals the two-way interaction and influence between the socio-cultural and historical context (Soviet-era and post-Soviet era) and the three translations, as well as the reasons behind specific translation-related decisions made by the (re)translators.

Introduction

The well-known poem by the famous American poet Edgar Allan Poe, *The Raven*, has more than four Armenian translations. Taking into consideration the fact that many works by some well-known authors have not been translated into Armenian at all, the case of *The Raven* and its multiple translations is curious and uncovers various layers of culturally and historically significant revelations regarding the conventions of the time periods during which each translation was done. The rich history and heritage of Armenian translations have long been and continue to be some of the most fundamental milestones of the Armenian nation. In the context of modern Armenia—that has persisted through the Soviet Union and has a small population—the phenomenon of more than one existing translations of a single text within the Armenian language raises numerous questions.

Edgar Allan Poe was famous for his Gothic stories and mysterious writing, as well as his literary criticism. In his essay *The Philosophy of Composition*, Poe provides a detailed explanation regarding the methods, approaches and reasons that led him to write *The Raven*. Such information, along with Poe's biographical peculiarities and literary context (Romanticism), provides resourceful basis for researching the Armenian translations and obtaining insight into the motifs, unique features and intentions of the original text, such as the strict rhyming patterns and the fact that being composed during the Romantic Movement has granted the poem inherent qualities of dissidence.

The three Armenian translations reviewed in a chronological order in this research have been done by three different translators, each unique and interesting in their own contemporary setting and context. The initial translation by Khachik Dashtents, an Armenian linguist, author, philologist and pedagogue, was done in 1937. The second translation, technically a retranslation,

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was done by Vigen Babayan, an Armenian activist and translator, in 1977. The third translation (second retranslation) analyzed in this study was done by Samvel Mkrtchayn, a translator, editor, and the author of many publications, in 2009. The first two translations had been published while Armenia was still part of the Soviet Union and the last one was published in post-Soviet Armenia.

Drawing from “the analytic of translation,” a method of assessing and examining translations, the three translations are reviewed from the perspective of the 12 deforming tendencies found in translations, as suggested by translation theorist Berman (1985), leading to a plethora of significant revelations regarding the socio-cultural context in which the given translator lived and practiced. The Retranslation Hypothesis—also proposed by Berman—which suggests that initial translations are incomplete and the subsequent retranslations become increasingly complete by becoming similar to the original, helps gain an understanding about the need of multiple other translations of the exact same work. In the case of the three translations analyzed in this research, the hypothesis clearly can be proven, as the concepts of domestication and foreignization of Venuti (1995) appear to be at work: Dashtents’ initial translation is reader-oriented due to multiple omissions and transformations, while Mkrtchyan’s translation, which includes foreign word(s), is author-oriented.

Moreover, a brief overview of each historical era (in this case, Soviet and post-Soviet eras), also provides a wide range of significant insights into the intentions of the three translations. In this context, the three translations can be considered dissidence, as the concept of translation being dissidence has been suggested by various theorists, such as Tymoczko (2006). A study by Nikoghosyan (2013) about the Armenian translations from 1991-2013 and Russian as the intermediary language for Armenian translations, coupled with the translators’ biographies

and the implications and restrictions of the Soviet Union, further reinforces the idea that the three translations of *The Raven* have been influenced by the historical context and have influenced the historical and socio-cultural context of their respective time periods.

Literature Review

Edgar Allan Poe's poem, *The Raven*, has multiple translations in Armenian. When taking into consideration the fact that there are many literary pieces that have not been translated into Armenian, the abundance of the translations of *The Raven* poses multiple questions, such as; why there was a need to retranslate this particular poem; how the social, cultural, linguistic, and historical contexts affect and shape the need for translation and especially retranslation.

In order to acquire a solid understanding of the three Armenian translations, it is crucial to have clear perceptions about the original text and the author's intentions regarding that text. Poe's essay *The Philosophy of Composition* (published in 1846, a year after the publication and widespread success of *The Raven*) is an irreplaceable resource that provides comprehensive insight into the author's mind and intentions. The essay becomes even more valuable as the author himself penned it and provided arguments and propositions as to how and why the poem had been composed the way it had. Poe suggests three guiding points that helped determine the poem's nature. The length, the province (the subject, the topic) and the tone were predetermined by Poe instead of being revealed themselves during the composition of the poem. Moreover, he suggests a very rough calculation approach regarding the length and the rhythm of the poem, which further proves that he had specific intentions and purposes for it (Poe, 1846).

Further insight into Poe's authorial figure, as well as the poem, is provided by Buranelli (1977) in his examination of Poe's life and authorial figure. Poe's character has been and still is

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mystical and controversial. Therefore, Buranelli's analysis is significant because he bases his analysis heavily on Poe's biography, hardships, career and, most importantly, historical context. Poe's historical context renders him a Romantic author and many features of Romanticism are evident within his writings, such as the fascination with the ancient mysteries, legends and especially the Gothic in the case of *The Raven*. Another interesting feature of the Romantic Movement was the rejection of authorities and the value placed on individuality and freedom (Buranelli, 1977). When considering the poem in this context, much about the Armenian translators' choices becomes clear, as Dashtents, Babayan and Mkrtychyan all had both personal and more objective reasons to resort to rejecting the politically accepted conventions via literary activism.

The analysis of the three translations is set within the scopes of Berman's (1985) framework suggested in his essay *Translation and the Trials of the Foreign*, where he suggests a method of analyzing translations called the analytic of translation. In the scope of this method, Berman proposes 12 tendencies that deform any kind of translation and render it colossally different from the source text. The 12 deforming tendencies are the following:

1. Rationalization.
2. Clarification.
3. Expansion.
4. Ennoblement and popularization.
5. Qualitative impoverishment.
6. Quantitative impoverishment.

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7. The destruction of rhythms.
8. The destruction of underlying networks of signification.
9. The destruction of linguistic patternings.
10. The destruction of vernacular networks or their exoticization.
11. The destruction of expressions and idioms.
12. The effacement of the superimposition of languages.

(Berman, 1985)

Approaching the analysis of the Armenian translations from Berman's analytic of translation and deforming tendencies helps uncover and acquire significant information about the socio-cultural impact of each translator and their choices regarding specific elements of the source language and its execution in the target language.

Building on Berman's (1985) method and what is found within such analysis, the Retranslation Hypothesis, initially proposed by Berman himself and explained in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Baker & Saldanha, 2008), is applied to the three Armenian translations, two of which are retranslations technically. The Retranslation Hypothesis emerged during the late 20th century. The hypothesis argues that translation is incomplete inherently and only retranslations help to reach completion. The incompleteness of the initial translation is found within the tendency to render the translation readable, thus altering the originality of the source text and naturalizing it to make it compatible with the target culture. This also explains the deforming tendencies proposed by Berman (1985). Consecutive translations, retranslations strictly speaking, tend to look beyond the motif of naturalization and aim to become similar to

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the original text (Baker & Saldanha, 2008) Berman also suggests that the need for retranslation(s) is brought about by the “aging” of the initial translation, which is logical as cultural and linguistic changes result in changes in translation conventions (Baker & Saldanha, 2008). The hypothesis is not necessarily true in all cases (Dastjerdi & Mohammadi, 2013) but the translations of *The Raven* clearly adhere to its principles.

Considering the historical context is also crucial when explaining the phenomenon of one poem having multiple translations in one language. Bournoutian (2006) provides a precise overview of the Soviet era and the Armenian Republic, particularly how the Russian policies impacted the socio-cultural conventions and traditions of Armenia. This is a vital point, as most Armenian translators have used Russian as an intermediary language. A brief examination of what has been and how has been translated into Armenian presents an apparent pattern of using Russian as an intermediary language. Nikoghosyan (2013) has published an analysis of all the translations that have been done into Armenian after the independence of 1991. The concept of intermediary language is a vital point in considerations of how these three translations have also displayed elements of political dissidence and disagreement. According to the study, Russian had the highest percentage among the major languages from which works of fiction (and not only) have been translated into Armenian from 1991-2013 (Nikoghosyan, 2013).

