



KAISA KOSKINEN

## Beyond Ambivalence

Postmodernity and the Ethics of Translation

*University of Tampere  
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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION  
University of Tampere, Department of Translation Studies

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# Abstract

Keywords: ethics, postmodernity, deconstruction, visibility

This study on the ethics of translation focuses on recent developments within the field of translation studies. Centred around the notion of the postmodern, it attempts to analyse and assess the state of the art in the ethics of translation in contemporary translation theory. It deals with new developments such as feminist translation, deconstruction, and postcolonial theories. Within the general framework of contemporary theories, the work of Lawrence Venuti (minoritising translation) and Anthony Pym (the ethics of intercultural cooperation) is subjected to a deconstructive analysis.

The analysis reveals that Venuti and Pym, who are seldom studied together and are often seen to represent very different approaches to translation, actually have several 'postmodern' traits in common. Their views are not identical, but they both focus on similar issues. The questions that both models seek to answer indicate areas we need to chart if we want to put forward meaningful postmodern theories of the ethics of translation. Among the fundamental issues are the dichotomies of translation theory, the vexed question of translators' visibility and trust, as well as untying the deadlock of fidelity. Venuti's and Pym's ethics are also both based on an understanding that responsibilities and moral commitments cannot be determined by focusing on the immediate translation commission alone. In addition to the immediate relationships between the author, commissioner, translator and reader, each individual translation project is also part of a larger network that needs to be taken into account in decision-making.

The main thrust of this thesis is theoretical, but Venuti's and Pym's positions are also put to the test in two case studies (Manuel Puig's novel *Boquitas pintadas* and its two translations, and translating in the European Commission), shedding light on the problems of the ethics of translation and the role of the translator in both literary and non-literary translation. The case studies show that both Venuti's and Pym's conceptual frameworks can be fruitfully employed, but they also indicate that real-life situations are more complex than theoretical maxims allow for.

In this thesis it is my goal to provide a critical overview of the postmodern tendencies in translation theories, with particular emphasis on deconstruction and associated theories. Within translation studies, the new approaches have successfully pointed out the failures and omissions of previous viewpoints, bringing to the forefront issues like the masculine bias of many translation theories or the limits of the Western/European perspective in translation studies. Reading the postmodern approaches together one can also identify several shared aspects, such as the need to overcome the logic of either/or, to acknowledge the situationality of translation, and to take into account both individual and collective aspects of morality and ethics, as well as the necessity to rethink the question of where to draw the limits of translators' contextual responsibilities. These features indicate directions for future discussions.

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# Preface

For anyone interested in theorising about translation, the 1990s was a fascinating period. We witnessed a veritable fireworks of challenging new approaches. Redefinitions of translation have ranged from cannibalism to carnivalism, from hijacking to subversion, and from manipulatory rewriting to regulated transformation. All these approaches have a common feature: they are all attempts to rethink the role of the translator. They all renounce the image of a subordinate faithful servant, turning to radically different metaphors of emancipation. Subversion or manipulation are hard to accommodate with an ethics of fidelity. It is therefore both interesting and necessary to search for an ethical framework compatible with our contemporary perceptions of translation. This is the path I travelled in the course of my dissertation project: I was originally interested in the redefinitions of the role of the translator (see Koskinen 1994a), but it soon became obvious that they also have a bearing on the ethics of translation. And vice versa, reflecting on how the new approaches fare ethically is a good way of revealing their strengths and weaknesses.

The focus of this thesis is on recent developments, and I will mainly concentrate on the theoretical statements and positions put forward during the 1990s. Trying to grasp the most significant and lasting features of contemporary trends and lines of thought is a perilous task, the accuracy of which can only be assessed with hindsight. In charting the contemporary views, I have found it useful to tie the various novel traits to the notion of ‘postmodernity’. One of the most fashionable concepts in academic discussions since the 1980s, it has acquired numerous interpretations, some of them extremely pejorative, some uncritically appreciative. In my own usage, the concept is used as a rather neutral way of grasping the wider social and theoretical context of the various reformulations of the role and ethics of translation in the 1990s. The new approaches feed and reflect on certain social and theoretical developments. Within the sphere of ‘postmodern’ theories, deconstruction is the one most intimately involved in translation studies: in most new approaches to translation (be they feminist, cannibalist, postcolonialist or cultural materialist), deconstruction and Jacques Derrida are explicitly mentioned, either extensively or in passing, and deconstruction has also been the subject of heated theoretical debates between them (see Chapter 3.2. below).

For me personally, deconstruction is an old acquaintance, and has featured in my academic pursuits since undergraduate seminars. However, when I started writing this dissertation, I decided to set deconstruction aside, and concentrate on ethical theories, focusing on developments within translation studies itself. But working on the two explicit efforts to develop a new ethics of translation – minoritising translation by Lawrence Venuti and the ethics of interculturality by Anthony Pym – I soon realised how useful the framework of deconstruction would be for my analysis. Many central notions of both Venuti’s and Pym’s argumentation continuously revolve around issues related to the postmodern condition, standing in direct relation to some

of the central themes of deconstruction (such as dichotomies, textuality, and undecidability). Deconstruction thus offered a conceptual grid tying together the various details and ‘teasing out’ relations and connections that are not immediately visible on the surface of these two approaches. In a way, it also ties together Pym’s and Venuti’s contributions. Pym has been its most vehement critic, and has repeatedly stressed its uselessness or even harmfulness in the search for a new ethics of translation. Venuti, then, is openly in favour of deconstruction and other poststructural trends. Deconstruction, and postmodern ethics in general, therefore functions as a fruitful point of reference in analysing the two proposals for a new ethics of translation.

Since the focus on deconstruction ‘imposed’ itself, I decided to make a complete about-face: instead of avoiding the inclusion of deconstruction, I chose it as one of the central pathways on my search for a new ethics of translation, the axis around which I rotate my analysis of contemporary translation studies. In other words, deconstruction functions as a tool that assists me in fulfilling the central aim of the thesis, that is, in analysing and assessing the state of the art in the ethics of translation in contemporary translation theory. But the decision to give it a central role also led to an important side-product: this dissertation is also an attempt at working through deconstruction in translation studies, offering a critical overview of the deconstructive approaches to translation and analysing its impact on different viewpoints.

Fully aware that the ‘orthodox’ view of deconstruction is that it is *not* a method, I still use it as a methodological strategy. In the following, it is my intention to produce a double reading of Venuti’s and Pym’s contributions to the ethics of translation: trying to read both with them and also against them, that is, locating the moments of contradiction and undecidability, points where the text turns against itself. Whereas deconstruction is often perceived as a negative form of criticism, as a ‘politics of suspicion’, my own aim is inherently positive. I have chosen to take these two theorists under scrutiny because of an initial belief that they have something to offer, and in reading their texts closely it is my aim to highlight their values, as well as offer a (de)constructive critique of certain problematic issues.

The main thrust of this thesis is theoretical, but Venuti’s and Pym’s positions are also put to the test in two case studies (Manuel Puig’s novel *Boquitas pintadas* and its two translations, and translating in the Commission of the European Union), shedding light on the problems of the ethics of translation and the role of the translator in both literary and non-literary translation. This is, for me, a significant issue. While different text types and genres of translation naturally set different demands and constraints on the translator, I see no reason why translation theories should be limited to bear only on either literary or non-literary translation. I have, for instance, found concepts like intertextuality or visibility, often linked with literary translation, extremely useful within the context of EU translation. Translation theory has a long history of emphasising literary translation, and even though the practice has developed to many interesting non-literary directions, the legacy of literary translation theory is still strong in translation studies today. Most of the new approaches to translation in the 1990s (e.g., feminist translation and cannibalism) still largely concentrate on literary translation. There are, however, also promising signs of change, and some new frameworks, like skopos theory, explicitly build on non-literary translation. The same

division can be seen in the two new ethics of translation: while Venuti completely excludes non-literary translation, Pym's framework is built on it.

This thesis belongs to the field of translation studies, and I have intentionally tried to avoid bringing in too much material from other disciplines. But the focus on ethics necessitates some philosophical background, even if I did not want to attempt to produce a commentary of the whole (long and impressive) tradition of moral philosophy. In keeping with my emphasis on recent translation theories, I also concentrate on recent developments in philosophical thinking, focusing on the ideas of postmodernity. Before moving on to the analysis of postmodernity and the ethics of translation, it is necessary to define how ethics is perceived in this study. In everyday language 'ethical' and 'moral' are often used as more or less synonymous terms, but in theoretical discussions the two concepts are differentiated in a variety of ways. For example, ethics can be equated with morals, or collective morality, which is further equated with codes of practice, but, secondly, ethics is also used to denote moral philosophy or metaethics (see, e.g., Pietarinen and Poutanen 1998, 12; Pursiainen 1999, 45). In this study, my own perception of the two terms and their relation to each other is different: I see morality as a characteristic not of communities but of individuals, and ethics as 'collectivised' morality, as a collective effort of a community to formulate a set of rules or recommendations of accepted moral behaviour (see also Bauman 1993, 61).

While morality and ethics are thus interconnected, morality being a sort of 'personalised ethics' and ethics 'collectivised morality', they are not the same, and no code of ethics can function as a precondition or guarantee of moral action. It follows that while my aim is to produce an analysis of two ethical theories of translation, and while I consider it extremely important to reflect on the moral and ethical aspects of translation, it is *not* my goal to formulate my own ethical code. In other words, my project is metaethical in that I will analyse and comment on ethical theories rather than the praxis of translation (in the two case studies the theoretical views are then put in interaction with real-life situations), and it is analytical rather than normative in that my aim is to produce a conceptual analysis of the theories in question, not to formulate moral principles or codes of practice (for more on different types of ethical theory, see Pietarinen and Poutanen 1998). It might, therefore, be appropriate to issue a warning similar to the one Zygmunt Bauman offered at the beginning of his *Postmodern Ethics*:

The reader should be warned: no ethical code will emerge at the end of this exploration; nor could an ethical code be contemplated in the light of what will be found in its course. The kind of understanding of the moral self's condition which the postmodern vantage point allows is unlikely to make moral life *easier*. The most it can dream of is making it a bit more *moral*.

(Bauman 1993, 15)



# 1. Introduction

## Moral choices

Throughout its history, discourse on translation has included strong moralising overtones: many, if not most, contributions either explicitly or implicitly dwell on the issue of how translations ought to be produced. It is also often argued that the activity of translation has always been exceptionally regulated and suspect. Famous dictums like *traduttore, traditore* feed on a feeling of mistrust. The origins of this moralising tendency can be found in the mythical origins of translation. Among the popular myths explaining the extraordinary fact that we humans have so many different languages, one of the best-known is the biblical myth of Babel. According to it, the ambitious project of building a tower reaching up to heaven makes God angry and afraid of losing his own position. In order to end the project, he punishes humans with the eternal pain of translation by fragmenting the pure tongue of Eden into pieces. Each language can thus only grasp and reflect its own fraction of reality: 'Being erratic blocks, all languages share in a common myopia; none can articulate the whole truth of God or give its speakers a key to the meaning of existence. Translators are men groping towards each other in a common mist.' (Steiner 1992, 65) According to the myth of Babel, translation is thus a curse, an evil at the same time necessary and impossible (Derrida 1985a).<sup>1</sup>

The Babelic curse, together with a strong emphasis on Bible translations and classic texts, has left its mark on the history of Western translation theory. Traditionally, the ethics of translation has often been sought for via the concept of fidelity. The dichotomy of faithful versus free translations reflected a world view of Divine creation and Divine monitoring. In that context, free will could only mean freedom to choose wrong over right, to depart from the Divine order (Bauman 1993, 4). Being in the right, on the other hand, contained no choice but rather the avoidance of choice. Faithful translation was the one and only, while free rewritings were many, and all of them 'wrong' and suspect. The assumption that free will always produces wrong choices, that unmonitored freedom always verges on licentiousness, led to the conclusion that translators' freedom needs to be bridled in order to prevent them from using it to do wrong (see also Bauman 1993, 7). To start making choices would lead to infidelity. The ethical code could thus be seen to consist, in short, of the requirement to refrain from choosing.

There had, of course, been debates, dissident voices and even periods when translation was considered from a different point of view, but a more decisive change of perspective can be seen to originate in the Romanticism of the late 18th and early 19th century. Instead of the ideals of fidelity and sameness between source and target texts, the German Romantics began to build their theories of translation around the problem of cultural differences. The most valuable aspect of the foreign was its

foreignness, the way it differed from the domestic, and the task of the translator was to find ways to convey this difference (see, e.g., Schleiermacher 1977 [1813]; see also Steiner 1992, 249 and Hirsch 1997, 397).<sup>2</sup> At the same time, emphasis shifted away from the theological context, towards literary discussions. But theological overtones remained: instead of contemplating how to translate God's holy word, the discussions were centred around the problem of how to recreate divine poetic inspiration (e.g., Wackenroder [1797] and Novalis [1798], in Furst (ed.) 1980, 55 and 69).

Today, the centre of translational debate is within the academic field of translation studies, and literary translation has gradually given way to a wider variety of text types. The contemporary world view has little space for any preordained conditions, stressing issues like individuality and the plurality of choices: 'The choice is not between following the rules and breaking them, as there is no one set of rules to be obeyed or breached. The choice is, rather, between different sets of rules and different authorities preaching them.' (Bauman 1993, 20) No wonder, then, that the contemporary understanding of the process of translation is also strikingly different from the dichotomy of faithful versus free translation: choice, conscious or not, is now rather seen as an essential feature of all translation. For instance, during the past few decades translating has been defined as a decision process (Levý 1989 [1967]); it has been studied from the point of view of shifts (Popovič 1970); it has been seen as a process of choosing and transmitting relevant information (Gutt 1991) and as a process of defining the adequate skopos of the translation and deciding on the optimal strategy to achieve it (Vermeer 1996). The basic imperative of translation is, according to Anthony Pym, 'Decide!' (1992a, 174).

The stress on freedom of choice is not only a message of liberation but also of responsibility. Making choices can be difficult, painful and risky. The experience of freedom can be sweet but also bitter:

The bitter experience in question is the experience of *freedom*: of the misery of life composed of risky choices, which always mean taking some chances while forfeiting others, or incurable uncertainty built into the unknown consequences of every choice, of the constant fear of foreclosing the future and yet unforeseen possibilities, of the dread of personal inadequacy, of experiencing less and not so strongly as others perhaps do, of the nightmare of being not up to the new and improved formulae of life which the notoriously capricious future may bring.

(Bauman 1997, 183)

If translating is seen as a process of making choices, it follows that it by definition includes moral aspects and value judgements. As Bauman argues, evaluation is an indispensable part of choosing (1993, 4–5). If there were only one correct line of action, following it would not require consulting one's moral conscience, but as soon as there exists more than one option, choosing between them necessitates (among other things, of course) moral considerations, and the choice can also be judged and valued by others from the point of view of ethics and morality. In other words, the chooser cannot escape the responsibility for the choice (Bauman 1997, 202). Ethics, then, can be seen as attempts to evaluate and justify choices and actions. Basically, one can interpret all translational rules as ethical decisions (Pym 1992a, 174).

The ethics of translation is twofold: it contains collective, professional aspects as well as the translator's individual morality. Collective efforts to formulate ethical guidelines include codes of practice, legal obligations (copyright, translation contract), social expectations of 'good' translation practice, and the norms that govern translation in a particular situation. Discussions on the ethics of translation have often limited themselves to the professional dimension, but as our awareness of the various influences of translation has increased, it has become more and more evident that it is also relevant to contemplate how to resolve situations where professional ethics clash with the translators' personal moral convictions (see Robinson 1997b, 31–33).

Ethics is not just reserved for special occasions, for solemn speeches and pompous declarations. It is an essential aspect of translators' everyday work. For example, translating from Finnish, a language with no grammatical gender, into English (or any other language that requires the distinction) translators regularly need to make decisions on how to handle the problem of 'he or she'. In making the decision they need to take into account the normative solutions, as well as try to keep track of the changing norm, but the choice is also balanced with their own relation to the feminist cause. From the point of view of morality, it is not sufficient simply to follow the norm: they need to decide whether they want to steer the conservative route, or whether they wish to participate in the process of *changing* that norm. Furthermore, the choice needs to be considered from the point of view of the source text, and its original writer, as well as the socio-historical context of its production, and if the attitudes clash, the translator needs to choose whether it is morally acceptable to force a conservative translation strategy on a radical text or vice versa, and decide what relevance to assign to the ways in which the text reflects the original context (for instance in the case of a text dating from a period prior to the rise of the whole issue of gendered language). The problem of 'he or she' is mundane in its generality, but from the point of view of ethics, its repercussions are manifold.

As the above example indicates, the morality of an individual translator is grounded in the collective, either agreeing with it, or going against it, i.e. counterbalancing it. Collective guidelines, like norms, are thus a central background force for moral choices. First of all, norms and conventions are a great source of relief: without them the abundance of choices would be paralysing, and there would be no way of evaluating different solutions apart from subjective preferences. But norms do not free one from responsibility, nor do they guarantee morality. When outdated or otherwise not suited for the particularities of the situation, norms can also be a veritable straitjacket, constraining the translator and preventing moral action. On occasion it may happen that 'society supports the moral self much like the rope supports the hanged man – norms being the rope and reason the ropemaker' (Bauman 1993, 116).

The dual nature of norms is a clear indication that the collective level alone is not a sufficient ground for morality: morality is, in the end, an individual quality, and moral action may require breaching the collective rules. In fact, collective codes and norms are in a state of constant change, and redefinitions are a result of the occasions where it has been necessary *not* to follow them. It thus also follows that at any particular time and place there probably coexist several competing norms, some of

them in decline, some dominant, and some only emerging or marginal (as in the case of ‘he or she’) (see also Toury 1995, 62).

As a representation of an idea of how translations ought to be made, any norm can be seen to include ethical aspects, but it is also possible to discern particular ethical norms that aim to guide moral action. All attempts to formulate an ethics of translation can be seen as proposals for ethical norms, but the expected behaviour can also be tacitly assumed rather than expressly stated. Like any ethical codes, the ethical norms of translation are based on an assumption that moral conduct can be translated into universal rules, ‘the moral “I” being just a singular form of the ethical “us”’ (Bauman 1993, 47). In practice, the collective ‘we’ is not a harmonious group of identical ‘I’s, but a whole ‘knit together, and continuously knit together’ out of individual moral selves (ibid., 48). This is the paradox of ethics: the only route to universality passes through a multitude of individuals, with their different values, aims and situations.

## From the ethics of sameness towards the ethics of difference

Defining translating as a process of choosing and decision-making creates problems for anyone trying to explore the ethics of translation. If any decision includes moral aspects, it follows that any act of translation, and any theoretical treatise on it, can be read from the point of view of ethics. It becomes obvious that conclusive historical charting of the ethics of translation is, if not impossible, an enormous task. It also lies beyond the scope of the present study. Rather than analysing its history, I will concentrate on the contemporary developments in the ethics of translation. But of course one needs to know the past to understand the present, let alone the future.

Translation studies has its roots in pragmatic aims. Especially in its early phases it was closely tied up with pedagogical goals, leading to a need for normative statements that could be used in translator training. There are also contemporary representatives of the pedagogical approach: for instance, the scholarly work of a theorist such as Peter Newmark stems from pedagogical considerations, and the general aim of providing both trainee translators and professionals with tools for improvement runs through the texts of a descriptive theorist like Andrew Chesterman, explicitly non-normative as his approach is (see, e.g., Newmark 1988; Chesterman 1997). Another central consideration especially in the early phases was the need to find a theoretical basis that would lead to improved quality of translations. The driving force behind Eugene A. Nida’s influential theory of functional equivalence in the 1960s, for example, was the need to develop a theoretical framework to assist Bible translators in producing better translations (see Nida 1964; Nida and Taber 1969).

While pedagogical aims will no doubt always be a part of translation studies, and while translation quality assessment has been among the favourite topics of recent discussions (see, e.g., Schäffner (ed.) 1998), one could still argue that in translation theory there has been a gradual shift from an emphasis on sameness (fidelity, equivalence) and normativeness to an understanding and acceptance of difference in translation. In fact one could even maintain that contemporary translation studies as a discipline is an extended effort to analyse and explain the differences between source



and target texts. Among the pioneers of this emphasis was a group of translation theorists with a formalist background, most notably Jiří Levý and Anton Popovič. In 1970, Popovič, introducing the notion of shifts, grounded his theory of translation on the differences between the original and the translation. He argued that ‘translation by its very nature entails certain shifts of intellectual and aesthetic values’ (1970, 78). These shifts ‘are determined by the differences between the two languages, the two authors, and the two literary situations involved’ (ibid., 79). Within the sphere of ethics, the new stress on differences did not, however, indicate a shift away from the ethics of sameness as expressed by the notion of fidelity. Even though Popovič maintained that the translator has ‘the right to differ organically, to be independent’, this independence was kept in check by the principal demand for faithfulness. According to Popovič, changes were only acceptable if they were necessary ‘for the sake of the original’ (ibid., 80).

In the 1970s, the groundbreaking work of Levý and Popovič was supported and continued by similar developments in the Netherlands and Belgium. Also influenced by the formalist approach, a group of scholars launched a project of establishing a full-fledged discipline of translation studies.<sup>3</sup> Among the leading figures were James Holmes and André Lefevere. Drawing on Levý’s argument of translation as a decision process, Holmes insisted that the task of the empirical and descriptive science of translation is to analyse the choices made in actual translations. According to him, the notion of equivalence that had gained currency in translation theory, most notably via the pioneering work of Eugene A. Nida, missed the point of what translation is all about:

Now put five translators onto rendering even a syntactically straight-forward, metrically unbound, imagically simple poem like Carl Sandburg’s ‘Fog’ into, say, Dutch. The chances that any two of the five translations will be identical are very slight indeed. Then set twenty-five other translators into turning the five Dutch versions back into English, five translators to a version. Again, the result will almost certainly be as many renderings as there are translators. To call this equivalence is perverse.

(1973, reprinted in Holmes 1988, 53)

The point made by Holmes was also brought up by André Lefevere in his *Translating Poetry: Seven Strategies and a Blueprint* (1975), where he described and analysed seven different translations of one poem. Initially, his project seems like a test case for Holmes’s argument, as he demonstrates how each strategy opens certain possibilities but rules out some others. However, in his conclusion we witness a rather unexpected return to equivalence-based ethics. The translator’s task, Lefevere argues, is to render the original author’s interpretation of a given theme by replacing ‘all the variations contained in the source text by their equivalents’ (1975, 99). During the 1980s, the prescriptiveness of early Lefevere gives way to contemplations of power, ideology and constraints affecting the work of the translator as well as the translation scholar (e.g., Lefevere 1992). As a leading exponent of what has sometimes been labelled the manipulation school, Lefevere has increased our awareness of the complex sets of situational factors affecting the translator’s decisions. Translation, the argument runs, always involves manipulation. The translator cannot escape the ideological and

cultural constraints which always tilt the translation in one direction or another. But even though it brings the problem of ethics into the forefront, the idea of translation as manipulation sidesteps the issue by stressing the inescapable infidelity of all translation.

In the 1980s, the question of ethics was not among the most popular themes for study. The emphasis was, and still largely is, on descriptive theory. In contrast to previous prescriptive tendencies, it became ‘academically correct’ for theorists to announce their aim to be purely descriptive and to produce objective, empirical facts without value judgements. The manipulation approach, as well as many other current theoretical trends, drew heavily on the work of Israeli scholars with strong descriptive preferences, particularly Itamar Even-Zohar’s polysystem theory with clear affinities to formalism and structuralism, and the work of his colleague Gideon Toury. Situating the translations in a wider cultural context, the polysystem theory paved the way for the so called ‘cultural turn’ in the early 1990s. It also shifted the focus away from the source text to the fortunes of the translation in the receiving culture. The emphasis is so securely on the target side that Toury’s entire work has even been defined as a project ‘to deconstruct source-oriented, static theoretical models of translation’ (Gentzler 1993, 132).

By now, the notion of difference in translation has become so commonplace that in his latest book Toury maintains that ‘the occurrence of shifts has long been acknowledged as a true universal of translation’ (1995, 57; cf. 84–85). The shifts, and the decision-making involved in them, are, according to Toury, norm-governed. The notion of norms, Toury’s central concept, is, in short, one way of explaining the differences and variability of translation. Referring to sociology and social psychology, Toury defines norms as ‘the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community – as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate – into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations, specifying what is prescribed and forbidden as well as what is tolerated and permitted in a certain behavioural dimension’ (ibid., 55). The definition makes it quite explicit that norms are intrinsically related to ethico-moral issues. This, however, is a dimension Toury forcibly avoids. He never touches the issue himself, and is openly critical of the attempt to incorporate ethical aspects in another target-oriented theory, skopos theory (ibid., 25; for more on skopos theory see Chapter 1.3. below). The obvious reason for this unfortunate omission is Toury’s wish to develop translation studies into a systematic, empirical and, most importantly, non-prescriptive scientific discipline. The mere thought of contaminating the data with non-observable or conjectural moral aspects may seem utterly undesirable. There is, however, no reason why a descriptive theorist could not also approach the ethical issues descriptively (see, e.g., Chesterman 1997), and refrain from personal value judgements if they are deemed to compromise the objective status of the observer. Another question, then, is whether such complete objectivity is ever attainable (is, for instance, Chesterman’s listing of ‘clarity’ among ‘fundamental translational values’ a purely descriptive statement or not?), or, for that matter, do not descriptive studies have, at least potentially, equal steering power on actual practice as prescriptive announcements?

Current translation theories from descriptive translation studies to feminist and postcolonial theories and from skopos theory to cultural theories all share the basic

assumption that the essence of translation is *not* to be found in the reproduction of the original. As Sherry Simon has stated, ‘we realize that it is difference which interests us today’ (cited in Arrojo 1993, 71). Differences caused by translation are not only tolerated but often even celebrated. For example, Barbara Godard argues that translation signifies ‘difference despite similarity’, and that ‘[t]hough traditionally a negative topos in translation, “difference” becomes a positive one in feminist translation’ (1990, 93).

Seeing the historical developments as a linear progress from sameness to difference entails a deliberate simplification: in practice, developments are seldom that straight-forward. Rather, ideas evolve in relation and sometimes parallel to each other, and conflicting views can quite logically coexist (see also Chesterman 1997). A prime example is the concept of equivalence which has been a centre of debate for decades, some theorists building their models around it while others would like to dismiss it altogether (see Halverson 1997; Pym 1995c; Snell-Hornby 1988). One can, however, rather safely argue that views related to equivalence, similarity and translators’ subservience have lately been in decline in theoretical discussions, while conceptions stressing cultural and functional differences are more dominant.

## Fidelity and loyalty

In contemporary translation theories the notion of ethics is often touched upon, but even though many translation theorists with a variety of different theoretical backgrounds have recently stressed the need to rethink the issue of ethics (e.g., Arrojo 1994; Chesterman 1997; Lane-Mercier 1997), the process of rethinking has only begun. As I intend to show in the course of this thesis, there are many promising attempts at finding new viewpoints on the issue of translation and ethics. But ethico-moral issues still seem to be a considerable touchstone for many theorists, and while translation has been perceived as a locus of difference, discussions of ethics are largely yet to follow suit. In spite of its obvious incompatibility with difference-oriented theories, the ‘supermeme’ of fidelity is still holding its own. Everyone seems compelled to produce their revised version of it, and attempts to redirect the discussion repeatedly turn back to the question of where the translator’s fidelity should be directed to. It seems that fidelity is still perceived as *the* word to be used in speaking about translation and ethics (Henry 1995, 370). For example, Sherry Simon’s interpretation of the feminist version of fidelity is that, instead of being faithful to the author or the reader, fidelity is to be directed towards the writing project itself (1996, 2). In other words, even if there is among feminist translators ‘deep suspicion of rules defining fidelity’ (ibid., 8), the explanatory power of the concept of fidelity itself is not truly questioned as long as the rules for definition are agreed on.

Suzanne Jill Levine’s answer to the burning question of fidelity has been to call herself a ‘subversive scribe’ who is ‘faithfully unfaithful’, subverting the surface level of the text while being faithful to its tenor (see Levine 1991, *passim.*; see also Chapter 4.2. below). This position has been fiercely criticised by Rosemary Arrojo, who considers it to be an ‘opportunistic brand of “faithfulness”’ (Arrojo 1994, 152; cf. von Flotow 1997, 81S83). In my view, rather than being merely opportunistic or a sign of

‘a bizarre sense of ethics’ (Arrojo 1994, 159), Levine’s statement is just one example of the unlimited use of fidelity. After tracing the long and winding history of the concept of fidelity, Louis G. Kelly summed up where the debate had led by the end of the 1970s: ‘Fidelity, then, was the *obligation of deciding* what was important, and the *choice* of how this was to be reproduced or represented in the target text.’ (1979, 211; emphasis added) The quotation shows how much the limits of the concept had already been stretched.

In today’s discussions, fidelity can be defined in whatever way the speaker feels preferable. Arrojo’s own preferred version of fidelity stresses the cultural context informing the translator’s decisions: ‘The only kind of fidelity is the one we owe to our own assumptions, not simply as individuals, but as members of a cultural community which produces and validates them’ (1994, 160). Even among the revisionists of translation theory, there still seems to exist a hidden equation mark between fidelity and ethics, even though fidelity is often put inside quotation marks. In spite of her rebellious tones, Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood still considers professional translation ethics to be equal to fidelity to the author (the feminine form of author) and the employer (1991, 154), and Rosemary Arrojo calls for not only a new kind of ethics but also a new kind of fidelity for the feminist translator (1994, 149). But the limits of the fidelity-based ethics are immediately visible in Lotbinière-Harwood’s next line where she continues by saying that the feminist translator is also personally committed to particular political aims. In negotiating these contrasting aims and dealing with split loyalties the translator really needs a sound ethical base. In other words, ethics is needed precisely at that point when the explanatory power of fidelity peters out. Rethinking the ethics of translation is one of the key issues for today’s translation theory, and it requires more than just redefinitions of fidelity.

The skopos theory developed by Hans J. Vermeer together with Katharina Reiss (see Reiss and Vermeer 1984; Holz-Mänttari 1984; Vermeer 1996) includes an explicit attempt to reformulate the ethics of translation independently of the notion of fidelity. Vermeer’s functionalist approach has been supplemented by Christiane Nord to incorporate in it the concept of loyalty. Skopos theory has successfully integrated several new elements and agents in the theory of translation, and perceives translating as a purposeful activity guided by the aims and intended functions (the skopos) of the translation.<sup>4</sup> Within this framework, the success or quality of a translation is not measured by comparing it with the original but by assessing how well it fulfils its skopos and meets the needs of the client and the target audience. Rather than retrospectively equivalent with the source text, the translation ‘should be prospectively adequate to a target-text skopos’ (Vermeer 1996, 77–78). In other words, ‘the translation purpose justifies the translation procedures’ (Nord 1997a, 124). Functionalist approaches have turned the subservient image of the translator upside down, and depict the translator as a bi-cultural expert of intercultural communication, licenced to do whatever s/he considers necessary to fulfil the intended skopos (Vermeer 1996; Holz-Mänttari 1984). Skopos theory has been criticised for granting the translators too much freedom, but according to Vermeer it is rather the other way round: ‘Skopos theory accords translators their due responsibility in the ‘world’‘ (1996, 14).<sup>5</sup>

Even though Nord endorses the functionalist approach, she (responding to the critique) finds it too limited from the point of view of the relationship between the translator and the source text author (1997a, 124). This is the reason for supplementing the theory with the notion of loyalty. Loyalty, according to Nord, is a bilateral commitment to source text and target text situation, and the translator is responsible to both the source text sender and the target text recipient (1991, 29). It follows that loyalty limits the range of justifiable target-text functions: if the function is not compatible with the original author's intentions, the translator is expected to negotiate and mediate, seeking the understanding of all sides (1997a, 125–128).

The concept of loyalty is obviously designed to soften the radical image of the *skopos* theory among more conservative theorists (see Vermeer 1996, 87, n. 3), but it is also explicitly intended to replace the old notion of fidelity. In addition to a reinforced emphasis on the target culture, Nord insists on differentiating loyalty as an interpersonal category from fidelity which she perceives as a relationship between texts (Nord 1997b, 48). The basis of this differentiation is, however, arguable: during its long history, fidelity has also often been seen as an interpersonal relationship (see Henry 1995; Kelly 1979, 44ff.). But compared to the notion of fidelity, loyalty does indeed offer a wider perspective. It is not limited to the relationship between the translator and either the source text or its writer.

