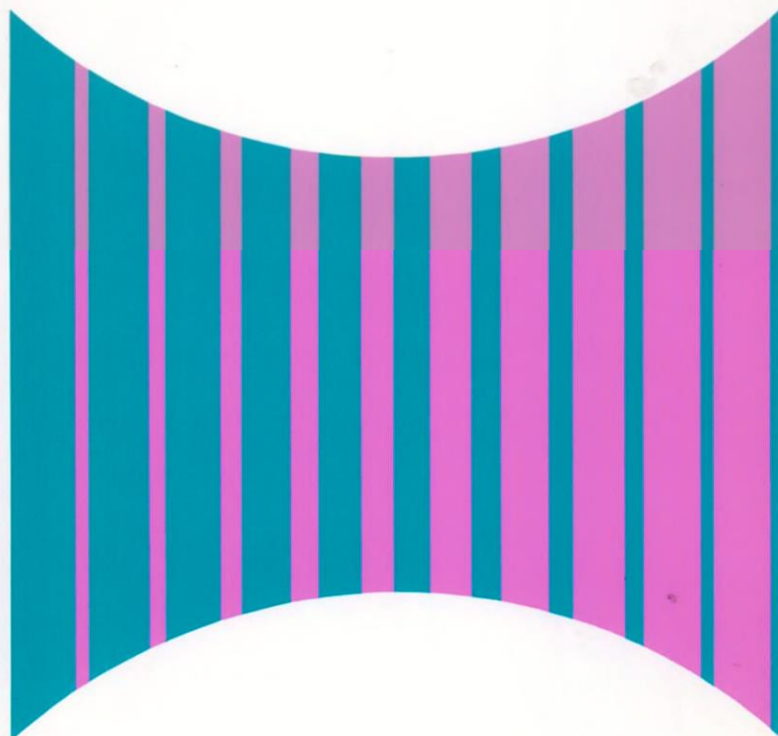


TOPICS IN TRANSLATION

CONSTRUCTING CULTURES

Essays on Literary Translation



Susan Bassnett & André Lefevere

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TOPICS IN TRANSLATION 11

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Foreword

EDWIN GENTZLER

In their work over the past twenty years, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere have consistently built bridges within the field of translation studies and developed interdisciplinary connections to fields of study outside the discipline. In 1990, they were the first to suggest that translation studies take the 'cultural turn' and look toward work of cultural studies scholars. In their new book *Constructing Cultures*, they present a strong case for moving the field of cultural studies closer to translation studies. New strategies gleaned from translation histories, such as we see in Lefevere's discussion of *Aeneid* translations or Bassnett's discussions of *Inferno* translations that follow, not only give translators more insight into the actual practice of translation, but they also give cultural studies critics new insight into cultural manipulation by those in power. Following Bassnett and Lefevere, translators have increasingly become more empowered and less self-effacing, a development that has allowed theorists to better view the process of mediating between cultures and/or of introducing different words, forms, cultural nuances, and meaning into their own respective culture. As Bassnett and Lefevere argue in *Constructing Cultures*, the study of translation is the study of cultural interaction, and thus the appeal of this book to cultural studies scholars, literary theorists, anthropologists, ethnographers, psycholinguists, and language philosophers and all of those interested in multicultural socialisation processes.

Constructing Cultures builds on a series of landmark texts by Bassnett and Lefevere, who, perhaps more than any other scholars in the field, have been responsible for putting translation studies on the academic map. Both were present at the historic 1976 conference in Leuven (Louvain), Belgium, which most scholars agree was the conference at which translation studies was founded. In the collected papers of that conference entitled *Literature and Translation* (Holmes *et al.*, 1978), Lefevere contributed the essay 'Translation: The Focus of the Growth of Literary Knowledge', which traces the linguistic, literary, and cultural components of translation studies, topics that are further elaborated in essays that follow in this anthology. His often quoted 'Translation Studies: The Goal of the Discipline', also collected in

the 1978 anthology, argues that translation practice should inform theory and vice versa, a dynamic that has allowed the field to grow so productively. In the same anthology, Bassnett's essay 'Translating Spatial Poetry: An Examination of the Theatre Texts in Performance', expands the purely linguistic and literary methodologies for study to include intertextual and intersemiotic factors, again topics further developed in essays collected here. Bassnett went on to write the book *Translation Studies* (1980), a book that remains the definitive text in the field. Bassnett provides scholars with an historical survey of theoretical developments as well as illuminating samples of comparative analysis. She also discusses strategies for practising translators of poetry, drama, and fiction, again showing how translation theory and comparative analysis can inform practice.

In 1985, the next milestone in the development of the field of translation studies appeared: *The Manipulation of Literature* (1985), edited by Theo Hermans. The title of the anthology ended up giving this group of contributing scholars, including Bassnett and Lefevere, the nickname 'The Manipulation School', a name some associated with the new discipline resisted, but one which in some ways is appropriate. For translation studies scholars were beginning to show that translations, rather than being a secondary and derivative genre, were instead one of the *primary* literary tools that larger social institutions — educational systems, arts councils, publishing firms, and even governments — had at their disposal to 'manipulate' a given society in order to 'construct' the kind of 'culture' desired. Churches would commission Bible translations; governments would support national epic translations; schools would teach great book translations; kings would be patrons for heroic conquests translations; socialist regimes would underwrite socialist realism translations. The 'manipulation' thesis posited in 1985 evolves into 'cultural construction' of the anthology in your hand. The present analysis is much more sophisticated and complex than some of the early ideas, but the ideas posited then have held up to academic and cultural scrutiny.

The *Manipulation of Literature* contained significant contributions by Bassnett and Lefevere. In 'Ways Through the Labyrinth: Strategies and Methods for Translating Theatre Texts', Bassnett suggested including more semiotic markers — gestures, lighting, sound, silences, etc. — than just verbal signs in her methodology for translating drama texts. One can see the development of her thought over the past decade in the essay 'Still Trapped in the Labyrinth' that follows in the present volume. Lefevere contributed the essay 'Why Waste our Time on Rewrites? The Trouble with the Role of Rewriting in an Alternative Paradigm', in which he lays out his concept of 'rewriting' — a genre that includes interpretation, criticism,

anthologising, as well as translation — and shows how all rewriters operate under constraints of poetic norms and ideological beliefs inherent in the target culture. We see the development of his pioneering ideas in essays such as 'Translation Practice(s) and the Circulation of Cultural Capital: Some *Aeneids* in English' and 'Acculturating Bertolt Brecht' in the essays that follow in this book.

A real breakthrough for the field of translation studies came in the 1990s with the collection of essays titled *Translation, History, and Culture*, co-edited by Bassnett and Lefevere. It was then that translation studies officially took the 'cultural turn', the authors redefining the object of study as a verbal text within the network of literary and extra-literary signs in both the source and target cultures. As Bassnett notes in Chapter 8, 'The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies', that follows, she and Lefevere were suggesting that such a redefinition of the field

could offer a way of understanding how complex manipulative textual processes take place: how a text is selected for translation ... what role the translator plays in that selection, what the role of an editor, publisher, or patron plays, what criteria determine the strategies that will be employed for the translators, and how a text might be received in the target system.

While many scholars were inching toward the cultural turn in the early 1990s, Bassnett and Lefevere were the first to articulate the position. In the explosion of events that have followed, Bassnett and Lefevere again have led the way.