From this perspective, which links translations and specific socio-political eras, Tymoczko (2006) introduces descriptive translation studies in her article *Translation: Ethics, Ideology, Action*. The latter is a practice that considers translations within their cultural and political contexts, as an important development within the reconsideration of translations’ role and essence (Tymoczko, 2006). She explains the connections between imperial control, censorship, and translations – concepts that can be further researched and unveil the dynamics of

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the Armenian translation scene. Venuti (1995), another famous translation theorist, presents the domesticating and foreignizing methods of translation, which he constructed on the basis of Friedrich Schleiermacher's (Biguenet & Schulte, 1992) differentiation of reader-oriented and author-oriented types of translation. Venuti further argues that each method has its own implications, and in the case of the Armenian translations, especially Babayan's transliteration and Mkrtchyan's usage of an English word, it is evident how the foreignizing method of translation functions as dissidence and manifests political disagreement.

Central Research Questions

Question #1: What peculiarities and intentions are displayed in Poe's *The Raven* that create a basis for the multiple Armenian translations?

Question #2: What do the three Armenian (re)translations of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* reveal about the socio-cultural and historical contexts of the given time periods in Armenia?

Methodology

This research relies on content analysis of multiple translation theorists, as well as biographers, critics and essays as means for examining and analyzing the three Armenian translations of the poem.

Berman's method of "the analytic of translation" and the 12 deforming tendencies are applied to the Armenian translations in order to obtain an understanding regarding the socio-cultural context of the given time-period, as well as the decision making processes in terms of omissions and transformations found in the translations. Another concept by Berman, the

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Retranslation Hypothesis, stating that each following retranslation of the original text becomes more complete and similar to the source text, is applied to the three observed translations, further explaining the reasons behind specific phenomena found in the Armenian translations, such as the use of transliteration. The concepts suggested by other translation theorists, including Venuti (domestication and foreignization) and Tymoczko (translation as political activism), have also been applied in the case of the Armenian translations, revealing historically significant and important features.

It is important to mention that there are other translations of *The Raven* that have not been included in this research because 1) the three translations included were done by some of the most central literary and translation figures during some of the most significant historical time periods in Armenia and 2) the inclusion of each available translation would surpass the scopes and limitations of this kind of research paper.

Research Findings and Analysis

As this paper focuses on one of Poe's most famous literary compositions – *The Raven* and its three Armenian translations – and aims, through comparative analysis, to display the significance of such translations and the socio-cultural changes reflected through the differences found in the (re)translations, understanding Poe's background and intentions behind writing the poem is vital.

One of the most significant authors of the 19th century has left a legacy of gothic stories and poems that have not lost the characteristics of suspense and horror amid modern compositions. Edgar Allan Poe, known as the forerunner of short stories, wrote some of the most ghastly stories and one of the most fearfully enticing poems of all times. Born in Boston in a family of actors, orphaned at the age of three, adopted by the Allans, dismissed from the University of Virginia and the US Military Academy at West Point, Poe started to display his writing talents when he was in the army in Boston and published some volumes of writing that were unnoticed initially. After struggling financially during the life and after the death of his foster father, who never legally adopted the writer, Poe had directed several journals for ten years and simultaneously published his writings, which became prominent during the early 1840s. In 1836, he married his cousin Virginia, after whose death Poe became involved in multiple romantic affairs and died mysteriously before his second marriage (Poetry Foundation, 2017).

The Raven (see Appendix A) was published in January of 1845 in the *Evening Mirror*. Having struggled most of his life from financial issues, due to which the author was compelled to work as an editor for various journals and magazines, thus becoming a notable literary critic, Poe ultimately gained attention and fame after the publication of the poem, which became one of his

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most renowned works worldwide (Fisher, 2008). The gothic and dark poem, famous for the usage of alliterations and internal rhymes, tells the story of the encounter between a young man troubled with the memories of his deceased lover and a raven, capable of human speech. Poe's literary criticism provides insight into the intention of the poem and its composition.

Poe's literary heritage, besides short stories and haunting poetry, also includes literary criticism. It is notable that Charles Dickens' *Barnaby Rudge* was reviewed by Poe, and the raven in Poe's famous poem is said to be inspired by Dickens' pet, Grip the Raven (Quinn, 1941). A significant display of Poe's critical and poetic combination is the essay *The Philosophy of Composition*, written by Poe in 1846, one year after the publication of *The Raven*. In the essay, Poe displays the character of a literary critic and explicates the underlying layers that make up the writing process of his famous poem.

Revealing the steps by which the author reached any and every decision regarding the composition of the poem, Poe presents three major factors as the driving forces that underline (or, otherwise, should underline) the process of writing a poem. One of the most central points in the essay is that of meticulous planning in regard to the composition of the poem. Poe's statement and the intention of writing this essay is to manifest that the poem has been planned in detail in a manner that is similar to the accuracy of "a mathematical problem" (Poe, 1846). Hence, the explication of the three factors—length (extent), province (idea) and tone. A brief review of each will reveal what the intention of *The Raven* was throughout its composition and writing.

The length or extent, as Poe calls it, determines the effect that is desired to be produced by the poem. A poem cannot exceed "the limit of a single sitting" (Poe, 1846) because in order to produce an effect, a certain degree of brevity is required. Thus, a type of mathematical approach

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is inevitable in the case of *The Raven*, to reach the desired effect within the limit of a single sitting—reading a given poem once and perceiving its meaning as opposed to multiple readings being necessary for achieving the same understanding. Taking these contemplations into consideration, Poe chose “a length of about one hundred lines” for his poem (Poe, 1864).

Having determined the length of the prospective composition, Poe introduces the understanding of “province”. Cambridge Dictionary defines “province” as “a subject or activity of special interest, knowledge, or responsibility” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). The author, by the term “province”, therefore means the more global idea of the work—the exact concept that the poem is to transmit. According to Poe, the single legitimate and proper province of a poem is beauty because it reveals pure, elevating and intense pleasure.

The tone of the poem is in direct contact with the province—the beauty—because the province is expressed via the tone. As sadness or, more specifically, melancholy is the most appropriate poetical tone according to Poe. Beauty, thus, is fully transmitted through that exact tone in completion.

Having determined these three aspects, Poe details the method or process through which the repeated “Nevermore” came into existence and became the keyword of the poem. Poe’s initial idea was to come up with a keystone, in a way, which would be shaped and molded as the cornerstone and base of the poem, and in the considerations of such techniques, he settled on the refrain as its usage was universal. According to Cambridge Dictionary, a refrain is a “short part of a poem that is repeated, especially between the verses” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). The essence of the refrain is found in its repetitive characteristic and Poe’s intention was to create different effects but simultaneously maintain the repetitiveness of the refrain. Building on this, Poe’s choice of a single word, “nevermore,” as the refrain is understandable: the refrain had to be

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the same throughout the poem but its application and produced effect were to be various. As the presence of a refrain had been determined, dividing the poem into stanzas was a direct consequence as refrains are situated in between verses, as mentioned above. Choosing the vowel “o” as the most sonorous sound and the consonant “r” as the most pronounceable, as Poe’s wording precedes, the word “nevermore” was “impossible to overlook” (Poe, 1846).

As the word was to be repeated constantly, and a human character, who is capable of reason, constantly repeating a word did not work properly, Poe presents the idea of creating an animal character that would be able to communicate the word. He states that the initial idea was a parrot but a raven suited more with the predetermined melancholic tone of the poem. At this point, it is noteworthy how, according to this essay, intertwined and thought-out the connections between the various and complex aspects of this poem are. The mere notion of choosing a raven instead of a parrot – which would be the first and more logical option for a talking animal in the given context – displays an extreme meticulousness and devotion on the part of the author to his work.