The notion of loyalty is valuable as an attempt to integrate the discussion of ethics with the other theoretical developments of *skopos* theory. Compared to the rather omnipotent translator image of some earlier functionalist approaches, it is also a useful reminder that the translator is not alone in the process. There are also other participants with their particular aims and intentions, and their expertise in their own particular fields. Loyalty builds on ideas of responsibility, visibility and trust, which, as I intend to show in the course of this thesis, are all relevant in discussing the ethics of translation. But Nord has not yet ventured beyond the surface of these catchwords, and the concept of loyalty has not surpassed the immediate textual context (see Nord 1997b). It does not tackle the problem of conflicting interests and failed negotiations, nor the limits of visibility and self-awareness or the contradiction between visibility and trust, nor translators' moral responsibilities related to the reality beyond the 'bilateral commitment'. In its present formulation, loyalty does not therefore offer sufficient grounds on which to build a new ethics of translation (for a critique of loyalty see also Vermeer 1996, 79–101).

It is, however, becoming evident that the changes in translators' working environment and the redefinitions concerning translation call for not only new working methods but also reformulations of the values and attitudes involved. It has even been predicted that the next stage of translation studies will be characterised by the theme of ethics (Chesterman 1997, 48). So far, the most thorough book-length attempts at rethinking the ethics of translation have been produced by Lawrence Venuti (esp. 1998a; aptly subtitled 'Towards an ethics of difference') and Anthony Pym (1997a). Both Venuti and Pym are rather solitary figures within translation studies in that, in contrast to theorists such as Christiane Nord (*skopos* theory) or Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood (feminist translation), neither of them has any strong affinities with a particular school or group of theorists. In a way, this is the reason why I decided to focus specifically on Venuti and Pym: in other new approaches

reformulations of ethics are often side-products, dealt with in passing or even only implied, whereas in both Venuti's and Pym's projects the issue of ethics is brought to the forefront. In the following, it is my intention to analyse these two proposals for an ethics of translation, trying to locate their new insights as well as unravel their weaknesses. I will then produce a synthesis of their views and, building on it, try to erect signposts to show useful directions for future discussions, making connections with other contemporary theories of translation as well. My analysis is based on a firm belief that translators live and work in a world that is far more complicated than any fidelity-based ethics can encompass. To be of any real value, any new ethics needs to take into account the many special features of the contemporary world.

## 2. Postmodern ethics

### Postmodernity

Postmodernity has been a fashionable concept in academic writing during recent years. Its popularity has, however, rather added to than reduced the confusion around it. There exists little agreement over what is meant by it either among those who employ it or among those who would like to dismiss it altogether. Basically, there are three intertwined senses of the word ‘postmodern’ (and similar ones of ‘modern’): (1) postmodernity as an era, (2) postmodern philosophies as attempts to grasp the peculiarities of that era, and (3) *postmodernism*, that is, responses to and expressions of the first two in the aesthetic realm (architecture, literature, visual arts etc.). What is understood by these three different categories is then a point of further debate. It is important to keep in mind that there does not exist any postmodern school or orthodox postmodern theory but a host of different writers. Therein lies the confusion about the term: for some people postmodernity refers only to Jean-Jacques Lyotard, who first brought the concept to public knowledge (see 1979; cf. Jameson 1991, 60–61), whereas others also add Jean Baudrillard and maybe a few others to the list. Recently, it has become more and more common to use it as an umbrella term to put together writers such as Foucault, Derrida, Lacan, Kristeva, Irigaray, Cixous, Spivak, and de Man. This latter view is also the one I have adopted in this thesis: for me the concept ‘postmodern’ functions as a loose label for the various critical theories of the past few decades.

In this context, my emphasis is on the first two senses of the word: first of all, I use the concept of postmodernity as a shorthand for our contemporary late-modern (Western) world. Fully aware of the fuzziness of the concepts of ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’, I still find the notion of postmodernity a useful theoretical concept that can be used to designate a particular cultural context. I tend to agree with Fredric Jameson’s view that however many contradictory and conflicted meanings the notion of postmodernity has acquired, it is so essentially part of contemporary discourse that it is hardly possible *not* to use it (1991, xxii). This, I think, is true of recent translation theories as well. But since the word ‘postmodern’ has acquired so many different meanings, some of them significantly more coloured and more limited than in my usage, I find it important to devote some time and space to clarifying how I perceive postmodernity. My basic tenet is that there are in our contemporary world certain peculiar and distinctive traits which can be called ‘postmodern’. If modernity can be epitomised by faith in progress, growth and improvement, postmodernity can be characterised as an era of lost hopes and ambivalent feelings: technological progress has turned out to be a mixed blessing, causing as many problems as it has solved; economic growth has been achieved in some already affluent countries only by the exploitation of others; societal improvements have not solved social problems, and

extended projects like the welfare state have been eroded; and education and self-improvement are no longer seen as guarantees for success in life. In many ways, we currently live in ‘a runaway world’ (Giddens 1990, 151; see also Bauman 1993; Beck 1995).

This disillusionment has been called a variety of names, such as high or radicalised modernity (Anthony Giddens), reflexive modernity (Ulrich Beck), late capitalism (Fredric Jameson) or, most commonly, postmodernity. All these names imply not a disruptive shift with modernity but a changed mode of thinking. Postmodernity has been defined as modernity becoming aware of itself (Bauman 1993; see also Giddens 1990; Jameson 1991). In other words, modernity turns into postmodernity when it starts to contemplate and reflect on its own aims and results. Or, conversely, postmodernity can be seen as a critique of modernity, or the state in which modernity begins to self-erode. Either way, postmodernity is still closely tied to modernity or even internal to it: it is not a departure into new directions, but it highlights the impasses reached in modern paths. It shows us the limits of modernity (cf. Drucilla Cornell’s renaming of deconstruction as ‘the philosophy of the limit’). To what extent postmodernity entails an irreversible shift away from modernity, or to what extent it is merely a temporary crisis, remains to be seen. But at the moment, the project of modernity is in many ways in serious trouble: ‘we are left with questions where once there appeared to be answers’ (Giddens 1990, 49).

A linear view on theoretical paradigms presupposes a clear-cut division of predecessors and successors and necessitates an answer to the question whether or not the shift from modernity to postmodernity has taken place. A less linear approach allows for the ambivalence: ‘Perhaps we live in a postmodern age, perhaps not’ (Bauman 1997, 79). Perhaps we are all *Blendlinge* (see Chapter 4.2. below), one foot resting securely on the edifice of modernity, the other already feeling the foothold trembling. The relation between modernity and postmodernity is less a clear-cut chronological succession than an unsteady coexistence. For example, the European Union is a modern project *par excellence*, aiming at centrally controlled differences and cohesion among the Member States, but at the same time it promotes postmodern tendencies by diminishing the role of another modern project, the nation-state.

Philosophers associated with postmodern views have become notorious for extremist statements (often quoted as celebrating ‘the end of history’ or ‘the death of the author’, or claiming that ‘there is no truth’ or that ‘there is nothing outside the text’; cf. Chapter 2.2. below), as well as for their often cryptic or even apocalyptic style of writing (see, e.g., Lehman 1991, 103–113 *et passim*). It is therefore not surprising that they have not won unanimous support (although some commentators consider the new style of writing to be the best and most entertaining input of writers like Derrida; see Rorty 1993). It is also quite typical, among their friends and enemies alike, to take their claims at face value, without any attempt at historicising or contextualising them.<sup>6</sup> The lack of any historical perspective is, by now, a severe problem. Many of the theorists have had an academic career of thirty years or more, and in addition to differences of opinion between those grouped under the heading of postmodern theories, any serious scholarly attempt at analysing them would have to try and take into account the different phases and changes in the texts of any one philosopher over the years. However, texts dating from different periods and different



writers are often mingled together so that all differences are blurred. Within translation studies we should be especially alert to this problem since the discipline has been slow to participate in the discussion of postmodernity, and the 'new' ideas have only found their way into translation theory in the 1990s – sometimes more than twenty years after their first publication.

Postmodern theories are naturally not exempt from the important academic process of critique and self-correction. But it is deplorable that critiques of postmodern theories are often characterised by deliberate simplifications and exaggerations, and little attention is paid to the fact that we are not dealing with a unified movement. Postmodern positions are depicted as either ridiculous and unacademic nonsense or as a form of juvenile cynicism only suited for angry young men dressed in black (see, e.g., Searle 1993; Airaksinen 1997). This caricature is then easy to dismiss. The resulting arguments against this self-created 'postmodernism' are sometimes wild enough to be amusing. For example, Airaksinen argues that supporters of the Greens cannot enjoy postmodern art, and vice versa: if you support postmodern theories you cannot truly care for ecological and environmental issues<sup>7</sup> (1997, 129). The mock image of postmodern attitudes and postmodern theories, centred around the alleged amorality and *laissez-faire* attitude, distorts discussions of postmodern positions. Instead of an exchange of pertinent arguments, they often become quasi-religious battles where everyone is called upon to take sides.

All this has made 'postmodern' a notorious label, and as a result, there is a tendency even among the proponents of postmodern positions to try and disentangle their favourite writers from its spell. A culmination of sorts may be Barry Smart's conclusion that *none* of the philosophers he has discussed as major figures of postmodern theory (Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, Baudrillard and Vattimo) may in fact be appropriately designated 'postmodern' (1999, 61). The issue of whether Derrida should be listed among the postmoderns or not has been controversial. Whereas critical commentators tend to see him as a descendant of the postmodern line starting from Nietzsche, many of his epigones have attempted to salvage him from the declining reputation of postmodern theories by claiming that he is not one of the bad guys. For example, Christopher Norris (1990) and Drucilla Cornell (1992) give lengthy explanations as to why Jacques Derrida cannot be considered a postmodern theorist. Admittedly, Derrida himself does not use the word 'postmodern'. But in my vocabulary postmodern theories include a variety of critical approaches, and among them deconstruction is one of the more moderate responses to the postmodern condition (cf. Arrojo's view of deconstruction as the strictest and most ruthless reading strategy among postmodern theories in 1998b).

The critique or even hostility towards postmodern philosophies can partially be explained by the extremism and ambivalence which tend to leave postmodern philosophers vulnerable to criticism. It is often easy to continue their line of argument *ad absurdum*, creating a ridiculous image of the whole theoretical framework (see, for instance, the extension of Derrida's notion of *différance* to the act of walking in Tallis 1988, 216). However, I suspect the hostility may also occasionally be a projection of an unwillingness to accept some features of today's world (Tallis's critique, for instance, is motivated by his wish to raise the status of realistic fiction within literary circles). Accusing postmodern theories of introducing attitudes and tendencies that

can, in fact, be interpreted as corollaries of modernity, some critics seem to be blaming the mirror for the image they are not happy with (on modern morality see Smart 1999). A good case in point is the often expressed claim that postmodern theories reject the possibility of any reality outside the play of textuality (see also Chapter 5.4. below). The simplistic counterargument, then, is to knock on a nearby table and question whether it exists or not. The debate is, in my view, rather pointless. It would be absurd to argue that physical objects do not exist. But it would be equally futile to argue that our understanding of the world is in no way linked to representations and interpretations. The real point is located elsewhere: our world is becoming ever more mediated and textual/digital, and instead of authentic experiences we are often confronted with virtuality, hyper reality or 'simulacra'. One could argue that the most extended metaphor of postmodernity is the shopping mall. Instead of city streets and piazzas (urbanisation being one of modernity's major projects), the shopping mall offers an artificial, simulated city, climatised and sterilised from the unwanted aspects of real cities (cf. the new TV wars in the Persian Gulf and the Balkans). It also epitomises the overall conversion of people from citizens to consumers, as well as the exclusion of those with not enough spending power.

To gain understanding of this shopping mall world, and of the ethical challenge it poses, I have found it useful to resort to theories that try to grasp its particularities and build on them. This, in other words, relates to the second sense of 'postmodern', postmodern theories and philosophical approaches. From among the various approaches I have selected two theorists: Jacques Derrida and Zygmunt Bauman. I have chosen to emphasise deconstruction because among postmodern theories it is the one most closely connected with translation theory (see Chapter 3.2. below). The main focus is thus on Derrida and deconstruction. Bauman, then, is extremely useful as a point of reference, his analyses of the postmodern condition functioning like a mirror on which to reflect the various approaches. Significantly, the two writers complement each other fruitfully and offer a rich array of viewpoints on the issues of ethics and translation.

## Making a difference: deconstruction and ethics

### *Undecidability*

I have argued above that deconstruction functions as a significant point of reference in contemporary translation theory. It is therefore necessary to sketch an outline of deconstruction and its relation to ethics and translation. It is not my place nor my intention to engage in the debate over the value of deconstruction, or postmodern theories in general, in the realm of philosophy, nor to provide an authoritative exegesis of Derrida's work. My more modest aim here is to give a general introduction to those aspects of Derridean deconstruction that I see as most relevant for my present purposes (see also Koskinen 1994c). It follows that while I do not wish to dismiss all critical responses to deconstruction, and while I do provide my own commentary on those controversial aspects which are pertinent to my thesis, I do not see it necessary in this context to offer an extensive analysis of the massive literature both for and against

deconstruction. In the following, I will also limit my discussion to Derrida's own texts, with only limited references to the form of deconstruction as an institutionalised literary theory within the United States (for more on deconstruction in America see Comay 1991). The reason for my emphasis is two-fold: firstly, I consider Derrida's position far more fruitful to the discussion of ethics (cf. the differentiation between 'soft-core' and 'hard-core' deconstruction in Lehman 1991, 118), and secondly, responses to deconstruction within translation theory are mainly linked to Derridean deconstruction, and references to Paul de Man and other American theorists are only made in passing.

Deconstruction, the extended project of Jacques Derrida, stretches from the mid-1960s to the 1990s. Attempting a simple definition of the by now massive corpus of a thinker who refuses to send a clear-cut message, it could be defined as a reading practice, a critical analysis:

To locate the promising marginal text, to disclose the undecidable moment, to pry it loose with the positive lever of the signifier; to reverse the resident hierarchy, only to displace it; to dismantle in order to reconstitute what is always already inscribed. Deconstruction in a nutshell.

*(Spivak 1976, lxxvii)*

Putting a philosophical stance as elusive as deconstruction in a nutshell is, however, necessarily a rather violent simplification. Furthermore, Gayatri Spivak's definition was formulated in the mid-1970s, and is thus naturally a reflection on early Derrida only. In time, deconstruction has encompassed issues further and further from the realms of philosophy and literary theory, moving towards more direct involvement in socio-political spheres: in the 1980s and 1990s Derrida has addressed, for instance, the problems of apartheid and animal rights. In a more recent introduction to Derridean deconstruction, Spivak focuses on this announced movement towards a second phase of deconstruction, alerting us to a greater emphasis on ethico-political issues (1999, 426 *et passim.*).

Whatever the subject matter, a deconstructive interpretation always attempts to reveal the inconsistencies, the aporias, and undecidabilities, that is, the limits of any particular viewpoint. Deconstruction functions as a constant reminder that every approach has its reverse side, that every vision is limited. What we see is always haunted by what remains unseen. This, of course, applies to the deconstructive critic as well. Deconstruction is always provisional. This indefiniteness of textuality can be tempting: 'The fall into the abyss of deconstruction inspires us with as much pleasure as fear. We are intoxicated with the prospect of never hitting the bottom.' (Spivak 1976, lxxvii)

The relation between deconstruction and ethics is both unsettled and unsettling. For some, it represents a nihilistic (or hedonistic, as the above quote from Spivak indicates) withdrawal from the sphere of ethics.<sup>8</sup> It is seen as an amoral play of textuality, or, in the most extreme, an apology for Nazism. The latter accusation stems from the controversy around Paul de Man – the leading representative of American deconstructionism – considering his juvenile collaborationism in war-time Belgium where he published articles with anti-Semitic sentiments.<sup>9</sup> The revelation of the articles in the late 1980s created a scandal, and, equating first Paul de Man's early

political writings and his later theoretical work and then further Paul de Man and deconstruction, many concluded that the whole project of deconstruction is ethically questionable, if not implicitly Nazist. Since it detaches the text from its writer, it was claimed, deconstruction was defenceless against immoral or totalitarian thinking.<sup>10</sup> The episode, and the criticism it evoked, no doubt enforced the so-called ‘ethical turn’ that the writings of Derrida and his interpreters have taken during the 1990s (see Critchley 1992, 3; Spivak 1999, 429).<sup>11</sup> The turn has not so much meant turning in new directions but bringing the underlying ethical considerations to the surface and working on them more explicitly. As many analysts have remarked, Derrida’s early writings do already contain the ethical aspect, but it is not manifest in an explicit discussion. In his later work, especially in his readings of Levinas, the ethical is brought to the forefront. A significant turning point is Derrida’s afterword to *Limited Inc*, titled ‘Toward An Ethic of Discussion’ (1997 [1988]). In it he confronts the ethical and political aspects of deconstruction with uncharacteristic explicitness and responds to various criticisms concerning, for example, undecidability, authority, relativism, and the de Man controversy. It is thus a good introductory text for anyone interested in hearing Derrida’s own views about the relation between deconstruction and ethics.

In deconstruction, textuality is not seen as a system of fixed meanings but as one open to changing interpretations. Its central ‘concept’, *différance*, is a neologism to emphasise that meanings are ‘always already’ somewhere else, temporally and positionally deferred. Texts are full of echos and traces of earlier texts, as well as laden with the yet unrealised potential future contexts they may enter (see Derrida 1972). The repercussions of this view within the sphere of ethics have been interpreted in opposite ways. Some see it as an open invitation to indifference: the endless differences have been seen to blur all distinctions – among them the differences between good and bad, right and wrong, truth and lies. Among the play of differences, nothing makes a difference. Or worse, caught in the web of textuality we are unable to make a difference. Language speaks us, and we cannot control it. But this is a view Derrida does not accept. In the afterword to *Limited Inc* he gives an irritated comment:

[T]his definition of deconstruction is *false* (that’s right: false, not true) and feeble; it supposes a bad (that’s right: bad, not good) and feeble reading of numerous texts, first of all mine, which therefore must finally be read or reread. Then perhaps it will be understood that the value of truth (and all those values associated with it) is never contested or destroyed in my writings, but only reinscribed in more powerful, larger, more stratified contexts.

(1997, 146)

Derrida maintains that deconstruction is a positive and responsible action, not a licence to nihilism (e.g., 1992; 1997). Some readers have indeed perceived the ethical dimension, and parallel to the severe criticism of the amorality of deconstruction there exist equally strong views that one of the essential questions that deconstruction poses us is that of ethics<sup>12</sup> (see, e.g., Cornell 1992; Critchley 1992; Norris 1989; Spivak 1999; see also Koskinen 1996). In this interpretation, *différance* is seen to reinforce rather than dissolve personal responsibility: in a world where few things are preordained we are all responsible for making a difference. As Tobin Siebers (1988,

97) puts it: ‘The theory of difference makes the structure of language not a prison-house but the ethical model and signature of a hypothetical equality based on difference and not identity.’

The notion of difference epitomises the basic thrust of Derrida’s project, aptly renamed as a philosophy of undecidability by Bauman (1991, 189). From the point of view of ethical action, the idea of differential and deferred meanings is challenging. Even though our knowledge is always partial, we still need to act here and now. The limits of decidability rather increase than decrease our responsibility: ‘Derrida’s text leaves us with the infinite responsibility undecidability imposes on us. Undecidability in no way alleviates responsibility. The opposite is the case.’ (Cornell 1992, 169; see also Derrida 1992, 20) Undecidability should not, however, be confused with indeterminacy. Derrida has explicitly refused to accept the interpretation that deconstruction advocates indeterminism:

There would be no indecision or *double bind* were it not between *determined* (semantic, ethical, political) poles, which are upon occasion terribly necessary and always irreplaceably singular. Which is to say that from the point of view of semantics, but also of ethics and politics, ‘deconstruction’ should never lead either to relativism or to any sort of indeterminism.

(1997, 148; *emphasis in the original*)

The undecidable is not merely oscillation between two contradictory but equally imperative rules (as in the case of translation trying to be loyal to both source and target sides simultaneously). It is also, according to Derrida, the *sine qua non* of free decision: ‘A decision that didn’t go through the ordeal of the undecidable would not be a free decision, it would only be the programmable application or unfolding of a calculable process’ (1997, 24). For Derrida, each decision is singular. A decision cannot be justified by appeal to pre-existing norms, rules or laws (*ibid.*, 17). In a decision, there needs to be a moment of suspense. The decision *may* then reaffirm a pre-existing rule or law, but not through passive conformity or mechanistic application. In each individual case, the rule needs to be reinvented (*ibid.*, 22–23). In stressing the individuality of each situation, Derrida’s position is very similar to Bauman’s. For both of them, norms and conventions and other collectively formulated standards can only offer limited ethical guidelines. In a morally charged situation, we are, in the end, on our own: ‘As a moral person, I am alone, though as a social person I am always *with* others; just as I am free though entrapped in the dense web of prescriptions and prohibitions.’ (Bauman 1993, 60; *emphasis in the text*)

Derrida’s stance has sometimes been interpreted as an absolute retreat from Law (e.g., Bannet 1993, 78). But as Zygmunt Bauman reminds us, as social beings, we cannot escape the web of social expectations. The importance, and the intensified responsibility, arises from the view that we cannot blindly rely on them or uncritically follow them. At the same time, the ghost of undecidability, or – to use another favourite term of Derrida – the experience of *aporia*, makes it impossible to reach perfectly just or moral decisions. Bauman’s view of ethics is in many ways similar to Derrida’s. According to Bauman, morality is incurably *aporetic*, that is, moral choices are contradictory and conflictual. According to him, the difference between modernity and postmodernity lies in the attitude to the *aporias*: modernity played *aporias* down

as ‘a temporary nuisance, a residual imperfection on the road to perfection’ (1993, 8) and was characterised by a faith in the possibility of a non-ambivalent, non-aporetic ethical code. Postmodernity, then, entertains no such belief. Postmodern ethics is based on a world view of ambivalence and uncertainty.

This ambivalence has been interpreted as leading to a conclusion that reaching moral judgements is impossible, and deconstruction has been accused of propagating for passive scepticism (e.g., Lehman 1991, 110). Another way of looking at uncertainty is to see it as a challenge: ‘To run into an aporia, to reach the *limit* of philosophy, is not necessarily to be paralysed. [...] The limit challenges us to reopen the question – to think again.’ (Cornell 1992, 70–71) But the limit is also a reminder of the need for a certain humility. ‘Justice’, says Derrida, ‘is an experience of the impossible’ (1992, 16). Morality is an elusive desire, a horizon that retreats as we try to reach it. Our moral responsibility is to try and reach the impossible. As Bauman puts it, morality must set itself standards which it cannot reach, it must ‘hold the saintliness of the saints for its only horizon’ (1993, 81). However, the critique is not without justification: the paralysing effect is dangerously close, if the standard is set inhumanly high. The ‘angelic’ standard must not prevent us from also contemplating the everyday aspects of morality. While it is no doubt true that we humans can hardly reach a state of complete and impeccable ‘saintly’ morality, we can act morally in our life and work.

### *Authorial intentions*

The undecidability of Derrida’s writings seems to make them prone to extremist and opposing readings. Similar, and related, to the controversy over the relation to ethics, the status of the writer/subject is also open to various interpretations, or ‘mimetic perversions’ (Norris 1989, 201).<sup>13</sup> Derrida is often grouped together with Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, who are then all portrayed as declaring the death of the author, denouncing once and for all the authorial subject.<sup>14</sup> Their commentators, then, can be roughly divided into two groups: those who accept this view ‘almost as an article of faith’ and those who dismiss it ‘in sometimes moralistic, sometimes commonsensical tones’ (Burke 1993, 17). In spite of some obvious affinities between the three theorists, this reading finds, however, little support in Derrida’s texts apart from the (in)famous and often intentionally misunderstood statement that ‘there is nothing outside of the text’ (Derrida 1976, 158, 163; cf. Derrida 1986b). Rather, he has explicitly tried to distance himself from it:

What I call ‘text’ implies all the structures called ‘real,’ ‘economic,’ ‘historical,’ socio-institutional, in short: all possible referents. Another way of recalling once again that ‘there is nothing outside the text.’ That does not mean that all referents are suspended, denied, or enclosed in a book, as people have claimed, or have been naïve enough to believe and to have accused me of believing. But it does mean that every referent and all reality has the structure of a *différential* trace, and that one cannot refer to this ‘real’ except in an interpretive experience.

*(Derrida 1997, 148; see also Derrida 1972; Derrida 1986a)*

It is also important to take note of a later reformulation of the axiomatic statement: ‘nothing *exists* outside context’ (Derrida 1997, 152; emphasis in the original). It seems that there in fact *is* something outside the text: its context(s). Or rather, the text cannot be separated from its context. A text only comes into being in a context. The context, including strategies, rhetoric, ethics and politics, ‘penetrates and thus determines the inside’ (ibid.; see also Critchley 1992, 31–44). These contextual features, then, ‘penetrate’ both the writing and reading processes, and the text is, among other factors, ‘determined’ by the strategical, rhetorical, ethical or political intentions of both writers and readers. As the discussion of contextuality shows, even though some critics have wanted to portray him as an extremist, in his writings Derrida actually steers the middle way, keeping a critical distance to the extreme view while refusing to denounce it. Complete dismissal of the authorial intentions would in fact be ill-suited with the project of deconstruction.<sup>15</sup> Rather than claiming that intentionality does not exist, deconstruction aims at showing its limits:

[I]f authorial intentions are to be deconstructed it must be accepted that they are cardinally relevant and recognizable. The deconstructor must assume that he or she has the clearest conception of what the author wanted to say if the work of deconstruction is to get underway. [...] [D]econstructive procedure takes the form of following the line of authorial intention up to the point at which it encountered resistance within the text itself; from this position the resistance can then be turned back against the author to show that his text differs from itself, that what he wished to say does not dominate what the text says, but is rather inscribed within (or in more radical cases, engulfed by) the larger signifying system.

(Burke 1993, 141–142)<sup>16</sup>

The issue of intentionality and interpreters’ responsibility is discussed at length in Derrida’s afterword to *Limited Inc*. He stresses that to reach the space of undecidability and contradiction, a deconstructive reading must first understand and acknowledge the conventional interpretations of authorial intentions (‘a relative stability of the dominant interpretation’) and the necessary consensus concerning the intelligibility of texts (1997, 143ff.). For him, deconstruction is anything but lighthearted or reckless. The movement of deconstruction involves responsibility without limits, and an awareness of history.<sup>17</sup> Taking the example of Rousseau he states that one must be armed with a profound knowledge of the French language as well as Rousseau’s whole oeuvre and the relevant contexts: ‘the literary, philosophical, rhetorical traditions, the history of the French language, society, history, which is to say, so many other things as well’. ‘Otherwise’, he continues, ‘one could indeed say just anything at all and I have never accepted saying, or encouraging others to say, just anything at all, nor have I argued for indeterminacy as such’ (ibid., 144–145). Towards the end of the afterword he concludes:

[Deconstructive writing] must inevitably partition itself along two sides of a limit and continue (up to a certain point) to respect the rules of that which it deconstructs or of which it exposes the deconstructibility. Hence, it always makes this dual gesture, apparently contradictory, which consists in accepting, within certain limits – that is to say, in never entirely accepting – the givenness of a context, its closedness and its stubbornness [*sa fermeture et sa fermet *]. But without this tension or without this

apparent contradiction, would anything ever be done? Would anything ever be changed?

*(Ibid., 152)*

The critics of deconstruction are doubtless quite right in claiming that deconstruction as a philosophical stance or method does not rule out the possibility of misuse and unethical implementations, let alone guarantee that those arguing in favour of it would always be morally impeccable in their private lives. No philosophy can be expected to accomplish that. But in my opinion the claim that deconstruction would be oblivious or indifferent to ethical aspects is far more difficult to sustain. To sum up, I hope to have shown that, against some allegations, deconstruction is *not* necessarily amoral or anti-ethical. It does indeed involve aspects of ethical responsibility. But its ethical dimension, brought forth by the suspension of choice and by affirmation of difference and undecidability, does not give any directly applicable guidelines for ethical action. Or to quote Simon Critchley, ‘deconstruction fails to navigate the treacherous passage from ethics to politics’ (1992, 189). Derrida’s hesitation in confronting the ethical leaves it up to us to cover the passage from undecidability to decision-making, but the ethical dimension of deconstruction gives us several signposts on our way, ‘it opens up a passageway’ (Derrida 1991, 218). It is good to remember that even though Derrida himself has shied away from the political uses of deconstruction, others have not. ‘[I]t seems churlish’, as Steven Helmling points out, ‘not to acknowledge that his method, in other hands, has proved enormously useful for a variety of oppositional criticisms – feminist, gay/lesbian/queer, minority, postcolonialist, etc.’ (1994, 14). I would like to add translation to the list. But instead of formulating a ready-made ethics, postmodern ethics maintains that it is in the end our own responsibility, yours and mine, to evaluate the moral aspects of our situation and to act accordingly (for a discussion of individual morality and collectivity see Chapter 5.3. below).



### 3. Postmodernity and translation

#### The age of translation

In the 1980s and especially in the 1990s, the growth of translation studies has been explosive. The rise of the discipline has even been described as a ‘success story of the 1980s’ (Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere in Gentzler 1993, ix). At the same time, over the last thirty or forty years, the practice of translation has changed drastically: ‘It has ceased to be a mainly literary side activity of knowledgeable or incompetent *dilettanti* to become a full-fledged, mainly technical profession. The bulk of translations being now production-related, an overwhelming social need has arisen for the specialist at translating.’ (Viaggio 1994, 98) These two developments have in many cases progressed hand in hand, theoretical insight feeding into practical work, and practice invigorating theory. But importantly, it is not a mere coincidence that both translating activities and translation studies have expanded in recent decades simultaneously with postmodern tendencies. Translating is a postmodern activity *par excellence*: in a world full of texts and mediated information, interpreters and mediators have a central role. This new emphasis is epitomised in Zygmunt Bauman’s extended metaphors of modernity as an age of legislators and postmodernity as an age of interpreters (1987). Similarly, according to Sherry Simon, in the contemporary world the place of the translator in fact overlaps with that of the Western citizen (1999, 59). In a sense, we have all become translators.

The problems and paradoxes of translation bring to light many central themes of postmodern theories: the problematic relationship between signs and significations, the entanglement of ideologies and interpretation, the issue of cultural hegemony, centres and peripheries, and so on. No wonder translation has attracted attention among postmodern philosophers (see, e.g., Smart 1999, 20–26; Bannet 1993). The trend of using translation as a tool for rethinking textual relations is perhaps most extended in Jacques Derrida’s writings. In fact, his contribution has even been listed among the most promising contemporary translation theories (Gentzler 1993; see also Johnson 1985). In spite of his input, I would not call Derrida a translation theorist, but rather see him as a philosopher interested in language uses including translation. But it would, of course, be hard to deny the direct and indirect influence of deconstruction in the development of many current trends in translation studies (see Chapter 3.2. below).

In addition to a specifically deconstructive approach, there are also other postmodern trends in translation studies (in fact, the whole *interdiscipline* has a rather postmodern outlook). Their development has clearly been influenced by theorists like Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Hélène Cixous. The manipulation approach of the 1980s already had affinities with postmodern philosophies of power and ideology. In fact, Susan Bassnett has perceived it as inaugurating a ‘post-structuralist stage’ in

translation studies, during which translation is conceived 'as one of a range of processes of textual manipulation, where the concept of plurality replaces dogmas of faithfulness to a source text, and where the idea of the original is being challenged from a variety of perspectives' (1993, 147).