In 1992, Lefevere published not just one, but *three* books on translation: *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, *Translation/History/Culture: A Sourcebook*, and *Translating Literature*. In addition, he published them not with obscure firms, but with major publishing firms such as Routledge and MLA Press. The books sold well, and the boom in translation studies was on. New journals such as *The Translator* and *Target* sprang up. Conference activity increased all over the world, including England, Holland, Poland, Finland, Spain, Austria, Brazil, and Canada. New publishing firms got into the market, e.g., Kent State University Press in the USA or Jerome Publishing in England. Old series were revived, such as the Rodopi Series in Holland. Encyclopedias of translation studies were developed in England, Germany, China, and elsewhere. Perhaps most significantly, translation studies entered academia, with new MA and PhD programmes starting at universities such as Middlesex, Massachusetts, Salamanca, São Paulo, and elsewhere. It is a shame that André Lefevere is no longer with us and is unable to see the fruits of the seeds that he planted.

In many ways, *Constructing Cultures* can be viewed as a celebration of André Lefevere's life and work. Everyone in the field, most deeply Susan Bassnett, perhaps his closest colleague and friend, is saddened by his passing. With difficulty and great care, Bassnett has collected and edited his final words in the shape that follows here.

The explosion of thinking and writing on and about translations has made it hard for anyone to keep up. For those recently discovering the field, Bassnett's and Lefevere's *Constructing Cultures* offer a variety of essays that reflect the evolution of the field: these essays address the most recent developments in theory, in cultural studies, in translation research (called descriptive studies by translation studies scholars), and in teaching translation. Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere also continue to push the boundaries of the definition of the field of translation studies. This book is not just a collection of essays and talks presented at colloquia of the past and/or previously published in journals. Rather, it presents new and unpublished material, either in the form of new work the two of them had presented in process at closed seminars of the graduate programme at the Centre for British and Comparative Cultural Studies at the University of Warwick, or radically rethinking and revising positions taken in previously published essays.

Constructing Cultures begins with three new essays: first, the introduction co-authored by Bassnett and Lefevere entitled 'Where are we in Translation Studies?'; then the first chapter by Lefevere entitled 'Chinese and Western Thinking on Translation'; and next the second chapter by Bassnett entitled 'When is Translation not a Translation?'. The co-authored introductory essay combines a blend of translation history followed by a new set of questions and openings for future research. It also contains the central thesis of the book, and answers a question those who first pick up the book might ask. Why is a book by two prominent translation scholars called *Constructing Cultures*? The answer indicates just how far translation studies has evolved since 1978. Translators, argue Bassnett and Lefevere, have always provided a vital link enabling different cultures to interact. The next logical stage posited by Bassnett and Lefevere is not just to study translations but to study cultural interaction. Perhaps the most obvious, comprehensive, indeed empirical data for studying cultural interaction are the translated texts themselves. To do so, Bassnett and Lefevere posit three models for studying translations that they have found useful: the Horatian model, in which the translator tends to be faithful to his/her customers, i.e., the target audience; the Jerome model, in which the translator tends to be faithful to the source text, in this case the Bible; and the Schleiermacher model, which emphasises preservation of the alterity of the source model

for the target reader. Rather than suggesting that one theory of translation is valid across cultures and time, Bassnett's and Lefevere's multiple models are helpful for studying translations in different cultures during different periods. They also offer new critical tools to enable such study, such as the concept of 'textual grids' derived from the work of Pierre Bourdieu. A textual grid is understood as the collection of acceptable literary forms and genres in which texts can be expressed. For example, Chinese novels have their own set of rules, rules which differ from the ways in which novels in Europe tend to be constructed. These 'grids' cause patterns of expectations in the respective audiences, and both practising translators and in particular literary historians need to take into consideration such grids in order to better produce and/or analyse translations. Of most interest in the introductory essay are the set of questions Bassnett and Lefevere ask. For example, why are certain texts translated and not others? What is the agenda behind translation? How are translators used by those in control of such agendas? Can we predict how a given translation might function in any given culture? The future of the field is bright, according to Bassnett and Lefevere; areas for future research include, among others, the study of the history of translation to better relativise the present, the study of postcolonial translation to better re-evaluate Eurocentric models, and the study of different kinds of criticism, anthologies, reference works, as well as translations, to see how images of texts are created and function within any given culture.

In Chapter 1, 'Chinese and Western Thinking on Translation', André Lefevere shows how a textual grid might help scholars doing comparative analysis. He views the concept of translation historically, showing just how culturally dependent our Western definition is. In a fascinating essay that juxtaposes the history of translation in the West and China, we see that our definition (white, Anglo-Germanic) of translation may not be as universal as some theorists speculate. Lefevere compares a system in the West in which translations are invariably written by a single author and read in silence by single readers to a system in China in which translations tend to be oral in nature, often translated by teams of scholars, and frequently recited and/or chanted publicly. In the West, he suggests, the 'original' text always consciously or subconsciously looms behind the translated text, whereas in China, the translated text often *replaces* the original, with the reader asking few questions about the 'original'. Lefevere examines powerful institutions that may shape such sensibilities such as the Roman Catholic Church in the West and powerful emperors in China. As a result, Lefevere forces the reader to see that our very definition of translation as a kind of language transfer is embedded in larger systems or grids that define

and limit our practice to a greater degree than hitherto imagined. Only by taking a step back from the immediate language transfer process, and by taking the larger institutions involved in cultural construction into consideration can the scholar begin to see the nature of the role translations play in cultural construction.

Lefevere continues to explore the usefulness of the concept of a textual grid throughout the book that follows. For example, in Chapter 5, 'The Gates of Analogy: The *Kalevala* in English', Lefevere examines the construction and translations of the *Kalevala*, a collection of Finnish oral poetry, a kind of Finnish national epic, to show how readers and critics consciously and unconsciously submit to a culturally constructed concept of an acceptable form for national epics, a 'grid' influenced by our concept of Homeric epics or Nordic epics. Lefevere argues that submitting to such a grid that underlies our notion of 'world literature' is particularly important to literatures written in languages less widely spoken. If a nation wants to be recognised as a nation among world nations, as was true of Finland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, then constructing a national epic is one of the main requirements. Lefevere shows that that very construction was exactly what a series of Finnish critics and translators set out to do. Quoting *Kalevala* translator Keith Bosley, Lefevere points out that the Finnish historians who constructed the epic were 'concerned less with fidelity to sources than with the validation of a national culture'. Ironically, because of the predominance of the Swedish language in Finland at the time, the very scholars who constructed the Finnish epic had to do so using *Swedish* at first, the only literary language they knew. For lesser-known languages such as Finnish, Czech, Flemish, Gaelic, such a ironic twist is not unusual; their revival is often dependent upon translations from Swedish, German, French, or English to bring them into existence. In 'The *Kalevala* in English', Lefevere shows that both critics such as Lönnrot and translators such as the first two English translators very definitely use grids such as those of the classical Nordic epic to manipulate the original to conform to what readers typically associate with classical epics. This kind of research on the role translations play in emerging nations is one of the most exciting contributions of translation studies scholars. Pioneering work by translation studies scholars such as Lefevere provide us with models from the past that will have enormous influence on cultural studies and identity formation in the future.