Having determined the above-mentioned, Poe chose the death of a beautiful woman to be the most supreme poetical theme. From this choice stems the relationship and the dynamics of the interaction between the man and the raven. According to Poe, what made the constant repetition and the question-answer format work for the most part of the poem was creating a certain quality within the man’s character that would gain satisfaction and pleasure from asking certain questions and receiving a certain answer—virtually, that single answer—and gradually, the character’s questions were to become intentionally worded and formatted in a way as to desire and expect the word “nevermore” as the answer (Poe, 1846).

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The detailed exposition of the poem's composition coming from the author himself provides irreplaceable and exclusive information regarding the intentions of *The Raven*. However, it is also resourceful to consider Poe's characteristics as an author in a more general sense. Two aspects of Poe's authorial image are of great importance to the interpretation of the poem's Armenian translations—romanticism and symbolism.

Given the historical era of Poe's lifetime, he has been widely accepted as a romantic author. Romanticism, prominent during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, featured a strong sense of individual freedom, fascination with nature and, of course, the mysticism of the medieval era ("What is Romanticism," n.d.). Buranelli (1977) provides a comprehensive analysis of Poe's emergence and development as an author in his book *Edgar Allan Poe*. Drawing quite considerably from Poe's biography and historical context, Buranelli states that Poe's authorial peculiarities—the unification of the mystical and the beautiful—can simply be traced to the literary convention of his era. From the Romantic perspective, resistance to authority was implied, as individuality and freedom were primary values to the literary movement. (Buranelli, 1977). This is a central point in viewing the Armenian translations as types of political resistance and will be mentioned later.

Poe's romantic tendencies in *The Raven* become clearer when considering Romanticism's emergence as a reaction to Classicism. As such, Romanticism strived to display emotions and sentiments that could be attained beyond the scopes of general consciousness and intellect. In their attempts to achieve such manifestation, romantic authors consulted and used the aspects of the mind that were rarely used previously (e.g. the fantastic and nightmares) (Buranelli, 1977, p. 28). This also explains the popularity of Gothic elements during the early nineteenth century. Poe's heritage abounds in mysteries and the Gothic (*The Raven* being a valid example of the

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Gothic in Poe's writing). Such application of the imagination is linked to Poe's fascination with using elements and themes found in, as Buranelli labels, "half-dreams" – the blurred instances between wakefulness and sleep where intellect becomes secondary (Buranelli, 1977). A raven capable of human speech does resemble an element that can be found in half-dreams.

Deeming Poe a Romantic writer, however, does not imply an overly emotional character. Despite his tendency to resort to the [tragic] narrative of his life and his imagination in order to acquire a basis for his works, Poe did not approve of emotional imbalance in writing (Buranelli, 1977, p. 31). This can be observed in *The Raven* and what Poe argues in *The Philosophy of Composition*. The poem's theme as well as the setting and the development is emotional—the demise of a bereaved lover, whose pain intensifies gradually. Nonetheless, the technical aspects of the poem – the internal rhymes, the construction of rhythmical patterns, the consistent number of lines within each stanza and whatnot – display a strict, thorough, and even, as Poe put it, mathematical approach to the composition, which is one of the most prominent elements of its essence.

The general and particular scopes and singularities of the poem provide a starting point for the analysis of the Armenian translations. The analysis is set within two general contexts. Firstly, the translations will be analyzed according to Berman's (1985) analytic of translation, and based on the results, the retranslation hypothesis will be applied. Secondly, each of the translations will be examined in the historical contexts and thus, the influence of given eras on translation choices will become evident.

The Analytic of Translation and the Retranslation Hypothesis

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Berman proposed the analytic of translation—a type of textual analysis that observes the deformations that occur in the process of translation. Within this analytic, Berman defines 12 deforming tendencies (Berman, 1985).

The 12 deforming tendencies have been mostly observed in the Western tradition, and Berman mainly refers to prose and not poems, but it is equally proper to observe them within the context of Armenian translations of the poem, as Berman states that the tendencies “bear on all translating” (Berman, 1985, p. 288).

The earliest translation, published in 1937, was done by Dashtents (see Appendix B). One of the most striking changes in this translation is the difference between the number of stanzas of the original and the translation, the former being 18 and the latter being 15. Certain stanzas are missing (ninth, 14th and 15th). This is labeled quantitative impoverishment by Berman. Despite the fact that Berman mainly refers to the lexical loss of individual words and/or phrases in prose writing, the complete omission of three stanzas can be considered as quantitative impoverishment. Moreover, qualitative impoverishment, another tendency, can also be observed alongside the quantitative loss. The exclusion of the ninth is not clear, but the omission of the two consecutive stanzas (14th and 15th) will be referred to later in the historical context, as it has to do with the ideological limitations of the Soviet era. Overall, from the point of view of Poe’s *The Philosophy of Composition*, such impoverishments, especially quantitative, were not to be allowed in the translation due to Poe’s strict resort to mathematical calculations in the composition of his essay.

As long as Berman suggests the tendencies in the context of prose, the destruction of linguistic patternings—the construction of sentences—can be applied in examining the changes in rhymes in the case of the poem. In the poem, there is a consistent pattern of rhymes. Each

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stanza is composed of six lines. The last three lines rhyme and in the case of the two lines preceding the last line, an identical rhyme is used, using the same word (Poetry Foundation, 2009). This pattern never changes in the original. In Dashtents' translation, this is distorted. The last three lines do not rhyme in the third, fifth, and 15th stanzas. In the rest of the stanzas, the rhymes are maintained but identical rhyming is only present in the first stanza.

Lastly, another significant deformation observed in this translation is the transformation of the phrase “bust of Pallas” in the source language into “Միներվա” (Minerva) in the target language. Pallas is one of the multiple names of the Greek goddess Athena, goddess of war and handicrafts. Minerva is the Roman equivalent of Athena (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.). In terms of deformation tendencies, this falls into the category of ennoblement. Berman explains ennoblement as a stylistic approach of rewriting the original and making it more elegant (Berman, 1985). Going beyond the analytic of translation, it might shed some light on the choice of transformation to say that Dashtents' pedagogical experience might have played into the translation. Driven by the motifs of a lecturer, the translator might have simply decided to employ a lesser-known Roman name of the goddess instead of the famous Greek one in order to expand the knowledge of the reader.

The second translation that will be observed, which is technically a retranslation, was published in 1977 (see Appendix C). Babayan was an activist who wrote poems. Visually, Babayan's translation has combined some stanzas into big blocks, thus resulting in 12 stanzas. For example, the first three stanzas are combined, creating a large stanza with 18 lines. There is no consistency within such combinations that might reveal a pattern, so it seems quite random. It might have been printed in such a manner during the publication of the issue. This falls within the tendency of the destruction of rhythms, as Berman notes that even changes in punctuation

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can alter the original text's rhythm (Berman, 1985). However, the number of stanzas, including six lines, each corresponds to the original. Therefore, there is no apparent quantitative impoverishment present, except for the sixth stanza, which includes five lines instead of six.

The rhymes and the pattern within the last three lines of each stanza mentioned earlier are kept throughout Babayan's translation and the last three lines of each stanza rhyme. Identical rhymes are present in the first, third, seventh, and 15th stanzas. There is quite an interesting shift present in Babayan's translation from the point of view of rhymes and linguistics. Starting from the eighth stanza and repeating from there on, the translator has used a transliteration of the word "nevermore." Transliteration is the method of expressing the sounding of a given word or set of words from the source language through the alphabet of the target language (LondonTranslations n.d.). "Nevermore" appears as "նեվըրմոր" in Babayan's translation and in this case, the transliteration does appear uncommon and deviates from the conventions of Armenian grammar. For example, the vowel "ը" in the transliteration is rarely used mid-word in Armenian as it is audible in most words but is not written. Similarly, the combination of vowel "ե" and consonant "վ" is also uncommon because the added letter "ւ" ("yev") combines the letters and the sounds expressed by them. The transliteration is written in quotation marks in the translation, which partly compensates for its peculiarity amid the rest of the text. The decision to resort to transliteration might seem extreme in this case and it might be viewed as a way of compromising linguistic wholeness for the sake of rhymes. However, this approach will be observed within the retranslation hypothesis a bit later.