Labelling the 1980s as a post-structuralist phase may be an overstatement, but the seeds for later developments were certainly sown. The postmodern tendencies have been further enforced by the 'cultural turn' in (the literary branch of) translation studies (see Bassnett and Lefevere 1990). The anthologies *Translation, History and Culture* co-edited by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (1990) and *Rethinking Translation* edited by Lawrence Venuti (1992) function both as testimonies and forcible attempts to take the turn. They brought together (among others) a number of contributions from two emerging approaches with distinctively postmodern traits: feminist and postcolonial translation theories. It is no wonder deconstruction has attracted attention within these two new trends in translation theory. With its emphasis on dismantling hierarchical oppositions, deconstruction is particularly useful for various emancipatory purposes. Within translation theory it has been used for rethinking the roles of source and target texts/cultures, as well as the relation between the author and the translator; feminist/gender studies have questioned the traditional binarism of man/woman; and postcolonial theory has opened new perspectives on cultural relations (for more on postcolonial theory see Niranjana 1992; Robinson 1997a, Vieira 1997; for overviews of feminist translation theory see Simon 1996, von Flotow 1997). Feminist and postcolonial approaches are both centred around issues of identities and ideologies, and they both bring the political aspects of translation into the foreground (see also Chapter 3.2. below). Considering the affinities, it is no wonder that they have paved each other's way to translation studies, and in some cases the same theorists (such as Susan Bassnett and Sherry Simon) have actively promoted both.

By now, the cultural turn of the discipline is an uncontested fact, but the direction of the turn remains rather vague. The more accepted and widespread the cultural arguments have become, the less it is sufficient just to repeat the importance of cultural factors in the study of translations. As Sherry Simon has argued, culture-oriented accounts of translation often lack a clear definition of what is meant by 'culture' (1996, 137). In addition to clarifying the central concept, it is also necessary to reflect critically on the new paradigm, asking the question 'Where do we go from here?' In looking for answers, it might be useful to look at Eve Tavor Bannet's prediction of a postcultural turn (1993). Writing from a Marxist framework and representing literary theory, Bannet offers a strikingly up-to-date contribution to the discussion of postmodern ethics of translation.

Proving the point of increased interest and growing prestige of translation theory within other fields of study, Bannet brings translation theories to bear on literary criticism. Trying to navigate ways beyond the boundaries and limitations of current theories, cultural studies in particular, Bannet incorporates Derridean deconstruction (which she calls (De)construction to differentiate it from the deconstruction prevalent in literary theory), feminist theories and recent translation theories to construct an image of a new, responsible criticism. By the term 'postcultural', borrowed from Bauman (1987, 156), Bannet does not refer to

translation studies but to cultural theory, but since the cultural turn in translation theory and cultural studies have a related origin in the theoretical climate of the 1980s and 1990s, we could benefit from her insights.

Bannet's basic argument is that cultural theories tend to over-emphasise the determining power of cultural factors, leaving little or no room for singularity or individuality (e.g., 1993, 29). Her aim is to not to abolish but to expand the theories to accommodate both aspects (her notion of the logic of both/and will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 5.1. below). A further point, well worth taking notice of in translation studies as well, is that the whole notion of 'culture' is rapidly losing its explanatory power. According to Bauman, it has only been 'an episode in history' (1987, 116). It is essentially a modernist concept, closely tied with nation-states and the idea of bounded and autonomous national cultures (see Bannet 1993, 183–184; Bhabha 1994, 139–170; Smart 1999, 17-26). With the decline of nation-states, rapid globalisation and internationalisation as well as new forms of communications, the boundaries of nations and cultures are becoming more and more blurred (nor were the borders between cultures fixed or closed before either). Sherry Simon has even argued that 'Western society as a whole has turned into an immense contact zone, where intercultural relations contribute to the internal life of all national cultures' (1999, 58). At the same time, increasing regionalisation and the ethnic and cultural diversification within national cultures erode the concept 'from within'. For translation studies, the repercussions of these developments are manifold. They do not diminish the importance of those factors we are accustomed to labelling 'cultural', but they pose great challenges in analysing them. The problem of equating cultures and languages with nations has recently been addressed by some translation scholars (e.g., Simon 1999; Vermeer 1999), but we are only beginning to grasp the consequences of the changing scene to approaches like the cultural and polysystems theories which are founded on the notion of culture(s). I will come back to this point of cultures and the difficulties in defining them in the framework of my analysis of Pym's ethical stance in Chapter 4.2. below.

## Deconstruction and translation theories

### *Derrida on translation*

The problem of translation is never fully absent in Derrida's texts. Most, if not all, central themes of deconstruction can be brought to bear on translation theory, but on several occasions Derrida has also addressed the issue of translation directly. His most famous, and most quoted, contribution is undoubtedly 'Des Tours de Babel' (1985a), a discussion on the necessity and impossibility of translation that uses the myth of Babel and Walter Benjamin's classic text 'Das Aufgabe des Übersetzers' as its starting point. In the text, Benjamin's and Derrida's voices are intertwined into a veritable maze of intriguing conceptions of what translation could involve. Starting from the Babelic curse and the word 'Aufgabe', Derrida develops a rather familiar notion of translation as a commitment, a duty, a debt, and a responsibility (1985a, 174–175). The duty is both necessary and impossible, the debt impossible to resolve. But, and

this is the crucial point in Derrida's argument, the text to be translated is equally indebted: 'The original is the first debtor, the first petitioner; it begins by lacking and by pleading for translation' (ibid., 184). This double indebtedness is insolvent on both sides: no translation can ever exhaust the translative possibilities, and the initial lack can never be fully compensated for. Following the logic of deconstruction of exposing the limits, Derrida repeatedly stresses the unfinishedness of translation. Employing the image of a marriage contract with a promise of a child, he maintains that this reproductive reconciliation is only promised but never reached. The hymen remains 'intact and virgin in spite of the labor of translation' (ibid., 192). Derrida's choice of metaphors aside, the essence of his argument is that even though complete translatability can never be attained, the *promise* is valuable as such. For Derrida, translation is an inescapably dual activity. It is governed by 'the law imposed by the name of God who in one stroke commands and forbids you to translate by showing *and* hiding from you the limit' (ibid., 204; see also 1985b, 123).

In refusing to assign translation a secondary position, the notion of debt contains a 'liberating' message, but it also emphasises the limits of translation. A more positive version of the same theme can be found in the related notion of supplementarity. The *supplément* is another conceptual master-word in Derrida's chain of quasi-interchangeable 'non-concepts': differance, hymen, pharmakon, trace... It is an accessory, an extra addition, '[it] adds itself, it is a surplus, a plenitude enriching another plenitude' (Derrida 1976, 144), but it also indicates a lack. It is also a compensation or replacement: if it adds, it adds to replace, if it fills, it is as one fills a void, if it represents, it is by the anterior default of a presence (ibid., 145). It is easy to see how supplementarity can be used to define translation: various translations function as supplements of the source text which as such is 'ready' but still also lacking as it needs to be supplemented, compensated and replaced by the translation. The translation, then, is not an accidental addition to a self-sufficient entity, but called for and needed by the original. In its supplementary function, translation 'will truly be a moment in the growth of the original' (Derrida 1985a, 188).

Derrida's position is condensed in his definition of translation as 'productive writing called for by the original text' (1985b, 153). First of all, translating is productive, not *re*productive. A translator does not transcode pre-existing and stable meanings (since there are none) but produces a new text in a process of writing that is not qualitatively different from other kinds of writing. But, importantly, the process is not random. Deconstruction is not tantamount to giving translators licence to do whatever they please. To be a translation, the translation has to cultivate a particular relationship with the source text. The translation is *called for* by the original text, and the writing process has to take into account this call: it adds to replace, it fills to fill a void.

### *The Brazilian connection*

In recent theoretical discussions on translation, there are often casual references to Derrida's views on translation, but there are also some more extended efforts to analyse his position or to incorporate his views in the study of translations. In the

following, I will analyse these efforts in order to offer a critical introduction to deconstruction as applied to translation studies.

The Brazilian scholar Rosemary Arrojo has been among the most prolific proponents of deconstruction within translation theory in the 1990s. In numerous articles she has put forward a postmodern approach with special emphasis on deconstruction (e.g., 1997ab, 1998ab). Arrojo was also among the first to introduce Derrida in translation studies, but since her early work (e.g., Arrojo 1992, 1993) was published exclusively in Brazil and in Portuguese (a marginal language from the point of view of mainstream translation studies), she remained little known in the European circles until the mid-1990s. Arrojo's main theses are best elaborated in *Tradução, Desconstrução e Psicanálise*, a collection of articles published in 1993. There she sets herself several aims: valorisation of translation, reformulation of the traditional concepts of originality and fidelity, as well as redefinition of the role of the translator and the relations of translating and reading, translation and interpretation, and translation and authorship (1993, 9–19). Embracing Derrida's critique of logocentrism (see, e.g., Derrida 1976), she uses deconstruction as a framework to create an alternative picture of translation as active production of meanings, as creation and production rather than conservation and protection, and of translators being faithful only to their own conceptions of translation (1993, 19–42).

Arrojo is a sharp-eyed critical reader, and her input has been essential for the gradual institutionalisation of deconstruction as one of the contemporary translation theories (particularly in the German-speaking countries, Arrojo seems to have a central status; see, e.g., Vermeer 1996; Wolf (ed.) 1997). But the centrality of one interpretation has been a mixed blessing. What troubles me most is her evangelical tone: dismissing the vast and varied history of translation theory and practice as two thousand years of misled speculation, and disregarding all competing contemporary frameworks as covertly essentialist or otherwise suspect, she offers us postmodern theories, as exemplified by deconstruction, as our salvation:

In the wake of poststructuralism and postmodernism, the visible translator's claim to bear his or her own name may finally begin to change the age-old prejudices that have always ignored or humiliated the production of meaning that constitutes the inescapable task of any translation.

(Arrojo 1997b, 31)

Arrojo is well acquainted with deconstruction, but her knowledge of the theory and practice of translation seems less extensive, leading her to unwarranted generalisations such as the one above. It would be fairly easy to give examples of different attitudes disturbing Arrojo's schema of a continuing practice of humiliation (vernacular translation practices during the Middle Ages are an obvious example, see also Koskinen 1994a, 41–43). Arrojo's selection of representative translation theory appears equally limited. It seems, for instance, rather off-target during the 1990s to write an extensive and a-historical criticism of Georges Mounin's book of translation theory dating from the 1960s, claiming it to be 'one of the most prestigious essays on translation theory' (Arrojo 1992, 109), when the whole discipline of translation studies has actually emerged in the meantime. In her zeal to renew the discipline, Arrojo is also unable to capitalise on those approaches which could support her own theses. For

example, she could benefit from Toury's and others' work on norms, and there are also some obvious affinities with the functionalist approach (see *ibid.* and Arrojo 1993, 18–19, 147; see also Vermeer's appreciative preface of the German translations of Arrojo's texts in Wolf (ed.) 1997).

The problems of Arrojo's strategy become evident in her entry on deconstruction in *Handbuch Translation* (Arrojo 1998b). The one and a half pages mainly describe what deconstruction is *not*, what translation is *not*, and what translation theory should *not* be, and what deconstruction could offer in return remains rather vague. The problem originates in deconstructive theory itself, which is not remarkably practice-oriented and tends to remain on an abstract level, but the real impasse is caused by Arrojo's reluctance to accept that other approaches might also have something to offer. This blindness is unfortunate, especially since many of Derrida's – and Arrojo's – basic arguments have in time become commonly accepted in translation studies, and their views have been supported by developments in different camps of translation theory. There is, for example, hardly a theorist today who would completely ignore the differences between the original and its translations caused by contextual and cultural factors and would call for absolute fidelity to the letter of the original.

Arrojo uses the notion of postmodernism rather loosely, and without clarifying definitions. It is, however, evident that for her it serves as a label of a theoretical approach. It might be useful also in translation studies to differentiate between *postmodernism* and postmodern theories, confining the former to designate a particular aesthetic trend or 'school' of translation praxis. This aspect of postmodernity is touched upon by another Brazilian scholar, Else Vieira, who has brought out a unique Brazilian conception of translation as a form of cannibalism (see Vieira 1994; 1997; 1998; 1999). As a translation practice, cannibalism can be defined as a symbolic and respectful, even amorous, devouring of the source text, a transfusion of blood. Feeding on the ambivalent postcolonial relation between the central source culture and the peripheral target culture, cannibalism simultaneously acknowledges and annihilates the cultural values of the centre: 'translation is no longer a one-way flow from the source to the target culture, but a two-way transcultural enterprise' (Vieira 1994, 69). This cannibalistic translation, as developed and practised by the brothers Augusto and Haroldo de Campos, Vieira defines as a specific postmodern translational aesthetics (*ibid.*; cf. Oittinen 1997).

Whereas Arrojo's interests seem to lie purely on the theoretical level, Vieira refers to postmodern characteristics in actual translations. In stressing practice rather than theory, Vieira's article suggests that it might also be fruitful to attempt to produce a history of the various isms in literary translation following a logic familiar from art history in general. In her articles published in English, Vieira, however, mainly refers to translators' paratextual statements rather than actual translations, and she does not focus on the interrelationships and mutual contradictions between metalanguage and praxis. In a more recent article (Vieira 1998), there is more emphasis on actual translations, and she stresses the chronological priority of translators' postmodern practice to similar claims of translation theorists. But even there, the main focus is still on translators' paratextual statements.

It is, of course, quite acceptable to focus an analysis on metalanguage, but one cannot automatically assume an unproblematic identity between what is said and done. Vieira does not tackle this issue in her articles. The problem of relating words and deeds is rather typical in translation theory. Many key statements in the history of translation are prefaces or other ‘side products’ of actual translations. In spite of the alleged division of theory and practice and the rapidly increasing academisation of the field, the same still holds true of contemporary translation studies to some extent. It seems that most translation theorists also translate (or have translated at some point in their career). Similarly, true to the tradition of translation theory, many translators occasionally turn on the theorist-mode and give theoretical accounts of their work (e.g., Suzanne Jill Levine or Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood). This is, of course, a tremendous asset and enrichment to the field, but it would be dangerous to make wide-reaching assumptions on the qualities of actual translations on the basis of the translators’ paratextual statements. Instead, the interplay of theory and practice, the tensions as well as mutual influences, offers abundant material for research (I will come back to this point in Chapters 4.2. and 5.2. below).

### *Perverse readings: Gentzler and Robinson*

In his introductory book on contemporary translation theories, Edwin Gentzler openly advocates deconstruction as a radically new approach to translation (1993, Ch. 6). His position is, however, problematised by the lack of representative examples within translation studies (Rosemary Arrojo is not mentioned), a lack he repeatedly laments. As a result, he ends up listing – in addition to a border-line case like Derrida – thinkers like Foucault and Heidegger not only among deconstructionists but also among translation theorists! His obvious wish to efface his own authorial voice also results in portraying Derrida as an alter ego, or voice-over. For example, I can hardly imagine Derrida specifically attempting to ‘dismantle previous attempts to arrive at a theory of translation’ (Gentzler 1993, 158) – it seems more likely that he is oblivious to most of them – but Gentzler has obviously set *himself* this target (see *ibid.*, 193 *et passim*). Gentzler’s representation of deconstruction is also strategically selective and biased. In a way counterproductive to his own aims, he portrays deconstruction as a rather reckless and pointless activity. According to Gentzler, ‘Derrida implies bottomless chessboards and random, accidental development, without an end’ (*ibid.*, 167), and ‘Derrida’s tack is more an empirical wandering, not bound to the responsibility of philosophy, to tradition, to evolution of language or thought systems, foregrounding instead movement along a surface of the written language, *play* without calculation, wandering without an end or *telos*’ (*ibid.*, 159; italics in the original). In short, Gentzler offers precisely the interpretation Derrida himself so forcibly contests in the afterword to *Limited Inc* (1997).<sup>18</sup>

Gentzler repeatedly stresses the ‘life-giving, positive, and regenerative’ (1993, 176) aspects of deconstruction and its conception of translation. He emphasises the opportunities for play and chances to extend the boundaries of meaning (*ibid.*, 162). Referring to ‘Des Tours de Babel’ (Derrida 1985a), he defines deconstruction as an essentially positive force: deconstruction ‘allows receiving and giving, allows for love

and growth'<sup>19</sup> (Gentzler 1993, 166). He completely omits, however, the notion of double bind, whereas for Derrida, gift is necessarily supplemented by debt, and love is inseparably connected to hate (1985a, 176). Stressing the possibilities of growing and maturing through translation, Gentzler refuses to contemplate the equally important aspect of translation as a closure, and the translator 'as the place at which the process of infinite semiosis is halted within an utterance that works to produce political effects' (Godard 1991, 113). The happy-go-lucky deconstruction advocated by Gentzler thus seems to be more his own creation than a description of Derrida's theses.<sup>20</sup>

A similar tendency to strategic colouring can be discerned in Raymond van den Broeck, the one predecessor Gentzler refers to within translation studies, introducing his article as 'the only serious attempt in Translation Studies to talk about translation theory in post-Derridean terms' (1993, 172). Taking up James S. Holmes's initiative to examine the relationship between deconstructive thinking and some translational phenomena, Raymond van den Broeck published an article reflecting on the uses of deconstruction in the study of translations (1990; originally published in *Linguistica Antverpiensia* No 22 in 1988). In the article, van den Broeck's main line of argument is the parallel development of deconstruction and descriptive translation studies. Drawing on Toury's work in particular, van den Broeck maintains that all central viewpoints that deconstruction could offer are in fact already incorporated in descriptive translation theory. His obvious intention is to use deconstruction as a means to enforce the descriptive approach. The pioneering article deals with Derrida's pertinent texts on translation and offers many insights, but its value is seriously diminished by a straightforward equation of Derrida with foreignising translation. Proponents of the foreignising strategy can, no doubt, find Derrida's claims useful for their purposes, but Derrida himself has hardly advocated abusive translation (a concept coined by Philip E. Lewis but attributed to Derrida in van den Broeck 1990, 50) or any other strategy. Describing Derrida's theory as 'highly prescriptive' (ibid., 47) therefore seems rather odd (see also Gentzler 1993, 173). In addition to being prescriptive, deconstruction is, according to van den Broeck, non-empirical, non-objective and of limited theoretical value to translation studies (surprisingly, van den Broeck stresses the *practical* uses of deconstruction): 'translation studies will be served in a better way – at least for the time being – by a model that is both historical and polysystemic' (1990, 47).

Both Gentzler and van den Broeck use Derrida strategically to advance their own views. While particularly Gentzler's interpretation of deconstruction strikes me as a 'mimetic perversion' of Derrida, Douglas Robinson lists Jacques Derrida as a prime example of perverse translation in his categorization of the various 'versions' of translation (conversion, reversion, subversion, perversion, aversion, diversion and conversation). Perverse translation, then, is 'the warping of a reader's trust beyond replacement or redirection: a confusion, an unravelling of response, a stymieing of response, a putting the TL reader at sixes and sevens with regard to the SL text' (Robinson 1991, 232). Perverse translation is, in short, an anarchist or nihilist undertaking. Robinson reads Derrida's 'Des Tours de Babel' (1985a) – the same text where Gentzler had found endless playfulness – as a sarcastic celebration of confusion and impossibility of translation. Stretching the sexual metaphors in Derrida's text, he



offers us the (deconstructive) image of translation as failed fellatio offering no real sexual pleasure (Robinson 1991, 235; see also 242).

If one wants to adopt a sarcastic world view, it is certainly possible to read Derrida in a way that enforces this attitude, but one then has to ignore all the contradictory tendencies in his writings. Seen side by side, Arrojo, Gentzler and Robinson illuminate different aspects of Derrida's texts. For Rosemary Arrojo, the most important element is rigorousness. For her, deconstruction is the strictest, the most rigorous reading strategy among postmodern theories (1998b). For Edwin Gentzler, deconstruction is all but rigorous: it is play with no rules. Douglas Robinson's emphasis, then, is on the irony and hopelessness of deconstruction. It could be argued that they are all in a sense right, but also wrong. All these tendencies – rigour, playfulness and irony – are keys to understanding Derrida's project, but to emphasise one at the cost of others is bound to result in a rather distorted image of deconstruction. Of the three, Arrojo initially appealed to me most because of her seriousness. In the end, however, as Robinson softens his ironic representation, his interpretation of deconstruction becomes closer to my own view than either Arrojo's or Gentzler's. He acknowledges that there is 'a profoundly serious ethical concern' behind the perverse attitude, but considers deconstructive translation 'more like a first step' in shaking the reader awake and smashing the easy habits of interpretation than as a stand one could adopt permanently (Robinson 1991, 238–239).

### *Political overtones*

The most programmatic statement on postmodern translation theory has been made by Lawrence Venuti in the introduction to the anthology *Rethinking translation* (1992), in many ways one of the first extensive attempts to bring a rich array of poststructuralist ideas into the focus of translation studies. Venuti's project is clearly sympathetic to deconstruction and other poststructuralist views, but it is debatable whether Venuti should be labelled as a 'pure' deconstructionist. The most typical classification is probably to stress his affinities with Marxism or cultural materialism (see, e.g., Milton 1996; on the Marxist paradigm in translation theory see also Bannet 1993, 181). For my purposes the issue is not that significant: in analysing both Venuti's and Pym's texts I am looking for postmodern or deconstructive *tendencies* in their thinking, not searching for an appropriate theoretical label to encompass their whole *oeuvre*. More significantly, I do not see Marxism (or cultural materialism) as being incompatible with deconstruction, and in my view Venuti's position includes affinities with both of them (see also Spivak 1999).

Venuti's formulation of a poststructural method (referring to Derrida, de Man, Foucault, Cixous, as well as Deleuze and Guattari) includes, first, a comparison of the source- and target-language texts; second, an examination of discontinuities in the translation itself; and third, an analysis of the ideological and institutional determinations. The method in itself is not strikingly different from other contemporary approaches to studying translation: there are comparative theories, target-oriented descriptive theories as well as theories related to cultural and ideological constraints. Its distinctiveness, then, has to be sought from the underlying

assumptions, which are explicitly political and emancipatory: ‘it becomes essential to recognize that translation in its many aspects [...] wields enormous power in the construction of national identities and hence can play an important geopolitical role’ (Venuti 1992, 13). The task of the theorist, then, is to contribute to a project aiming at the ‘elaboration of the theoretical, critical, and textual means by which translation can be studied as the locus of difference’ (ibid.). Compared to the alleged withdrawal from the ethical sphere in deconstruction, related applications in translation studies are thus openly ethico-political. This political dimension is, according to Venuti, an element in both translation research, teaching and practice. In his later writings, Venuti brings the political aspects of translating to the forefront, describing minoritising translation (see Chapter 4.1. below) as a calculated political move that ‘breaks down the distinction between aesthetic pleasure and political action’ (Venuti 1998b, 139).

The ethico-political thrust becomes even more evident if one also takes into account the related fields of feminist and postcolonial translation (theory and practice). They are openly committed to particular political aims, and their ethics is formulated accordingly. An illustrative example of the feminist ethos is Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood’s account of her own translation practice in the bilingual book *Re-Belle et Infidèle/The Body Bilingual* (1991). The tone familiar from many feminist texts is already visible in the title which flaunts a refusal to accept a role traditionally assigned to translators. The *Re-* is significant: not only a *belle infidèle* like the 17th century French translators, the feminist translator wants to be a rebel. Feminist translation is a political activity, openly advocating a feminist ideology and fighting for social change. Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood’s political position is summarised in her response to a critique accusing her of ‘feminising’ a text in translation:

My translation practice is a political activity aimed at making language speak for women. So my signature on a translation means: this translation has used every possible translation strategy to make the feminine visible in the language. Because making the feminine visible in language means making women seen and heard in the real world. Which is what feminism is all about.

(cited in von Flotow 1991, 79)

Visibility is a key concept for feminist translation, and while feminist translation ethics has sometimes been fiercely criticised, the notion of visibility has fared well in translation studies in general (see Chapter 5.2. below). The feminist translator makes her intervention visible, puts her cards on the table (Lotbinière-Harwood 1991, 11). The presence of the translating subject is crucial. For feminist translators like Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood ‘ethics is knowing what you stand for, and taking the responsibility for inscribing that world-view in what you do’ (ibid., 166). Because of the political aims, feminist translation strategies are prone to didactic overtones (see Delisle 1993). The ethics of visibility, too, is largely a result of the need to educate the readers to better understand and appreciate the particularities of feminist translation (Lotbinière-Harwood 1991, 47). Notes and prefaces, as well as feminist translation in general, become ‘an educational tool’ (von Flotow 1991, 77), in service of a larger mission of alerting the readers to the feminist issues and directing their attention to the specialities of feminist translation in an attempt to ‘guide their steps’ (Delisle 1993, 223).

In a similar vein, educational aspects and a related preference for visibility can be perceived in postcolonial approaches to translation. For instance, in discussing Gayatri Spivak's essay 'The Politics of Translation' (1993) Sherry Simon sees it as a part of her larger project of 'postcolonial pedagogy' (1996, 149). In Spivak's view, Simon continues, 'it is argued that the political agenda of translation is best pursued by foregrounding the act of mediation, by giving voice and body to the figure of the translator' (1996, 154). Simon chooses to emphasise the postcolonial framework, but Spivak is, of course, a representative not only of postcolonial theory but also of feminist and deconstructivist approaches, personifying their interrelatedness (see Spivak 1988).<sup>21</sup> As the title of Spivak's essay also indicates, both feminist and postcolonial notions of translation have their roots in a political agenda: that of unsettling the received ideas of the woman's/subaltern condition and questioning the hegemonic power structures of patriarchy/colonisation. Even though cannibalism, for instance, is an aesthetic literary movement, it contains decisive political overtones (Vieira 1999; see also Jackson 1994), and these political aspects have contributed to the fact that the views of the de Campos brothers have gained such currency in contemporary translation studies (in Vieira's view the idea of cannibalism has in fact been *too quickly* swallowed, devoured without digesting; see Vieira 1999, 95). Questioning the subordinate position of the translation, and shaking the asymmetrical cultural relations supporting it, the cannibalistic notion of translation resonates with recent theoretical developments.<sup>22</sup>

### *Debates and discussions*

Postcolonial and feminist translation theories, while not dependent on deconstruction nor its progenies in any straightforward way, contain numerous affinities with deconstruction and have been intellectually nourished by it. For example, according to Sherry Simon:

It is through Derrida that feminist translation finds its new definitions of textual authority and develops its politics of transmission. The unprecedented theoretical attention given by Derrida and Derrideans to translation itself will provide feminist translators with a vocabulary allowing them to redefine their task.

*(1996, 94–95; see also von Flotow 1991, 80; Niranjana 1992; Spivak 1993)*

Shared opinions and common background have given mutual support to deconstructive, feminist and postcolonial approaches, but have not resulted in an uncritical consensus among them. In fact, the most extended critique of the feminist approach has come from Rosemary Arrojo, who represents 'radical deconstructionism' (Simon 1996, 28). The crux of Arrojo's critique is ethical: she has accused feminist translators of opportunistic and hypocritical attitudes, even of a 'bizarre sense of ethics' (1994, 159), for failing to admit the violence of their own strategies while criticising earlier 'patriarchal' practices (Arrojo 1994; 1995; 1999; see also Chapter 1.3. above).

The debate between Arrojo and the supporters of the feminist approach has also included a disagreement on the 'proper' uses of deconstruction in translation studies.

According to Arrojo, feminist translators have ‘illegitimately’ used Derrida to justify their translation strategies (1994, 156S159). Luise von Flotow has responded by arguing that the practice of selecting useful bits of theory is tactical and strategic, not incoherent (1997, 83). Rather than just contributing to the debate over whether or not feminist translation theory is or is not part of orthodox deconstruction (obviously not, since it is something else, and orthodox deconstruction in itself is rather a contradiction in terms), I would like to take a wider perspective. Seen in the context of translation studies, feminist translation can indeed be said to perform a particular deconstructive project. In my view, deconstruction is essentially a process of resolving hierarchical oppositions (like faithful/unfaithful or original/translation) and revealing the inner contradictions of seemingly coherent conceptualisations. Resolving a binary opposition requires two steps: first, it needs to be turned upside down, changing the previously subordinated, negative or invisible pole into the dominant, positive position. And this seems to be what feminist translation has been doing: changing the order and forcing us to reconsider the traditional role of women/translators. But the second step is also necessary: deconstruction is only completed after both poles are redefined so that neither is on top and the violent opposition is resolved. Thus far, feminist translation theories have mainly concentrated on overturning the opposition male/female, positing the feminine/maternal images as qualitatively higher and morally more tenable than their masculine/paternal counterparts which are depicted as highly suspect. Arrojo’s criticism of the blind spots of feminist translation, then, can also be interpreted as a deconstructive move aiming towards the second step, the redefinitions.

The two most explicit statements on the new ethical challenges of translation in the 1990s, those by Anthony Pym and Lawrence Venuti, have also both been made in relation to deconstruction: whereas Venuti has propagated a model with obvious affinities to it, Pym has repeatedly argued against it. In two successive articles with the same title (1993a and 1995a), Pym’s main argument is rendered in two almost identical sentences. Pointing out that translators have to make choices between available alternatives, and need ethical guidelines to do so, he laments that ‘the question of ethics, which is where translation theory needs real help from philosophers’ is precisely the point obscured by deconstruction’s ‘focus on textuality’ (1993a, 513), or ‘fixations of origins’ (1995a, 17). In the earlier version, Pym’s main object of criticism is deconstruction’s stress on textuality and what he perceives as a lack of attentiveness to the social aspects of translation. This criticism may, as discussed earlier in Chapter 2.2., be partially justified in relation to Derrida’s texts, but is hardly descriptive of the uses of deconstruction within translation studies. Theorists working within a postcolonial or feminist framework, for example, are engaged in an active attempt to affect that social situation – and have also been criticised for it (e.g., Baker 1996). Interestingly, Pym has elsewhere lamented the *lack* of deconstruction and related approaches in translation studies, seeing them as ways of tackling many problematic phenomena:

[...] European translation scholars have been strangely reluctant or unable to engage in wider social or academic debates. Although translation inevitably concerns extremely problematic phenomena like traditional canons, cultural specificity, political identity, and nationalist combinations of all three, most theorists have stayed clear of such turbulent waters. There has been virtually no deconstruction, little feminism,

scant critique of European east-west relations, no more than lip-service to the translation costs that risk crippling the European Union, and minimal critique of a thing called 'culture' that remains so vague it couldn't upset anyone's idea of a culture.

(Pym 1995c, 172)

As for the claim of 'fixations of origins', its logic escapes me. In my view deconstruction rather shifts the focus *away* from the source and to the afterlife and maturation process of the text in translation. Even though deconstruction stresses the possibility of multiple, even contradictory, readings of a text, contrary to Pym's argument this is not tantamount to an idealised conception of the original as an unending source of all interpretations (or else, Pym, while ostensibly criticising translation theorists, must in fact be referring to a tendency in some – but definitely not all – deconstructive literary theory in the United States to assume that great literary works somehow 'anticipate' any deconstruction, i.e. that all possible interpretations are already there in the text, just waiting to be excavated). In my opinion, this is precisely the view deconstruction opposes, and in my view it has not been forwarded within translation studies (see also Arrojo 1993, 28, 48; Arrojo 1996). According to the deconstructive view, meanings are only produced in interaction with other texts and contexts in various readings, they are not originally all there in the text just waiting to be decoded. Concepts like *differance* and *supplementarity* essentially include the idea of excess, of growing, adding, becoming more – all the words indicating forward, towards the future, not backward, towards an unattainable origin.

Pym's argument is, however, supported by Andrew Chesterman, who situates deconstruction within his 'Logos meme' in which 'the pendulum swings back towards the original' (1997, 26; see also Pym 1997a, 87). Paradoxically, this alleged return to the origin and 'inferiorization of translation' (Pym 1995a, 15) is also characterised as 'the age of the translator' (Chesterman 1997, 29; see also Paloposki 1996). In fact, the pendulum swing only takes place with reference to the extreme target-orientation of descriptive translation studies. Interestingly, according to Pym it is the problem of origins that differentiates Venuti from deconstruction. Placing him within the Marxist framework, Pym praises Venuti's unwillingness to pay any homage to the source text (1997a, 95). While I agree with Pym's reading of Venuti in that Venuti's position does not privilege the source (and I also agree that Venuti has affinities with the Marxist paradigm and cultural materialism), I do not share his opinion that this would make Venuti's approach incompatible with deconstruction (see also Bahadir 1998).