One of the most fascinating texts illustrating the phenomenon of the construction of a national epic via translation is James Macpherson's translation of *Ossian*, a Scottish national epic, right around the same time Finnish scholars were constructing the *Kalevala*. The only problem was that

no original existed. Macpherson's translation was a hoax, or what translation studies has come to call a 'pseudo-translation', a term coined by Gideon Toury in 'Translation, Literary Translation, and Pseudotranslation' (1985). Lefevere's essay on the translation of 'epic' literature in lesser-known languages is complemented by Susan Bassnett's essay in Chapter 2, 'When is a Translation Not a Translation?' She, too, points out how cultural construction is a determinant factor in presenting and marketing a text as a translation, when it is in fact an original work. Why might someone do such a thing? Often certain cultural constraints make it impossible to write about certain topics or use certain poetic forms. In the USA, for example, with free verse reigning as the norm in poetic circles, publishing serious verse in rhymed couplets might be difficult; however, if one masked one's identity and posed as the greatest writer from some other country, perhaps one could perhaps find one's way into print. Examples of such deception abound, including the recent publication of the work of 'Araki Yasusada' in English. Yasusada, a Japanese Hiroshima 'survivor', writes poems whose surreal images and abrupt juxtapositions were in stark contrast to the often sentimental images of other Hiroshima poets translated into English. The problem was Yasusada didn't exist. While rumours are still flying, the lead suspect, according to Emily Nussbaum (1997) in 'Turning Japanese: The Hiroshima Poetry Hoax' is one Kent Johnson, professor of English and Spanish at Highland Community College, who has published his own poems in the voice of a Hiroshima survivor, masking his identity to lend authenticity to his voice. The difference between an imagined survivor and a 'real' Japanese survivor/eyewitness are two different things, especially when one considers that the constructed biography of Yasusada includes his daughter dying of radiation poisoning.

In 'When is Translation Not a Translation?' Bassnett introduces a new concept she calls 'collusion' to analyse such pseudo-translations, arguing that readers go along with this ruse for a variety of conscious and subconscious reasons. Given the number of examples she cites, pseudo-translations are much more prevalent than the reading public and/or literary critics ever imagined: Thomas Mallory's *Morte d'Arthur*, Richard Burton's *The Kasidah of Hajj Abdú El-Yezdi* are pseudo-translations; others are found within travel writing texts such as Robert Byron's *The Road to Oxiana*, in which dialogues are presented as translations, but the reader subconsciously knows that the traveller does *not* know the indigenous language; thus they must indeed be fabricated rather than factual. Because readers do not want to admit this, readers 'collude' with the writer in perpetuating the facade that these texts and/or dialogues are based on 'fact' rather than fiction. The scheme also allows the original writer to remain the

authority and effectively erases the translator from the mediatory process. Bassnett's insights point out just how difficult it is to determine the border between original writing and translation and how critics 'collude' with a culture that tends to have very distinct and separate concepts of original writing and translation. Such thinking makes *Constructing Culture* appeal to cultural studies scholars and language philosophers alike.

Bassnett and Lefevere deploy these new critical tools well in *Constructing Cultures* when they revisit sites of their thinking about translation developed during their earlier years. In Chapter 3, 'Translation Practice(s) and the Circulation of Cultural Capital: Some *Aeneids* in English', Lefevere provides a diachronic study of translations of the *Aeneid* into English, the kind of translation history characteristic of translation studies during its descriptive phase of the 1980s. This time, however, Lefevere incorporates the concept of 'cultural capital' from Pierre Bourdieu, by which he refers to information a person needs in any given cultural context to belong to the 'right circles', information that Lefevere argues is regulated and transmitted by translation. Attacking translation critics who set up some sort of universal standard of good versus bad to judge translations and to explain their success or failure in a given culture, Lefevere instead argues that the success of certain translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* has to do less with the quality of the translation, and more to do with the *prestige* of the source language culture for the audience of the translation, i.e., the elite reading public (whose skill in Latin is decreasing over time) in England who want to belong to the right literary and social circles. Behind this article we see the concept of patronage developed by Lefevere. For example, in a 1984 essay called 'That Structure in the Dialect of Man Interpreted', Lefevere talked about patronage as any kind of force that can be influential in encouraging or discouraging, even censoring, works of literature. Lefevere's concept of patronage is a broad one: kings, queens, booksellers, school systems, arts councils, governments, are all implicated. In the case of 'Some *Aeneids* in English', Lefevere gives the example of the Pope serving as a patron for Christopher Pitt's 1740 translation, or the broadcasting industry serving as a patron in the case of Cecil Day Lewis' 1952 translation. What I find interesting in this essay is that Lefevere actually uses his theory to predict future translations, arguing for example that patrons of feminist bookstores will no doubt contribute to the production of a new feminist translation of the *Aeneid*.

On goal of Lefevere's work is to unmask institutional forces that create a kind of translation hegemony which influences the kinds of translation that get produced. In Chapter 7, 'Acculturating Bertolt Brecht', Lefevere turns to the literary criticism industry and uses the example of Brecht

translations in the USA to illustrate his point. Although he dealt with Brecht translations previously in his essay 'Mother Courage's Cucumbers' (1982), this time he expands the parameters of translation studies to include both translations, literary criticism, and reference works such as encyclopedias. Using his concept of translation as a kind of 'rewriting', introduced in 1987 in an article called '"Beyond Interpretation" or the Business of (Re)Writing', and referring to all those writers who interpret, explain, paraphrase literary texts. Lefevere reveals how both translators and literary critics are guilty of perpetuating certain cultural values at the expense of others as they rewrite. This new essay 'Acculturating Bertolt Brecht' exposes literary and ideological prejudices in the United States during the World War II period through the early 1970s, and demonstrates how translators and critics were not innocent bystanders of such cultural prejudices, but rather active participants contributing to particular cultural constructions. Discussing *Mother Courage* translations by H.R. Hays (1941), Eric Bentley (1967), and Ralph Manheim (1972), for example, Lefevere reveals the leading role translators played in making Brecht part of the American canon. While the translators' negotiations to make Brecht accepted tended to remain at the level of language, stage directions, and literary form, Lefevere goes on to argue that the real critical battle over the reception of Brecht was waged by the literary critics. In his analysis of the criticism, Lefevere shows another kind of collusion, in which critics ignored Brecht's epic forms and alienation effects, dismissed his politics and Marxism, and instead turned Brecht into another kind of liberal humanist. Lefevere's quotes are especially damning: Bentley, for example, sublates 'epic theatre' into 'theatre of narrative realism'; Bocket turns Brecht's alienation effects into another kind of Aristotelian catharsis. Some critics went so far as to argue that Brecht's Marxism damaged his work and that Brecht's primary significance was his ability to 'entertain'. The powerful combination of critics and translators succeeded in constructing an *image* of Brecht in the West for those who do not know German. For those who do, such a social constructing is actually appalling; one begins to wonder whether there are any professional standards in literary translation or literary criticism at all. One of the goals of translation studies over the past two decades has been to reveal the social and literary norms of the target culture and show the impact that such constraints have on practising translators; Lefevere's essay not only effectively demonstrates such constraints, but it also shows how translators and critics participate in that very construction. For those postcolonial critics who are attempting to unmask cultural institutions that serve to marginalise minority voices and for those with alternative political persuasions, one can learn much from

Lefevere's essay. Such translation studies research might also inform the training of literary and cultural critics as well.