The third and latest translation was done by Mkrtychyan in 2009 (see Appendix D). This translation does not display a single instance of quantitative impoverishment; the number of stanzas and lines perfectly match with that of the original. The rhyming pattern of the original is

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also preserved here, except for the fifth, 15th, and 18th stanzas, where the rhymes of the two lines preceding the last line are not identical. The most interesting component of this translation is that the word “nevermore” appears in English starting from the eighth stanza and appears as such afterwards. It is neither taken into quotation marks nor explained alternatively. There is not much to say about Mkrtchyan’s translation in terms of Berman’s deformation tendencies and this lack of deformation leads to the retranslation hypothesis according to which, this translation is the closest to the original text.

The Armenian translations clearly depict the ideas proposed by the hypothesis, as each following retranslation corresponds to the changing of times and translation conventions. The process of naturalization proposed by Berman (1958) can be found in Dashtents’ translation which has most differences from the original text. The omission of certain stanzas is a way of naturalization as well as a way to make the translation readable in the Soviet Armenia, due to ideological (primarily religious) restrictions. Babayan’s translation, which is the first retranslation (second translation), displays some experimental attempts, such as merging the stanzas and using transliteration. These attempts, the use of transliteration in particular, manifest gradually the point of the hypothesis about how consecutive retractions tend to grow closer to the original text. The latest retranslation by Mkrtchyan puts the final touches of what the hypothesis argues. This retranslation is the closest of all to the original – the preservation of the rhyming patterns, the strict construction of the number of stanzas and the lines, and of course the bold attempt of inserting a word from the source language within the translation.

Historical Era and Translation as a Reaction to or a Result of the Political Context

Labeling translation as political activism or dissidence has its roots set in World War II. Tymoczko (2006) claims that translation obtained new dimensions due to the expanded involvement of different nations in the war (Tymoczko, 2006). The previously held traditional perspective on translation as a tool of cultural integration and spreading knowledge began to be transformed into a tool of propaganda. Translation's new role as means of spreading social change required efficient and timely solutions. Such kind of a role, consequently, evoked concepts such as ethics and ideology. The Soviet Union is a significant example when talking about ideology, as it was used intensively throughout the Soviet period as means of maintaining power and controlling the unity (or lack thereof) in member states.

In 1921, a year after Armenia became part of the Soviet Union, Lenin implemented a new policy – NEP (New Economic Policy) – part of which was nativization, an initiative to encourage people of different nations to return back to their countries. As an opportunity to unite intellectuals and display the efficiency of communism, the culture and language of each republic would be supported by the state, and the core institutions of a country would use the native language of the republic. This fact alone stands to show how language, even on the primitive concept of being declared the official language of a given country (and this was the first time Armenian became the official language of the Republic), can be a powerful tool for making significant social, cultural and political changes in a great and multi-layered system, such as the Soviet Union. If language alone can have such an impact, then translation can, if not more, at least equally influence the socio-political life of a country (Bournoutian, 2006).

As a result of nativization, many Armenian intellectuals immigrated back to Armenia, schools were opened, including Yerevan State University, illiterate people up to the age of fifty were encouraged to enroll in schools, publications were done in the Armenian language

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(Bournoutian, 2006) After Lenin's death, the positive results diminished as Stalin's "Socialism in One Country", a different type of NEP was implemented in 1929. This was when many Armenian intellectuals were exiled to Siberia during the purges of the Soviet Union. This is when Russian, once again, became the dominant language as it became mandatory in schools and began to replace Armenian terms (Bournoutian, 2006). A publication by Nikoghosyan (2013) helps understand one of the most prominent linguistic and literary phenomena in Armenia – the widespread, sometimes imbalanced usage of the Russian language as a source for many academic purposes.

The long historical linkage has, naturally, left an impact on Armenia (the smaller of the two states) in terms of both power and territory. The involvement in the Soviet Union has prolonged that influence. Armenian linguistics and literature, like many other institutions in modern-day Armenia, are built on Soviet (Russian) traditions. According to a 2010 survey conducted by Gallup regarding the popularity of Russian influence, 75% of all surveyed Armenians approved of Russia's leadership (Ray, 2011). This is a pattern found in most post-Soviet countries (Ray, 2011). The popularity of the Russian language also has high indicators. According to Gallup, 73% of the Armenian population considered it highly important to know Russian in 2006, while the percentage rose up to 75% a year later (Armenpress, 2008).

A comparison between the popularity of the Russian and English languages also reveals the significance that the Russian language still has on the Armenian cultural and linguistic spheres. As of 2011, Russian was the second language for 52.7% of Armenians, while only 3.6% Armenians used English as the second language (Nag, 2017). It is not surprising that Russian has been the leading intermediary language in Armenia (the source language for most translations into Armenian, even in the case of those works that were originally written and

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published in English). This can be explained by the fact that during the Soviet Union, the translations were managed by the state (Nikoghosyan, 2013).

Nikoghosyan (2013) factualizes one of the most prominent linguistic and literary phenomenon in Armenia – the widespread, sometimes imbalanced usage of the Russian language as a source for many academic purposes. The study demonstrates the effects of the Soviet Union on and the patterns developed in current post-Soviet countries. The territorial division into Eastern and Western Armenia meant a linguistic division as well. Due to the Soviet Union membership, Russian became the intermediary language of Eastern Armenia, a key concept in translation (Nikoghosyan, 2013). Being a post-Soviet country, not only did Russian become a dominant language in Armenia, but also multiple other factors contributed to the further development of Armenian translations, such as ideology and power relations.

Within such historical context, the Armenian translations of *The Raven* become even more fascinating as each of the three translations represent different time periods. Dashtents' choice to translate Poe's poem can be directly linked to the Great Purge of the late 1930s (Hill, 2013) because the timelines correspond. Dashtents' translation, published in 1937, was a literary resistance to the socio-political events that were taking place at the time. The Gothic quality within the original poem was an implicit way for the translator to express his discontent with the political occurrences of his time when other literary figures were being exiled and executed, while simultaneously maintaining his literary rights. Moreover, taking into account the prominent role of Russian as an intermediary language that still prevails, Dashtents' profession as a linguist leads to the conclusion that he used the original English text rather than a Russian translation. This alone is an obvious deviation from what was conventional at the time. It is also noteworthy that the explanation for the two of the three stanzas that were omitted from

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Dashtents' translation can be found within the ideological limitations of the Soviet era. The 14th and the 15th stanzas include Biblical references – Seraphim (angel), God, Tempter (Satan), “balm of Gilead” (geographical location in the Bible; Gilead was famous for its balm) (Easton's Bible Dictionary–Gilead, n.d.). As long as religious activities were forbidden in the Soviet Union, Dashtents chose to exclude these stanzas to be able to publish the translation. This is a prime example as to how the historical context influences and somehow even directs the literary sphere of a country.

Romantic literature implied resistance to the authority through emphasis on individuality and freedom. The inherent quality of resistance found in *The Raven* as a composition written during the Romantic era reveals much about why Babayan chose to retranslate exactly this poem. Babayan was a political activist during the mid-1990s who founded Armenian Youth Union in 1958. One of the main goals of the union was the elimination of Russian educational system from Armenian schools, along with cultural revolution. The meetings of the union featured various events, including evenings of Armenian poetry and political discussions. Babayan studied philology and was arrested during his fourth year of studies. After being imprisoned for five years in a prison camp in Moldova, he restarted his studies and published poems, translations and various publications (Alaverdyan, 2013). In this case, Babayan's political activism has influenced his choice to translate *The Raven*, as the poem fits within Babayan's ideological orientation for which he fought for – individual freedom, overcoming authority and eliminating Russian dominance. The desire to overthrow the latter is particularly evident in Babayan's choice of inserting transliteration in the translation, thus moving further away from the conventional methods evident in the first retranslation.