In a way fitting to its controversial nature, and its divided reception in other disciplines, too, the importance of deconstruction for translation studies has been interpreted in two different ways. As might be expected, Anthony Pym does not want to credit it more than passing doubts: 'In a world where everything is to be constructed, deconstructionist theory can and should raise passing doubts on the way to concrete action. But translation theory has a lot of other things to do, awaiting the philosophers' return from Derridean islands.' (Pym 1995a, 17; cf. Koskinen 1996) Compared to Pym's pessimistic view on the uses of philosophical musing, Edwin Gentzler's zeal seems somewhat disproportionate: 'In the nineties, those translation theorists who have worked through the contribution of deconstructionists will not only

be at the forefront of their own field, but may begin to engage in meaningful exchanges with those from other fields' (1993, 192).

At first glance, the two opinions appear antagonistic, but a closer look reveals some similarities: Pym's 'passing doubts' need not be too far from Gentzler's view of 'working through' deconstruction on the way to somewhere further. Deconstruction is not likely to be the end of the story, but it can be seen as a way to new directions. And while it may be exaggerated to claim that deconstruction is presently at the forefront of translation studies, a theorist with no knowledge of it can hardly be there, nor have many possibilities for successful interdisciplinary work. Regardless of how one chooses to respond to them, postmodern theories have become such an 'institutionalised' part of academic discourse that a basic knowledge of them can be seen as a prerequisite for any professional scholar.

As a discipline, translation studies was slow to enter the discussion about postmodern theories, and so it is only now entering the phase of critical reconsideration that many other disciplines have already passed. In many ways, the height of the hype around poststructuralism and postmodernism can be dated to the mid-80s – before the ideas had truly began to filter through to the emerging discipline of translation studies. It follows that while many other fields of study are already moving further, building on the insights of poststructuralist and postmodern theories and leaving behind those views which they did not find fruitful, within translation studies we have only begun to work through their uses for the study of translations.

## 4. Towards a new ethics of translation

### Resistance and dissidence: Venuti

In contemporary translation theory, one could hardly find a more enthusiastic spokesman for translators than Lawrence Venuti. Throughout the 1990s he has been waging a one-man war for raising the status of translation (see *Rethinking Translation*, Venuti (ed.) 1992, *The Translator's Invisibility* 1995, *The Scandals of Translation* 1998a). According to his 'victimology', translation is presently scandalously stigmatised, discouraged, depreciated and exploited (1998a, 1). He wants to expose and rectify this scandal by initiating a productive rethinking of translation. The rethought translation, then, would force a cultural and social change, redefining authorship, advocating cultural difference, changing teaching methods and bringing forth new policies in publishing houses and corporations alike (ibid., 3). In stressing the marginal status of translation Venuti utilises a popular strategy. According to Tobin Siebers, posing as a victim has become fashionable in literary theory. It is a useful position, since it is not easily attacked; it decreases personal responsibility, and gives the speaker an aura of purity (1988, 194–197).

A closer reading of Venuti's texts shows, however, that most translators may actually side with the enemy, adhering to values like easy readability, fluency and standard syntax, all of which Venuti finds highly suspect. Unlike most contemporary translation theory, where normative discourse is nearly a taboo, Venuti is not afraid to express explicit preferences. His crusade is directed against the tendency towards fluent translation strategies that aim at an illusion of transparency, hiding both the translatedness of the translation and the translating subject while purporting to offer an unobstructed access to the original text. His own preferred method resists this tendency by using various nonfluent strategies. It eschews features like linear syntax, univocal meaning or controlled ambiguity, current usage and linguistic consistency (Venuti 1992, 4). This method is first called 'foreignizing' (Venuti 1995) and later also 'minoritizing' and resistant translation (Venuti 1998a). Venuti's fight against domesticating can be put into a wider context by seeing the domesticating translation strategy as yet one more attempt at assimilating the foreign(ers) that Bauman considers typical of modernity. 'Fluency', Venuti complains, 'is assimilationist' (1998a, 12). In a way fitting to the theme of translation, Bauman sees assimilation as 'a declaration of war on semantic ambiguity' (1991, 105). Venuti's project, then, can be seen as an attempt to find a strategy that would avoid the violence he perceives in the domesticating model and would instead enhance the foreign origin of translation.

## *Anxieties of influence: Schleiermacher*

Before continuing with the analysis of Venuti's foreignising method, it is necessary to make a detour via two obvious predecessors of this line of thinking: Friedrich Schleiermacher and Antoine Berman. One of the many dualisms that seem to haunt translation studies, the issue of foreignising versus domesticating translation methods is basically a reformulation of Schleiermacher's famous differentiation between methods that take the reader to the foreign author and those that bring the foreign author to the reader. It seems impossible to discuss translation and ethics without also thinking through Friedrich Schleiermacher's contribution. A link between Schleiermacher and contemporary discussions is provided by the French translator and translation theorist Antoine Berman, who has often been celebrated as the most explicit spokesman for the ethics of translation in the 1980s (see, e.g., Simon 1996). Berman develops his ethics of translation with close reference to German Romanticism. These two thinkers, Schleiermacher and Berman, are prominent figures in both Anthony Pym's and Lawrence Venuti's texts. Both Venuti and Pym follow the track from Berman to Schleiermacher, either to continue the same line of thought as Venuti does or to depart from it like Pym.

To support his basic line of argument, Venuti lists Schleiermacher among the marginalised and neglected dissident figures in translation theory (1995, 117). The claim is somewhat surprising. Presently, it rather seems that Schleiermacher's lecture 'Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens' (1813, in English in Lefevere 1977) is one of the canonical texts in the history of translation theory, frequently anthologised and cited, even at times when the strategy he advocates has not been in fashion. For example, in 1977, André Lefevere stated that '[t]o us the very standard Schleiermacher proposes seems mistaken' (67), but he nevertheless acknowledged the lecture's position as a keynote address of a particular mode of thought. Venuti complains that the lecture was not translated until Lefevere's anthology in 1977, and laments that with Schleiermacher's lecture untranslated, English translators were unaware of the possibilities of foreignising translation. But it may well be that Venuti puts too much importance on the role of translation in the migration of ideas. Even though the lecture had not been translated, the English cultural elite was undoubtedly not unaware of the novel ideas springing up in Germany. Like-minded thinkers did have their connections. For example, the leading English Romantics, Wordsworth and Coleridge, spent nearly a year in Germany getting acquainted with German Romanticism (see Lehtonen 1994, 140). One could also propose another interpretation for the date of the English translation of Schleiermacher's lecture: one can equally well see it as an indication of the value that the emerging discipline assigned to German Romanticism: Lefevere's anthology in 1977 was among the very first publications of the new group of translation studies scholars (see also Pym 1997a, 20).

Schleiermacher's importance does not so much stem from inventing highly original ideas but rather from having successfully incorporated and developed a number of new insights earlier expressed by his contemporaries, such as Goethe, Herder and A.W. Schlegel. Among the methods of translating, Schleiermacher advocated the one leaving the writer in peace and moving the reader to him, that is, the method we are accustomed to call 'foreignising'. Attacking the Lutheran tradition of



fluent and natural-sounding translations, the Romantics argued for a method that intended to give the reader an image of the original in its foreignness. The ultimate goal of this translation project, then, was to enrich (or, in fact, to create) the national culture through contacts with the foreign. The project is described as a moral calling:

An inner necessity, in which a peculiar calling of our people [the Germans] expresses itself clearly enough, has driven us to translating *en masse*; we cannot go back and we must go on. Just as our soil itself has no doubt become richer and more fertile and our climate milder and more pleasant only after much transplantations of foreign flora, just so we sense that our language, because we exercise it less owing to our Nordic sluggishness, can thrive in all its freshness and completely develop its own power only through the most many-sided contacts with what is foreign.

(Schleiermacher 1977, 88)

Antoine Berman's book *L'épreuve de l'étranger* (1984) is a descendant of Schleiermacher's foreignising method and an obvious predecessor of Venuti's project. With the assistance of German Romanticism, Berman seeks an ethics of translation to combat ethnocentric translation. His argumentation is very similar to Venuti's, complaining about the shadowy existence of translators and calling for translation as a form of active and critical intervention. Anticipating the developments in the 1990s, in the conclusion he refers to similar problematics in ethnography, a connection that has proved fruitful in postcolonial translation theory, and points out the connections to various postmodern theories (1984, 284–296). Berman emphasises the ethical aspects of Schleiermacher's argument, but instead of the patriotic 'calling' he stresses the responsibilities of intersubjectivity and required openness to the foreign (*ibid.*, 226–249; see also Pym 1997a, 88).

Whereas Berman's reading of Schleiermacher is emphatic (cf. 1984, 246–248 on the limits of the foreignising method), Venuti's approach is more critical. According to Venuti, Schleiermacher's elitism and Prussian nationalism mark 'a shift from an ethical to a political problematic' (1991, 129; see also 1995, 99–118). For him, Schleiermacher's foreignising method is essentially ethnocentric:

Ultimately, it would seem that foreignizing translation does not so much introduce the foreign into German culture as use the foreign to confirm and develop a sameness, a process of fashioning an ideal cultural self on the basis of another, a cultural narcissism, which is endowed, moreover, with historical necessity.

(Venuti 1991, 139)

In spite of the problems that Venuti discerns in Schleiermacher's thinking, his basic approach is positive. According to him, Schleiermacher can 'offer a way out' from the conservatism plaguing contemporary translation and from the inability to use translation as a weapon in a cultural political combat (Venuti 1995, 118). But the combat rests on 'shaky ground' because of Schleiermacher's nationalism and elitism (*ibid.*, 111). The issue of nationalism and translation is a complex one. In spite of the differences in Berman's, Venuti's and Pym's interpretations, they all agree on one aspect: nationalism is an unwanted element in any translation or translation theory. But is it truly possible to eliminate all nationalistic traits of translation? And are they even

always and in all forms unwelcome (in today's discussions the notion of nationalism is often linked with ideas of fanaticism or racism, but one could also cite several historical examples of nationalism as a positive force, for example, in fights for independence or self-determination)? What if the act of translation as cultural transfer inherently includes aspects of cultural 'narcissism' and notions of development and growth in the target culture? Consider, for example, Venuti's own project: he has discerned a weakness in his own cultural context (that of monolingual ethnocentrism) and now purports to develop or improve that culture with the help of foreign texts translated with his favourite method. Wouldn't it be possible to argue that his motivation also contains nationalist overtones (see also Venuti 1998b, 144)?

Anthony Pym is equally unhappy with Schleiermacher's nationalism. His reading of Schleiermacher's foreignising method is a strategic juxtaposition. Pym reads the lecture as a 'manifesto against interculturality' (1997a, 37), and offers his own intercultural *Blending*-translator as a counterfigure for Schleiermacherian nationalism (see Chapter 4.3. below). The starting point of Pym's analysis is, interestingly, to show that Schleiermacher's text is 'contestable' (1997a, 20). Even though he criticises the strategy of reinterpreting classic texts as a way of transferring authority, as a way of showing that one knows more than the earlier writer, Pym seems to be doing exactly that with Schleiermacher's lecture. Fixing his gaze on Schleiermacher's notion of the 'unerfreulicher Mitte', the uncomfortable middle ground between two nations and languages, Pym argues that Schleiermacher fails to recognise the significance and value of this intermediary position. While Schleiermacher finds it necessary to avoid floating 'without any bearings' above this unpleasant area (1977, 84), Pym argues that this is precisely where all translators should ideally be located. In a similar vein, Berman points out that translation is located in just this 'obscure and dangerous area' (1984, 247). Berman's choice of words, originating from Schleiermacher's text, is a reminder that the contact areas of cultures are not always havens of peaceful interculturality. Translation can be a balancing act between competing norms and expectations. It helps to have some bearings – Schleiermacher found them in a fixed national identity, whereas Pym wants to create a shared ethics of intercultural translation.

The shift of intellectual climate around the turn of the 19th century was linked to various socio-economic changes such as the break-up of a bi(multi)lingual coterie culture, the rise of a bourgeois middle-class and thus the birth of a new reading public, the professionalisation of authorship and changes in the publishing industry (Couturier 1991; Lefevere 1990). It can be perceived as a golden era of translation (Bernofsky 1997), but the legacy of Romanticism also left us with a myth of authors and poets as quasi-godly creators whose originality and genius was beyond the reach of ordinary people, a myth postmodern literary theories have attacked. It remained a point of debate whether translation merited the status of a creative process or whether it should be considered a fairly straight-forward mechanistic activity. The dualism is reflected in Schleiermacher's differentiation between 'interpreters', i.e., commercial translators, and 'translators' who work with 'high art'. On this double scale the translator rises 'more and more above the interpreter' (Schleiermacher 1977, 69).<sup>23</sup>

The legacy of this dualism is discernible in Pym's and Venuti's contributions to the ethics of translation. Similar to Schleiermacher, Venuti's interest is directed at

literary translation, which he considers the most significant form of translation. Pym, then, intentionally shifts the emphasis away from the literary framework and explicitly extends his ethical framework to include translators of all text types, not just, or even primarily, those involved in literary translation (1997a, 40). In defining his own object of study ‘restrictively’ as those translations that are paid for, that are exchanged for something else (Pym 1997a, 11), he also offers a fresh departure from a romantic and elitist rhetoric eschewing all financial aspects that is still common both in translators’ own discourse and in many theoretical approaches to translation.

The legacy of Romanticism includes discussing translation in terms of love. The German Romantics saw love as the basic motivation for any translator, and the recommendation that one should only translate what one loves was often expressed (see, e.g., von Humboldt, A.W. Schlegel and Novalis in Lefevere 1977). As L.G. Kelly points out, the requirement has ever since been ‘often and tediously repeated’ (1979, 61). While examples of the metaphors of love can be found in texts originating from different periods, contemporary discussions are a particularly rich source of examples. The recent revival of the rhetoric of love and sex is largely explained by the rise of feminist translation and theory, explicitly concerned with the dichotomy male/female. The lexicon of sexuality has been employed to bring forth the ‘subtle connections between gender, definitions of mimesis or fidelity in writing, and translation’ (von Flotow 1991, 81). According to Luise von Flotow, this can be seen as a sort of counterreaction to the way in which discourse on translation ‘has routinely used metaphors of rape and violence against women and of paternalistic control to maintain this difference [in value between the original and its “reproduction”]’ (ibid., 81-82). The positive metaphors are then employed to combat the negative image. For example, Susan Bassnett equates translation with the maternal principle, with caring and with giving birth (cited in Arrojo 1995, 71; see also Arrojo 1994 and 1999).

Seeing translating in terms of love and passion leaves one to wonder about the destiny of those texts that are not immediately lovable but still need to be translated. Sherry Simon touches this significant issue in discussing the problematic of ideologically unfriendly texts (1996, 30-32). But the problem is, I think, a larger one. The loving encounter presupposes not only ideological affinity but also a particular attitude towards translation that is ill suited for translating, say, legislative texts or technical documentation. It would sound hopelessly funny to claim that a translator of EU directives or computer manuals makes love to the source text. Personally, I do not believe in treating literary translation as qualitatively different from other genres of translation. In my view, the renewed emphasis on love gives unnecessary support to the Romantic division between literary and ‘mundane’ translation. Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood makes this distinction explicit by stating that she considers *literary* translation to be a labour of love precisely because one cannot earn a living doing it (1991, 90). In other words the rhetoric of love is also elitist: this position is only tenable if your steady income comes from somewhere else, most often from an academic profession. Then you can afford to choose the authors, and enjoy the orgasmic<sup>24</sup> act of love.

From the point of view of professional translators, the metaphors of love has some unfortunate financial repercussions. Money and love are curiously incompatible. A true lover is an amateur, and financial compensations make the act of love suspect.

The inversion of the economic logic and the complicated relationship of money and art can also be seen in the attitudes towards translators' payment. It is not altogether unusual that people find 'amateur' translators more prestigious than professionals (irrespective of the quality of their work), simply because the amateurs can be seen to work for love whereas the professional translators 'do it for money'.

In the history of translation theory, German Romanticism is a fascinating era in its intensity and contradictoriness. For contemporary discussions of translation it offers multiple contact points, some of them clearly in accord with postmodern tendencies, some in obvious contradiction with them. At some point, Venuti even indicates a revival of Romantic translation theory (1995, 116). It is, however, obvious that revivals can never be repetitions. The Romanticism of the early 19th century grew out of particular cultural, political and social circumstances, and the present interest in it is a response to a completely different set of parameters, and while parallels can be drawn, their peculiarities are also to be kept in mind.

### *Foreignising*

A sort of Schleiermacherian commonsense reading of the notion of foreignising is to see it as 'keeping the foreign' (cf. Lefevere 1977, 78). In other words, the foreign elements in the translation are seen to originate in the source text, and foreignising translation, leading the reader to the source, is then understood to imply 'that a translation should stay close to the SL' (Barbe 1996, 333; see also Toury 1995, 56–57). This is also one aspect of Venutian foreignising, but foreignising in the Venutian sense seems to be also something completely different. For him, there is no obvious link between the foreignness in the translation and the source culture in question. Foreign or alien elements can, of course, originate in the source text/language/culture, but they can equally well be drawn from the target culture to achieve a distancing effect. In other words, the word 'foreign' often rather refers to those aspects of the *domestic* culture that are hidden, marginalised or stigmatised.

One can question whether 'foreignising' is always the best word to describe the features that Venuti enlists in the service of his preferred translation strategy. The notion of foreignising is sometimes understood as simply changing the traditionally negative concept of source language interference into a positive value, but in fact Venuti's model seems to favour target language resources. For example, it would be fairly easy to argue that using archaic forms of the target language to designate temporal distance, or the use of colloquialisms, are domesticating strategies since they draw from domestic sources. It rather seems that Venuti is ready to praise any nonfluent, nonconformist strategy, and the term 'foreignising' is just a label of his acceptance (see, e.g., 1995, 135, 200). Or else, in Venuti's vocabulary, 'foreign' is to be understood as foreignness in comparison with the prevalent translation strategy, that is, norm-breaking. In fact, Venuti's use of the term bears witness to his close affinity with literary theory: in his usage its meaning is much closer to the formalist notion of *ostranenie* and to Brechtian alienation than to the traditional uses of the term in translation studies. But the bottom line is that for Venuti all features that draw the readers' attention to the textuality of the text and direct the thoughts to the process of

its production are desirable. They function as a reminder of the translatedness of the text. They are ruptures in the transparency and the illusion of authorial presence, thus indirectly underlining the foreign origin of the text. One can, however, wonder whether the foreignising method merely produces an illusion of foreignness in a vein rather similar to the illusion of transparency produced by the fluent method (see Barbe 1996, 334; Lane-Mercier 1997, 58).

The whole notion of foreignisation is rather paradoxical: as both Venuti himself and many of his critics have pointed out, it can be claimed that translation is by definition an act of domestication. It is essentially an ethnocentric act of representing an alien and incomprehensible text in domestically intelligible terms (one could, thus, argue that nationalist overtones are an intrinsic part of all translation). Foreignising translation can therefore be seen as a contradiction in terms. Or else, the method has to be understood more as an accompaniment than an opponent of domesticating translation. Instead of being either one or the other, any translation includes elements of both. Furthermore, according to Venuti, one can also foreignise a domesticating translation with the help of a particular reading practice. This so-called symptomatic reading can show the discontinuities of domesticating translation, but it can equally well reveal the domesticating elements involved in any foreignising translation (Venuti 1995, 29). This could easily lead to the conclusion that the dichotomy is useless (see Barbe 1996, 333; cf. Lane-Mercier 1997, 63), but Venuti maintains that there is in spite of their entanglement a fundamental difference between the two methods: even though every translation unavoidably includes both tendencies, in domesticating translation they tend to be hidden and perhaps also unconscious, whereas foreignising translations ‘tend to flaunt their partiality instead of concealing it’ (Venuti 1995, 34; see also 24; cf. Chapter 6 below).

The concept of the remainder is central to Venuti’s argument. Borrowing from Jean-Jacques Lecercle, he describes it as the release of multiple meanings that exceed and sometimes impede the transparent uses of language (Venuti 1995, 216). The remainder can be actively employed and also actively sought for during the reading process, but it is essentially unpredictable and uncontrollable. Its enriching and redirecting effects are often, and in their most powerful form, rather subtle (Venuti 1998a, 112–115). In this context, Venuti does not mention Jacques Derrida, but it is fairly easy to draw parallels between the concept of the remainder and Derrida’s notions of trace and supplementarity. For Derrida, every sign carries with it traces of all the meanings that have been attached to it in different contexts. The meaning of a sign can never be fixed as contexts keep changing, but neither can a sign obtain completely new meanings as the old ones cannot be brushed away (see Derrida 1972; 1976). The link to the idea of supplement is most obvious in a previous statement in which Venuti describes this effect as ‘adding a surplus’ (1995, 147). The notion of supplementarity can well be used to define translation: various translations function as supplements of the source text which as such is ‘ready’ but still also lacking as it needs to be supplemented, compensated and replaced by translation. The translation is, then, not an accidental addition to a self-sufficient entity, but something that the source text demands and needs to fill in its voids (see Derrida 1985b, 153). But supplementarity is an endless project: as some gaps are filled, new ones are created, and every translation is thus open to retranslations.

## *Minoritising*

Foreignising is a complex and problematic concept, and Venuti's idiosyncratic way of using it adds to the complexity. This may be the reason why the method was renamed 'minoritizing' in Venuti's latest book (1998a). In addition to stressing affinities with postcolonial and gender-based approaches in translation studies (see also Venuti 1998b), the new label underlines the basic thrust in Venuti's theory: self-inflicted marginality. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, Venuti states that 'the aim of minoritising translation is "never to acquire the majority", never to erect a new standard or to establish a new canon, but rather to promote cultural innovation as well as the understanding of cultural difference' (Venuti 1998a, 11). The issue of difference forms the essence of Venuti's ethical stand. For him, the aim of translation is to promote cultural innovation and change, and different strategies and choices are to be judged from this perspective (*ibid.*, 188). The task of a Venutian revisionist translator is to go against the grain, to be dissident, and mainstream dissidence is hard to imagine (1995, 148). In choosing to reside in the cultural margins, Venuti parts company with Schleiermacher, according to whom foreignising translation must be applied extensively since it 'has no value whatsoever if it is practised only by chance and in isolated instances in a given language' (1977, 80).

At least in their more extreme expressions, the strategies Venuti propagates are unavoidably marginal. For example, Venuti uses the unenthusiastic response to Louis Zukofsky's translations of Catullus as an example of the symptomatic bias towards fluency and transparency in Anglo-American translations. But he could hardly seriously consider a world full of translations following this homophonic model:

Nulli se dicit mulier mea nubere malle  
quam mihi, non si se Iuppiter ipse petat.

Newly say dickered my love air my own would marry me all  
whom but one, none see say Jupiter if she petted.

(cited in Venuti 1995, 215)

The basic tenet of Venuti's theoretical stand is, however, suddenly undermined by his own writing. In a dazzling move, after spending dozens of pages in complaining about the negative response to Paul Blackburn's experimental foreignising and non-fluent translations, Venuti unexpectedly turns to praising Blackburn's *fluent* translation of Julio Cortázar's short stories (1995, 267). For a moment, Venuti abandons his customary extremism and acknowledges the constraining power of the prevalent norms. By staying close enough to the commonly accepted method of translating and by using the foreignising strategy sparingly enough for it to be accepted as a special flavour of the translation instead of using it extensively and thus turning the critics and readers against the text, Blackburn was able to 'smuggle' into the Anglo-American culture elements that his previous translations could not transmit.

In *Scandals of Translation* (Venuti 1998a) one can discern a general softening in Venuti's stand. In discussing the English translation of Banana Yoshimoto's

*Kitchen*, for example, he maintains that it is not necessary for the translation to deviate too much from domestic norms. One does not need to risk unintelligibility to make a difference (1998a, 87). The logic is similar to the one discerned by Susan Bernofsky in Schleiermacher's argumentation. After analysing Schleiermacher's famous essay in the light of his attitudes towards the foreignising elements in Schlegel's and Voss's translations, Bernofsky suggests that Schleiermacher's notion of foreignisation was in fact far more flexible than he made explicit in his essay, and that in practice he favoured a much more moderate view than in his theory (1997, 187–188). The same change of attitude can also be seen in Venuti's discussion of violence in translation. Following the logic of deconstruction that violence is an inherent element of language, *The Translator's Invisibility* is full of references to the violence inherent in every act of translation (esp. Venuti 1995, 18–20; cf. Derrida 1976, 106, 112 *et passim*; see also Siebers 1988, 6–9, 69–97). In his book review, Anthony Pym criticised Venuti's extensive use of the word, complaining that it 'doesn't leave [him] many words for the kinds of violence where people bleed and die as a result of transcultural relationships' (1996, 166). Personally, I can see the point of using words like violence to indicate the power relations that are always involved in translation. For me, the problem resides in the unnecessary stress on the negative aspects of power. Venuti is far from the only one to fall into this trap. Similar negativity is rather typical of the post-manipulation school era of translation studies: case studies on manipulative and manhandling translators pile up. But even though one cannot ignore the more sinister side of power relations, power can also be a positive force (for more on these two aspects of power see Koskinen 1994a, 53–63). In *The Scandals of Translation*, the discussion of translation as a form of violence gives way to this positive aspect of power, the power of translation to make a difference (e.g., Venuti 1998a, 159).

Acknowledging the asymmetrical power relations inherent in translation (cf. Arrojo 1997a) also relativises Venuti's otherwise fairly dogmatic-sounding adherence to particular translation strategies. They are to be interpreted in the light of the cultural situation in Britain and the United States. When the scene of translation changes, and the power relations are different, Venuti's preferences also seem to change to favour even domesticating methods. For example, within a postcolonial context, where the 'domestic' can be seen as a hybrid of global and local trends, Venuti maintains that 'translation can revise hegemonic values even when it seems to employ the most conservatively domesticating strategies' (1998a, 189). For Venuti, there is a specific ethics of location, based on a recognition of cultural difference. Strategies, as well as the concepts of 'domestic' and 'foreign', are to be reconstructed in every translation project to meet the needs of the local scene (Venuti 1998a, 187).

The issue of location touches one problematic aspect of Venuti's approach: to what extent should it be interpreted and tested from a specifically English perspective? Venuti has repeatedly stressed that his critique is directed to contemporary Anglo-American culture (cf. Pym 1999), but he is himself quick to point out that the features that he discerns are not necessarily exclusively Anglo-American, thereby inviting the reader to extend the applicability of his proposals (e.g., 1995, 1; 1998a, 1). The reign of fluency, the corner-stone of Venuti's criticism, is certainly not limited to the British and American literary scenes, and it seems therefore quite justified to test Venuti's statements in other fluency-praising cultures as well. This is where Venuti's theory

starts to wobble. When tested in different cultural frameworks, the causal relationship he proposes between fluency on the one hand and the marginal status of translation and imperialistic culture on the other hand becomes questionable.<sup>25</sup> Venuti's basic tenet is that fluent translation strategies are the reason for the defects he discerns in the Anglo-American culture, and that the remedy would be to apply non-fluent strategies instead. But the causal relation seems questionable, and to be convincing Venuti would need to prove his point much more effectively than he has done so far.

Doubts about the connection between fluency and imperialism, and the general applicability of Venuti's model, have been expressed in many critiques of Venuti's project (e.g., Paloposki 1996; Pym 1996; Lane-Mercier 1997; Robinson 1997a, 108–113; Tymoczko 2000). Some critics have gone even further and claimed that even within the Anglo-American framework Venuti's basic assumption of the dominance of fluent strategies may be coloured by a eurocentric view on the field of translation. Referring to various non-European languages and cultures, they claim that the standard Anglo-American translation strategy has not been to aim at domestication and fluency but precisely to enhance the texts' exotic foreignness by producing an orientalist translation. For example, Jaime Harker (1999) maintains that contrary to Venuti's argument most English translations of Japanese fiction have conformed to a foreignising method where the main objective has in fact been to emphasise a particular stereotypical image of Japan and the Japanese. Centring his argumentation around the example of Banana Yoshimoto's *Kitchen* (obviously unaware of the fact that Venuti has dealt with the same translation in his latest book, coming up with a view very similar to that of Harker), Harker argues that the most successful element in that translation was not extensive foreignisation but strategic naturalisation that succeeded in both satisfying and disrupting expectations of the 'oriental'. In the light of *The Scandals of Translation*, Harker's criticism of Venuti is slightly outdated, but it functions as a useful reminder of the complexities of domestication and foreignisation.

### *Venuti's paradoxes*

Venuti is undoubtedly sincere in his attempt to reform the practice of literary translation into English, but his project contains various paradoxes. Perhaps the greatest of them is that he is promoting a strategy that is by definition marginal. Stressing the need for 'mere' resistance while shunning a full-scale revolution links Venuti to postmodern theories in general: they are strong on critique but contain few elements that would lead to radically new directions. The logic of deconstruction, for example, rules out the possibility of ever giving unconditional support to any revolution, or even of believing in the very possibility of true revolutions. Rather, any revolutionary attempt would have to be immediately deconstructed. Deconstruction cannot, by definition, be unconditionally *for* any particular cause, at best it can be a form of saying 'yes, but'. Even though deconstruction is more inclined to support radicalism than conservatism, it does not advocate revolution or circumvention but resistance and interventions (see also Helmling 1994, 13; Bernasconi 1993, 118). The same can be said of Venuti's strategy of resistant translation. Venuti's virtuous



marginality, siding with the marginalised reformist translators and the maltreated cultural others, also functions as a shield against criticism: stressing the ethical considerations can easily hide the fact that in arguing against one kind of representation he is propagating another kind. And we have to take Venuti's word for the fairness of the image of the cultural other in his favourite model.

Another related paradox is that Venuti is calling for more democratic cultural practices from a hopelessly elitist position. Elitism is one of Venuti's main points of criticism, especially visible in his critique of Schleiermacher (1991) and in his discussion of the Arnold-Newman controversy (1995, Ch. 3). Venuti repeatedly expresses his disdain for the elitist attitudes of Matthew Arnold and praises Francis Newman's archaistic translation for its popularism and the clever way in which Newman used Schleiermacher's foreignising method but detached it from both elitism and nationalism (*ibid.*, 145; see also Venuti 1991). Elsewhere he even eschews the use of footnotes for fear of narrowing the audience to a 'cultural elite' (1998a, 22). It is therefore ironic that Venuti seems to be completely ignorant of his own elitism. His critique of a reviewer of Arnold's could equally well be directed at himself: 'yet it was precisely the literary values of a select scholarly clique that the reviewer wanted to be imposed on the entire reading public' (1995, 138; see also Pym 1997a, 96).

Venuti's elitism is linked to his insistence on the predominant status of literary translation. According to Venuti, 'literary translation is emphasised because it has long set the standard applied in technical translation (*viz.* fluency), and, most importantly for present purposes, it has traditionally been the field where innovative theories and practices emerge' (1995, 41). The literary emphasis is a natural outcome of Venuti's own position within the field of translation studies: coming from literary theory and literary translation and not closely connected to any theoretical framework within the study of translations, he quite naturally sticks to the area he is most familiar with. Still, I believe it would be beneficial for his approach if he took some time to explore the various translation practices within 'technical' translation. I do not see any need to assume that minoritising strategies can only be adopted in literary translation or that in technical settings good translating always has to adhere to the conventions of the field (Venuti 1998a, 23–24; cf. Chapter 4.4. below). And contrary to Venuti's belief, literature may not be a leading shaping force in today's society: one could argue, for example, that new innovations like the Internet and new technical appliances like mobile phones are much more relevant in shaping our perception of the world and of our own position in it. Undoubtedly, literary translation has been in a dominant position, especially in 19th century European discussions about translation, just as theological translation had been before it (see Pym 1992a, 143), but in contemporary translation theory its status is becoming disputable as new non-literary text types are rapidly gaining ground in the practice of translation. Especially if we accept Venuti's own argument of the marginal status of translated literature in the Anglo-American literary scene (for a different viewpoint see Pym 1996, 168), the possibilities of the 'minoritised' translator within this already minor field to make a difference are dishearteningly few.