Armed with a new set of critical tools, Bassnett also productively revisits a site of her previous thinking, i.e., that of theatre translation, in Chapter 6, 'Still Trapped in the Labyrinth: Further Reflections on Translation and Theatre'. Less than comfortable with certain literary critical notions prevalent in the West, Bassnett uses examples of third world translations to illustrate her points. Playing with the overlapping boundaries among play text, translation, and performance, she expands the boundaries of translation studies to include visual as well as verbal signs. The central argument circles around Bassnett's discomfort with certain scholars' notion of 'performability', i.e., those who claim that a kind of universal 'performability' (or 'speakability' or 'gestic subtext') is inherent in the text, one that determines whether or not the play can be translated and/or performed in the first place. Indeed, Bassnett sees a danger in such universalising concepts: for once the translator/director has a vision of this elusive universal gestic subtext, many contradictions, subtle nuances, and shifts in tone in the text may get smoothed out for the sake of a unified conceptual vision. Using well chosen examples, such as Vicki Ooi's discussion of the translation of O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* into Chinese, Bassnett shows how certain non-Western cultures do not have the convention of searching for subtextual patterns within a playtext. One of the strengths of both Bassnett and Lefevere's work over the years has been the fact that they are not interested in theory as philosophy, but in theory that may be of use for practising translators. Indeed, very little practical advice exists for those translating drama. Yet here Bassnett offers explicit and well-taken advice: trying to render a text performable is *not* the translator's task; rather, Bassnett recommends leaving in the contradictions, nuances, and shifts in tone if found in the original. The director, the dramaturge, or the actor, may end up unifying the text. The goal of the translator, however, is *to maintain the strangeness* of the text in order to allow the reader (or artistic director) to discover the text for themselves. In fact, the only way to construct a multicultural theatre in the West will be if translators reject strategies that conform to Western dramatic conventions and cultural practices, reject searching for deep, unifying structures, and instead focus on the translation of the signs of the texts — the words, the silences, the shifts of tone — in all their contradictions and multi-layered play.

Bassnett further blends theory and practical advice in Chapter 4, 'Transplanting the Seed: Poetry and Translation'. Her advice for poetry translators is similar to the advice she gives theatre translators: to focus on the play of language in the text. Bassnett distances herself from notions that

poetry is some intangible, ineffable spirit or presence, taking issue with poets such as Robert Frost who suggest that poetry is what gets lost in translation. Supporting a thesis posited by poet and translator Frederic Will (1993) in *Translation, Theory and Practice: Reassembling the Tower*, Bassnett argues that texts consist of language — nouns, verbs, grammatical patterns — the very material with which translators work with to construct their translations. Citing famous translators such as Ezra Pound, Augusto de Campos, Yves Bonnefoy, and Octavio Paz, Bassnett argues the task of the translator is to dismantle the raw linguistic material of the poet, and to reassemble the signs in a new language. The task is less to copy an original, but to compose an analogous text. Paz suggests we think in terms of transmutation; Bassnett suggests that we think in terms of transplanting a seed. To illustrate her theory, Bassnett gives several illuminating examples of both how to and how not to translate. She cites, for example, Sir Thomas Wyatt's translations of Petrarch as an example of Paz' translation approach. While some critics are uncomfortable with Wyatt's translation strategy, Bassnett is not. She allows that Wyatt makes many changes, including altering the rhyme scheme and foregrounding many pronouns, especially the self-referential 'I', which makes the poetry less mystical and more concrete. Yet by subtly altering the form, Bassnett shows how Wyatt created a new form with new possibilities in the English language, one that was later to be used by writers such as Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare. The seed, once transplanted, flourishes. She also gives excellent examples of how not to translate, citing several versions of the Paolo and Francesca story from Dante's *Inferno*, Canto V. In a typical translation studies fashion, Bassnett compares translations by Cary (1816), Byron (1820), Longfellow (1867), Norton (1941), Sayers (1949), Sisson (1980) and Durling (1996). What strikes the reader is how confusing and devoid of feeling nearly all of them are. The signs never become free, but instead remain tied to their source, clumsily bound to two syntactic structures, and uncertain with regard to their intended audience. Bassnett hopes to liberate translators from their slavish attachment to the source text, and empower them with positive imagery. Bassnett views translation as energy-releasing, as freeing linguistic and semiotic signs to circulate among the best creative writing in the receiving culture. Such a theory of translation has post-structuralist resonance; one can hear echoes of Benjamin, Derrida, and de Man in Bassnett's position; recent work of translation studies scholars such as Lawrence Venuti and Teraswini Niranjani indicate its growing acceptance in the field. Yet, perhaps most importantly, is the appeal of such a translation approach for cultural studies and postcolonial scholars.

Susan Bassnett's final essay 'The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies'

makes the connection between translation studies and cultural studies. A fitting conclusion to this book, the essay announces a new era for interdisciplinary research. Translation studies scholarship over the last three decades has now built up what might be called a critical mass of scholarship, enough that any cultural studies scholars discussing intercultural movement, or lamenting the lack thereof, needs to consult the findings of the translation studies scholarship. I have argued that translated texts serve as empirical data documenting intercultural transfer; Bassnett argues similarly that translations are the *performative* aspect of intercultural communication. Using models developed by Anthony Easthope in a recent essay 'But what is Cultural Studies' (1997), Bassnett traces a parallel development of both cultural studies and translation studies over the past three decades, both going through a culturalist phase (Nida and Newmark), a structuralist phase (Even-Zohar and Toury), and a post-structuralist phase (Simon and Niranjana). As cultural studies now enters a new internationalist phase, incorporating sociological and ethnographic methodologies, Bassnett suggests that the moment has come for the two disciplines to jump off their parallel track and join together. Cultural studies is now dealing with questions of power relations and textual production. Translation studies scholars know something about this: their years of research in historical comparison of Greek and Latin classics or canonical writers such as Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, have given them great insight into how cultural values and ideals are constructed and whose interests such values represent. Yet while cultural studies has embraced gender studies, film studies, and media studies, Bassnett points out that they have been slow to recognise the value of translation studies research. Quoting Homi Bhabha's citation of Paul de Man from *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bassnett argues that translations provide the scholar with actual situations of cultural transfer rather than hypothetical situations: translation, de Man notes, 'puts the original in motion to decanonise it, giving it movement of fragmentation, a wandering of errance, a kind of permanent exile'. For Bassnett, this image of translation as a sign of fragmentation, wandering, and exile, characterises the new internationalist phase of cultural studies in the late twentieth century. More than a metaphor, Bassnett concludes, the study of culture would do well to study the processes of encoding and decoding involved in translation. For in the study of translations, the scholar can demonstrate how fragments survive, which wanderings occur, and how texts in exile are received. As Barbara Johnson (1985) has argued in 'Taking Fidelity Philosophically', a text that Bassnett has cited in the past, it is time to move the study of translations from the margins of critical

investigations to centre stage. Translation studies has taken the cultural turn; now cultural studies should take the translation turn.

