As Bella Brodzki states cogently in the very first sentence of her 2007 *Can These Bones Live?*, “We are in the midst of a widespread rethinking of translation.” One sign of this rethinking is the rise of translation studies. In her seminal 1980 book on the then still-emerging field of translation studies, Susan Bassnett described it simply as the "systematic study of translation" (1980, 1) that had never before been recognized as an independent field. In her preface to the revised edition of that book, Bassnett notes that a distinguishing feature of translation studies is its combining of work in linguistics, literary studies [including theory, as she makes clear later], cultural history, philosophy, and anthropology (xi). She also notes the attention to the problem of gender and the expansion of cultures considered beyond Europe, but 1991 was still too early to introduce the issues of power and the postcolonial that have subsequently become crucial components of translation studies, for which Bassnett edited a book in 1999, and which it will be one object of this introduction to review. I begin by noting two interrelated aspects of translation studies: 1) increased emphasis on cultural, political, and (literary-)historical contexts for the origins of translations; and 2) a vastly broadened field of operations for translation. Brodzki’s subtitle, *Translation, Survival, and Cultural Memory*, provides one example of the second point—culture memory survives inasmuch as it receives translation. Brodzki’s first chapter analyzes not translations, but transmetic texts, that is, four literary narratives (by Cynthia Ozick, Italo
Calvino, Barbara Wilson, and Philip Roth) that feature translators or translations. Brodzki concludes that the translator characters “act as stand-in for the reader’s—and the author’s—increased semiotic awareness that language systems are models revealing the interplay of underlying structures of human culture.”ii In other words, authors too play a role in mimetically presenting the historical, cultural, psychological, and sometimes linguistic contexts that generate translations. I call this phenomenon “transmesis,” the metaphorical conjunction of mimesis and translation.

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ii Ibid., 65.