A minor paradox may also be discerned in the translator's location in the cultural scene. The Venutian translator is to perform a collective change rather singlehandedly. Even though he extends his victimology to a critique of the publishing

industry, copyright laws and the teaching of literature, in discussing the particular translations Venuti often seems to ignore the many actors and factors affecting translation. As a result, he puts the translator alone in charge of all aspects of the translation process. For example, not only is the translator responsible for adopting a resistant translation strategy, s/he is also expected to be strategic in selecting foreign texts to be translated (e.g., Venuti 1998a, 10). This decision, however, is in real life seldom made by the translator, at least not alone. Venuti's emphasis on the translator can partly be explained by his literary approach: while literary translators often work in relative solitude, many translators in more 'technical' settings (e.g., EU translators and technical writers) produce their texts in more immediate interaction with other participants of the project. But the omission of commissioners, publishers, readers and other participants in the translation process is a serious gap in his model. On the other hand, Venuti's ethics of difference is faithful to the Levinasian basic tenet of the essential non-reciprocity of moral responsibility: I can only demand of myself to act morally without expecting anyone else to do the same (see, e.g., Bauman 1993, 50). Morally, every 'I' is more responsible than any other. In this sense, it is quite logical to demand that, regardless of the responsibility accepted by the other participants of the translation process, the Venutian resistant translator is to assume the greatest responsibility for the outcome.

### *Venuti's value*

Response to Venuti's approach has been very dualistic. In the early 1990s he was enthusiastically applauded as a fresh new voice, but the tide has since then turned, and during recent years he has met with increasing criticism. There are, as I have indicated, several problematic features in Venuti's approach, but in spite of its paradoxes his project is a significant new departure in translation studies. Unlike most (post)modern translation theories, Venuti seems to have overcome the obstacle of fidelity. Even though he has not renounced the origin of the translation, his ethics of difference, as the name implies, is *not* based on any reformulation of the notion of fidelity. For him, the important issues and ethical aims are located elsewhere than in fidelity or loyalty towards the source text or clients and target readers. The most important considerations are, instead, to be found in the wider framework of cultural exchange. Reflecting on this aspect in the Venutian ethics of translation, Anthony Pym maintains that, in spite of some initial similarities, Venuti's way of devaluing the moral responsibilities towards the source text differentiates him from Derrida and Paul de Man (1997a, 95). As I have stated above, I disagree with Pym's understanding of the status of the source text in deconstructive translation theory in general. It is easier to agree with Pym's argument that the position taken by Venuti contains 'at least, a seed of properly ethical thinking' (ibid.; trans. K.K.).

There is also another important aspect in Venuti's thinking, one that is seldom appreciated. Venuti's argument is often perceived as a dualistic division between (bad) domesticating and (good) foreignising translation, and then the evaluation is either agreed on or contested (for binary readings see, e.g., Harker 1999; Lane-Mercier 1997; Pym 1997a, 22). On the surface level, the polemic presentation offers itself readily to

this kind of reading, but once one digs deeper into Venuti's argument, the binary opposition becomes 'deconstructed' and the two opposing poles begin to merge. Instead of being either domesticating or foreignising, any translation includes elements of both strategies. Since the domesticating tendencies, according to Venuti, get ample support in today's Anglo-American literary scene, the Venutian logic calls for a balancing act by favouring the foreignising strategies. But in my view, the logic is not either/or: the translator cannot choose to be purely domesticating nor purely foreignising. The translation can only be directed more or less towards one of the extremes. In other words, while Schleiermacher maintained that 'there cannot be a third method' (1977, 74; see also Pym 1997a, 21), in the light of Venuti's argumentation it seems that there rather cannot be two distinct and opposite methods but only the third, the middle one with varying degrees of foreignisation and domestication.

## Case I: Subverting the tango

In practice, it may sometimes be difficult even to determine whether a particular translation follows a domesticating or a foreignising/minoritising strategy (on the difficulties in applying Venuti's terminology see also Tymoczko 2000). A good example is Suzanne Jill Levine's translation of Manuel Puig's novel *Boquitas pintadas*, a translation that Venuti cites as a representative example of foreignising translation (1991, 148). The choice is interesting, since Levine's translation is a result of an extensive Americanising process in many ways rather similar to that of the American Don Camillo translations Venuti is critical of (1998a, 124–152). A further attempt to categorise Jarkko Laine's Finnish translation of *Boquitas pintadas* along these lines would, no doubt, further add to the confusion.

In the following, I will take a closer look at the two translators' strategic choices in transporting *Boquitas Pintadas* first to the United States and then further to Finland. In my analysis, I will concentrate on problematising the discourse of translation as subversion and on analysing the elements of domestication and foreignisation with particular reference to imperialism. To shed light on the issue from different angles, I have selected the case study so that it includes not only the two translations but also the Finnish translator's preface and the American translator's separately published essays. My material, in other words, consists of the original novel *Boquitas pintadas* (first published in 1969), the American translation *Heartbreak tango* by Suzanne Jill Levine (first printed in 1973), Levine's essays collected in *The Subversive Scribe* (1991), as well as the Finnish translation *Särkyneen sydämen tango* (1978) with a preface by Jarkko Laine, the book's translator. This way, I can approach the question on three different levels: theoretical, paratextual and textual. The juxtapositions and contradictions between the various levels can reveal important insights into the ethics of translation (see also Chapter 5.2. below).

*Boquitas pintadas*, the second novel by the Argentine writer Manuel Puig, is a collection of letters, newspaper clippings, police reports, and so on. Together, these fragments tell the tragicomical story of the people of Coronel Vallejos, a provincial pampas town. In a mixture of nostalgia and parody, Puig sets these people in a

framework of Argentine tango lyrics, imported Hollywood films, women's magazines and radio soap operas of the 1930s and 1940s. The characters try to imitate the models of speech and conduct set by the popular songs and film stars, thus making themselves living caricatures of the romantic and cliché-filled popular culture of the time. But *Boquitas pintadas* is not a mere attempt to ridicule these peoples' hopeless effort to fit their lives into the sentimental model; it is an empathetic depiction of the dreams and illusions of common people, and a tribute — even if ironical — to the *tango Argentino*.

The novel is closely tied to the Argentine culture and the country's socio-historical situation in the 1930s and 40s. It feeds on the homespun tango tradition as well as the tremendous influence of imported American popular culture; the text is actually so inseparably connected with the Argentine cultural heritage that the publishers of the Spanish edition considered it necessary to make it more accessible by expanding some tango lyrics from the original one-liners to whole stanzas and by even replacing some of them in order for them to be recognisable for the European readership (see Levine 1991, 131).

Every episode or chapter of *Boquitas pintadas* opens with an epigraph, a line or two from a popular tango (or, in the case of the title epigraph, a fox trot). Functioning as a framework for the story, these epigraphs set the tone by invoking a well-known melody, and they reflect the theme of the episode in question. The frame of reference produced by the Argentine popular culture and the tango lyrics presents the translators with two basic sets of difficulties or constraints: first, how to re-render the universe of discourse, and second, how to respond to the ideological aspects of the novel. Ideological constraints affect the translation from two directions: it has to accommodate not only the ideological aspects of the original but also those of the translator and the receiving culture.

### *Read my lips: Boquitas pintadas into Heartbreak Tango*

*Boquitas pintadas* was translated into (American) English by Suzanne Jill Levine as *Heartbreak Tango* in 1973. In a theoretical account on her translations (Levine 1991, 123-134 *et passim.*), she offers the reader detailed information about the process of transmitting *Boquitas pintadas* to the North American audience. For her, translating Puig's novel is very much a question of recontextualising the ideology of the text. For how can Manuel Puig's criticism of the imported glamorised Hollywood ideals and American cultural imperialism be 'backtranslated' into American English and thus to the origin of these models without simultaneously subverting this criticism? The importance of the indigenous tango tradition is another problem: the lyrics that echo in the soul of the Argentine reader are unrecognisable or merely exotic to the North American reader. Levine's solution was to replace most of the original epigraphs with new material, such as tag lines from Hollywood films and Argentine radio commercials imitating the Hollywood style. In other words, she wanted to use material that was relevant to the original context, but simultaneously 'rang a funny, familiar, exaggerated bell for the American readers' (*ibid.*, 128).

A key issue of any translation strategy of *Boquitas pintadas* is to decide how to approach the tango references. The English title of the novel is a case in point of the complexities involved in the translation process (see Levine 1989, 37). How does ‘boquitas pintadas’ (painted little lips) become replaced by ‘heartbreak tango’? The original title is derived from a tango of Le Pera, and appears in the epigraph for episode III: ‘Deliciosas criaturas perfumadas, quiero el beso de sus boquitas pintadas...’ (delicious perfumed creatures, I want a kiss from their painted little lips). The same epigraph in Levine's translation bears no apparent resemblance: ‘She fought with the fury of a tigress for her man! He treated her rough — and she loved it! — *ad for Red Dust starring Jean Harlow and Clark Cable.*’

Levine explains that the connotations of ‘painted lips’ would for the American reader be totally different from the Argentine, suggesting painted, whorish ‘women of the street’ (1991, 123). It would therefore not, she maintains, function in the same way as the original title does: namely to register in the ear of its reader, suggest nostalgia for a past era, satirise the sentimentality of popular culture, and anchor the book in its Argentine frame of reference (ibid., 132). So, instead of the original stanza, another tango was chosen to represent the tone of the novel in the title: *Maldito tango*, one of the songs that the seduced and then abandoned servant girl listens to on the radio while scrubbing the floor in episode IX. Its lyrics were translated into English (‘Blame That Tango’), parts of it were inserted as epigraphs, and the phrase ‘heartbreak tango’ was extracted from the lyrics to become the title. Instead of the subtle implications of the original, the translated title makes the framework of the tango explicit, thus making the Argentine connection easier to grasp. In doing so, Levine argues, the new title also to some extent repairs the balance between American culture and the tango tradition which had been shaken by making the American images more prominent in the translation (ibid., 133S134).

### Heartbreak Tango *into* Särkyneen sydämen tango

The novel was translated into Finnish in 1978 by Jarkko Laine. Similar to many other translations from Spanish (among other ‘exotic’ languages) at the time, it was not translated directly from the original language, but, as the Finnish title *Särkyneen sydämen tango* (a direct translation of *Heartbreak Tango*) already indicates, the translation was based on Suzanne Jill Levine's version (although, deplorably, her contribution is nowhere acknowledged). While I do not want to get into the numerous general problems involved in using translations as source texts, I would like to discuss the cultural and ideological aspects of transferring the version tailored for North American readers to the Finnish context.

The Finnish translation reproduces the elements inserted in the American English version. The strategy is surprising, because the unique position of the tango in Finland makes the fundamental reasons for making the changes in the English translation simply not valid in Finland. Suzanne Jill Levine argues that, for the American and European reader, tango lyrics are foreign, maybe exotic, funny or hollow, and the specific tone is lost (1991, 127). While this may be true in most European countries, it is not true in Finland, the home away from home of the tango.

With its rich homespun tradition of Finnish (both translated and original) tangos, Finland is a country where the annual tango festival gathers tens of thousands of people to dance away the night on the street, a country which elects her own tango kings and queens who become national celebrities. The melancholy and melodramatic passion of the tango touches the Finnish soul in a peculiar way. (For more on the Finnish tango tradition see Kukkonen 1996.)

Considering the immediate availability of domestic tango references, and their familiarity to Finnish readers, there would have to be strong evidence indeed for the preferability of the Hollywood imitations for them to override the original idea of using tango lyrics in the epigraphs. While the Hollywood films and the dreamland of America were not unfamiliar in pre- and post-war Finland, and these glamorised role models were imported into and imitated in Finland, it was also a very active period for the Finnish film industry. Finnish movie stars like Ansa Ikonen and Tauno Palo characterise the era at least as well, if not better, than Jean Harlow and Clark Gable. Substituting the Hollywood images with dialogues from Finnish films or similarly exaggerated Finnish ads would probably have caused the comic effect of thrusting Ansa and Tauno unexpectedly in the middle of the pampas — a difficulty that a translator in a culturally imperialistic state can avoid: they do not need to justify their presence anywhere. The problem of incongruent settings does not arise, if one retains the original idea of tango lyrics. The Finnish audience is well aware that the Finnish tango is a translation, and most of them would probably quite easily locate its origins in Argentina (the Uruguayan tango tradition is less well known). So the appearance of the familiar lyrics of Finnish tangos in an Argentine setting would not seem inappropriate or funny.

While the Finnish tango is obviously not ‘equivalent’ to the *tango Argentino*, there are also significant similarities which would have made it quite possible to replace the tango references by their Finnish counterparts. Even though the tango is still popular in Finland and its popularity is again on the rise, its golden era was in the 1940s and 50s, when the most famous tango singers, especially the legendary Olavi Virta, became national heroes. The popularity of the tango decreased dramatically during the 1970s with the introduction of discotheques and new forms of popular music. The general attitude may have had an impact on the decision to leave the tango in the background of Laine’s translation: the tango was old-fashioned but not yet nostalgic, and there was no way of predicting its revival in the 80s and 90s. But instead of silencing the tango, the situation might have offered a perfect opportunity for seeing it from a critical distance, celebrating its tragicomical qualities. This approach would have followed a logic similar to what Levine discerns in Puig’s writing: ‘Puig’s writing reevaluates ‘bad taste,’ provokes the reader to enjoy and not to suppress it as ‘good taste’ has done’ (1989, 36).

Using the Hollywood tag lines and the Argentine imitations of Hollywood style and simply translating their content into Finnish deprives the Finnish reader of a sense of nostalgic recognition. Instead, the added references to American popular culture, familiar to the North American readers, function in a totally different way — the Finnish translation becomes a critique of American cultural imperialism. The result is paradoxical: by unquestionably imitating Levine’s interpretation of the Argentine novel, by filtering our perception of Latin America through American lenses, the

translation becomes a criticism of the very same approach. In other words, saved from any personal involvement, the Finnish readers can adopt a superior stance and criticise the characters for the very same attitude which lies behind the translation they are reading.

Venuti draws rather straightforward parallels between imperialism and fluency, advocating minoritising strategies as a way of fighting against hegemonic cultural relations. Trying to assess Levine's and Laine's translation strategies from the point of view of (cultural) imperialism reveals the complexity of the issue. Is Levine's use of domestic references instead of the indigenous tango tradition an indication of an imperialistic translation strategy, or is it in fact an attempt to subvert the hegemonic position of American popular culture (cf. Robyns 1992; 1994)? And how should we interpret the Finnish translation with its excessive use of imported American material? How to approach the critical tenor that seems like an accidental outcome of a subordinate translation attitude rather than a strategic choice of a resistant translator?

Levine herself notes that substituting the tango references could be criticised for further subverting Puig's original intention by bringing to the forefront precisely those artefacts of American cultural hegemony whose value is questioned in the source text, and by thus disparaging local cultural phenomena in favour of imported models (1991, 127S129). She willingly admits that this is partly the case, and that ideological subversion already takes place in the rewriting of the text in American English, but she also stresses that 'the other side of the coin is, if the reader cannot recognise the *Boquitas*'s parodical effect, its ideology is suppressed even more radically' (ibid., 129). That would also easily lead to a situation, similar to that created by the Finnish translation, where the American readers could look down on the Argentine characters from an assumed position of supremacy without recognising similar patterns of thought and conduct in their own culture.

### *Subservient subversiveness*

Suzanne Jill Levine's definition of herself as a translator is that she is 'a subversive scribe', thus giving the impression of being both subservient and also radically different, even destructive. According to Levine, a translator is to 'serve another language' (1991, 1), to continue the mode of the original (1989, 33), and to repeat the intended effect (ibid., 37), but she also states that the original language, intention, and reality remain forever elusive, and asks 'How faithful can one be? And faithful to what?' (1991, 2). She talks about betrayal, and claims that

[a] translation should be a critical act, [...], creating doubt, posing questions to its reader, recontextualizing the ideology of the original text. Since a good translation, as with all rhetoric, aims to (re)produce an effect, to persuade a reader, it is, in the broadest terms, a political act.

(Levine 1991, 3S4)

The idea of recontextualising the text's ideology evokes another meaning for subversion: translation makes explicit the latent subtext(s) (or versions) of the original, its unconscious or implicit insights and meanings (Levine 1989, 33). While in

producing the translation, or (sub)version, something is inevitably destroyed, something else is gained: 'meaning is reproduced through another form. A translation in this light becomes a continuation of the original, which already always alters the reality it intends to re-create.' (Levine 1991, 7S8) Echoing Walter Benjamin's idea of the text's survival in translation and Jacques Derrida's notion of the supplementarity of translation, Levine describes different forms of rewriting (translation, parody and literary criticism) as both parallel and complementary by nature (1989, 31, 34).

Some of the replacements in Levine's translation deviate radically from the source text material. For example in episode II, 'Charlemos, la tarde es triste...' (let's talk, the afternoon is melancholy...), a tango lyric line, is transformed into 'As long as you can smile, success can be yours. — *radio commercial for toothpaste, Buenos Aires 1947.*' Instead of '... todo, todo se ilumina' (everything, everything becomes clear), episode VII opens with several lines from a dialogue in an Argentine film. However, Levine states that

[e]ven though the translated epigraphs strayed semantically and formally away from the originals, they reinstated meaning in a broader sense, restaging the *function* of the original epigraphs, involving both a semantic and formal relationship between the head (epigraph) and the body of the episode. [...] The interchangeability of one tango for another, of a movie tag line for a tango, indicates that what matters here is not the monolithic value of a quoted text but rather the relationship between texts, and between the novel and its reader.

(1991, 131S132)

Suzanne Jill Levine's ethical stand seems to include a 'double standard'; the task of the translator is to serve the source text, to (re)present it in a light as favourable as possible, but this cannot be achieved through uncritical repetition or imitation of the original. Rather, a translator is first a critical reader seeking to unearth the hidden implications and unwritten presuppositions, and then a creative and culturally alert decision-maker aiming at producing correspondences, not at the level of words, images, or structures, but at the level of readers' world-knowledge and experiences (1991, xiii, 34).

Seeing translation and other forms of rewriting as manipulation makes us reconsider the relationship between writers and rewriters. Rewriting is very much a question of power, of the right to impose meanings and interpretations. In discussing Levine's ethical rhetoric and translation practice one cannot ignore the issue of the relationship between the author and the translator. Her views of translation as subversion or manipulation, and her stress on the macro-level values at the expense of equivalence on the micro-level have to be read in the light of her active collaboration, or 'closelaboration', with the authors she translates. Similar to other translations of Levine, *Heartbreak Tango* was prepared in close cooperation with the author, so close in fact that instead of *her* decisions she continuously talks about *us*: *we* decided, *we* chose, *our* invention... Whatever changes there are in the translation, they are authorised by the author himself, and the translator is withdrawn from personal responsibility for the rather radical alterations. This reliance on Manuel Puig's authority over his text stands in direct opposition to Puig's own attitude toward this kind of authorisation, as quoted by Levine herself: 'Authority frightens me: I hate it.



I don't accept it, but at the same time I find great difficulty in rebelling against it, in facing it directly.' (Puig in Levine 1991, 32) A few pages later, Levine even characterises Puig as follows: 'He betrays the reader, as he does the role of the author, by not communicating a clear-cut message' (ibid., 35).

The author's participation in translating is also seen as a guarantee that meanings are not lost in the process (Levine 1991, 131), thus implying that had the translator worked alone this might easily have been the case. Perhaps unintentionally, Levine makes a clear distinction between translations made with and without the author's cooperation, stating that they are different by nature as the author's presence gives a translation a higher existence above ordinary translations: 'Because of the author's creative collaboration in all these translations, the original becomes an *incomplete* project that continues to be elaborated', 'Why is the "first" text more original than the "second" when the author's work is "self-translated"' (1991, 136S137; italics in the original, underlining added). In other words, what at first seemed to be a position similar to Benjamin or Derrida, stressing translating as a process of moving forward and continuing or supplementing the original, in fact seems to support the idea of returning to the origin and subordinating the translation to the authority of the author. The stress on close cooperation with and reliance on the author is illuminated by Suzanne Jill Levine's choice of words when she describes the relationship between translation and original composition as being 'symbiotic if not parasitic' (ibid., 7).

To sum up, it is clear that the subversive scribe in the title of Levine's collection of essays has to be interpreted as ironic (see Levine 1989, 33). The subversive scribe is not really subversive: in spite of the deviant tones and stress on the manipulative aspect of translation, the translator actually works in collaboration with the author who then authorises all changes. In other words, whereas Rosemary Arrojo (1994) criticises Levine for maltreating the authors, my point is quite the opposite. Compared to the deviant rhetoric of her metatexts, her translation activity seems to be less so. But the subversive scribe is not really a scribe either: although Levine sees the translator as subordinated to the author who has the final say in decisions, the translator is still an active participant in the process of (re)producing the text.

Compared to Suzanne Jill Levine, the Finnish translator Jarkko Laine has adopted a much more passive role. He has not made similarly dramatic alterations to the text nor introduced new domestic material as Levine did. The Finnish translation is not, however, consistent in its strategy. After repeating the material intended for the North American readership in the first ten epigraphs, the Finnish translator suddenly changes strategy, and four out of the six remaining epigraphs differ from Levine's translation. In two of them, Levine's Hollywood references are eliminated in favour of tango lines. In the two others Laine has opted for tango lyrics that differ from Levine's and Puig's lyrics. Similarly, in the thirteenth episode the Finnish translation, quoting *El choclo*, has strayed away from the others.

*El choclo* is an interesting choice for Laine. It also offers a good example of how the epigraphs and the title could have been translated for the Finnish readers. Laine's translation of the lyrics sounds unfamiliar, being presumably Laine's own, and so the reader is unable to recognise the tango even though the standard Finnish translation *Tulisuudelma* (Kiss of Fire) is a well known song. The original lunfardo

(a mixture of Spanish, Italian, French and Indian words) lyrics were not imported; the standard Finnish lyrics are translated from the American version. With its exaggerated passion and foreshadowed destruction, *Tulisuudelma* epitomises the general pattern of Puig's novel. At the end of the novel, the town casanova dies of TB; the servant girl murders her former lover and the father of her son; the middle-class women marry men they do not love and never did.

*Tulisuudelma*, immensely popular in Finland, would have functioned well in several epigraphs, and it could have also been used in the Finnish title. *Boquitas pintadas* might then have been translated either as 'Tulisuudelma' or, if the tango reference needed more explication, by using the opening words 'Sun tulisuudelmasi tähden' (Because of your kiss of fire). This way the title would retain the reference to lips, the colour red, and the framework of the tango, while also being recognisable to Finnish readers and capable of evoking a melody, maybe even memories (cf. Levine 1989, 42). The existing Finnish title *Särkyneen sydämen tango* only indicates the reference to the tango, and even then only by stating it explicitly. The effect is somewhat paradoxical: in the text itself the translation obscures the tango, but in the title the tango connection is underlined.

It is difficult to rationalise the Finnish translator's change of strategy. If he had considered the first ten epigraphs to be acceptable as they were in the English version, and since he returned to repeating Levine's Hollywood imagery in the fourteenth epigraph and her tango line in the last one, what motivated the changes in the four others? In any case, the substitutions were obviously not designed to bring the text closer to the Finnish reader, since Laine did not use existing Finnish lyrics, not even in the case of *El choclo* where they would have been immediately recognisable to most Finnish readers. The most important aspect of the changes may, however, be the fact that they indicate conscious choice. Without them, I would have been inclined to assume that the translator was unaware of the migration process of the text, and that leaving the American substitutions intact was accidental rather than strategic. But in the light of the changes it rather seems that the passive role was *actively* chosen by the Finnish translator. The changes thus work as a useful reminder that 'active manipulation' and 'passive repetition' are not necessarily two opposing roles for the translator. Rather, the two forces, permanence and change, are simultaneously at work in any translation (see also Lane-Mercier 1997, 56, 63).

## *Readers*

Audience expectations and the constraints set by the receiving culture play an important role in decisions of domestication or foreignisation. Responsibility towards the readership is also an important aspect of Suzanne Jill Levine's view of the ethics of translation. Basically, her decisions are always evaluated from the point of view of future readers. She also stresses the readers' need to get information about the process of translation, about the manner in which foreign literature is transmitted to a new cultural environment, and how 'differences and similarities between cultures and languages affect *what* is finally transmitted' (1991, xv; italics in the original).

Reality is sometimes different from the ideal situation. For example, my copy of Levine's translation, reprinted in 1992, gives the reader no information whatsoever about the translation process. A further complication results from the fact that my copy was published by a British publisher twenty years after it first appeared in the United States. In spite of the apparently shared language, is it safe to assume that North American and British readers form a unified readership and that a text tailor-made for the American readers is automatically and without any explanations also ideally suitable for a British audience? The question is even more pertinent when the situation is contrasted with the Spanish edition which, as I noted before, was revised to make the universe of discourse more accessible to European Spanish-speaking readers. Again, my copy of the Spanish edition contains no information about the revisions.

The Finnish translation follows suit: the Finnish readers are not informed of the changes which have been made during the passage via the United States. The only piece of information referring to the translation process is the notice on the title page stating that the text is based on the English translation which had been 'checked' by the author (the name of the English translator is not mentioned), although instead of just checking that the translation corresponds to the original text, Manuel Puig was actually actively involved in making significant changes. One could argue that the Finnish translation is therefore actually more subversive than Levine's. Even though Levine claims to be subversive, she does not actually usurp the author's authority. Laine's translation, on the other hand, claims to rely on the authority of the author while at the same time violating the carefully constructed recontextualisation by transporting the text to the Finnish context without considering the differences between Finnish and American cultural frameworks.

Somewhat surprisingly, the Finnish translation *does* include a translator's preface, and considering the radical decisions — a drastic change of imagery and frame of reference when compared to the Argentine original — one would expect that the translator would use some of the available space to explain to the reader how the text has been transformed during its transatlantic journey from Argentina via the United States to Finland, and to give justifications for using the English translation, praised and acclaimed as it may be, instead of the original text as the primary source. The preface, however, contains no reference whatsoever to the process of translation. Even though it explicitly discusses the system of epigraphs and its functions, focusing on the toothpaste commercial, it fails to inform the reader that the epigraph in question was chosen particularly for the American English translation and that it does not exist in the original text.

Jarkko Laine's translation is for the most part based on an imitative approach. Its aim is to reproduce *its* source text, the English translation. Laine's idea of the role of the translator is interesting. He does not capitalise on the creativity afforded to him as a writer; while translating he generally uses the translator-mode of the traditional 'faithful' copyist. But in writing the preface he has switched on the writer-mode. The Finnish preface offers some basic data on the author and his oeuvre as well as on Laine's own interpretation of the novel. In other words, even though the preface happens to be written by the translator himself, he does not write it *qua* translator but as an expert who has a thorough knowledge of the text and its context, and is therefore suited to offer his reading as a guideline for other readers. Jarkko Laine is, and has been for years, a prominent figure on the Finnish literary scene, and he was already fairly established in the late 70s. A well-known writer, editor and anthologist (not so much a translator, even though during the 1970s he produced numerous translations), and presently the chairman of the Finnish Writers' Union, he certainly is in a position to exert authority over readers in questions of interpretation.

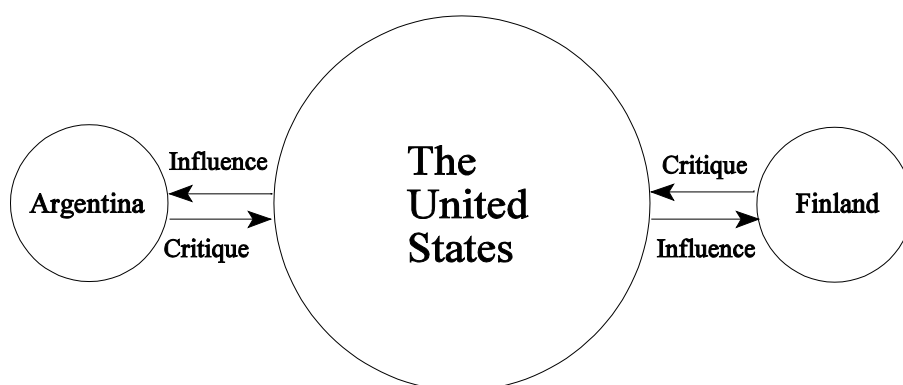
The view of translation as manipulation and other recent developments in translation studies have brought forth the issue of the visibility of translation. Manipulation does not need to be a sneaky business. But undercover activity, leaving readers unaware of what they are actually reading, may lead to morally questionable situations, no matter how much of a standard procedure it is to leave out all metatextual information. The role of the publisher is central: they can either offer or withhold information concerning the process of writing or rewriting. And in the case of *Boquitas pintadas* the publishers seem to agree on not telling the reader any more than they have to.

It may well be that the less the readers know the happier they remain. While one can criticise the Finnish translation for being inattentive to the basic characteristics of the original novel and for ignoring the complexities of the previous translation process, it is also good to remember that the existing translation has been fully accepted by the Finnish literary system. It never caused a stir, and as far as I know its status as a fair representative of Manuel Puig's novel in Finland has not been questioned. In many ways it is a perfectly readable book: it reads fluently, the language is rich in nuances, there are no striking blunders in the text. The only thing which might strike one as odd is the abundance of references to American popular culture, but since the average Finnish reader is not so familiar with the Argentine culture nor with its connections with the United States, most readers would probably not pay undue attention to them. But for the Finnish reader the novel remains distant and exotic, while it would have been fairly easy to make the text really resonate inside the reader.

### *Centres and peripheries*

Attempting to draw an overall picture of the complex forces of domestication and foreignisation, imperialism and anti-imperialism, subversiveness and subordination in this multiple translation project, one immediately encounters the central status of the United States. In the process, there is one centre or source (the United States and

its cultural dominance) and two disconnected peripheries (Argentina and Finland). In a way, the project has its origins in the United States: American popular culture functions as a ‘source’ of Puig’s novel in that the critique of American cultural influence in Latin America is one of its central themes. This aspect is then further enforced and brought to the forefront in Levine’s ‘backtranslation’, motivated by a wish to subvert the hegemonic cultural status of the United States. But Levine’s strategy also obscures autochthonous cultural phenomena in favour of domestic models, and can thus be accused of an imperialistic attitude. Laine’s translation, then, transports the image of the novel created in the centre to another periphery. In the Finnish translation, the elements originally added by Levine to accentuate the critical tenor of Puig’s novel seem to fulfil their intended function perhaps even better than in the American context because the domesticating and assimilating aspects that unavoidably affect Levine’s translation do not play a role in the Finnish context. The situation could be depicted as follows:



The graphic representation of the situation visualises three significant features. First, it emphasises the central and dominant position of the United States and, second, it shows the parallel position of Argentina and Finland with respect to the centre. There is a flow of influence from the centre to both peripheries, and they both respond to this with critique. The third feature is the disconnectedness of the two peripheries: all movement takes place via the United States and the peripheries have no direct contact with one another. These features affect both translations. It is doubtful whether the central role played by the target culture of Levine’s translation could be completely bypassed by any translation strategy. The relative position of the American popular culture in the entire process is so central that it defies any minoritising efforts. In other words, while one can criticise Levine’s strategy for suppressing or disparaging the local culture in accentuating the role of the target culture, one has to acknowledge that there would hardly have been a way to eliminate this dominant position completely. Levine’s solution, then, was to deal with a situation she could not alter by making it

even more explicit in her translation, trying to draw the American readers' attention to the issue of imperialism.

The two peripheries, Argentina and Finland, stand in a similar position with respect to the centre: the flow of influence is unidirectional, directed from the centre to the peripheries, and this influence is criticised both in Puig's novel and in Laine's translation. In fact, one could thus argue that, on the global level of transcultural exchange, Laine's translation is functionally equivalent to Puig's novel. This interpretation, however, presupposes that we accept Levine's view – based on her own cultural context – that the critique of American cultural imperialism *is* in fact the most central aspect of the novel and needs to be highlighted in all rewritings. The lack of any direct contact between the two peripheries excludes the possibility of finding other frames of reference or contact points (such as the tango tradition) between the two cultures. And even though one shared Levine's interpretation, one could argue that the best way to fight American cultural imperialism would be, instead of relying on the American perception of the novel, to ignore it completely in the Finnish translation project.

## Lost in the intercultural space: Pym

### *Do not kill the messenger*

During the 1990s, Anthony Pym became a regular dissident voice within translation theory: for example, at a time when most theorists have renounced the usefulness of equivalence, Pym has risen to defend the concept; and the wider the acceptance of poststructural theories within the study of translation, the more fiercely he has attacked them. This dissidence makes his thinking an interesting object of study, and the dissident attitude also links him to Lawrence Venuti. Both in their own ways, the two men offer fresh new ideas in translation theory.