In *Constructing Cultures*, Bassnett and Lefevere again present the field with a pioneering text. For the past two decades, translation studies has conducted much descriptive work. The methodology has been sound, the comparisons valid, and the values and interests of the cultural elite in various European and North American societies exposed. Yet much of this work has been carried out behind the scenes and has not yet reached wider audiences. Many scholars in the field have been asking where will translation studies go after its descriptive studies period. In *Constructing Cultures*, Bassnett and Lefevere not only report on the latest developments in the field of translation studies, they also point to new directions for the discipline for the next millennium. When I read work by Jacques Derrida, Homi Bhabha, or Edward Said, I am often struck by how naive their ideas about translation sound in comparison to the detailed analysis provided by translation scholars. Bassnett and Lefevere point the field to a new interdisciplinary phase. As cultural studies scholars, postcolonial critics, and language philosophers discover translation studies, they should like what they see. Translation studies scholars need also to learn from methods what they see. Translation studies scholars need also to learn from methods of cultural studies disciplines to broaden their investigations. In 'The Translation Turn', Bassnett points to new avenues for interdisciplinary investigations into what Venuti calls the 'ethnocentric violence of translation', into how cultures construct 'images' of writers, and into which texts become cultural capital for the ruling elite. The task is large, for no one scholar from any single discipline can fully comprehend the complex network of signs that constitute a culture. Bassnett forcefully argues that we need to combine resources, broaden research, and begin a new era of intercultural training, thereby opening the field to a plurality of voices.

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Introduction

Where are we in Translation Studies?

ANDRÉ LEFEVERE and SUSAN BASSNETT

Translation Studies Today

The questions that are generally accepted as relevant and important enough to be asked in the field of translation studies are very different now from what they were twenty years ago, when we first began to publish on translation. That fact is perhaps the clearest indicator of the distance we have covered in the meantime. Another indicator is that 'translation studies' has now come to mean something like 'anything that (claims) to have anything to do with translation'. Twenty years ago it meant: training translators. It is amazing to see, with hindsight, how preposterous some of the questions that were asked twenty years ago seem to us now.

The most preposterous question was that of translatability or: 'is translation possible'. The question seems preposterous now because we have discovered the history of translation in the meantime, and that discovery enabled us to counter that question with another, namely: 'why are you interested in proving or disproving the feasibility of something that has been going on around most of the world for at least four thousand years?'

History, then, is one of the things that happened to translation studies since the 1970s, and with history a sense of greater relativity and of the greater importance of concrete negotiations at certain times and in certain places, as opposed to abstract, general rules that would always be valid. In the post-war period, the agenda behind the analysis of translatability was that of the possible development of machines that would make translations valid for all times and all places, and would do so at any time, in any place. Machines, and machines alone, were to be trusted to produce 'good' translations, always and everywhere. History has turned out to be the ghost in that machine, and as the ghost has grown, the machine has crumbled.

Perhaps the most arresting example of this crumbling of the machine is the long retreat, and final disintegration of the once key concept of equivalence. Twenty years ago those in the field would ask themselves whether equivalence, too, was possible, and whether there was a foolproof

way to find it if it were possible. Again, the underlying assumption seemed to be that there could be something like an abstract and universally valid equivalence. Today we know that specific translators decide on the specific degree of equivalence they can realistically aim for in a specific text, and that they decide on that specific degree of equivalence on the basis of considerations that have little to do with the concept as it was used two decades ago.

The Jerome Model

The concept of equivalence lies at the heart of what may be called the 'Jerome' model of translation, after Saint Jerome (c.331–c.420 AD) whose Vulgate set the acknowledged and unacknowledged standards of much of translation in the West until about two hundred years ago. In its simplest avatar it reads more or less as follows: there is a text, and that text just needs to be transposed into another language, as faithfully as possible. Faithfulness is insured by good dictionaries, and since anybody can, basically, use a good dictionary, there is really no reason to train translators well, and even less of a reason to pay them well.

The days of the Jerome model are now numbered, at least in the West. The model is characterised by the presence of a central, sacred text, that of the Bible, which must be translated with the utmost fidelity, and the early ideal of that fidelity was the interlinear translation, in which one word would match another, indeed, in which the translated word would be written under the word it was supposed to translate. Even if the interlinear ideal could not be maintained in practice, short of producing a text syntactically so skewed as to become unintelligible, it did remain the ideal, not just for Biblical translation, but also, by extension, for translations of other texts. Precisely because it could never be realised, the ideal continued to haunt translators and those who thought about translation over the centuries. Since it could not be realised, de facto compromises were necessary, which were, of course, entered into, although at the double price of interminable wrangling about precisely how 'faithful' faithfulness should be, or what could really be termed an 'equivalent' of what and, more importantly, of generating a perennial feeling of guilt in translators and of permanently marginalising them in society as necessary evils, more evil at some times, more necessary at others.

To be able to elevate faithfulness to this central position, to the exclusion of many other factors, the Jerome model had to reduce thinking about translation to the linguistic level only. This could be done all the more easily because the text that served as the yardstick for fidelity was seen as timeless and unchangeable precisely because of its sacred nature.

It is because the Bible no longer exerts such powerful influence as a sacred text in the West to the extent it once did, that thinking about translation has been able to move away from the increasingly sterile 'faithful/free' opposition, and that it has been able to redefine equivalence, which is no longer seen as the mechanical matching of words in dictionaries, but rather as a strategic choice made by translators. What has changed is that one type of faithfulness (the one commonly connected with equivalence) is no longer imposed on translators. Rather, they are free to opt for the kind of faithfulness that will ensure, in their opinion, that a given text is received by the target audience in optimal conditions.

The change that has occurred, then, is from the belief in one type of faithfulness, conveniently equated with 'faithfulness as such', to the realisation that there are different types of faithfulness that may be adequate in different situations. After this change, people in the field gradually stopped asking the old questions and started replacing them with the questions that are dominating the field right now. These questions include: 'What is the function of the (this, not a, any) translation likely to be?' 'What type of text needs to be translated?' 'Who is the initiator of perfectly possible that they have to be faithful in some situations and free in others, in order to work to the satisfaction of their initiators.

We have learned to ask these questions, and we have realised their relevance, because we are no longer 'stuck to the word', or even the text, because we have realised the importance of context in matters of translation. One context is, of course, that of history. The other context is that of culture. The questions that now dominate the field are able to dominate it because research has taken a 'cultural turn', because people in the field began to realise, some time ago, that translations are never produced in a vacuum, and that they are also never received in a vacuum.

The Horace Model

We are in the process of moving beyond the Jerome model, towards a model that is associated with the name of the Roman poet Horace (65 BC–8 BC) and which historically predates the Jerome model, but has been overshadowed by it for about fourteen centuries. Horace's often quoted, though not always understood, 'fidus interpres' was not faithful to a text, but to *his* customers, and they were his customers only in Horace's time. A 'fidus' translator/interpreter was one who could be trusted, who got the job done on time and to the satisfaction of both parties. To do so, he had to negotiate between two clients and two languages, if he

was an interpreter, or between a patron and two languages if he was a translator. The fact that negotiation is the central concept here militates heavily against the kind of faithfulness traditionally associated with equivalence. Indeed, it is entirely conceivable, not to say inevitable, that the interpreter who wants to negotiate successfully a business transaction may, at times, be very well advised not to translate 'faithfully', so as not to let the negotiations collapse. In the Horatian model there is no sacred text, but there definitely is a privileged language, namely Latin. This implies that negotiation is, in the end, always slanted toward the privileged language, and that the negotiation does not take place on absolutely equal terms. The parallels between the position of Latin in Horace's time and English today are interestingly close. English today occupies the same position throughout the world that Latin occupied in the Mediterranean during the last centuries of the republic and the first centuries of the principate. Translations into English, particularly from third world languages, are almost invariably slanted toward English: we are confronted with what we may term the 'Holiday Inn Syndrome', where everything foreign and exotic is standardised, to a great extent. At least this is the case with texts that can be considered to build the 'cultural capital' of a civilisation. The question does not even arise for another type of text, and for reasons that have little to do with translation as such: the day when computer manuals will be translated from Uzbek into English, rather than the other way around, is obviously not near.