In the case of Mkrtchyan's translation, following the retranslation hypothesis and how the latest of the observed translations become more similar to the original, it is important to mention Venuti's (1995) concepts of domestication and foreignization. Venuti's ideas were developed on the basis of an earlier concept suggested by Schleiermacher. According to Schleiermacher (Biguenet & Schulte, 1992), translation methodology can be divided into two types—the translator either leads the reader to the writer or the writer is led to the reader. In the first case, the translator attempts to fill the gaps of the reader's mind and transmit the intentions of the writer in a culturally accessible manner. In the second case, the translator attempts to maintain the foreignness of the original text and the author (Biguenet & Schulte, 1992). Essentially, the two methods can be called reader-oriented and author-oriented. These ideas have been labeled differently, such as faithful and free translations, but Venuti coined the terms “foreignization” and “domestication.” Venuti (1995) suggests that the domesticating (ethnocentric) method of translation reduces the original text to the socio-cultural perceptions of the target language, and the foreignizing (ethnodeviant) method induces the conventions of the source language on the target language, thus “sending the reader abroad” (Venuti, 1995, pp. 19-20).

Mkrtchyan's translation clearly follows the foreignizing method, as the insertion of the English word “nevermore” is a deviation from the previously held conventions of Armenian translations. In the historical context, such an approach is eligible to be deemed as dissidence. Although Venuti's argument concerns English translations, it is applicable in this case that foreignizing translations are a sort of resistance towards imperialism and certain institutional values (Venuti, 1995). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenia was trying to establish itself as an independent country. The Russian conventions still persist in the country, but with the 21st century at its doorstep and especially during the early 2000s (and Mkrtchyan's translation

dates to 2009), it becomes clear how the Armenian language gradually acted as a means of overthrowing Russian “colonialism”. And Mkrtchyan’s translation and its foreignizing method manifest the impact that each historic era and political affairs of a given time-period have on the literary scene of a given country.

Despite the results and percentages of the mentioned surveys and language use (Russian vs. English), the three translations reveal (through the Retranslation Hypothesis and the presence of transliteration and foreign words in Armenian translations) that there is a subtle but steady decrease in the prominence of the Russian language and its influence on the Armenian language and literature.

Questions for Future Research

As mentioned, the three translations observed in this research are not the only existing translations and retranslations. Future research regarding this topic would highly benefit if the other existing translations, be it done by professional or amateur translators, are examined in the same manner as the translations done by Dashtents, Babayan, and Mkrtchayn, and even be applied within Postcolonial theory. The initial idea of this capstone was to apply Postcolonial theory to the Armenian translations by considering Armenia as a former Russian colony, but the focus shifted and became more socio-cultural. The application of Postcolonial theory might produce significant findings.

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Appendices**Appendix A**

Edgar Allan Poe, "The Raven"

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.

"'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—

Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;

And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.

Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow

From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—

For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—

Nameless *here* for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain

Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;

So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating

"'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—

Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—

This it is and nothing more."

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Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you”—here I opened wide the door;—
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, “Lenore?”
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, “Lenore!”—
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
“Surely,” said I, “surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—
'Tis the wind and nothing more!”

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,

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In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;
 Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
 But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—
 Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
 Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
 By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
 “Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,” I said, “art sure no craven,
 Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—
 Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s Plutonian shore!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
 Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
 For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
 Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
 Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
 With such name as “Nevermore.”

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
 That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
 Nothing farther then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—

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Till I scarcely more than muttered “Other friends have flown before—
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before.”

Then the bird said “Nevermore.”

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
“Doubtless,” said I, “what it utters is its only stock and store
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of ‘Never—nevermore’.”

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking “Nevermore.”

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom’s core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion’s velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o’er,
But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o’er,

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She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.

“Wretch,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore;
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—
Is there—*is* there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

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“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!” I shrieked, upstarting—

“Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore!

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, *still* is sitting

On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;

And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,

And the lamp-light o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor

Shall be lifted—nevermore!

Appendix B

Translation by Khachik Dashtents

Կեսգիշերին մի օր երբ ես մենակ նստած, հոգնած այսպես
 Խորհում էի, թերթում պեսպես պատմություններ, գրքեր հին հին,
 Երբ մրափն էր աչքս կոխում, լավեց հանկարծ մի խուլ թախում,
 Մեկը կարծես դուռս էր բախում, հեզիկ բախում մութի միջին.
 «Այցելու է, մրմնջացի, դուռս է ծեծում մութի միջին,
 Այցելու է, ուրիշ ոչինչ»:

Պարզ հիշում եմ, կես գիշեր էր, ցուրտ ու մռայլ դեկտեմբեր էր,
 Եվ մոխրացող ամեն կրակ շուր էր գցել հատակիս խոր.
 Անձկում էի լուսաբացին և գուր նստած գրքերում ցիր
 Խեղդել էի փորձում անծիր տխրությունս առ իմ Լենոր,
 Անգին ու վառ այն աղջկան, աղջկան այն արևավոր,
 Դարձած անհուշ ու հեռավոր:

Եվ ամեն մի նուրբ ու խորին խրչխրչոցը վարագույրի
 Համակեց ինձ դեռ չգագացած, կյանքում չեղած սարսափներով,
 Եվ որպիսի ահրս վանեմ և սարսափն այդ սրտես հանեմ,
 Ես կրկնեցի կանգնած վախով. «Այցելու է մտնում բախով,
 Մի ուշացած ճամփորդ գուցե, տեղ է խնդրում որ քիչ հանգչի,
 Այցելու է, ուրիշ ոչինչ»:

Եվ սրտապինդ ու անվարան մոտեցա ես այսպես դռան՝
 «Պարոն, ասի, կամ թե տիկին, ներեցեք ինձ՝ չլսեցի,
 Փաստ է, որ ես մրափեցի, իսկ դուք այնպես մեղմ բախեցիք,
 Իոկ դուք այնպես հեզ բախեցիք, մթության մեջ խարխափեցիք,
 Որ ես հագիվ ձեզ լսեցի»: Այստեղ դուռն իմ ես լայն բացի՝
 Խավար էր լոկ դեմս անծիր:

Դեպի մութն այդ սարսափահար նայեցի ես կանգնած երկար,
 Ու երագներ տեսա բազում երկրի մարդուն անմատչելի,
 Լռություն էր սակայն անծայր և խավար էր սակայն անձայն,
 Ու մթնում այդ միայն մի ձայն, մի անուն էր լսվում՝ Լենոր,
 Այդ բառը ես շնչացի, արձագանքեց մութի միջին,
 Այդ բառն էր լոկ, ուրիշ ոչինչ:

Սենյակս էի երբ ես դառնում և հոգիս էր իմ մեջ վառվում,
 Լսեցի ես դարձյալ մի գարկ, առաջվանից ուժգին փոքր ինչ.
 «Անշուշտ բան կա, բան կա, գիտեմ, պատուհանիս վանդակի դեմ,
 Թող երևա, գա դեմ առ դեմ, տեսնենք հապա ո՞վ է, կամ ինչ,
 Միրտս խաղաղ լինի թող քիչ, թող փարատվի գաղտնիքն այս ռինջ»:
 Քամին էր, լոկ, ուրիշ ոչինչ:

Պատուհանիս փեղկն երբ բացի, շուրջս թևեր թպրտացին,
 Ու ներս տոտեց մի վես ագռավ, հպարտ ագռավ հին օրերից,

Նա ոչ հակեց, ոչ կոացավ, ոչ խոնարհվեց, ոչ ետ դարձավ,
 Այլ վեհաքայլ առաջացավ, թռավ բարձր խցիս լանջին,
 Միներվայի անդրուն թառեց, հենց դեմուդեմ իմ առաջին,
 Ու լուռ նստեց, ուրիշ ոչինչ:

Տեսնելով այդ սևահավին, ես ժպտացի սրտիս ցավից,
 Ցնցված նրա խոժոռ տեսքից, կերպարանքից ահեղատես.
 «Ծեր ես թեպետ և ճաղատ ես, բայց դու ասի, վատասիրտ չես,
 Ժանտատեսիլ ու սուկատես հին ու թափառ ագռավի պես,
 Ասա, այնտեղ մութ գիշերում ի՞նչ տիրական անուն ունես.
 Ագռավն ասաց. «երբեք այլևս»:

...Բայց ագռավն այդ անդրուն թառած լոկ այդ բառն էր բերանն առած,
 Կարծես իր այդ մեն մի բառով դուրս էր հորդում հոգին իր կեզ,
 Ոչինչ էլ նա չասեց այլևս, փետուր անգամ չարժեց հեզ,
 Ծնջացի մինչ ես այսպես՝ ընկերներն իր չվեցին, տես,
 Լուսաբացին նա էլ կերթա վաղ գնացած հույսերիս պես.
 Ագռավն ասաց. «երբեք այլևս»:

Դողահար այդ շտապ ձայնից, Ագռավի սուր պատասխանից,
 — Անշուշտ ասի, ինչ ասում է՝ դա լոկ բառ է պատրաստ պահած,
 Քաղած տխուր մի վարպետից, մի տանջահար երգչապետից,
 Որի երգը սերտել պիտի միշտ կրկնելով արագ այդպես.

Մինչև հասնի երգն իր հույսի մահերգի մութ ու տխրակեզ
Բառին՝ «երբեք, երբեք այլևս»:

Բայց ագռավն այդ հոգիս մաղձոտ լցրեց ժպտով հուրհրացող,
Ուստի վերցրի մի բազկաթոռ ու դեմուդեմ նստեցի ես,
Եվ ընկղմված թավշում փափուկ սկսեցի լուռ մտաբորբոք
Եվ միտք առ միտք խորհել՝ արդյոք ի՞նչ է ուզում ասել սև-տես
Ժանտատեսիլ ու ահավոր չարագուշակ թռչունն այդ վես
Կռինչովն իր «երբեք այլևս»:

Նստեցի ես մտալարված, լուռ այդ մտքով միայն տարված,
Եվ հայացքը նրա վառված կուրծքս էր լափում կրակի պես,
Մառ տխրությանը ահաբեկված, իմ գլուխը ծնկիս կքած
Գեպի կապույտ բարձն իմ թեքած, սկսեցի ես խորհել այսպես.
«Մենակ եմ ես այս թավիշին. ում սիրեցի ես խենթի պես,
Չի հանգչելու ինձ հետ այլևս»:

— Գուշակ, — ասի,— չարաշրջուն, փորձի՞չ ես դու, դև՞ թե թռչուն,
Մեզ աղեղող երկնից եկած, աստծուց եկած պաշտելի մեզ,
Հոգիս վշտոտ ու մեղսական եղեմում այն դրախտական
Կհանդիպի՞ այն աղջկան, շողուն ու սուրբ ու լուսահեզ,
Անգին ու վառ այն աղջկան, Լենորին իմ արևատես,
Ագրավն ասաց. «երբեք այլևս»:

— Հավք,— գոչեցի,— բառն այդ դաժան թող նիշ լինի մեր բաժանման
 Իսկ դու հիմա հողմիդ դարձիր ու գիշերիդ խավարատես,
 Եվ քո ստին որպես հիշակ փետուր մի թող իմ հարկիս տակ,
 Մենությունս թող անխորտակ, թող այս անդրին, քշում եմ քեզ,
 Հան կտուցդ սրտիս միջից, առ պատկերդ չքվիր աչքես.
 Ագոավն ասաց. «Երբեք այլևս»:

Եվ ագոավն այդ հսկա, անթեռ, նստած է դեռ, նստած է դեռ
 Միներվայի գունատ անդրուն, հենց իմ դիմաց, չար ոգու պես,
 Եվ աչքերն իր ահաբեկող՝ դևի լինեն կարծես նիրհող:
 Իսկ լապտերը վերից վառվող՝ շարտել է շուքն հատակիս,
 Օ՛ իմ հոգին տարուրերվող շուքի տակից այդ ահատես
 Չի բարձրանա երբեք այլևս:

Appendix C

Translation by Vigen Babayan

Մի անգամ մութ կեսգիշերին խոկում էի խոնջ ու լռին
 Խորախորհուրդ հատորների վրա մեռած մի գիտության,
 Երբ մրափում էի հոգնած, մի թույլ հարված լսվեց հանկարծ,
 Կարծես մեկն էր գգուշորեն բախում, բախում դուռն իմ տան.
 «Մի այցելու է, — հեծծեցի ես, — որ բախում է դուռն իմ տան,
 Լոկ այս, ուրիշ ոչ մի բան...»:

Ա՞հ, հիշում եմ հատակորեն, դեկտեմբերին էր սառնեղեն,
 Մեռնող ամեն կոճղ հատակին գծագրում էր մի ուրվական:
 Կաթոգին այգն էի տենչում, ի գուր էի իմ գրքերում
 Լենորի մահն անվերջ լացող վշտիս փնտրելի մի դարման,
 Հրեշտակներից Լենոր կոչվող այն սուրբ կույսի, որ սակայն
 Անանուն է հավիտյան:

Ու ծիրանի վիժակների դողն անորոշ ու տխրալի
 Մարսում էր ինձ, լցնում հոգիս արհավիրքով ցնորական:
 Իսաղաղվելու համար սրտով ոտքի ելա ես կրկնելով.
 «Մի այցելու է, որ իմ տան դուռն է թակում անպայման,
 Ուշ մնացած մի այցելութակում է դուռն անպայման,
 Այս է, ուրիշ ոչ մի բան»:

Գոտեպնդվեց սիրտըս տկար, չերկբայելով արդեն երկար՝

«Պարո՛ն, — ասի,— կամ էլ տիկի՛ն, խնդրեմ ներող եղեր միայն,
 Բայց ես նիրհում էի հուշիկ, և դուք այնքան մեղմ բախեցիք
 Եվ դուք այնքան մեղմ բախեցիք, բախեցիք մեղմ դուք այնքան,
 Որ լոկ թվաց, թե լսեցի»: Իսկույն դուռս բացի լայն՝
 Խավա՞ր, ուրիշ ոչ մի բան:

Ու խավարին աչքերս հառած՝ մնացի լուռ ու շվարած,
 Անրջելով երազներ, որ չէր երազել ոչ ոք մինչ այն.
 Լռությունն էր սակայն խորունկ, չկար շուրջքս ձև ու շշուկ.
 Արտաբերվող միակ բառը «Լենոր» բառն էր, որ անձայն
 Ես հեծծեցի: «Լենո՞ր» կրկնեց արձագանքը անխափան...
 Լոկ այս, ուրիշ ոչ մի բան:

Ետ դառնալով դեպի սենյակ, բոցերի մեջ հոգիս համակ՝
 Մի նախկինից ուժգին հարված լսեցի ես կրկին անգամ:
 «Վստահորեն, վստահորեն ինչ-որ բան է ճաղերիս դեմ,
 Տեսնենք՝ ի՞նչ է, — ասի ես ինձ,— պարզենք խորհուրդն այս դաժան:
 Հո՞վն է, ուրիշ ոչ մի բան»:

Ու հրեցի փեղկերն ուժով, և աղմկոտ մի թռիչքով
 Մի փառահեղ Ագռավ մտավ սուրբ օրերից վաղնջական:
 Խոնարհություն չարեց բնավ, չվարանեց ու կանգ չառավ,
 Բայց սենյակիս դռան վրա թառեց տեսքով տիրական,
 Ճիշտ Պալլասի կիսարձանի վրա թառեց տիրական,
 Թառե՞ց, ուրիշ ոչ մի բան:

Իմ խոհանքը ցրեց այնժամ այդ թռչունը երենոսյան,
 Իր կեցվածքը վայելչատես, կերպարանքը խիստ ու խոլոր:
 «Թեև կատարդ է անփետուր, սակայն, գիտե՛մ, ստոր չես դու,
 Գիշերային ափունքներից հեռու հաճող ուղևո՛ր.
 Դժոխային այդ ափերինի՞նչ է անունդ ազնավոր»:
 Ազնավն ասաց՝ «նե՞վըրմոր»:

Ես զարմացա, որ այդ տխեղծ թռչունն իսկույն ինձ ընթռնեց,
 Պատասխանն իր թեև մի քիչ անիմաստ էր ու անսովոր
 Քանզի պետք է դուրք հասկանաք, թե մարդկային ո՛չ մի էակ
 Իր սենյակի դռան վրա դեռ չի տեսել թևավոր,
 Անասուն կամ թռչուն, թառած կիսարձանի վրա, որ
 Կոչվի այսպես՝ «նե՞վըրմոր»:

Բայց Ազնավը, հանգիստ նստած՝ այդ մեկ բառը միայն ասաց,
 Կարծես թե նա իր ողջ հոգին ձուլած լիներ բառում այդ խոր:
 Չարտասանեց էլ ո՛չ մի բան ու չչարժեց փետուր անգամ,
 Մինչև ասի. «Արդեն թռան ընկերներն իմ բյուրավոր,
 Վաղը նա էլ հույսերիս պես ինձ կթողնի մենավոր»:
 Թռչունն ասաց՝ «նե՞վըրմոր»:

Ես, սարսափած իմաստալից բառով խզված լռությունից՝

THE ARMENIAN TRANSLATIONS OF *THE RAVEN*

«Անշուշտ, — ասի, — այս բառն է լոկ որպես լեզու, ձիրք ու շնորհ
 Ժառանգել նա մի ուսուցչից, որի բախտը անկարեկից
 Հալածել է նրան, մինչև որ երգերն իր սգավոր,
 Մինչև հույսի երգերն իր մութ ունեցել են տրամաթոր
 Այս հանգերգը՝ «նե՛վըրմոր»:

Բայց Ագոստին կրկին անգամ ցրեց թախիծն իմ հոգեկան:
 Դռան առջև ու Պալլասի ես հրեցի մի թիկնաթոռ
 Եվ թաղվելով թավշում նրա, սկսեցի հյուսել իրար
 Երազներըս, միշտ խորհելով, թե ուրվային ու խոշոր
 Այս թռչունը ի՞նչ է ուզում ասել այսպես ահավոր
 Կոչելով՝ «նե՛վըրմոր»:

Այս բառն էր մեկնել փորձումսև թռչունի լուռ սևեռուն,
 Որի աչքերը հրեղեն մրրկում էին հոգիս մոլոր,
 Փորձում էի դեռ ավելին, խոնջ գլուխս լքած նրբին
 Բարձերի մեջ, ուր կաթում էր լամպարի լույսը բոսոր,
 Նուրբ բարձերի, որոնց վրա չի սահելու էլ աղվոր
 Գլուխն իր, ա՛հ, նե՛վըրմոր:
 Ու խտացավ օդը անտես մի բուրվառի բույրից կարծես,
 Որ միջոցում սերովբեներ ճոճում էին կշռութավոր,
 «Հրճվի՛ր, դժբա՛խտ, — գոռացի ես,— քո աստվածն է ուղարկում քեզ
 Այս դադարի մոռացոնքը սրտիդ համար վիրավոր:

Խամի՛ր, խամի՛ր ու հասկացի՛ր, թե չկա ո՛չ մի Լեւոնր»:

Ազոսավն ասաց՝ «նե՞վըրմոր»:

«Դո՛ւ, մարգարե, դև կամ թռչուն, մարգարե կամ ոգի դժգույն,
Թե փորձիչն է ուղարկոււմ քեզ կամ մրրիկն է փոխել մի օր
Այս ավերյալ, բայց աննվաճ հողի վրա կախարդըված,
Տունն այս վախով միշտ հաճախված՝ ասա՛, խնդրո՞ւմ եմ անգոր:
Կա՞, արդյոք, կա՞ մի բալասան: Ասա՛, խնդրո՞ւմ եմ անգոր»:

Ազոսավն ասաց՝ «նե՞վըրմոր»:

«Դո՛ւ, մարգարե, դև կամ թռչուն, մարգարե կամ ոգի դժգույն,
Ի սեր անհուն այս երկնքի, իսեր տիրոջ մեր երկնավոր
Ասա՛, սրտին այս վշտագին, թե եդեմի մեջ նա կրկին
Պիտի գրկի՞ այն աղջկան, որի անունն է Լեւոնր,
Այն պայծառ ու սուրբ աղջկան, որի անունն է Լեւոնր»:

Ազոսավն ասաց՝ «նե՞վըրմոր»:

«Թող հրաժե՛շտ տանք այդ բառով, — գոռացի ես վեր ցատկելով,—
Վերադարձի՛ր մրրիկի մեջ ու գեհենի ափերը չոր.
Ո՛չ մի փետուր ինձ չթողնես քո կեղծիքի վկա որպես,
Թո՛ղ կիսանդրին դռանս վրա, առանձնությունըս՝ անդորր,
Հանի՛ր կտուցդ իմ սրտից, տա՛ր տեսիլըդ ահավոր»:

Ազոսավն ասաց՝ «նե՞վըրմոր»:

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Եվ Ագոստին միշտ աներեր նստած է դեռ, նստած է դեռ
Ճիշտ իմ դռան վրա դրված կիսարձանին՝ գիշեր ու գօր,
Եվ աչքերն իր երագամույն դեի աչքեր են սևեռուն,
Եվ հատակին լամպի լույսը նետում է շուքն իր խոժոռ,
Եվ իմ հոգին այդ սև շուքի շրջանակից մեղմօրոր
Չի՛ ելնելու նե՞վրմոր...

Appendix D

Translation by Samvel Mkrtchyan

Մի անգամ, երբ մութ գիշեր էր, երբ հոգիս իր ցավն հիշել էր,

Եվ թերթում էի նիշերը մոռացված մի գիտության.

Մինչ ննջում էր իմ մրմուռը, մեկն անդո՛րր բախեց իմ դուռը—

Եվ այնպես, ասես, գեփյուռը մե՛ղմ թակում էր դուռն իմ տան:

«Հյուր է,— լոկ անցավ մտքովս,— որ բախում է դուռն իմ տան:

Հյուր է լոկ, այսքան մի բան»:

Ցուրտ ձմռան այդ հուշն ահեղ է. մի պայծառ վառվող կանթեղ է—

Երբ ամեն մեռնող անթեղը ուրուներ էր ծածանում:

Լույս էին տենչում մտքերս — գո՛ւր էի թերթում գրքերս,

Ախ, չէի՛ն պատմի երգերս Լինորի կորուստն անհուն—

Ախ, չէի՛ն մեղմի վերքերս — Լինորի կորուստն անհուն—

Աստ՝ հավիտյա՛ն անանուն:

Մետաքսի տխուր խշշուներ, շղարշի շաղոտ շրշուներ—

Ո՛հ, խայտո՛ւմ... խայթո՛ւմ էր սիրտս սոսկումով մի խոլական.

Միրտս դեռ ուժգին գարկում էր, մինչ լեզուս դեռ առարկում էր.