In various contexts, most notably in *Pour une éthique du traducteur* (1997a), Pym has promoted a new ethics of translation. His principal postulate is that translators are located in a special intercultural space, in an intersection between cultures. In formulating the characteristics of this space, Pym takes up Schleiermacher's lecture (see Chapter 4.1. above). In contrast to Schleiermacher's advice to avoid the unhappy state of hovering between cultures, in Pym's vocabulary this position in-between is inherently positive. Because of their profession, Pym argues, translators are by definition detached from national interests. Within the imaginary space between cultures, Pym wants to see translators functioning as benevolent but impartial helpers. He thus criticises Berman's ideal of translating so that the otherness of the Other is appreciated (Bermanian foreignising) because, Pym argues, it positions translators as frontier guards safeguarding the homeland from infiltrations and distributing *cartes de séjour* but not *citoyenneté*, that is, not allowing the alien to be assimilated, never forgetting its foreign origin (Pym 1997a, 15). Pym's critique, easily extendable to Venuti's approach as well, is a valuable reminder that the almost universally agreed postmodern postulate that difference, in addition to being unavoidable, is also desirable, can be employed for different purposes. The foreignness of the foreign can

be cultivated out of respect and appreciation, but stressing the foreignness may also be useful for emphasising or even creating the familiarity of the domestic. The liberal multiculturalist and pluralist attitude may not be too far from racism or separatist xenophobia (see Bauman 1997, 31, 81–82). Pym's ethical translator, then, should be neither domesticating nor foreignising, but 'interculturalising' (see also Venuti 1998a, 84).

The notions of borderline cases, liminal spaces and in-betweenness are often applied by postmodern, and particularly postcolonial, theorists to problematise binary relations. In stressing the translators' intercultural position Pym seems to be moving in the same direction. His vision of this intercultural space is, however, very different from the one described by, for instance, Homi K. Bhabha, one of the leading theorists of the postcolonial condition. The Third Space, the space in-between, a central notion in Bhabha's argumentation, is a conflictual and constantly renegotiated and hybridised space of diasporic identities, and those inhabiting it themselves function as the marks of its shifting boundaries (1994, 164 and *passim.*). The identity of the inhabitants is far from neutral interculturality, and the space is not a neutral intermediate area but rather a tensionful no-man's-land. Sometimes the intercultural space may even resemble a war zone, and the identity of those in it may be described as 'an inner war' (see Robinson 1997a, 28; also Koskinen 1994b). The tensions created by intercultural contacts also affect the texts and their translations: 'Texts, like cultures, like national territories, are more and more the sites of *competing* languages, diverse idioms, *conflicting* codes.' (Simon 1999, 72; italics added).

The conflictual aspects of cultural relations, and the asymmetrical power relations shaping them, are largely ignored by Pym (see, however, Pym 1993b). Or rather, he offers the vision of the intercultural space and translators' actively created neutrality as a salvation from the problems of divided loyalties (see, e.g., 1992a, 165–166). He optimistically sees interculturality as a possibility to resolve disputes and to make this world a better place, arguing that 'to think seriously about interculturality means imagining a different world' (Pym 1998, 192). One can, however, question whether the space in-between can ever be completely tensionless. In passing, Pym himself acknowledges the problem of unequal relations as he mentions the principle of privileging the weaker party. But he still maintains that this has to remain secondary to the basic principle of searching for reciprocal benefits (Pym 1997a, 126). The neutrality of the intercultural communicator may, however, also be challenged by the communicating parties. Much as translators may wish to perceive themselves as neutral mediators, the asymmetries and power relations of a particular situation may lead others to treat them with suspicion (cf. Levine's position discussed in Chapter 4.2. above). This may perhaps be most obvious in interpreting, where the negotiating parties may want to bring in their own interpreters, or in community interpreting in administrative settings where the immigrant or refugee may see the community interpreter as a representative of the institutional system, while the official in question sees the interpreter as an aid to assist the foreigner. In other words, both communicating parties may assume the interpreter to represent the other side, leading to a state of mutual suspicion where neither of them sees the interpreter as an impartial mutual help neutrally positioned in an intercultural space (see Hietanen 1999).

In *Pour une éthique du traducteur* (1997a), Pym's argumentation traces the inhabitants of the intercultural space via two related groups: the *Blendlinge* and the ancient Greek messengers. The value of problematising Schleiermacher's dichotomy of foreign versus domestic is obvious: by rethinking the notion of *Blendlinge* from the point of view of the intercultural space, Pym carves himself a specific niche within translation theory, offering a fresh viewpoint on the much-analysed lecture (there are clear postmodern traits in Pym's strategy of concentrating on the positive aspects of a previously negatively viewed position<sup>26</sup>). I am less convinced of the usefulness of the lengthy analysis of a historical incident between the Spartans and the Persians. The logic of the exercise escapes me, especially since its end result is that 'the translator is not just a messenger' who is not personally responsible for the news (Pym 1997a, 65; later he redefines translators as being both *Blendlinge* and also partially messengers). Pym himself questions the necessity of the exposé: it is evident, he states, that translators are responsible for the translations they produce, it would make no sense to even discuss the ethics of translation if they weren't (ibid., 67).

Pym links the historical events to more contemporary ethical dilemmas via two examples: the case of Salman Rushdie and his translators on the one hand and a neo-nazi translator disseminating antisemitic propaganda<sup>27</sup> on the other hand. Both these cases can, of course, illuminate the nature and gravity of the moral and ethical problems involved in translation. The point, however, cannot be to debate whether or not the translator is responsible for the message s/he transmits. This line of thinking would easily result in a logical impasse: one would like to discharge the translators of *Satanic Verses* from personal responsibility but condemn the nazi propagandist (Pym 1997a, 45). Why this impasse? Because the actual moral dilemma is located elsewhere, outside the immediate relationship between the translator and the source text, in the real world where words can kill (cf. Pym 1992a, 167). To take the case of Rushdie's translators, for example, it seems logical to think, as Pym does, that *if* Rushdie was guilty of offending the Islamic faith, the translators are equally guilty of doing the same in their translations. Since it seems indisputable that he did, intentionally or unintentionally, offend some Muslims, the real issue then is whether someone has the right to kill him for it or not.

For most of us, this is a philosophical problem where one enters the dispute between relativism and universalism over whether ethical principles are culture-bound or universal and whether we have the right to criticise the values and practises of other cultures (cf. Bauman 1993). For the translator who has been offered the job, the moral dilemma is more acute: s/he can choose to protect her/his own life and decide not to translate the book, but this can be interpreted as a silent acceptance of the *fatwa*. Or s/he can decide to translate the book, for example in order to defend the freedom of speech or to oppose the use of capital punishment (or for the money or fame, of course), but then s/he will have to accept the risk of getting killed. This dilemma, incidentally, takes us to Pym's main argument. The most important ethical question, he states, is not 'how to translate?' but 'should one translate?'. The moment of deciding whether or not to translate is where the translator's responsibility begins. Pym's proposal is that the translator is to be primarily responsible for this decision (1997a, 99–101).



Pym's interest in the problem of whether or not to translate does not seem to stem primarily from moral dilemmas like the one stated above. According to him, the decision whether to translate should be based on a cost/benefit analysis, determining how much effort, if any, it is wise to invest in the project (see Pym 1997a, 103–133). While Pym maintains that his model encompasses not just financial benefits but also symbolic values, his example illustrates the limits of his approach. He depicts a situation where two neighbours want to organise their refuse collection together. Pym calculates various possibilities for sharing the costs and then infers that it is most ethical to favour those situations where both parties have something to gain because this will ensure continued cooperation (*ibid.*, 110–111; see also 1995b). But can one really base moral action on one's (financial) benefits?<sup>28</sup> Why is there in Pym's calculations, for instance, no value attached to the ecological preferability of shared collections? And is cooperation automatically the ultimate good, no matter what sacrifices one has to make to maintain it? Turning to the world of commerce, Pym cites the example of Portugal and England: for geographical reasons the former specialised in the production of port wine and the latter in the textile industry. The commercial exchange was then, according to Pym, 'rationally advantageous' for both parties (1997a, 112). Without entering into a debate over the advantages of the commercial alliances between the two countries, it is, however, useful to remember that the Portuguese port wine industry was completely controlled by the British, and, with its geography unchanged, Portugal now has a significant textile industry. In other words, is it justified to claim that ethical priority should always be given to long-term relationships, regardless of the terms of cooperation? In the everyday life of the translator, this logic might lead to a rather distorted ethics: it is most ethical to limit one's efforts so that they do not exceed the level of remunerations, and moral priority should be given to ensuring stable clientele. For professional success, this may indeed be sound advice, but where is the moral aspect in it?

Pym has anticipated the criticism of propagating a mercenary ethics. His answer is that he is equally unwilling to reduce everything into calculations of cost-effectiveness (see also Pym's own critique of an ethics of commercial service in Pym 1992a, 165). But for him, the benefits of cooperation are the final measure to evaluate the necessity of translation (1997a, 131). There is also a more profound ethical aim behind his ethics of cooperation: cooperation, or even social solidarity, is seen as the general goal of social relations (*ibid.*, 132). The translator image arising from this theory of cooperation is also based on moral considerations: capable of independent thinking, responsible for his or her decisions, but also ready to take into account the other participants of intercultural communication (*ibid.*, 133). Unfortunately, the financial logic of the previous pages overshadows this excursion into more properly ethical issues (see also Vermeer 1999, 52). As a result, it remains rather vague what Pym really means by this ethics of intercultural cooperation. How does one position oneself in the intercultural space (Pym 1992a, 166), and how does one evaluate the benefits of cooperation? And, specifically, how does one choose between conflicting interests in cases where an obvious middle ground ensuring long-term cooperation simply does not exist (see also Bahadir 1998, n. 12)? Difficulties of application indicate a fundamental weakness in Pym's ethics of interculturality. In his model, the translator remains an outside mediator, not a participant in the contract. The mutual

benefits to be considered are those of the communicating partners, and the translator's role is instrumental (see e.g. Pym 1997a, 124).<sup>29</sup> This instrumentality is at odds with Pym's explicit wish to accord to translators a more prominent status in translation studies, and it is, in my view, doubtful whether one can formulate a successful ethics based on such instrumentality.

On the other hand, the instrumental role of the translator is a logical outcome of the instrumental role Pym gives to translation in general. To answer the question whether or not to translate, one also has to consider whether the goal of intercultural communication is better achieved by other means, most notably by language learning or by the use of *lingua francas*. Calculating the costs and benefits, Pym argues that especially in long-term cooperation translation is not the best, or the most cost-effective, solution to the problem of communication, and the translator should then advise the client against it (1997a, 127–129). To an extent, this makes sense. But Pym chooses to ignore the social and political aspects of intercultural cooperation. In his examples of language learning it is always the task of speakers of small languages to learn the *lingua francas*, mainly English. In today's world, this may be realistic, but on the other hand, translation could also be seen to function as a counterforce to the ever-increasing dominance of English. Issues like these are not included in Pym's ethics. 'I am not against defending Bosnian Muslims, Tibetan monks, French farmers, Scottish poets and many others', Pym says. 'But', he continues, these causes do not belong to the ethics of translation' (1997a, 127; my translation).

### *Nobody, but not just anybody*

Similar to the self-inflicted marginality of Venuti's approach, Pym's withdrawal into the intercultural space can be interpreted as a tactical move. Depicting the translator as an impartial inhabitant of a mystical no-man's-land in-between, Pym produces an aura of innocence and moral disinterestedness (see Siebers 1988, 11–12). At the same time, a truly intercultural space is a dream, a paradise to come. The problem of Pym's ethical stand is, therefore, that translators should base their decisions on the norms and goals of a space which is largely hypothetical and whose ultimate aims have yet to be formulated (see 1992a, 168).

One can discern similar tactics in Pym's claim that the translator is 'nobody in particular' (1992a, 51, 147). The translator, our contemporary Ulysses, can cleverly dodge all criticism by claiming to be 'nobody'.<sup>30</sup> The cyclops, failing to dig beyond the surface meaning, is disarmed. If things go wrong, there is 'nobody' to blame. Amusingly, the cyclops image has been used to characterise modern (one-eyed and dualistic) subjectivity (see Lehtonen 1994). One would not therefore need to stretch Pym's argument too far to claim that it represents a postmodern counterfigure for modernity and for a modern understanding of the nature of translation. But from the point of view of ethics, seeing translators as nobodies is fundamentally problematic. Can one expect 'nobody in particular', especially in an instrumental role, to be morally responsible for the translation?

This contradiction leads Pym to reformulate his stand. Confusingly, this view of the translator as 'nobody in particular' (*n'importe qui*) is later complemented with

a further statement that the translator is *not* just anybody (*pas n'importe qui*) (1997a, 69). The latter is accompanied by a note stating that the reader should not interpret this as an internal contradiction in Pym's argumentation. Rather, we should understand that these propositions refer to two different qualities and are both valid at the same time. If I grasp Pym's meandering line of thinking correctly, first of all, the translating subject has to remain anonymous in order not to break the illusionary effect (cf. Pym 1992a, 62–68). The personality of the translator is of no particular interest to the end user. But Pym locates this anonymity on a textual level which he considers to be separate from ethical considerations. The latter statement, then, refers to the social construction of the profession, and has some ethical repercussions. First, Pym is clearly attempting to professionalise translation: not just anybody can be a translator (see 1997a, 76). But within the translation process, Pym accredits the translator to act only as a representative of the profession, never as an individual (ibid., 81).<sup>31</sup> Second, confusingly, Pym is not willing to let translators remain anonymous. Ethics may require them to break the illusion:

Since translators cannot help but take position – since even neutral positions have to be created – , their ethics should break with passive non-identity, forcing them actively to evaluate the texts they work on, making them take on a major degree of responsibility for the texts they produce.

(Pym 1992a, 162)

In modern society, Zygmunt Bauman argues, the division of labour has split the world into expert-governed slices, and our lives are fragmented into several separate roles:

In each setting we merely appear in a 'role', one of many roles we play. [...] Each role has a brief attached which stipulates exactly what job is to be done, how and when. Every person who knows the brief and has mastered the skills which the job requires can do it. Nothing much would change, therefore, if I, this particular role-performer, opted out: another person would promptly fill the gap I left. [...] Again, responsibility has been 'floated'. Or, rather – so we are prompted to say – it rests with the *role*, not with the *person* who performs it.

(Bauman 1993, 19)

Bauman's representation seems like an apt description of Pym's vision of professionalised translation, where the identity of the translator is of little importance, and the role is to be maintained by wearing a professional *mask* (1997a, 81). It also reflects on the ethical codes, where traditionally the only individual right accorded to the translator has been the right to refuse a particular commission (and someone else will then promptly fill the gap). Different from Bauman, who would like to re-personalise morality (1993, 34), Pym generally seems eager to keep and even to enforce this state of affairs. But, as the above quotation on the need to break the non-identity indicates, there are also moments of doubt in his argumentation. This indecision between the ideal of professional anonymity and the need to break with non-identity is a significant indication of a profound ambiguity in Pym's ethical theory. He wavers between these two different translator-images. Momentarily, the professional mask is removed and we can catch a glimpse of the *face* (cf. Bauman

1993, 115) of the translating person taking not only professional but also *personal* responsibility for the translation.

Pym's ambiguous position with regard to professional versus personal ethics is, I think, an indication of a major issue in contemporary translation studies in general. While some new approaches to translation (feminist translation would be the most obvious example) have openly forwarded a notion of a personally committed translator, others have adamantly argued that theoretical formulations should remain strictly professional and impersonal. Hans J. Vermeer, for example, maintains that morality and ethics (which he sees as synonymous) are 'phenomena concerning personal behaviour' and therefore should not be included in the general theory which should be kept value-free (1996, 83). In Vermeer's argumentation as well as Pym's, the disavowed personal moral aspects, however, insistently push their way into the margins of professional role descriptions. To close the discussion, Vermeer argues that in his view 'the translator should be loyal to his own professional role demands only' – but then he adds in parenthesis that 'as a person' the translator should also be loyal to his ethical convictions (*ibid.*, 86; see also Chapter 5.2. below).

The insistence on wearing the mask of professionalism, and Pym's distinction between the textual level of *translations* and the social level of *translators*, create a conflict between what translators do and what they are expected to do: 'From the translator's point of view, to translate is to improve. But from the perspective of authors, clients, receivers and cultures, what we are calling translation is the production of equivalence.' (Pym 1992a, 164; cf. Arrojo 1996, 17) Pym condemns the idea of visibility and explicitness as a short-sighted solution to the problem, and states that the translator should remain invisible in order not to break 'fragile translational fictions' (*ibid.*, 165). Much of Pym's argumentation against visibility is based on an assumption that translation can be defined as production of equivalence (see *ibid.*, 37–49). But is the belief in ideal equivalence a governing factor of *all* translation? In many occasions it no doubt is (cf. Chapter 4.4. below), but there are also situations where equivalence is irrelevant or not particularly important for any of the participants. As a translator, I have often been asked to produce the target text on the basis of a source text that has explicitly been defined as 'raw material only', and I have been given plenty of leeway in rewriting the text. In a case like this, the commissioner is not interested in receiving an equivalent but an adequate text (cf. skopos theory). For the readers, the issue of equivalence may not even arise. For them, it may be irrelevant whether they are reading a translation or not. If we accept Pym's argument that equivalence is the defining factor of the object of study in translation studies, we would have to exclude a large part of translators' everyday work from theoretical considerations.

In spite of Pym's disclaimer, there remains a contradiction between the individual translator's anonymity and the particularity of the profession. The contradiction does not arise from the idea of having a professional group working anonymously. The confusion rather originates from Pym's duplicity in stating that the ethical translator should not be passive while letting the other participants of the process assume that s/he is. Pym's comparison of translators with storytellers is indicative. 'Storytellers', he argues, 'need not believe their fictions in order to establish fictionality' (1992a, 68). There is, however, an important difference Pym

ignores: the storyteller's listeners participate in a shared play of fictionality, a suspension of disbelief if you like,<sup>32</sup> whereas Pym propagates a double standard of translation where 'outward aims' are fundamentally different from inward aims (see also Chapter 5.2. below).

For Pym, (assumed) professional detachment is tantamount to attachment to the profession. According to him, '[t]ranslators' prime loyalty must be to their profession as an intercultural space' (1992a, 166). Pym's interest in translators' interculturality is evidently influenced by his own position: himself a sort of Euro-Aussie *Blending* living in Spain, with franco-australian children, he is a living proof of his own thesis (see, e.g., Pym 1997a, 27). But I am not sure how far his experience can be generalised as somehow essential for being a translator (cf. *ibid.*, 38; see also Bahadir 1998, n. 13). Even if one accepts the claim that all translators are by definition somewhat intercultural, or cultural blends, the mixtures are seldom impartial 50/50 ratios but rather varying cultural cocktails. For example, Pym's own identity is probably a mixture of Australian childhood, Spanish everyday life and mediated Frenchness rather than impartial interculturality. Is it safe to assume, then, that as a translator he has equally distanced himself from these various cultures? In other words, can translators be culturally detached? Or is it closer to the truth to assume that, similar to the two Spartans in Pym's story, the translators who are aware of the cultural differences may *pretend* to be intercultural (*ibid.*, 62)?<sup>33</sup>

However, while I have my doubts about the possibilities of ever creating a truly intercultural space where translators would have no affinities with either the source or the target culture (it is good to remember that translators are not automatically always more closely attached to the *target* culture, as assumed by, e.g., Toury 1995, 12), there is a grain of truth in Pym's argument. His earlier statement, in particular, is easy to agree with: 'Indeed, [translators] could logically constitute a special collectivity in that, if not entirely bicultural (bi-systemic?), they are by definition peculiarly well informed about transcultural relations...' (Pym 1992b, 230). For those who maintain the postmodern view of language as a prison-house, the figure of the translator can be a liberating one: it indicates a possibility to escape from prison (see Bannet 1993, 168; de Lotbinière-Harwood 1991, 92; see also the discussion of a translator acting as a postmodern heroine in Simon 1999, 67). Furthermore, Pym's notion of *Blendlinge* can be seen as an apt description of a fragmented and floating postmodern identity (see Bauman 1997, 13, 20). The postmodern traits are even more obvious in the text where Pym refers to translators as nomads, a frequently used metaphor in postmodern writings (cf. Bauman 1993, 240):

Like all the intermediaries needed for exchange, translators require the professional freedom to move from culture to culture, land to land, accepting a certain disenfranchisement and even disinterest as the condition of their task. Theirs need not be a territorial sense of culture. If they have a culture, it is about borders, not limited by them. Their conceptual geometry is ultimately that of the nomad, travelling from market to market, complementing sedentary culture but not fighting for it. If their work can be limited to a momentary strategy, if they can keep moving, translators might even promote some kind of fleeting victory for an apparent contradiction in etymologies, nomadic culture.

(Pym 1993b)

Rather than building on the split self-image, Pym retreats into an attempt to anchor it by creating a new place where it could belong, 'a space unquestionably one's own' (Bauman 1997, 26). In his quest for a new community of translators, Pym can be seen to respond to a need for new communitarianism, or even neo-tribalism, evoked by postmodernity. This age of contingency and ambivalence is also the age of community: 'of the lust for community, search for community, invention of community, imagining community' (Bauman 1991, 246). But is this a feasible project? Even if translators do act 'on the boundaries of cultures' (Pym 1992b, 231), and their decisions are informed by their professional knowledge, I would not automatically infer that their loyalties are then directed to this boundary area. Keeping in mind the problems related to the notion of cultures, it is questionable whether it is possible even to distinguish any stable boundaries between independent cultures, a difficulty amply illustrated by the very notion of an *intercultural space*. How, then, could this boundary area be united in forwarding a singular set of values? It seems that the new *Blending-identity* is an attempt to resolve a basic aporia inherent in translation by giving a fictional coherence to the translator's ambivalent identity. The problem of forced coherence in Pym's theory seems to result from the attempt to formulate an ethics based on the notion of interculturality. In *Method in Translation History* Pym depicts the idea of interculturality as a much more flexible notion, or 'operational fiction' (1998, 177), even though he dismisses the postmodern ideas such as hybridity and 'the deconstructionist world of interculturality as primal decentering' as impractical starting points for translation history (*ibid.*, 183).

Pym is critical of the role of translation in cultural cohesion, seeing it as merely a temporary solution to problems in intercultural communication since it supports the closedness of national cultures (1993b; cf. Susan Bassnett's competing view of translation as a sign of fragmentation and cultural destabilisation in Bassnett and Lefevere 1998, 137). One can, however, argue that his own notion of translators as intercultural mediators rather reinforces than questions this conception. The idea of some members of societies acting as intercultural communicators presupposes the existence of separate cultures unable to communicate by themselves and predestines the other members of the society to be by definition non-intercultural, that is, monocultural. In reality, translations may well, for various reasons, be used in situations where they would not be necessary for comprehension (e.g., in international negotiations or in the EU context). In other words, polyglottism and language learning do not necessarily exclude translation. Furthermore, our postmodern societies have been characterised as being exceptionally well aware of cultural differences, and the translator is seldom the only contact point with the source culture (see Oittinen 1997, 132). On the other hand, cultural mediation may be with us for good. We will hardly ever reach the state of a global village where all members would share the same knowledge, and where cultural variations would be eliminated so that no intermediators were needed. Even with a shared language, regional differences would probably – and hopefully – remain. A good case in point of cultural differences are the references to the Argentine tango tradition in Manuel Puig's novel *Boquitas pintadas*. In the edition published in Spain, they needed to be made more explicit to be accessible to the Spanish readership (see Chapter 4.2. above).

It would, of course, be tremendously difficult, if not impossible, to define and maintain the borders of the boundary area between the monocultures or to select those who should be involved in developing the common ethics and be bound by it, but the project also confronts other significant obstacles. With a view to Zygmunt Bauman's description of social spaces, Pym's attempt to reconcile anonymity with the creation of a specific intercultural space appears problematic. According to Bauman, social spaces are based on a differentiation of intimacy and anonymity, anonymity ruling out the possibility of creating a space (1993, 148–149). Even more problematic is the aim of consolidating the profession-based social space with a moral space. Bauman quite convincingly argues that moral spacing is unrelated or even contradictory to the construction and maintenance of social space, which he perceives as a cognitive process as opposed to the emotional level of moral thinking (ibid., 165–168). 'The two spacings', he says, 'are guided by different, and mutually autonomous factors, and the spectre of clash and mutual destruction hovers continuously over their uneasy coexistence' (ibid., 166). Contrary to Pym's wish to spell out a unified ethical aim for all translators, moral spacing is erratic, irrational and uncontrollable. It can be oblivious to the aims and goals of the social space, and is only guided by moral responsibility. Pym's attempt to create a unified ethics for translators can be interpreted as following the desperate logic of social spacing:

[T]he most that cognitively based social spacing may aim at is to confine moral responsibility, if it comes alive again, within boundaries roughly corresponding to the distinction between the intimacy of social proximity and the estrangement of social distance: to carve out, by means at its disposal, the permissible 'universe of social obligations' beyond which moral responsibility would not reach.

(Bauman 1993, 166–167)

Regardless of the odds for success, Pym's project is interesting in its comprehensiveness. It clearly indicates dissatisfaction with the present social structuring of translation. Pym's attempt at professionalisation seems to entail an assumption of previously lacking coherence among the practitioners of translation. It is, however, interesting to ponder whether it might actually reflect a paradigm shift in translation (theory). The intercultural space is not to be created *ex nihilo*, the intercultural communicators do not just miraculously appear. The newly constructed space would, in other words, rather require re-spacing, a reorganisation of a previous space of translators which, presumably, would be considered deficient. Seeking a predecessor for Pym's ideal intercultural translator, one is unavoidably confronted with the previous ideal of the faithful translator. Interestingly, Pym does not take issue with the ideal of fidelity. It seems that, for him, the concept of fidelity as such is no longer relevant for translators' ethics, but the need to fill the void left by it can be interpreted as a driving force behind his project.

## *Professional cover-up: umbrellas and masks*

Whereas the Venetian dissident translator is a solitary figure, Anthony Pym's explicit aim is to contribute to the creation of a collective identity of professional translators. His ethics is subordinate to this aim: the role of ethics, according to Pym, is to assist in the conceptualisation of the process of professionalisation (1997a, 100–101). In other words, the goal of ethics is not to define translators' responsibilities nor to depict ideal situations, but to help develop translation into a professional practice. It is debatable whether translation can be seen as a 'pure' profession or maybe rather a semi-profession. Typically, professions are assumed to have restricted access, whereas anyone can become a translator as there are no educational requirements or authorisation processes limiting the access. In medieval Latin, *professio* meant public commitment. To become a translator, one is not required to give oaths or commitments. Additionally, different from, for instance, doctors (healing) or lawyers (justice), translators as a professional group do not have their own specific goals but (similar to, e.g., engineers) rather adapt to the aims of the organisation or client they work with (see Airaksinen 1992). This latter aspect is Pym's main concern. He would like to see translators collectively *formulating* the goal(s) of the profession, and his own proposal is that the main responsibility of translators is to ensure and enhance intercultural cooperation.<sup>34</sup>

Within Pym's intercultural space of professional translators dominated by the ethics of cooperation, translators are primarily responsible not to the source text writer, the client or their readers but to their fellow translators (1992a, 166; 1997a, 81). The collectivity and anonymity of their profession dictates that every decision of an individual translator is made in the name of all translators (cf. Chapter 4.4. below). In stressing professional responsibility and renouncing individuality and personal attachments, Pym follows a modernist logic of separating private and public lives (Bauman 1993, 5). In line with Pym's interest in borrowing images from ancient Greece, the model for conduct that he propagates is reminiscent of the figure of Agamemnon. In the Trojan war, Agamemnon was elected commander of the Greek fleet. Killing a stag sacred to Artemis and boasting about it, he angered the Goddess. In revenge, she sent a calm, and the fleet could not set sail. Agamemnon was faced with a profound moral dilemma: to withdraw the calm so that the expedition could start, Artemis demanded that he sacrifice his daughter Iphigeneia, and Agamemnon had to decide between his fatherly feelings and his professional duties. Putting his professional responsibilities first, Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter rather than compromise his duties as commander of the expedition.

In his attempt to create a specific intercultural community of professional translators, Pym is in many ways a good example of the 'born-again communitarianism' that Bauman finds suspect. According to Bauman, the envisioned communities are to be seen not as existing realities but as a programme, 'a bid to bind a certain number of men and women and subordinate their actions to certain choices made preferable by the effort to make the postulated existence of community real' (1993, 44). The individual choices need to be limited and streamlined, and this, Bauman claims, is achieved through 'the demand to co-operate in making the group real, disguised as a demand to keep the group alive (the demand is often expressed



bluntly, and duplicitously, as the need to sacrifice individual, selfish interests for the – always putative – interest of all’ (ibid., 44–45). Pym’s call for cooperation to create the intercultural space and his conscious attempt to formulate a common ethics for translators bear witness to this kind of communitarian logic. But whereas Bauman sees communitarianism as a hidden agenda, disguised and duplicitous, Pym makes it quite explicit that the community he envisions is not – yet – in existence. His programme is an open call for cooperation.

The two big themes in Pym’s approach are interculturality and professionalism. Summing up his proposal, Pym lists five ethical principles: (1) the translator is responsible for the translation s/he has accepted to produce (*Faut-il traduire?*), (2) the translator is not directly responsible for the whole translation situation, but *professionally* responsible for the translation, (3) translation processes should not be reduced to an opposition between two cultures, and it is wrong to base one’s actions on only one set of cultural criteria, (4) the cost of translation ought not to outweigh the benefits of the intercultural relation in question, and (5) through her/his work, the translator is responsible for contributing to lasting intercultural cooperation (1997a, 136–137).

Pym’s explicit attempt is to create an umbrella of professionalism, sheltering and guiding the translator’s work. His ethics is an ethics of professional responsibility and professional working conditions. Drawing on an anecdote of an interpreter whose umbrella was taken away to shelter an important guest and who thus had to work in pouring rain, Pym concludes his exposé on the ethics of translation with a plea for a professional status for translators: for professional tariffs, reasonable deadlines, and the right to keep their umbrellas (1997a, 135–136). While this is all very admirable, and while I do not wish translators to get wet, professionalism can hardly be the end-all of ethical considerations. Rather, it is the starting point. In other words, while I find it problematic if an ethics of a professional practice is completely incompatible with financial remunerations (cf. the ethos of translating as a loving, or orgasmic, encounter), neither can financial benefits or professional working conditions be the guiding principles of moral action. From the point of view of ethics, far more important than the shape or shade of the umbrella is to know what takes place underneath its shelter. Working conditions, no matter how excellent, can never guarantee moral action. And conversely: working conditions, no matter how poor, are hardly an excuse for acting unethically.

Returning to the financial logic and the accusation of mercenary ethics, Pym’s argumentation with its tendency to equate professionalism and ethics is dangerously easy to interpret in such a way that the moral commitment of translators has to be bought. If the tariffs and other conditions are not optimal, the commitment is less binding. If it rains, the Pymian translator insists on having an umbrella; if there is a storm s/he stays at home. In addition to being a *Blending* and partially a messenger, Pym’s ideal translator is also described as being partially a sailor (Pym 1997a, 99). The metaphor is charming: like a sailor, the translator has to take the prevailing conditions into account and act accordingly, and for both of them the seas may be rough and cross-swells hard to manoeuvre. According to Pym, the ideal sailor/translator only hoists the sails when the conditions are favourable (in other words, one first has to ask the big question as to whether or not to translate). But sometimes it may be impossible

to postpone the journey, and wait for the ideal moment. One could therefore also claim that the best sailor is the one who sails the stormy seas with the least damage.<sup>35</sup> There are naturally cases where it is best not to translate at all, but to link morality to ideal conditions is problematic. It seems that the only ethical dilemma within Pym's intercultural space is whether or not to translate a particular text at a particular moment, and once the translator has given the affirmative answer (yes, if the translation assists in improving intercultural relations – no, if it does not), the resulting translation is automatically assumed to be acceptable (Pym 1997a, 16). But from the point of view of the ethics of translation, it is often much more important to contemplate *how* to translate a particular text in a less than ideal situation.