Another change is that today, we have come to recognise that different types of texts require different translation strategies. Some texts are primarily designed to convey information, and it stands to reason that translations of such texts should try to convey that information as well as possible. How they do so in practice will, in each particular case, be the result of assumed or explicit negotiation among the initiators who not only want the text translated, but also want it to function in the receiving culture in a meaningful way, the translator who actually translates it, the culture to which the text belongs, the culture the translation is aimed at, and the function the text is supposed to fulfil in the culture the translation is aimed at.

There are also texts that are primarily designed to entertain. They will have to be translated in a different, though not necessarily a radically different manner, since texts that are primarily designed to convey information, may well also try to entertain their readers, if only to ensure that the information will be conveyed in the most painless manner possible. Conversely, texts that are primarily designed to entertain, may, and often do, also contain information.

A third type of texts, which obviously has elements of the other two in them, as well as elements of the fourth type, tries to persuade. The fourth type consists of those texts that are recognised as belonging to the 'cultural capital' of a given culture, or even to the 'cultural capital' of something like 'world culture'. The novels of Trollope would be more 'British' than 'world' cultural capital, the plays of Shakespeare would be both. Texts that are recognised as cultural capital will, obviously, have started out as belonging to one, two, or all three of the other types, and they will continue to influence the other types.

But perhaps more important than the several and separate types is the existence of what can be called a 'grid' of text, the textual grid that a culture makes use of, the collection of acceptable ways in which things can be said. Different cultures may, of course, make use of essentially the same textual grid. The French, German, and English cultures, for instance, make use of the same textual grid, with slight variations in emphasis, because that is the grid they inherited from Greco-Roman antiquity through the shared vicissitudes of history. Other cultures, like Chinese and Japanese culture, have textual grids that are much more unique and not shared with other cultures. The interesting point in all this, though, is that these 'textual grids' seem to exist in cultures on a level that is deeper, or higher, or whatever metaphor you prefer, than that of language. In other words, the 'textual grid' pre-exists language(s). These grids are man-made, historical, contingent constructs; they are by no means eternal, unchangeable, or even 'always already there'. They can, and do, appear given for all eternity only when, as so often happens, they have been interiorised by human beings to such an extent that they have become totally transparent for them, that they appear 'natural'.

If textual grids do exist, and we claim that they do, not explicitly, but as a pattern of expectations that is felt, has been interiorised by members of a culture, who may not be able to list most, or all of their characteristic features and the rules that regulate their production, then students of translation should pay more attention to them than they have in the past, whether they want to learn the technique of translating, or whether they want to analyse translations and the part they play in the evolution of cultures.

One of the great strides that has been made over the last twenty years is the realisation that the house of translation has, indeed, many mansions now, not least because the definition of the field has been widened to include more than just the technique of translating, as it is studied and taught. Yet it would seem that the set of questions identified above as dominating the field, is as valid for the house as a whole as it is for its many

mansions. This central set of questions guarantees the unity of the field at its core; beyond that, there is much work, and of various different kinds, to be done in the various subfields, or 'interfields', of translation. It is easy to imagine translation as an interfield of linguistics, for instance, of literature, and of anthropology, cultural and otherwise. Again, while the different interfields can be 'felt' to exist by those working in the larger field, it would not be altogether wise to try to erect barriers between them, since one can, and should, indeed learn from the other whenever necessary.

A tremendous change, perhaps the most tremendous change in the field of translation occurred not when more and more interfields were added, but when the finality, the goal of work in the field was drastically widened. In the 1970s, translation was seen, as it undoubtedly is, as 'vital to the interaction between cultures'. What we have done is to take this statement and stand it on its head: if translation is, indeed, as everybody believes, vital to the interaction between cultures, then why not take the next step and study translation, not just to train translators, but precisely to study cultural interaction? There are no doubt various other ways in which that process can also be studied, but we contend that translation offers a means of studying cultural interaction that is not offered in the same way by any other field. Translation provides researchers with one of the most obvious, comprehensive, and easy to study 'laboratory situations' for the study of cultural interaction. A comparison of original and translation will not only reveal the constraints under which translators have to work at a certain time and in a certain place, but also the strategies they develop to overcome, or at least work around those constraints. This kind of comparison can, therefore, give the researcher something like a synchronic snapshot of many features of a given culture at a given time. Moreover, it can easily be shown that certain translations, and not just of the Bible in the West or the Buddhist Scriptures in China, have exerted an enormous influence on the evolution of societies and, through them, the evolution of history.

Translation is in history, always. It is, in many cases, a vital factor within history, and the more we learn about its history, the more obvious this fact becomes. It is no coincidence, therefore, that many histories of translation have been published over the last ten years, just as it is no exaggeration to say that if we want to study cultural history, the history of philosophy, literature, and religion, we shall have to study translations to a much greater extent than we have done in the past.

If you are a researcher in the field of translation and you think that translation does, and should, promote international understanding, you will define meaningful research in your interfield (which you should not equate with the field as a whole) as the activity that provides those working

in that interfield with the tools needed to do their work better, to improve the techniques of translating. If, on the other hand, you think that translation should primarily be used as a tool to analyse the processes through which international understanding comes into being, you will define meaningful research in your interfield (which you should also not equate with the field as a whole) in a different way. In the first case you will produce books and articles aimed at improving the training of translators, you will concern yourself more with translating than with translation. In the second case, you will produce the kind of case studies that are brought together in this book, as possible instances of the direction in which this kind of research could develop. There is no reason why both mansions should not be able to coexist in the house of translation.

The Schleiermacher Model

The case studies collected in this book deal with texts that constitute cultural capital, which should not be equated with capital as it is used in economics, but which makes it easier for people within a culture to gain access to that kind of capital as well. Many of these are the texts you need to be able to talk about, or at least bluff about convincingly enough in polite society. These are the texts the bourgeoisie hastened to read from the seventeenth century onwards because the aristocracy had been reading them, indeed claiming them as its own, and because the bourgeoisie did not want to be cut off from the company of the aristocracy, because that company would eventually provide access to the aristocracy's power, often also in exchange for the money of the bourgeoisie.

It is in the domain of cultural capital that translation can most clearly be seen to construct cultures. It does so by negotiating the passage of texts between them, or rather, by devising strategies through which texts from one culture can penetrate the textual and conceptual grids of another culture, and function in that other culture. What we call the 'socialisation process', of which formal education is a big, though not the only part, leaves us with textual and conceptual grids that regulate most of the writing and the thinking in the culture in which we grow up.

The most obvious form of negotiation between textual and conceptual grids is that of analogy; it is also the most superficial one, and the one that leads, inevitably, to the obliteration of differences between cultures and the texts they produce. Analogy is the easy way in negotiations between cultures, precisely because it slants the culture of origin toward the receiving culture, whose prestige is perceived to be so much greater. But it need not be the only way. The Schleiermacher model of translation takes issue with the automatic standardisation analogy produces. In his famous

lecture 'On the Different Ways of Translating', Friedrich Schleiermacher demands, among other things, that translations from different languages into German should read and sound different: the reader should be able to guess the Spanish behind a translation from Spanish, and the Greek behind a translation from Greek. If all translations read and sound alike (as they were soon to do in Victorian translations of the classics), the identity of the source text has been lost, levelled in the target text. The Schleiermacher model emphasises the importance of 'foreignising' translation. The privileged position of the receiving language or culture is denied, and the alterity of the source text needs to be preserved.