«Մի ճամփորդ է, որ թակում է ու բախում է դուռն իմ տան—

Ուշացած մի այցելու է, որ թակում է դուռն իմ տան—

Ընդամենն այսքան մի բան»:

Եվ հոգիս ցրեց իր ահը. չկորցրեց իզուր էլ պահը—
 «Տյար, կամ թե Տիկին,— կանչում եմ,— սպասեք դեռ մեկ վայրկյան.
 Խիստ բռնել էր աչքիս քունը, մինչ թակում էիք իմ դուռը—
 Եվ այնպես, ասես, գեփյուռը մե՛ղմ թակում էր դուռն իմ տան.
 Ինձ թվո՛ւմ էր, թե թակոց է...»,— բացեցի ես դուռն իմ տան—
 Մո՛ւթ գիշեր, այդքան մի բան:

Արդ մթնում կանգնած հսկում եմ — ու այնպե՛ս դողում, սոսկում եմ,
 Մինչ իմ սիրտը սողոսկում են երազներն անհրական:
 Սակայն շուրջս լուռումունջ էր, լռությունը անշո՛ւնջ էր,
 Սոսկ՝ «Լինո՛ր»— լավեց մրմունջը՝ իմ շունջը մեղմաճայն.
 Եվ՝ «Լինո՛ր»— շրշաց շունջը՝ իմ մրմունջը մեղմաճայն —
 Ընդամենն այդքան բան:

Ետ դարձա ես իմ սենյակը — ու վառվե՛ց հոգուս կրակը,
 Չի շուտով լավեց նույն գարկը — նույն թակոցը մեղմաճայն:
 «Դե իհա՛րկե՛ պատուհանն է, կամ այնտեղ ինչ-որ մի բան է...
 Կպարզեմ այս առեղծվածը, կտեսնեմ, թե ինչ է այն...
 Թող հանդարտ լինի իմ սիրտը, որ պարզեմ, թե ինչ է այն—
 Հողմն է սոսկ, այդքան մի բան»:

Բացեցի ես պատուհանը, որ տեսնեմ, թե ինչն է բանը—

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Եվ,— ասես թե անցյալից էր,— մի Ագռավ խուժեց անձայն.
 Մոռացած պատշաճ ողջույնը՝ նա կարծես մտավ իր բույնը—
 Եվ այս տիրակալ թռչունը գտավ քիվը իմ դռան,
 Ուր Պալլասի կիսարձանն էր՝ լուռուսուսն էր թառեց վրան—
 Լուռ թառեց, այդքան մի բան:

Այդուհետ այս սեւ Ագռավը մոռացրեց մի պահ իմ ցավը.
 Դեմքն, ասես, գիշեր ու դավ էր, տեսքն՝ այնպե՛ս հանդիսավոր:
 «Կարճ է շատ քո սեւ կատարը, բայց խիզախ էր քո ներս գալը.
 Դու,— ասի,— այն սեւ Ագռավն ես՝ ավերից այն ահավոր...
 Ի՞նչ է, ի՞նչ է քո անունը ավերում այն ահավոր»:
 Ագռավն ասաց — Nevermore:

Մի՛ թե այս մեկ բառը քիչ է. թե հրաշք չէ սա՛ էլ ի՞նչ է,
 Բայց եւ՛ համարյա ոչինչ է, երբ ասված է մոտավոր:
 Չի կյանքում գիտեն ամենքը՝ չի ծնվել բնավ այն մեկը,
 Որն ասի, թե սեւ Ագռավը Օրհնությունն է թեւավոր,
 Որ սեւուկ ու թուխ Ագռավը օրհնությունն է թեւավոր,
 Դեռ անունն էլ — Nevermore:

Կիսանդրին դարձրած իր թառը՝ նա խոսեց միակ այս բառը.
 Մի՞ թե մի հատիկ այդ բառն էր ողջ դարձվածն իր նենգավոր:
 Լռություն տիրեց մեր շուրջը, ու լսվեց սոսկ իմ մրմունջը.

«Կորցրել է իր երամը, մնացել է մենավոր...»

Կթռչի՛, երբ գա լուսալոյսը — հանց հույսերն իմ մենավոր...»—

Ազոավն ասաց — Nevermore:

Ու այսպես այս սեւ թռչունը դեռ անհոգ կրկնում էր նույնը,

Եվ անվերջ կապկում էր սույնը՝ սոսկ մեկ բառն իր գիտության...

«Ես գիտեմ, թե այդ բառն ումն է... իր տիրո՛ջ տված ուսումն է,

Որ որպես իր օրհնությունը՝ նա մի բառ թողեց միայն—

Երբ գտավ անդարձ իր քունը՝ նա մի բառ թողեց միայն,

Nevermore — այդքան մի բան»:

Այս Ազոավն, ասես, ցրում էր տխրությունս, մոռացնո՛ւմ էր,

Ինձ թվաց, թե ցավն անցնում է — եւ հուշերն իմ ահավոր...

Ես գլուխս լուռ հակում եմ, մոտ նստած՝ դեռ գուշակում եմ,

Թե չորուկ ու չար թռչունը՝ այս չարիքը չարավոր—

Ի՞նչ է, ո՞վ է այս թռչունը, այս սեւ չարքը չարավոր,

Որ կանչում է — Nevermore:

Դեռ այսպես նստած խորհում եմ ու անխոս դեռ մտորում եմ,

Մինչ նրա աչքերն այրում են, ա՛խ, իմ սիրտը վիրավոր.

Լուռ նստած դեռ գուշակում եմ, ու գլուխս լուռ հակում եմ,

Իսկ թավշի վրա ճրագը դեռ շողում է լուսավոր,

Բայց թավիշն այդ, ուր շողում է դեռ ճրագը լուսավոր,

Չի տեսնի նա — Nevermore:

Օդն հետո խեղդուկ ու հոծ էր, իմ սենյակը խնկանոց էր.

Քերովրեի ոտնաձայնն էր գորգին զնգում քաղցրալից.

«Ա՛հ, Աստվա՛ծ է ուղարկել քեզ, հրեշտակն է առաքել քեզ

Եվ հղել է նա դարմանը եւ հուշերն իմ Լինորից,

Որ ըմպեմ, ըմպեմ դարմանը, ազատվե՛մ իմ Լինորից...»—

Nevermore — լսվեց նորից:

«Մարգարե՞ ես, չարութ՞յունն ես, սատանա՞ ես թե թռչունն ես,

Քեզ բերողը Փորձապե՞տն է, թե՞ Փորձանքը ահավոր՝

Դեպ երկիրն այս, որ լքված է, բայց անվախ, դյուրթիչ ու բա՛ց է—

Ուր Սարսափն է տնակյացը — դու ասա՛ ինձ հիմնավոր՝

Գաղաադի բալասանը գտնելո՞ւ եմ ես մի օր...»—

Ազոավն ասաց — Nevermore:

«Մարգարե՛ ես, չարութ՞յունն ես, սատանա՛ ես թե թռչո՛ւնն ես՝

Թող վկա լինի երկինքը եւ մեր Հայրը երկնավոր—

Երբ փակվի վշտի այս բեմը, երբ հոգիս տեսնի Եդեմը՝

Սուրբ կույսին պիտի գտնի՞ նա՝ Լինորին իր լուսավոր—

Լինորին պիտի գրկի՞ նա՝ սուրբ կույսին իր լուսավոր...»—

Ազոավն ասաց — Nevermore:

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«Ինչ որ է՛ քո պիղծ անունը՝ ա՛յս լինի մեր բաժանումը,
 Ե՛տ դարձիր դեպ քո անհունը, քո ասիերը հեռավոր:
 Չթողնե՛ս քո սեւ փետուրը, չե՛ս եղել երբեք իմ հյուրը.
 Մի՛ խախտիր իմ մենությունը, թո՛ղ իմ տունը մենավոր—
 Քո կտուցն հանի՛ր սրտիցս — թո՛ղ իմ դուռը մենավոր...»—
 Ազոավն ասաց — Nevermore:

Եվ Ազոավն այդ լուռ բազմած է, դեռ նստած է, դե՛ռ նստած է,
 Ուր գունատ, դալուկ Պալլասն է՛ նա բազմա՛ծ է փառավոր.
 Իսկ հայացքն այնպե՛ս անկյանք է, հրեշավո՛ր կերպարանք է—
 Եվ նետում է դեռ ճրագը տեսիլներն իր նորանոր—
 Եվ բանտած հոգիս այդպես էլ տեսիլներից ահավոր
 Չի՛ ազատվի — Nevermore!