Demonstrations of professional ethics include the codes of practice issued by translators' unions, translator's charters, ISO 9000 and other quality standards as well as other normative expressions of what is considered to be acceptable and desirable behaviour in the profession. According to Pym, these rules determine what others have a right to expect from the translator: fidelity, accuracy, effectiveness, reasonable prices, solidarity between translators, professional secrecy (1997a, 68). A translator who obeys all these rules would then not need to contemplate the morality of his or her actions. The problem of ethics only arises if the explicit rules cannot be followed. In reality, the ethical codes may rather often leave the translator without much support. Analysing the Translator's Charter issued by the International Federation of Translators, Andrew Chesterman laments that the document leaves a lot to be desired. For example:

There is no explicit mention here [in the section concerning translators' rights] of any rights the translator may have which affect the translation process: the right to clarify where appropriate, the right to make changes where necessary, the right to justify his own translation decisions in terms of his own expertise, the right to make his own decisions.

*(1997, 189; see also Vuorinen 1994)*

Chesterman comes to the conclusion that the Charter seems incomplete and outdated. Another explanation for the omissions may also be sought in the functions of professional codes. Superficially, their aim is to guarantee ethical actions, and principles and values are spelled out to ensure this. But since codes are written by the profession itself, their trustworthiness is questionable: how do we know that the code really confronts the essential ethical dilemmas or even acknowledges that they exist? Or is it rather a cover story to mask the truly problematic issues (see Airaksinen 1992, 23)? One can ponder who is the primary addressee of the codes of practice, charters, quality standards and oaths of fidelity: are they truly intended as guidelines for translators or are they rather directed to the clients and readers of translations, and is their hidden function to create an atmosphere of trust and thus facilitate cooperation?<sup>36</sup>

Stressing issues like fidelity and accuracy, and remaining silent about the possibilities of the translator's active intervention in the meaning transfer, codes of practice keep up the illusion of unmediated communication. Deep inside, the translator may doubt the validity of the code, and may even act against it, but the professional discourse allows the translator to hide behind a mask with a confident smile, hiding the doubts (Pym 1997a, 81). In creating and sustaining a trust relationship, the mask

of professionalism may well be useful. But one can question the long-term success of a relationship based on hiding crucial information. (See also Chapter 5.2. below.)

## Case II: Translating in the European Commission

Pym's project of formulating the ethics of interculturality implies a curious dualism. On the one hand, he seems to be searching for a comprehensive model, ultimately (in future) unifying all translators to forward the aim of improving intercultural cooperation (see, e.g., Pym 1992a, 168). On the other hand, he seems to argue that one can locate pockets of intercultural spaces anywhere where translators work in an interface between cultures. One such space is the EU, a conglomerate and meeting place of fifteen national cultures and administrative traditions. It is therefore a good case to assess the viability of Pym's idea of neutral intercultural mediation. The largest translation bureau in the world and an integral part of a unique multilingual organisation, the Commission's Translation Service, and indeed the EU context as a whole, is an interesting object of study. In the following, I will chart the institutional and systemic factors involved in EU translation (see also Koskinen 2000). Drawing parallels to Pym's argumentation, I will look at the issue of equivalence within the EU context, the problems of intra- and intercultural communication, and the role of translators in the collective drafting process. Drawing on my own experience as a translator in the Commission in 1996–97, I will look at the Commission from a specifically Finnish perspective. As a lesser used non-Indo-European language and a relative newcomer, Finnish is a revealing case, making many complexities and paradoxes visible.

### *Equality and equivalence*

One of the fundamental tasks of the Translation Service S 'a service with a mission', as the information brochure describes it S is to safeguard the ideal of equality between languages. Within the EU context the symbolic value of translation is high. It is therefore impossible to discuss EU translation in the framework of information needs and transaction costs alone, even though the economic dimension of languages in a wide sense is naturally relevant (cf. Pym 1995b; Pym 1997a, 129; see Coulmas 1991). Especially in the case of lesser used languages like Finnish, the communicative function may often be subordinate to a symbolic function. Sometimes the primary function of the translation of a particular official document is simply to be there, to exist. Rather than just conveying a message or providing possibilities for communication, the role of the translation is then to stand as a proof of linguistic equality. For translators, trained to believe in the communicative function of the profession, this state of affairs can be frustrating: they need to produce a monument, not a text, and have to find new motivation to act as a guardian rather than a communicator. This could perhaps be called 'existential equivalence', that is, all the language versions need to exist, any other features being rather irrelevant or at least subordinate.

In spite of the deficiencies in its implementation, the ideal of linguistic equality in itself is valuable. While I agree with many of the postulates expressed by Anthony Pym in his provocative web article (Pym 1997b; for a more moderate expression of the same basic ideas see Pym 1995b), arguing against the principle of multilingualism and in favour of *lingua francas* and the ‘real needs’ translation policy, I think his view may be blurred by his own excellent knowledge of both English and French. An ordinary Finn is in a very different position, having a mother tongue which is unrelated to any other of the present official languages of the EU and (since Finland is officially bilingual) having been obliged to study Swedish, another ‘small’ EU language, as the second or third language at school. Parallel to the ‘monumental’ nature of some translations, there often is a ‘real need’ for translations, both among the general public and national authorities. Even for those who have a fair knowledge of a foreign language, it may be too difficult to deal with the specialised Eurospeak.<sup>37</sup> And even though most Finns can speak at least one foreign language (most often English), most other Europeans do not speak Finnish. So, the punishment of non-translation would be double: in addition to having to rely on foreign-language material, Finns (along with the speakers of many other smaller languages) would also be denied the right to express themselves in their native language.

Intertwined with the ideal of linguistic equality, the official policy is to state that the translations are not really translations but ‘language versions’, in other words that the documents are not merely translated but drafted in all languages simultaneously and that none of the ‘versions’ is derivative from any other. In a paradoxical manner, this renaming constitutes a semantic blurring of the fact that one could hardly find a more stereotyped notion of translation as mere linguistic transfer. The activity which the official policy claims is something more than ‘mere’ translating is actually a very limited version of translating, closer to interlinear than intercultural communication. The Translation Service has sometimes been called the contemporary Tower of Babel. A better analogy might, however, be found in the well-known myth of the translators of the Septuagint, according to which seventy-two Greek rabbis translated the Old Testament in isolated cells. Guided by divine inspiration, as the myth has it, they all produced identical translations (see Pym 1992a, 154S155). In a similar way to their biblical colleagues, the EU translators miraculously produce eleven similar versions of a document. This in-built illusion of equivalence is one of the cornerstones of the translation practice within the Commission.

The recent trend in translation studies has been to disclaim the importance of equivalence. The importance of assumed equivalence within the EU context gives reason to reconsider its role. Arguing that equivalence should not be ‘a dirty word’ in translation theory but rather that equivalence defines translation, Pym stresses the importance of belief in the production of equivalence: ‘It is one thing to argue that substantial equivalence is an illusion, but quite another to understand why anyone should be prepared to believe in it’ (Pym 1995c, 165). The translator, then, is ‘an equivalence producer, a professional communicator working for people who pay to believe that, on whatever level is pertinent, A is equivalent to B’ (ibid., 167).

For Pym, this socially operative belief is elementary to all translation. I am personally inclined to think that what defines translation is the existence of a ‘meaningful relation’ between two texts in different languages. Equivalence, illusory

or not, is just one of the possible relations, but it is certainly well suited to describe the EU context. The policy of linguistic equality presupposes equivalence of equal value of all language versions. Irrespective of any qualitative characteristics of the translation, all the versions are automatically assumed to be equivalent. Importantly, and unlike many other types of translation, the EU documents are equivalent not just with the source text but with the nine other translations as well. In other words, within the EU context, equivalence is an inherent quality of *all* translations, and instead of reflecting back to the origin, the equivalence relation is target-oriented in that it binds together all the different translations of the same text. Once the translations are finished, the source text actually ceases to exist as such, since none of the eleven 'equivalent' documents carries any sign making it distinguishable from the others. This kind of equivalence is most clearly discernible in EU legislation where all the 'language versions' are equally valid.

In the Translation Service, the practical application of the ideal of 'equal value' is based on an unnecessarily narrow interpretation of equivalence. In practice, equivalence is often taken to mean linguistic correspondence or literal re-rendering. The result is a multilingual Euro-speak where each national language is forced into an unnatural format. The specific EU culture has produced a new variant of each language, moulding the structures and coining new words. Sometimes equivalence is also reduced to mere visual equivalence: the number of paragraphs has to match, and headings and sub-headings have to be located in the same place as in the original. In the case of an 'exotic' language like Finnish this is often the only feedback the translator gets from the commissioners of the text. Unable to comment on any other aspect of the translation, they can just check that it is all there. Sometimes the requirement for visual equivalence can lead in the opposite direction: because Finnish words tend to be long, there may be too much text in the Finnish document and the translator may be required to fit the text in the same space as the other languages. What is important then is that all versions *look* the same.

### *Intracultural and intercultural translation*

In spite of its obvious multilingual and multicultural nature, the Commission's Translation Service has not paid much attention to the so-called 'cultural turn' that has taken place in translation studies during the 1990s. In practice, the translation policy aims at *a*cultural communication. This is partly due to the need to draft some documents so that they are applicable in all member states, and it is therefore necessary to avoid culture-specific features. But more significant is the institutional attitude that does not encourage any degree of cultural adaptation, nor perceive translators as experts in intercultural communication. There is a clear, albeit unwritten, preference for surface-level similarity, assumedly guaranteeing that the readers of the various translations all get the same message.

It is not difficult to find a reason for this. The obvious scapegoat is to be found in the translation of legal texts. The fact that each language version of a particular decision is equally valid and that different versions need to be used side-by-side has led to a literal translation strategy which leaves very little room for cultural

adaptations. In the case of Finnish, the translations have introduced a whole new legal rhetoric that is very different from the native administrative culture and even contrary to the basic ideals of Finnish legislation (for a critical overview of Finnish EU translations see Karvonen et al. 1996). Traditionally, Finnish or Nordic legislation has, at least in principle, favoured transparency, readability and clarity. Ideally, legal texts should be understandable for every citizen. The EU jurisdiction has its roots in a very different culture. In the case of legislation, the Finnish readers have had to adapt to this new rhetoric. For the translators, then, the legislation offers the challenge to find ways to promote the Finnish values of clarity and readability while still adhering to the format of the original and without forsaking the sometimes intentional and politically necessary fuzziness of the source text.

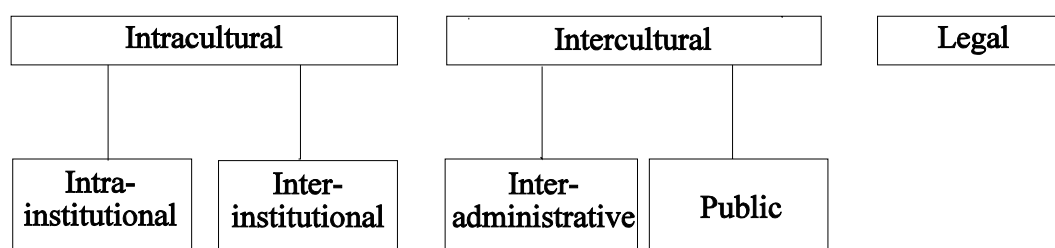
EU legislation is a separate case, setting unique constraints on the translator. A much more interesting question is why the rather literal mode of translation has gained so much popularity also beyond the field of legal texts. Only a minority of translated texts comprises directives, decisions and other legislative texts. Most translators in the Commission spend most of their time translating working papers, memos, minutes, information bulletins, green and white papers and other administrative and informative material where the translator could have much more leeway to adapt the texts. In addition to the overpowering example of legal documents, the lack of readability may be explained by the translators' identification with the administrative system. This would follow a logic similar to what has been discerned within the Finnish administration. The Finnish aim of good administrative language has stressed that the authorities have to strive for clarity and understandability when communicating to the citizens. But when communicating with each other, the authorities often seem to forget this principle and use unnecessarily complicated language, pompous style and cryptic expressions – all features common in Finnish EU translations as well (Rautala 1996; Karvonen et al. 1996).

An explanation can also be sought in Lawrence Venuti's claim that translating institutions generally show a preference for an ethics of sameness, one that does not unsettle the existing domestic discourses and canons (1998a, 82). Since the European Union is a transnational organisation producing translations mainly *out of* (or within, as I will argue below) the multinational EU culture, and since the translators themselves are located inside the EU bureaucracy, these 'domestic' discourses are not the ones prevalent in any target culture but the ones used inside the EU context. In this case, the ethics of sameness is thus to be understood as sameness with the source as well as sameness with the other language versions, not as sameness with target culture conventions.

The whole notion of a 'target culture' is in fact rather complicated in the EU context. In addition to the special case of legal texts, EU translations are actually divided into intra- and intercultural translation. By *intracultural* translation I mean communication within a specific national EU culture, where the users of translations are fairly accustomed to a specific EU rhetoric and are well acquainted with the terminology, so they do not expect or need extensive cultural adaptation. They may also often need to study different language versions side by side, or move between them, and extensive rewriting might cause them difficulties. Intracultural translation can be further divided into *intra-* and *interinstitutional* translation, i.e., translations for

internal use within the Commission and translations directed to other EU institutions. *Intercultural* translation, then, means communication between the EU culture and national cultures. It can also be divided into two groups of texts: *interadministrative* translations between the Commission and the national authorities as well as NGOs and other interest groups and, finally, translations used for communication between the Commission and the general *public* (see figure below).<sup>38</sup>

### Translating in the European Commission



Obviously, these different groups call for different translation strategies with varying degrees of cultural mediation, and the problems associated with (Finnish) EU translations<sup>39</sup> are largely caused by using the same strategy – the one inherited from translating legal texts – for them all. The strategic choices are very much a hidden agenda. There are written guidelines for idiomatic phrases and EU terminology, and terminology issues are also regularly discussed in translators’ meetings, but the more fundamental strategic choices are left to the individual translator to divine from the general atmosphere and the existing texts. The collective and intertextual nature of EU translations then makes sure that no translator will radically deviate from the general trend. Even if there are no clear and considered strategic guidelines, the translators are not free to use just any strategy they happen to prefer. Instead of planned and pondered strategic decisions there exists a rather accidental code of practice that most translators would probably not have actively chosen but that now weighs heavily upon them (cf. the notion of ‘textual grids’ as implicit patterns of expectations that have been interiorised by members of a culture; see Bassnett and Lefevere 1998, 5). In an institution as large as the Commission the wheels are slow to turn, and changing a chosen style or expression is difficult, often resulting in several co-existing versions.

In translation studies, EU translations have been labelled hybrid texts (see, e.g., Trosborg 1997). The hybrid text, then, is defined as ‘a text that results from a translation process and shows features that somehow seem “out of place”/“strange”/“unusual” for the receiving culture’. Further, a hybrid is ‘a product of two or more cultures, or a compromise between a number of cultures’. ‘Hybrids reflect specific textual features [...] which may clash with target language conventions’. These features are, by definition, ‘evidence of conscious and deliberate decisions by the translator’ (Trosborg 1997, 146–151). I am not convinced of the usefulness of the idea of hybridity. The definitions are so wide that it is hard to discern how hybrid texts would differ from any other translations. It is quite feasible to argue that all translations are products of/compromises between two or more cultures.

Another problem arises from the prevalent norm of descriptiveness in translation studies. Possibilities for criticism are ruled out by predefining the ‘unusual’ features as an integral and intended element of EU translations. However, the spectre of prescriptivism seems to haunt the descriptive theorist: after describing the specific nature of hybrid texts, Trosborg claims that ‘[i]t is reasonable to expect that a translation into Danish or any of the EU languages can be read as original prose like any other text’ (ibid., 154).

In my view, a more fruitful approach to the specific nature of EU translations can be to consider the EU institutions as forming a culture of their own. Instead of, or in addition to, being a multicultural contact-point of the various cultures, the institutional framework constitutes a frame of reference with its own history, shared knowledge, norms and aims. It has also developed its own idiom – in eleven dialects. Translations, then, are produced both for internal use and for those more or less distant from the sphere of the institutional EU culture. What is specific about EU translations is, in other words, the blurred divisions of languages and cultures. It has been taken for granted in translation studies that a change of language always also entails a change of culture (cf. the very definition of translation as intercultural communication), but within the EU context many translations are in fact *intracultural*. They are produced and consumed within the same cultural context. These translations, then, may be seen as hybrids from the perspective of the national culture since that culture is not their primary point of reference. But if *intercultural* translations between the EU and the national culture(s) include hybrid elements, they indicate that the cultural transfer has been overlooked in translation. In fact, one might argue that only EU legislation is truly hybrid in that, in spite of its intercultural nature, it unavoidably conserves foreign features even if they clash with target language conventions.

### *Collectivity and anonymity*

Any analysis of the role of the translators in the Commission has to take into account the institutional framework produced by the process of drafting and translating documents. The standard procedure creates a set of systemic constraints that unavoidably affect the translators’ work. Instead of a linear and straightforward process of transmitting a clear-cut message for a new audience, the Commission translator works within an intertextual network where texts rotate and develop in a circular manner, the versions being redrafted and retranslated several times and laden with traces and fragments of earlier documents. All the elements of the process are multiplied: the document to be translated is seldom written by an individual writer but is normally a collective product; the source text is not stable but gets rewritten by new sets of authors and then retranslated by the same translator or someone else; it is also not uncommon for the source language to be changed at some point of the process. Also, the institutional framework may sometimes be multiplied if a particular document passes through another EU institution’s translation process (often that of the Parliament). And all this pendulum-like movement of source texts and their translations takes place simultaneously in all the official languages.



In the Commission, the translation process is very much a collective effort. Texts are drafted collectively in committees, working groups and teams. The translators are also part of this collective enterprise. There may be several translators of the same document even within the same target language; the text is routinely revised by another translator; and long or particularly urgent texts are typically divided between two or more translators. More important, however, is the overriding intertextuality: since the texts are bound together by countless references and allusions to other texts, the translators are equally bound together, their individuality checked and balanced by collectivity. As a result, translators have little individual responsibility but great collective responsibility. Since the liberties of individual translators are limited, their personal responsibility is likewise reduced. But as representatives of the Translation Service all translators are collectively responsible for each and every translated document. Within the EU setting, Pym's requirement that translators' prime loyalty should be directed to other translators, to the whole profession is, in other words, of extreme importance. The problem of collective responsibility is that it is easily ignored: the shared responsibility seems to lie on no-one's shoulders. To use the expression coined by Zygmunt Bauman, responsibility for the outcome is often 'floating' (1993, 18).

Another feature caused by the institutional nature of EU translation is that of anonymity. The writers of the documents often remain anonymous, and so too do the translators. Instead of being products of individual creativity, the texts are both written and translated by the Commission, as represented by the individual writers and translators. Also the official policy, speaking about different language versions instead of translations, hides rather than emphasises the active input of translators. In the 1990s, many translation theorists have called for a more visible role for translators (see Chapter 5.2. below). In the institutional framework of the EU Commission (or perhaps in institutional translation in general) the requirement of visibility is only acceptable with modifications. It would be futile, for example, to demand that each document bear the translator's signature or that the translators always be accredited for their contribution. The text types and the collective and multilingual drafting process do not support the idea of individual authors and translators. Outwardly, the EU translators are, and probably will remain, relatively invisible.

Institutionally internal aspects of visibility are, however, of paramount importance for the future of the Translation Service. At present the institutional system does not support but rather hinders translators' active involvement in the communication process. The state of affairs is largely related to the internal invisibility of the translators. Contrary to what one might expect from the procedural and circular nature of the translation process, the army of Commission translators works mainly 'undercover' and remains unknown to the other participants in the process. Writers are physically and emotionally detached from translators, and often demonstrably unaware of the nature of translation. For the writers, the translation service seems to be like a machine: you just pull the lever and ten new language versions miraculously appear. Background material or extratextual information about the intended use of the translation is seldom offered. Sometimes the translator is asked to translate the captions without seeing the pictures in question, or just fragments of a larger document. Quality control is unorganised, and there is practically no internal feedback.

From the point of view of the translator it sometimes really feels like being locked inside a machine with two black holes: from one of them, out of nowhere, enters the source text; from the other one, the finished translation disappears into the great unknown. Inside this machine, there are also separate compartments for each language: in spite of the fact that the Translation Service is divided thematically rather than just linguistically, cooperation between different translators working on the same document has been sporadic and is left to the translators' own initiative. This situation is now changing; at least in some thematic groups there are now organised discussions between all the translators of a particular document.

Somewhat paradoxically, the translators' internal and external invisibility is counterbalanced by the extreme visibility of the 'translatedness' of the texts. With their unfamiliar and undomesticated eurorhetoric, EU terminology and unidiomatic structures, the translations flaunt their non-native origin. Even attempts at domesticating have led to foreignisation: one typical, even if increasingly criticised and less used feature of the Finnish translations is to use native variants for words that are normally borrowed. For example, *report* is translated as *kertomus* instead of *raportti*, and *to coordinate* is *yhteensovittaa* instead of *koordinoida*. The result of this 'excessive' domestication is a rather comical foreignising effect. Foreignising is, of course, one legitimate strategy among others. If one wants to emphasise the foreignness of the text, it is quite feasible to opt for nonfluent strategies. In the Commission, however, increased transparency is one of the key political concepts, and initiatives like *Citizens First* are designed precisely to add transparency and to improve the image of the EU institutions in the eyes of the Europeans, to get the messages across. It is therefore paradoxical that translations produced by the Commission itself tend towards strategies that might undermine these political goals.

Through the idea of the ethics of location, Venuti stresses the importance of taking into account the situational power relations. In the case of intercultural EU translation they are certainly asymmetrical, especially in those instances which affect the life or livelihood of ordinary citizens: one communicating partner is a 'hegemonic' and bureaucratic system with respect to which the other partner is subservient and has very little power of control. Following the logic of Venutian foreignising, one might argue that EU translators function as a resistant or subversive element within the system since their foreignising translation strategies can be seen to undermine the goals and aims of the more powerful partner. Such an effect, unintentional, has probably taken place to some extent, but this is hardly an accurate interpretation of the overall situation. The difference between Venuti's literary context and EU translations is the importance of the informative function: any translation strategy that hampers the receivers' possibilities of understanding the texts can be seen to enforce the existing asymmetry. The lack of domestication also includes elements of arrogance: the more powerful partner can impose its foreign style on the receiver, who then has to adapt. Within the context of EU translation, the ethics of resistance would in my view therefore rather call for fluent and domesticating translation strategies. While the EU context thus functions against Venuti's basic line of argument of the connection between fluency and cultural hegemony on the one hand, and foreignising and resistance on the other hand, his notion of the ethics of location can be usefully applied to EU translations as well.

Whereas Venuti's own interest is directed to literary translation, Pym has actively participated in discussions on the EU and translation. Many aspects of EU translation do in fact provide evidence for Pym's arguments. The importance of assumed equivalence clearly indicates that the concept is far from defunct in translation studies even though its uses seem to have changed from the linguistic and textual planes and idealism to the level of social expectations and shared illusions. The anonymous and collective character of EU documents also support Pym's opinions, but the situation also functions as a reminder that there are different kinds of visibility (see Chapter 5.2. below), and that anonymity in one direction does not automatically rule out the possibility or even necessity for visibility and non-anonymity in some other direction.

In testing Pym's views, the most crucial issue is whether EU translators (or the translators of the Commission of the European Union, since the institutional framework is different in different EU institutions) in fact form a specific intercultural space in Pym's sense of the word. In my view the answer is yes and no. If an interculture does in fact exist, it is the institutional EU culture as a whole: as I argued above it is not just a melting pot or combination of national cultures but an independent system, and its codes of conduct, norms of behaviour, administrative practices and so on have evolved and developed in the course of its history. And while EU officials do not lose their own nationality when employed, their prime loyalty is at least assumed to be directed to the EU institutions. Translators, then, are also EU officials and bound by the same requirements of loyalty, but their situation is different. Their position is that of mediators *between* the EU interculture and the national cultures. If they inhabit an intercultural space, it is an *inter*intercultural space between the EU culture and fifteen national cultures. Because of their prior commitment to the EU interculture (the employer), their loyalty cannot be directed to this interintercultural space alone, but their role as mediators imposes a certain loyalty towards the national culture as well. The elements of conflict and split loyalties are thus never completely alleviated. One also has to take into account the heterogeneity of the national cultures. In fact, one might argue that there exist eleven or even fifteen different interintercultural spaces (the identities are probably even more fragmented in languages like Swedish or German where translators have to deal with the problem of several national cultures). Each member state has a unique relation to the EU culture, and languages have different positions within the linguistic system, and all this affects the translators' situation. Obviously, there are differences between 'small' and 'large' languages, but there are also other factors, of which little is known. For example, in spite of their alleged cultural affinity, the similar size of languages, and simultaneous accession (and the fact that Swedish translations are used in Finland as well), the translational cultures within the Swedish and Finnish translation units are far from identical. Valuable insight could be obtained via researching the reasons for and background of the differences.<sup>40</sup>

The basic postulate of Pym's ethical stand is that the inhabitants of the intercultural space should consider continued and improved intercultural communication as the main goal of their work. According to this principle, one could formulate the ethical calling of the interintercultural EU translators as aiming at improving communication and mutual understanding between the EU institutions and

the national cultures. Taking into account the complaints of poor readability and the alienating effects of the pompous and foreignised style of many translations, the logical conclusion would seem to be similar to the one reached via Venuti's ethics of location: the strategies best suited for the ethics of intercultural communication within the EU context would seem to be those aiming at fluency, understandability and cultural adaptation.

## 5. Directions

The two new ethics of translation proposed by Anthony Pym and Lawrence Venuti are in many ways very different from one another. But in spite of their obvious differences, Pym's and Venuti's efforts also seem convergent in several significant aspects. It is therefore surprising how antagonistic they appear within the field of translation studies. Anthony Pym has been one of the most fierce critics of Venuti's pursuits (especially Pym 1996; cf. however 1997a, 93–97), and Lawrence Venuti has all but completely ignored Pym's input. Reading the two together, however, reveals their similarities. The importance of the two models is not so much in the answers, often preliminary and sometimes contradictory, that they give, but in the questions they both seek to answer. They indicate areas we need to chart if we want to put forward meaningful postmodern theories of the ethics of translation. Among the fundamental issues are the dichotomies of translation theory, the vexed question of translators' visibility and trust, as well as untying the deadlock of fidelity.

### Beyond dichotomies

Modernity has been characterised by an urge to classify and control the world. The quest for order and the fight against ambivalence and indeterminacy produced a binary world view where dichotomies and the hierarchy of values promoted by them became an uncontested and self-evident 'fact':

It was evident to everybody except the blind and the ignorant, that the West was superior to the East, white to black, civilized to crude, cultured to uneducated, sane to insane, healthy to sick, man to woman, normal to criminal, more to less, riches to austerity, high productivity to low productivity, high culture to low culture.

*(Bauman 1987, 120)*

The movement from modernity to postmodernity could, then, also be located in the realisation that these facts are in fact produced by asymmetrical power relations and that the order which they create is not natural but forced. Deconstruction, in particular, can be seen first and foremost as a continued project of dismantling the binary oppositions and revealing, maybe even celebrating, the underlying ambivalence that modernity sought to suppress. In a sense, the key word of deconstruction is *pharmakon*, implying the coexistence of the cure and the poison in the same drug (see Derrida 1981). What is essential is not to reverse the hierarchy (even though the reversal is a necessary intermediate step in the process) but to accept the inseparability of the two poles. They only exist in relation to each other. Thus, the negative is not external but internal to the positive pole.

In postmodern philosophies, the dichotomic world view has been challenged by a set of related concepts, all indicating a certain 'dialectics of ambivalence' (see

Vieira 1997, 111). Derrida's *pharmakon* and undecidability are very similar to Bauman's central concept of ambivalence, and not too far from the logic of both/and promoted by Eve Tavor Bannet.<sup>41</sup> The basic postmodern tenet is that one needs to 'sober up' and 'awake' from a life of binary oppositions and 'reach *back* into that messy, incongruent, non-rational *ambivalence* which truly founds the moral self' (Bauman 1993, 78). The postmodern understanding of morality is that it is fundamentally ambivalent: 'the moral person cannot beat ambivalence, s/he may only learn to live with it' (ibid., 182; see also Beck 1995, 22–26). Anthony Pym's argumentation is thus unmistakably postmodern when he complains that as long as the definitions of translation are binary (free vs. literal, foreignising vs. domesticating, source-text-oriented vs. target-text-oriented) the ethical principles remain equally binary, but the binary logic is ill-suited for practical situations where the decisions are nearly always much more complex than that (1997a, 10).

But ambivalence is not the end of the story. If the binary logic is ill-suited, the mere notion of ambivalence as such does not provide any guidance either. The real question is how to act morally or ethically in spite of ambivalence. Deconstruction has immensely increased our awareness of undecidability. It is less useful in working out how to reach decisions in undecidable terrain. Still, decisions need to be made: 'Our task [...] is to take a risky decision in the "night of non-knowledge", not just to learn to *think* plus and minus at the same time' (Spivak 1999, 334). In order to avoid the paralysing effects of undecidability, 'we need a wholly other logic, a logic capable of saying both/and' (Bannet 1993, 87). According to Bannet, the notion of undecidability is just one way of evading the real ethical, political and spiritual difficulty of navigating in a world where things are in flux, and it is often impossible to determine whether something is good or bad because, depending on how you look at it, it is both at the same time (ibid., 105; cf. Derrida 1997, 148). She argues for a reevaluation of the state in-between:

Why, for instance, do we have to speak of literary works either as unique products of towering genius, as Romanticism and the New Criticism did, or as mere effects and products of hegemonic cultures, as poststructuralism and post-marxism do? Why not somewhere in between? Why not in movement from one to the other? Why not sometimes more this, sometimes more that? Why do we have to think of persons either as docile bodies or as rugged individualists, agents or patients, saints or sinners, conforming or resisting? Why not somewhere in between? Why not in movement from one to the other? Why not now one, now the other? Why not one text or genre or person or group or period more this and another more that?

(Bannet 1993, 103–104)

Bannet's logic of both/and is one way of stressing the contextual and situational differences and the need for a certain openness in categories. Her view of literary theory is easily extendable to translation studies: translation cannot be exhaustively explained by studying systems and polysystems, but neither can the phenomenon be reduced to individual translators' idiosyncratic choices. Translators cannot be grouped as either Venutian resistant translators or conservative conformists, neither can one preordain one translation strategy as universally acceptable or another one in all cases forbidden (see also Pym 1997a, 98; Paloposki 1996). Translating as an activity is not

either/or, it is both/and: it is heavenly *and* daemonic, angelic *and* luciferian, transportation *and* transformation, imitative *and* recreative, submissive *and* subversive, domesticating *and* foreignising.

It may well be that the notion of the ethics of location, which up to now has received rather scant attention by Venuti himself and has seldom been pointed out or elaborated on by his critics, may in fact prove to be the most fruitful aspect of Venuti's ethical project. In any case, it leaves room for the ambivalences and contextual particularities of translation. Clearly connected to Venuti's ethics of location, the ethics of both/and can be described as 'a "situational ethics" of response-ibility to and for others' (Bannet 1993, 178). It entails, first, a serious attempt to grasp the particularities of the situation and, second, responsible action that responds to the situational factors (ibid., 106). Bannet considers her notion to be supplementary to Derrida's views, but in fact it is very similar to the one Derrida offers in the Afterword to *Limited Inc*: 'In accordance with what is only ostensibly a paradox, *this particular* undecidable opens the field of decision or decidability. It calls for decision in the order of ethical-political responsibility.' (1997, 116; italics in the original) In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida discusses the situationality of deconstructive readings, maintaining that there are no 'absolute beginnings', that we must begin '[w]herever we are: in a text we already believe ourselves to be' (1976, 162; emphasis in the original). From the point of view of the ethics of location in translation this would mean that a translator has to take into account (her/his interpretation of) the contextual situation, and this will have a bearing on the translation. Secondly, the 'we' is, I think, significant: it implies a need to exceed the limits of individuality, opening the ethics of location towards others and otherness.

True to the logic of modern sciences, theories about translation have been full of hierarchical dualities: faithful/unfaithful, literal/free, form/content and so on. Even recent discussions of translation have still often revolved around dichotomies, and even attempts to overcome them have often remained entangled in them (see Chapter 1.3. above). The problematic nature of dichotomies has been realised, but we are still looking for truly new ways of theorising about translation. The focus of translation theory has largely shifted from similarity to difference in translation, but a truly non-dichotomic approach would have to acknowledge that similarity and difference are not mutually exclusive aspects of translation but that there is similarity in spite of difference, and difference in spite of similarity.