Each of the three models referred to here has its place in a developing study of translation, as long as they are not seen (and do not see each other) as mutually exclusive. In programmes that are set up to teach the technique of translating, by which is most often meant the translating of texts that are not considered to belong to a society's cultural capital, though they are just as fundamental to that society in a different way — think of computer manuals, car manuals, medical, legal, and pharmaceutical texts — the Jerome model would have to come first, obviously, but only chronologically so. In a first stage of translation teaching, translation may still be used as a kind of proficiency check on students' knowledge of the language they are studying. Within the Jerome model students can be held to a more rigorous discipline. They can be shown where their strengths and weaknesses lie, and they can be helped to cultivate the former and overcome the latter. The Horace model needs to supplement the Jerome model in the first phase of the teaching of translating, to heighten students' awareness of the textual and conceptual grids that pre-exist the texts with which they are working.

The Horace model becomes more important on the level of the study of the actual translations of texts that can be subsumed under the category of cultural capital. It is not difficult to show how the process of negotiation, which can be said to refer to both the institutional constraints under which it took place, and the translators' own personal input, has affected the reception of certain texts in certain cultures, and how it has, at times, decisively influenced the evolution of those receptor cultures.

When juxtaposed with the Schleiermacher model, the Horace model helps us to ask the fundamental questions in the analysis of translations, questions that deal with the relative power and prestige of cultures, with matters of dominance, submission, and resistance. It should be stressed that these questions need to be answered in the translating of all kinds of texts and the analysis of all kinds of translations. The relative power and prestige of cultures is extremely relevant for the selection of texts to be translated.

Dominance shows itself in how translation changes the ways in which people write in the target culture. Advertisements written around the world now look much more like American advertisements than they did a few years ago. Submission, paradoxically, shows itself most clearly, these days, in instances of non-translation. Yuppies and would-be yuppies the world over will feel flattered by the fact that texts in their own language include the occasional English word like 'cool', or something upscale looking that ends in '-isation'. Resistance often shows itself in the refusal to accept certain aspects of the original that would lead to a negative reaction in the target culture, for instance when the original uses scantily clad models to advertise jeans and the advertising campaign is aimed at Islamic countries. Manufacturers, who want their product sold, are usually very happy to negotiate about this in the full Horatian sense of the word.

Yet, and this is perhaps the most fascinating topic right now, perhaps also because it is hardly still within the limits of any translation interfield, unless we expand once again what translation is 'felt' to be, the process of acculturation, in which translation has, traditionally, been seen as a key element, takes place not just *between cultures*, but also *inside* a given culture, any given culture. At the beginning of the socialisation process, those about to be initiated into a culture are not given access to the 'originals' of the texts that are considered to make up the cultural capital of that culture. Rather, individuals are exposed to translations of those texts, not, in most cases from another language, although, in some cases, from older stages of the any given culture. At the beginning of the socialisation process, those about to be initiated into a culture are not given access to the 'originals' of the texts that are considered to make up the cultural capital of that culture. Rather, individuals are exposed to translations of those texts, not, in most cases from another language, although, in some cases, from older stages of the same language, but literally from another world into their own: the cultural capital is rewritten in such a way that it matches their assumed level of comprehension at a certain stage in their development. These rewritings appear not just in the shape of verbal, but also of non-verbal texts. When we are deemed old enough to be exposed to some of the laws of our universe, we do not read Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, not even in some kind of translation, we are told about Newton's laws in physics textbooks. Our culture has decided that all we need from Newton now are a few formulas.

It is a sobering thought that most, if not all people who participate in a given culture will never in their life be exposed to all the 'originals' on which culture claims to be based. It is important, therefore, to realise that rewritings and translations function as originals for most, if not all people in a culture in those fields which are not an important part of their professional expertise. If fewer and fewer people read *Pride and Prejudice*, the novel, and if more and more people watch versions of it on television instead, it stands to reason that the visual rewriting of the novel will

effectively replace the original, or rather, function as the original for many people.

The more the socialisation process depends on rewritings, the more the image of one culture is constructed for another by translations, the more important it becomes to know how the process of rewriting develops, and what kinds of rewritings/translations are produced. Why are certain texts rewritten/translated and not others? What is the agenda behind the production of rewritings/translations? How are the techniques of translating used in the service of a given agenda? Rewriters and translators are the people who really construct cultures on the basic level in our day and age. It is as simple, and as monumental as that. And because it is so simple and yet so monumental, it is also transparent: it tends to be overlooked.

Where Next?

And then the final question: where do we go from here? Where will Translation Studies, one of the fastest-growing interfields of the 1990s go in the new millennium? It will go in directions that we demand, as a result of our exploration of some of the as yet unresolved questions that remain to be answered.

We need to know more about the history of translation, and not just in the West, but also in other cultures. A great deal has been done, but the more we know, the more we shall be able to relativise the practices of the present, the more we shall be able to see them as constructed and contingent, not as given, eternal, and transparent.

It is no accident that so much exciting work in translation studies is coming from those cultures who are presently in a phase of post-colonial development. As the world reassesses its relationship to the European 'original', so concepts of translation are inevitably re-evaluated and canons of excellence based on Eurocentric models are revised.

We need to learn more about the acculturation process between cultures, or rather, about the symbiotic working together of different kinds of rewritings within that process, about the ways in which translation, together with criticism, anthologisation, historiography, and the production of reference works, constructs the image of writers and/or their works, and then watches those images become reality. We also need to know more about the ways in which one image dislodges another, the ways in which different images of the same writers and their works coexist with each other and contradict each other.

We need to learn more about the agenda behind the construction of these images: why did the Finns, for instance, suddenly decide they needed an epic? This leads us to the domain, another very promising interfield, of

cultural policy, exemplified in translation and rewriting policy. Needless to say, the figure of the initiator looms large here, especially if that initiator is a (totalitarian) state, which tries to create a total image of itself with the help of the partial images it constructs. The other important factor in this respect is the relative prestige of cultures, that of Roman Antiquity versus English in Dryden's time, for instance, as compared to now, when English occupies the position of prestige language of the world.

We also need to learn more about the texts that constitute the cultural capital of other civilisations, and we need to learn about them in ways that try to overcome, or bypass the kiss of death bestowed by acculturation through analogy. Haikus are not epigrams, Chinese novels have their own rules, both the textual and conceptual grids of other civilisations should not be reduced to those of the West.

We need to find out how to translate the cultural capital of other civilisations in a way that preserves at least part of their own nature, without producing translations that are so low on the entertainment factor that they appeal only to those who read for professional reasons. Perhaps this is another area in which different forms of rewriting need to cooperate: we could imagine the translated text, translated in a way that also appeals to the non-professional reader, preceded by a long introduction which sets out to show how the original text works on its own terms, within its own grid, rather than to tell readers only what it is 'like' or even 'most like' in their own cultures. This kind of attempt is most likely to bring us up against the limits of translation, a necessary confrontation, for without such a challenge, how else are we ever to overcome such limits and move on?

Chapter 1

Chinese and Western Thinking on Translation¹

ANDRÉ LEFEVERE

In the following pages I shall make an attempt at comparing Chinese and Western thinking about translation. Obviously, I am far more familiar with Western approaches than with Chinese thinking on the subject; what interests me mainly here, however, is translation itself. Precisely because histories of translation are increasingly being produced, we are now able to begin to historicise the phenomenon of translation itself. In consequence, we are also able to move away from the normative approach that has obstructed our view of translation for so long.

Different cultures have tended to take translation for granted, or rather, different cultures have taken the technique of translating that was current at a given time in their evolution for granted and equated it with the phenomenon of translation as such. Histories of translation in the West have shown increasingly that the technique of translating in Western cultures has changed repeatedly over the centuries, and that what was accepted as 'obvious' at one particular time was, in fact, little more than a passing phase. The important point is that shifts and changes in the technique of translating did not occur at random. Rather, they were intimately linked with the way in which different cultures, at different times, came to terms with the phenomenon of translation, with the challenge posed by the existence of the Other and the need to select from a number of possible strategies for dealing with that Other. We are, therefore, finally beginning to see different methods of translating as well as different approaches to translational practice as contingent, not eternal, as changeable, not fixed, because we are beginning to recognise that they have, indeed, changed over the centuries. Paradoxically, once it is accepted that translation is contingent, it becomes possible to highlight the central position it has always occupied in the development, indeed the very definition of cultures. That contingency is even easier to see when two different traditions are compared. Such a comparison may, I believe, shed

light not just on the two traditions, but ultimately also on the phenomenon of translation itself.

In what follows I shall not discuss the activity of translating, the actual process that leads to the production of translated texts in the field delimited by the language pair Chinese and English. Rather, I shall consider what I would like to call 'translational practice' both in the Chinese and Western traditions. By translational practice I mean a practice that integrates the actual activity of translating into itself. It precedes that activity in that it gives certain guidelines, whether these are followed by particular translators or not, that are themselves the product of thinking about the process of translation within a culture. Translational practice also follows the process of translating, since it plays a part in the reception of translated texts in the culture, or cultures for which they are intended.

In short, translational practice is one of the strategies a culture devises for dealing with what we have learned to call 'the Other'. The development of a translational strategy therefore also provides good indications of the kind of society one is dealing with. The fact that China, for instance, developed translational strategies only three times in its history, with the translation of the Buddhist scriptures from roughly the second to the seventh centuries AD, with the translation of the Christian scriptures starting in the sixteenth century AD, and with the translation of much Western thought and literature starting in the nineteenth century AD, says something about the image of the Other dominant in Chinese civilisation, namely that the Other was not considered very important. Nor is China, as was sometimes erroneously believed, alone in that respect. A much more extreme example is provided by Classical Greece, which showed no interest in the Other, did not develop any thinking about translation and hardly translated anything at all.

A first and very tentative generalisation could run as follows: cultures that see themselves as central in the world they inhabit, are not likely to deal much with Others, unless they are forced to do so. The Greeks were forced to do so by the Persian invasion first, which they successfully rebuffed and could therefore afford to ignore, and then by the Roman occupation which they could ignore no longer. Yet they did not suffer much, because their language and culture were highly valued by their conquerors. The Chinese were forced to deal with the Other by the spread of Buddhism, which did not threaten the fabric of society, and therefore could be acculturated rather easily on the terms of the receiving, Chinese society. This is apparent not just from the manner of translating, but even more so from the fact that Taoist concepts were used in translations to acculturate Buddhist concepts. The story was not very different in the

nineteenth century: Yan Fu and Lin Shuh could still translate into classical Chinese, following the tradition created by their predecessors, and translate on Chinese terms. Only the abolishing of classical Chinese as the language of communication between officials, literati, and intellectuals, and the concomitant rise of Western influence in China rendered this strategy of acculturation impossible in the twentieth century.

Cultures that do not pay much attention to the Other are not just cultures that consider themselves central in the great scheme of things; they are also cultures that are relatively homogeneous, as is borne out in the case of both classical Greek and Chinese cultures. Cultures that are relatively homogeneous tend to see their own way of doing things as 'naturally', the only way, which just as naturally becomes the 'best' way when confronted with other ways. When such cultures themselves take over elements from outside, they will, once again, naturalise them without too many qualms and too many restrictions. When Chinese translates texts produced by Others outside its boundaries, it translates these texts in order to replace them, pure and simple. The translations take the place of the originals. They function as the originals in the culture to the extent that the originals disappear behind the translations, not least because many of those who participated in Chinese culture did not know the language or languages of the original, which made it very difficult indeed even to check what the translators were actually doing.

The homogeneity of a culture is also a matter of the number of participants in that culture and, as importantly, a matter of how we describe that culture. Again, the similarities between Chinese and classical Greek culture are instructive in this respect. Throughout China's history, up to the beginning of this century, the number of those who really participated in the literate culture was small, which would also help to explain why it was relatively easy to maintain uniform standards for what would be acceptable to that audience, also in the matter of writing style and diction. In classical Greece, as is well known, slaves far outnumbered the free men (women were not really included) who participated in literate culture. The audiences developed differently in China and the West, however. Throughout the vagaries of history, those audiences kept expanding in the West, as opposed to China.

It should not come as much of a surprise, in the light of the above, that translation activity arose in the West in cultures that were not homogeneous, that were, in fact, internally divided by linguistic differences, or certain degrees of bilingualism. Yet in both the Western and the Chinese traditions, translation activity seems to have begun with the interpretation of spoken, rather than the translation of written texts. This is important for at least two

reasons. One, though not the most important, is that translation activity does not find its origin in the translation of sacred, or even literary texts, but in the translation of oral communications that concern trade. This situation emphasises the importance of the interpreter (as we shall be calling the translator for now) as a person, as a mediator. It also stresses the importance of the actual situation in which interpretation takes place.

At the origins of translation in both traditions, communication was more direct and feedback more immediate than in later, translating situations. The important point was for both interlocutors to understand each other, and the translator/interpreter would consider his task to be accomplished successfully when that understanding had indeed taken place. Of course it was much easier for the interpreter to gauge understanding in any given situation, and it was perhaps easiest of all to do so in the situation of a commercial transaction. To accomplish his task successfully, the interpreter often could not afford to translate literally, word for word. In many cases interpreters would just convey the gist of what one partner in the conversation said to the other, they would quietly convert weights and measures, silently adjust cultural expectations. Small wonder that interpreters would, in those days as they still do now, build up a clientele based on their reputation, which would of course in turn be based on their performance. But the significant point is that the client could not really judge the quality of the performance, only its results: interpreters that helped strike a good deal were good interpreters, no matter how they might have distorted what had actually been said. Traces of this early attitude toward interpreters still lingers in Horace's famous phrase '*fidus interpres*' as used in his *Ars Poetica*, where the *fidus* does not mean 'faithful to the original, or even to the wording of the original', as it has been interpreted in the light of subsequent developments, but rather something like 'dependable, someone who won't let you down'.

In this early translation process, there was not much time for correction, nor for agonising over the translation: once done, it was finished, and was seen to be transient and dependent on a particular situation. It was not etched in stone, or inscribed in clay, as it would soon be in Sumer and Akkad.

It is my contention that the Chinese and the Western tradition have developed away from the primal interpreting situation along two very different, perhaps even diametrically opposed tracks. The Chinese tradition, which I will allow to end, for the purposes of this paper, with Yan Fu and Li Shuh's nineteenth century translations has tended, on the whole, to stay closer to the interpreting situation. It has, consequently, attached comparatively less importance to the 'faithful' translation that became such a central notion in the thinking on translation that arose in the West.