In the search for non-binary approaches, deconstruction can function as a useful tool, but it is, of course, no foolproof guarantee of radical 'postmodernity'. The difficulty of avoiding dichotomies is well illustrated in an article by Rosemary Arrojo (1998a). The article in question is an attempt to revise the traditional dichotomy between theory and practice. The main target of Arrojo's criticism are the 'essentialist', modern theories which, according to her, underestimate translation and translators in their attempt to control practice by setting translation rules and standards. The article produces a clear-cut binary division between good, postmodern theories like Arrojo's own, and bad, modern theories of translation. But towards the end, Arrojo adopts a stand strikingly similar to the one she herself criticised earlier in the text. For example, Arrojo claims that Mona Baker, in the essentialist camp, 'implicitly devalues the practice of translation as she argues that it is the alleged rigour of the

science of language which could finally improve the translators' professional status' (1998a, 36). How, then, does Baker's essentialist stance differ from the anti-essentialist one propagated by Arrojo?:

[T]he notion of translation as 'regulated transformation' has certainly begun to offer us a much needed instrument not only to raise awareness among practising translators about the conflicting relationships they tend to establish both with theory or 'science' and with their own work, but also to equip aspiring professionals with the critical background which will allow them to become fully responsible translators, well aware of their authorial voices.

(*Ibid.*, 44)

Considering the difficulties involved in most sincere attempts to open up the dichotomies, the attempts by Pym and Venuti to overcome the dichotomy of domesticating and foreignising strategies of translation are laudable. Venuti's position ultimately dismantles the opposition by merging the two poles: for him, domesticating strategies are always already foreignising, and foreignising strategies always already domesticating. Instead of being two distinct strategies to choose between, the two aspects are intertwined and are at work in any translation, no matter what the consciously chosen strategy happens to be. Pym's approach, then, is to put into question the use of the terms 'domestic' and 'foreign' in the context of translation. He locates the translator within a specific space *between* the two cultures, and claims that translators do not belong to any one 'domestic' culture, and the distinction between domestic and foreign is therefore pointless. In other words, both Venuti and Pym can be seen to dismantle the opposition, Venuti by merging the opposite poles, Pym by refusing to accept the validity of either one.

Less explicitly, or rather by *not* explicating their relationship to it, both Pym and Venuti take a stand towards another dichotomy as well. For any reconsideration of the ethics of translation, overcoming or even bypassing the dichotomy between fidelity/infidelity seems to be a considerable touchstone (see Chapter 1.3. above). It may well be the most revolutionary aspect of Pym's and Venuti's new ethics of translation that neither of them seems compelled to produce their revised version of fidelity. The issue of fidelity, as it seems, is simply no longer relevant to them. For both Pym and Venuti, the essence of translators' ethics is not to be found in any redefinition of fidelity but in a completely different direction. Making a passing remark on the inadequacy of the concept of fidelity, Pym points out that it does not cover the aspect he considers most fundamental for translators' ethics, the responsibility to the profession (1997a, 82). Similar to Pym, Venuti locates the fundamental issues in areas outside the realm of fidelity. As a concept, fidelity can only cover and regulate the relationship between the writer and the translator (or source and target texts), being maybe extended to future readers. It is too limited to function as a starting point for an ethics like Venuti's, where the translator is expected to act ethically towards the whole cultural exchange and to promote democratic interaction between cultures. In his indifference towards fidelity, Venuti the theorist may well be accompanied by Venuti the translator. This, at least, is the interpretation given by Rosemary Arrojo: 'Venuti's translations have not really abused De Angelis's poetry as they have been neither faithful nor unfaithful to it.' (1997b, 29)



## Now you see me, now you don't

### *Illusions*

A significant difference between Pym's ethics of the translator and Venuti's ethics of difference is epitomised by their attitude to illusions. The theme of illusions related to translation has an important role in both Pym's and Venuti's ethical projects, but their approaches are diametrically opposed. According to Pym, it is the task of the translator to *keep up* the illusion of sameness between the source text and the translation. For Venuti, the essential task is precisely the opposite: a minoritising translator is to *break* the illusion and make the intervention caused by translation visible. This difference can be interpreted as indicating a different attitude to the modernity/postmodernity debate. According to Zygmunt Bauman, modernity 'wrapped the mechanisms of self-reproduction with a veil of illusions' essential to their functioning, whereas postmodernity 'means above all the tearing off of the mask of illusions' (1993, 3).

Pym, while fully aware of the illusory nature of sameness, wants to hide it behind an enforced mask of professionalism and anonymity, whereas Venuti is so enthusiastic about the new possibilities that he completely ignores the issue of whether it is possible to completely overcome the illusory aspects of translation. He is so sure of his own preferred strategy that he fails to contemplate the limits of his own vision and the possibility of there remaining some illusions he, or the minoritising translator, might not perceive. In his optimism, Venuti is not alone. A similar tendency is obvious, for example, in Bauman's argumentation, defining postmodernity as 'modernity without illusions' (and modernity as 'postmodernity refusing to accept its own truth') (1993, 32; see also 34). In other words, postmodernity is seen as a 'higher' state of mind, knowledgeable and full of self-awareness. While postmodernity has undeniably revealed many illusions maintained by modernity, I suspect Bauman's and Venuti's zeal to be somewhat exaggerated. I am more inclined to side with the more sceptical view as expressed by Jacques Derrida. The postmodern theories are in no way exempt from the logic of difference. Whatever the 'truth' they accept, whatever the illusions they do without, postmodern theories are also haunted by their own aporias (see also Chapter 6 below).

In many ways, the theme of illusions is linked to a more general trend of assumed supremacy towards earlier eras in contemporary translation theory. An illustrative example, as discussed above, is to be found in attitudes to Schleiermacher's nationalism. From our present (Western) viewpoint of eroding nation-states, romantic nationalism may well seem naive or dangerous and undesirable, but who knows how silly the contemporary mantras of inter- or multiculturalism, otherness and foreignisation will seem in two hundred years? An attitude that sees the study of translations as a way of 'revealing' some 'damning' examples of the 'appalling' crimes earlier translators 'are guilty of' (citations from Gentzler in Bassnett and Lefevere 1998, xvii) overlooks the possibility that our own era might be just as apt to commission and reward translations that happen to fit in with the contemporary world view. Similar to earlier translators and translation theorists, *our* own historical context is *our* starting point (see also Spivak 1999, 173).

## *Visibility*

Visibility, ‘the keyword of the 1990s’ (Bassnett 1998, 111), has recently become an immensely popular concept in translation studies. Much like its predecessor fidelity at one time, it has a positive resonance and is easy to agree with regardless of theoretical background. It has thus acquired an aura of general acceptance. Academia seems rather united in its faith that if the translators just keep the readers informed, all moral problems are solved. Many share Antoine Berman’s view that the translators have *all the rights* as long as they are playing fair (1995, 93), that is, tell what they have done in the translation, or put their ‘cards on the table’, to quote the feminist translator Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood (1991, 11). This very same view I have myself also argued for within a framework of deconstruction (e.g., Koskinen 1994abc).

Those who find the emancipatory stances too radical can find a more moderate framework for visibility in Christiane Nord’s notion of loyalty within a functionalist framework. According to Nord, loyalty may well require non-observance of certain conventions. But, importantly, ‘any nonconformism has to be laid open in order to prevent the reader from being deceived in his expectations without so much as noticing it’ (Nord 1991, 107). Even though Hans J. Vermeer has been critical of Nord’s attempt to include moral aspects in the general theory (see 1996, 79–101), he, too, accommodates the idea of visibility in his ‘value-free’ theoretical framework, maintaining that the translator needs to inform the target recipients about any deviations from the source text functions and intentions (*ibid.*, 82). Another representative of skopos theory, Hans G. Hönl, is even more categorical: ‘Because of the nature of language and of communications and because of cultural differences’, he argues, ‘a translator must be visible *in a translation*, there is no other way’ (in Schäffner (ed.) 1998, 45; italics added). In spite of its valorising aspects, the notion of visibility has also found support in the descriptivist camp. According to Andrew Chesterman, for instance, it is the translator’s responsibility to give explanations if the readers’ expectations are somehow being challenged (1997, 182). Visibility is, in other words, presently probably the most widely accepted ethical notion in translation studies. Regardless of the theoretical framework, the keywords of visibility seem to be fairness, openness, explicitness, responsibility and honesty.

The most obvious proponent of visibility of all is of course Lawrence Venuti, who has built his whole theoretical apparatus around the critique of translators’ invisibility. According to him, ‘the concept of the translator’s “invisibility” is already a cultural critique, a diagnosis that opposes the situation it represents’ (1995, 17). Venuti’s description of the situation, depicting translation as a stigmatised and victimised activity, is no doubt exaggerated, but the basic argument of translators’ invisibility and anonymity is Anthony Pym’s starting point as well (see, e.g., 1997a, 12). While Venuti steers the extreme route, and calls for radical rethinking of the translator’s role, Pym only allows for very limited visibility in order not to break the illusion of translational equivalence. According to him, visibility and explicitness are short-sighted solutions, unnecessarily breaching the translator’s anonymity and thus risking cooperation (1992a, 164-165). While the logic of Pym’s reluctance is, I

suppose, partially that of characteristic dissidence, of going against the generally accepted trend, his stand cannot be dismissed without pondering the various aspects of visibility.

Before any critical analysis, the notion of visibility needs to be opened up. At the moment it is used to cover a wide range of attitudes and phenomena. There are at least three distinct kinds of visibility. One might call them *textual*, *paratextual* and *extratextual* visibility. By textual visibility I refer to the ways in which the translator makes his or her presence visible on the textual level, in the translation itself. The Venutian minoritising translator is a good example of strategic and conscious use of textual visibility, but one can also argue that every translator is textually visible in so far as any translation reflects the translator's 'translational position'. According to this logic, translators' visibility is to some extent 'inevitable' (Arrojo 1997b, 28). Instead of considering visibility and invisibility as two opposing strategies to choose between, the translator's invisibility can thus be interpreted as a strategic illusionary effect, as occulted visibility (Lane-Mercier 1997; see also Berman 1995). This illusionary effect is in fact the core of Venuti's criticism, since it eclipses 'the translator's labor with an illusion of authorial presence, reproducing the cultural marginality and economic exploitation which translation suffers today' (Venuti 1995, 290). Calls for textual visibility are, in other words, composed of two distinct features: alongside the demand for increased visibility there runs an at least equally important argument for a change of attitude towards the (inevitable) visibility, a recognition 'that will free the translator's visibility from the stigma of impropriety or abuse' (Arrojo 1997b, 31).

Paratextual visibility, then, refers to translators' statements about their work outside or in the margins of the actual text. Minimal paratextual visibility might consist of adding the translator's signature to the text, or even just an indication of its status as a translation. At the other end of the scale it could include book-length exposés on a particular translator's understanding of her/his role and reports on actual translation projects. Demands for paratextual visibility, most audible among 'emancipatory' translation scholars and in literary translation, have often centred around the question of prefaces and afterwords which have been seen as an excellent opportunity for the translator to explain her/his translation strategies to the readers (see Simon 1988; Godard 1990; von Flotow 1991). In other words, the traditional locus of translators' visibility has experienced a revival in the radical camps of contemporary translation theory.

While connected to textual and paratextual visibility, extratextual visibility is most closely related to the social status of translation outside and beyond the immediate vicinity of the translated text. The popularity of the notion of visibility has acted as a catalyst to various efforts aiming at increased publicity for the profession. Different from other forms of visibility, demands for extratextual visibility are not primarily directed at translators themselves but at others dealing with translations. Following the logic of paratextual visibility, the demands have ranged from the requirement that the name of the translator be mentioned in publisher's publicity material to debates on the need to include specific translation criticism in newspaper reviews of translated books.

Minoritising translation strategies on the textual level, the stress on prefaces and afterwords on the paratextual level, and the orientation of the demands for

extratextual visibility all indicate that discussions of visibility have concentrated on literary translation, and it has remained rather vague how one could be assumed to add explanatory paratexts to, say, technical manuals, newspaper articles, tourist brochures, or EU documents, let alone on-line helps and the like. The apparent incompatibility of the notion of visibility outside the literary field may be one reason why Pym has remained sceptical about the ethics of explicitness. But even though these definitions of visibility have referred to the field of literary translation, and are maybe not directly applicable to more technical fields of translation, the notion as such might in fact prove extremely useful when adapted to the particularities of each setting. The cooperative nature of text production and the role of translators in a team of experts in fields such as technical writing or EU translation call for active participation rather than anonymous mediation (see Chapter 4.4. above).

### *The limits of paratextual visibility*

While Venuti's project of increased *textual* visibility has met with some scepticism and resistance, visibility in its *paratextual* form is often depicted as an unproblematic virtue, and a guarantee of ethical action. Discussions have often followed a logic similar to what Robert E. Goodin has discerned within the political arena: 'attacks upon deceptive politics have centred upon the evils of secrecy and the virtues of publicity' (1980, 46). The demand for visibility is often expressed for the sake of the readers who have a right not to be 'deceived', but the benefits of the ethics of explicitness are even seen to 'help us build a more cogent discipline of translation studies' (Arrojo 1997a, 21). Considering the value currently attached to the virtues of visibility from the point of view of issues as diverse as readers' consumer rights, translators' remunerations and the theoretical development of translation studies, a critical re-examination of the notion of visibility seems essential. It may well be a keyword, but is it a master key?

A translator's preface or afterword seems like an obvious way in which a translator can make the process of translation more visible and open. We are used to thinking of the preface as an 'expository exercise', involving a norm of truth (Spivak 1976, x). However, a closer look at various prefaces and other translators' paratexts soon shows the complexity of the situation from the point of view of the visibility of the translation process. Words and deeds do not always meet. Possibilities for manipulation actually seem to increase in prefaces and other metatextual commentaries. Indeed, it may well be that translators themselves are not always aware of their own strategies, and if they are, they may find it either unwise or unnecessary to reveal them to the reader (and, importantly, readers may refuse to accept the translator's explanations, no matter how sincerely offered; for a lamenting account by one translator see Venuti 1998a, 19). In his analysis of political life, Robert E. Goodin lists four different strategies – more or less manipulative – in the politics of lying: lying proper, secrecy, propaganda, and information overload (1980, 37–64). All four could easily be applied to translators' commentaries on their work.

To begin with, outright *lying* or communication of deliberate untruths seems an unlikely choice in prefaces, but I suspect that translators do occasionally revert to

it. It is easier to convey information which the readers are willing and prepared to receive, and translators often seem to repeat over and over again the old phrase of 'trying to render the original as faithfully as possible' even if they know very well what changes they have made. More often than not it is probably also the case that translators deceive themselves as much as their readers: they may well believe their own phraseology. For example, when discussing her role as a translator with me, one Finnish translator categorised herself as a 'traditional, faithful translator' and claimed that in her opinion the translator should render the original 'as it is', respecting the original author's voice. The next minute she was, however, explaining how a particular book had to be toned down and softened for Finnish readers because its American-style argumentation would have been counterproductive in Finland. While one could of course argue that the procedure was in fact in keeping with her personal idea of fidelity, I am more inclined to see the mismatch between the words and the deeds as an indication that the translator in question had not paused to analyse the translation process.

A special case of lying is lying that is not expected to go unnoticed. One such case is the late Pentti Saarikoski. He was both a poet-writer and a prolific translator of authors from Homer to Joyce into Finnish. Saarikoski was a well-known eccentric figure, and he held a dominant position in the cultural life of Finland in the 1960s and 70s.<sup>42</sup> He was a strong personality as well as a highly appreciated 'virtuoso' translator, and the self-confident apologies that accompanied some of his translations were not intended to be taken seriously. Or, at least, that is how they have been read by his contemporary critics, who rather saw them as Saarikoski's cunning way of eliciting praise (Pihlajamaa 1969). I suspect this may be the case in many other prefaces as well, and even if one accepts the claim that translators' prefaces are notoriously apologetic (Robinson 1991, xii; see also Delisle 1993, 212–214), the apologetic rhetoric cannot be automatically interpreted as proof of a submissive attitude. The example of Saarikoski is also a good reminder that the role accorded to translators in a particular system is not a constant, and some translators (often, as in the case of Saarikoski, writer-translators) are allowed much more leeway than others (see also Aaltonen 1996, 199).

Compared to lying, *secrecy* is a more obvious strategy for a translator. This entails not only the absence of any preface or other paratextual explanations, but also the cases where such information exists but essential issues are left undiscussed. It is thus closely related to another useful strategy, that of *information overload*. In both cases the released information is in itself correct, but the important elements are either left out or hidden underneath an uncontrollable information overflow. Translators' prefaces often include valuable background information about the text in question but they may well completely avoid discussion about the process of translation, or they may be tiresomely pedantic and detailed lists of minor decisions but fail to even mention more decisive strategic choices. The translator may want to pose as a knowledgeable expert on the text (which s/he often enough is), and play down the less dignified role of the translator with its manipulatory aspects. For example, Jarkko Laine's prefaced Finnish translation of Manuel Puig's novel *Boquitas pintadas* (Laine 1978) seems to indicate dynamics of this kind. Laine's preface gives the reader a lengthy interpretation of the novel but does not even mention the fact that his

translation is based on Suzanne Jill Levine's English translation, let alone reflect on the effects of such multiple transformations. Considering the amount of rewriting during the English translation, this is a strange omission indeed. (See Chapter 4.2. above.)

There is a risk of information overload also in cases where the translator assumes a position of superiority with respect to readers, and uses every opportunity to educate the reader whom s/he assumes to be completely ignorant and in need of constant guidance. According to Richard Jacquemond, this feature is characteristic of the Orientalist ethos which assumes 'a totally ignorant reader, confronted with a totally new world, unable to come to grips with it unless he is guided step by step by the steady and authoritative hand of the omniscient Orientalist-translator, trained to decipher the otherwise unfathomable mysteries of the Orient' (1992, 150).

Another threat of information overload comes from the requirement of visibility itself. If every translation is expected to have a translator's explanatory paratext, a quite likely outcome will be an inflationary spiral of prefaces. Not every reader is interested in the process of translation, and not every solution needs to be justified by extensive explanations – nor do all publishers welcome translators' prefaces. Some texts may need to be more comprehensively rewritten than others, and some translators are willing to exercise their power of reinterpretation more effectively than others. But the problem is how to recognise these instances, especially if the translator does not want to come into the open. This is a moral decision: to base one's translation decisions, however dramatic, on ethically solid and tenable ground so that one can let readers know how the source text has been processed and why.

*Propaganda*, then, disseminates favourable information and leaves more problematic issues aside. Different from actual lying, the information is accurate, but crucially incomplete or biased. Depending on the subject matter and the sociocultural situation of the translation, translators can use prefaces to forward particular ideologies. For example, since translation involves cultural interaction, it is necessarily affected by visions of both the source and the target culture and their respective positions vis-à-vis each other. Translator's prefaces can therefore be harnessed for, say, nationalistic or internationalistic propaganda. The political aspect of prefaces has been pointed out by Sherry Simon. According to her, one can turn this state of affairs into an asset: 'Rather than dismissing prefaces for being too closely linked to political imperatives, I would like to suggest that they be read precisely at this level. [...] Prefaces are useful precisely because they trace the contours of literary ideology and expose for us the sociopolitical context which commands literary exchanges.' (Simon 1990, 112)

Propagandistic traits, too, might easily enter the prefaces of those translators who hold strong theoretical views on translation. Translation is an activity that welcomes – or even calls for – a combination of theoretical and practical work. Many translation theorists are also practising translators. Quite naturally, their prefaces may then operate as theoretical statements (in fact, a large number of canonised theoretical texts on translation are originally translator's prefaces). Theoretical aspects may then override the practical elements, and the text may be tilted toward preferred theoretical opinions and away from what actually has taken place in the individual translation process – since theory and practice do not always go hand in hand. For example, I

have felt some mismatch between Suzanne Jill Levine's theoretical opinions and her translations (see Chapter 4.2. above). This tendency may be most common in situations where translation takes place in a situation that is ideologically or politically highly charged: the actual translation strategies are often far less dramatic than what one might expect from the explanatory texts which may discuss ideas like 'radical intervention' or 'hijacking the text' (see von Flotow 1991). This assumption finds support in Sherry Simon's findings within the 'postcolonial' context of Quebec: comparing the translations of a Quebec writer, Jacques Brault, to his stated aim of producing 'non-translations', Simon comes to the conclusion that in his translations 'Brault has not deviated from conventional norms as much as his concept of 'non-traduction' might have suggested' (1999, 63).

Translators' testimonies offer important insights into the process of translation and are therefore valuable and fruitful material for research. But they do not give us direct and unmediated access to the translation process. Like anyone else producing a narrative of their action, translators may wish to colour the situation in their favour, tell the readers what they assume the readers want to hear, or stress those aspects they find most important and leave the unpleasant ones unsaid. Sometimes the most important issues may also remain on the unconscious level and go unnoticed by the translator, or the once generally accepted behaviour is only questioned by later readers and critics. Similar to translations themselves, translators' paratexts are also governed by changing norms and conventions. For many reasons, increased visibility is not an automatic guarantee of an explicit and transparent process. Assumptions of a straightforward link between visibility and the ethics of translation are also problematic. If one accepts the Bermanian view that translators have the right to do anything as long as they keep others informed, it follows that any translatorial solution becomes morally acceptable if it is brought into the open, and vice versa: each solution is morally suspect unless it is accompanied by an explanatory note.

The situation is further complicated by the link between visibility and reader expectations. According to Christiane Nord, for example, visibility is required when the translator for some reason needs to deviate from expectations (1991, 107). But do translators (or translation theorists) always even know who their readers will be, let alone their expectations towards the translation? Or, if we assume that lay readers trust the codes of ethics and other professional masks that hide the manipulatory aspects of translation, how many translations could in fact do without any explanations (cf. Pym's argument on the illusion of equivalence)? In other words, is it feasible to attach such priority to expectations, assuming that translators have a general responsibility to fulfil them, and if they cannot, they at least owe the readers an explanation? Can one expect uninitiated readers to have familiarised themselves so well with the intricacies of translating that their expectations are in line with the reality and the possibilities of translation? And why should they be: isn't it the task of the professional translator to use her/his expert knowledge and make the decisions? (Similarly, one could question the validity of the claim, frequently expressed in discussions on translation quality assessment, that the customer is always right and that translation quality can be measured by client satisfaction.)

## *Visibility and trust*

Trust can be seen as an essential prerequisite for any human interaction. For society to function we need to be able to trust other members of it to do their share: to fulfil contracts, follow traffic regulations, abide by laws and so forth. Since translating is social action, the element of trust also features in it. The concept of trust was introduced into translation theory by George Steiner (1992 [1975]) as part of his ‘hermeneutic motion’ which began with the translator’s initial trust that a source text is meaningful. Another, more obvious, aspect of translational trust is the fact that those who cannot read the original need to trust the translator. But in fact trust is needed in all translational relationships:

The translator also needs to trust the original writer, and also the commissioner of the translation: there must be a trust that the translation itself is worth doing. Translators must also trust that their readers will read the translation in good faith, that their readers in turn will trust that there is ‘something there’ in the translation that makes it worth reading. It is, in fact, not only the translator who must trust, but also the other parties to the translation act: readers, plus of course the commissioner of the translation, the publisher, and also the original writer (if still alive, of course). Translational trust works both ways.

*(Chesterman 1997, 180)*

The multitude of trust relations already indicates that ‘translational trust’ can hardly be a constant. Rather, it is a situational factor whose significance depends on the overall situation and the relationships of the participants. There are cases where translational trust can be defined as insignificant or at least tacit, like in those instances where the readers do not realise they are reading a translation, or the fact is of little importance to them. In the (business) relationship between the commissioner and the translator, trust may be most significant in the general and contractual sense of business transactions, in aspects like professional conduct, in-time delivery, or payments (translators’ professional codes of ethics and quality standards in fact largely concentrate on non-translational issues like these; see Vuorinen 1994). The *translational* trust may develop in new directions if the relationship lasts. From the initial trust that the translator is capable of producing an adequate (or ‘equivalent’) translation, the translator’s personal way of conducting the role of a translator may result in that the commissioner, for instance, learns to trust that the translator will give a polished version of a rudimentary source text, or a translator may become famous for always producing a clever or interesting, even if not flawless, translation, and can be trusted not to disappoint a reader willing to be surprised. In some cases, the trust relationship between the writer and the translator can even take the form of active collaboration (see Chapter 4.2. above), or the translational relationship may be a result of a prior ideological or aesthetic affinity, trust thus preceding the translation process (e.g., the Quebec circle of feminist writers and translators).

There are clear connections between trust and visibility or non-anonymity. One obvious reason for the importance of trust is the invisibility of translation. If there is a need for a translator to assist in communication, it follows that the translation



process is not completely controllable by the other participants because they lack the necessary skills. They will have to blindly trust the translator. This state of affairs fits well with the description of trust by Anthony Giddens. According to him, trust is related to absence in time and in space; there would be no need to trust anyone whose activities were continually visible and whose thought processes were transparent, or to trust any system whose workings were wholly known and understood. ‘The prime condition of requirements for trust’, Giddens continues, ‘is not lack of power but lack of full information. [...] *All trust is in a certain sense blind trust!*’ (Giddens 1990, 33; italics in the original)

It has been argued that because of the centrality of trust, translators need to work in such a way as to create and maintain trust (Chesterman 1997, 181). How this is done is a complex issue. Giddens stresses the importance of creating an aura of trustworthiness, for example by a suitable demeanour such as ‘the grave deliberations of the judge, solemn professionalism of the doctor, or stereotyped cheerfulness of the air cabin crew’ (Giddens 1990, 85), or, we might add, by the stereotyped self-effacement of the translator, functioning as an assurance of disinterestedness. The idea is to keep up a certain image, to create a division between ‘frontstage’ and ‘backstage’ performances (ibid., 86). In other words, Giddens supports a view similar to that of Anthony Pym: to create trust, the translator has to produce a mask of confidence and professional detachment, leaving the readers happily oblivious of the complexities and problems of the process, alleviating any misgivings they might have had. As an air passenger, the logic goes, rather wants to be spared all the details and risks of flying, and just wishes to be transported from point A to point B with as little delay as possible, so users of translations just want to get text B without worrying too much about how it relates to text A. While this can be interpreted as the successful creation of a trusting atmosphere, it is important to differentiate between trust and dependency (see Smart 1999, 71): one could argue that without the necessary expertise and knowledge, the passenger/reader is not so much in a position to choose between trusting or mistrusting the pilot/translator in question, but is rather dependent on the knowledgeable expert to get to the destination.

For Giddens and Pym, the creation of trustworthiness is, at least to some extent, a conscious choice of strategic invisibility or limited transparency. Zygmunt Bauman goes even further, maintaining that visibility is not even a possible option. According to him, moral action is un-reasonable, and cannot be explicated. It is ‘negligent of reasons, refers to no communicable knowledge and is unable to mount an argued self-defence, let alone convince those in doubt to accept its results’ (1993, 166). Bauman’s view is thus in direct opposition to the ethics of visibility and explicitness. According to him, the moral person is condemned to an ‘incurable solitude’ (ibid., 183), unable to communicate the choices nor to negotiate the reasons or principles of action, struggling alone among the aporias and ambivalence of morality. Bauman and Pym, in other words, come to the same position against visibility from completely different directions: whereas Pym is developing an ethics of collective anonymity and professional solidarity, Bauman refuses the possibility of collective reasoning in moral issues (for more on individuality and collectivity see Chapter 5.3. below). This kind of contradictoriness, together with the problems and limits discussed in the previous section, suggests that visibility can hardly be the simple solution to the problem of

ethics it is sometimes depicted as in contemporary translation studies. Rather, it seems to involve all kinds of complexities that may in fact leave it open to as many uses and interpretations as its predecessor, the notion of fidelity.

If visibility is an ambivalent notion, the same can be said of trust. Ambivalence lies at the core of all trust relations: trust is only needed where there is ignorance, yet ignorance always provides grounds for scepticism or at least caution (Giddens 1990, 89). Human life is based on mutual trust, but at the same time we fear that we may be deceived, that *homo homini lupus est*. The two contradictory aspects are simultaneously true: 'We trust and we do not; we are equally afraid of trusting (that will render us easy prey to any confidence man) and mistrusting (regular mistrust would render our life unbearable)' (Bauman 1993, 115). The link between mistrust and ignorance seems to support the case of visibility: by diminishing ignorance one diminishes mistrust. One might assume that the more the readers know about the process of translation and the options available for the translator generally and in particular situations, and the better they are aware of the various trends and fashions in the history of translation, the less likely they are to revert to radical mistrust when faced with a case going against their personal preferences. But even if this were the case, it remains unclear whether, or to what extent, strategies of visibility (textual, paratextual or extratextual) can in fact address the crucial issues.

Trust includes a tacit moral demand: the trusting person tacitly demands to be respected and not to be deceived (see Lagerspetz 1996). In the ambivalent terrain of trust and mistrust, Pym's mask of professionalism seems to be a handy outfit, but Venuti and the visibility camp also seem to have a point in arguing for *unmasking* the process of translation. For optimal trust, the best result may be attained by wise and strategic use of both invisibility and visibility. Too much information for an unprepared audience may result in added mistrust, but a permanent division between frontstage and backstage performances is also vulnerable if it sustains an illusion that is easily broken. The role of visibility, whatever form it may take, would thus be to narrow the gap between the stages so that a glimpse of the backstage is not in direct contradiction with what is shown on the frontstage. And the other way round: the smaller the gap, the less there is need to restrict access to the backstage. In spite of their risks and limits, in the long run visibility and explicitness therefore seem to have more potential for creating trustworthiness than just hiding behind the mask of professionalism. This conclusion, however, is *not* tantamount to arguing that visibility is ethically or morally preferable to anonymity. I suspect the debate will remain inconclusive: the values of each strategy can only be debated in particular situations and in relation to the adopted translation strategies.

## Lone riders and team players

In their attitude towards individuality and collectivity, Pym and Venuti stress opposite poles: Pym is developing a professional, collective ethics of a like-minded group tied together by mutual responsibilities; Venuti propagates individual dissidence going, if necessary, against the generally accepted norms of the profession. In stressing the individuality of moral choices, Venuti is in line with the postmodern ethics as

expressed by Bauman. In his discussion of individuality versus universalism, Bauman relies heavily on Emmanuel Levinas's ethics of being *for* the Other. It stresses the asymmetrical nature of the relationship, that is, the relationship remains ethical only as long as my responsibility for the Other is unsolicited by the Other and not supported by any wish for reciprocity (Bauman 1993, 47–61 *et passim*). According to Bauman, this moral responsibility can only be individual, any attempt to universalise or collectivise the demand destroys it. Instead of the sphere of morality we would then return to the domains of Law, rules and business-like transactions. The demand has to remain silent, 'confused and confusing', leaving the moral self forever uncertain over the interpretation (see *ibid.*, 80).

Morality is undoubtedly a matter of conscience, and therefore fundamentally individual. Any attempt to preordain it is to shift the focus from pure morality to the sphere of norms and rules. But precisely because of the essential loneliness of the moral self, I do not see it necessary to draw too strong a division between the collective approach as expressed by Anthony Pym and the individualistic stance of Lawrence Venuti. From the point of view of ethics, the value of the collective group is not so much to be found in a norm-setting function, but in the possibilities it offers for alleviating (for diminishing even if not resolving) the uncertainties and anxieties. While the final responsibility lies on the shoulders of the individual, I do not see any reason for a solipsistic withdrawal from discussions and debates with others dealing with similar dilemmas (cf. Bauman 1993, 244). In other words, while I doubt the possibilities or even desirability of ever creating a species of intercultural communicators all united in their ethical aims, the professionalisation of translators might give the necessary support for the Venutian resistant translator struggling against the odds to do the right thing.

Interestingly, this view finds support in Pym's argumentation. Before engaging in developing the intercultural professional ethics he actually questions the usefulness of his project in stating that the translator only enters the sphere of ethics when s/he begins to doubt the adequacy of the commonly agreed professional rules and norms. Pym's sphere of doubt is very similar to Derrida's notion of undecidability: each free decision has to be preceded by a moment of undecidability, of critical reconsideration of the applicability of pre-existing rules (see Chapter 2.2. above). The ethics of this sphere of doubt is not prescriptive, but an aid for orientating and for conceptualising the problems and for finding satisfactory solutions. The individual translator, Pym argues, always navigates on the basis of his or her own choices, and the aim of ethical discourse is to help him or her to see more clearly, to debate, and to decide (1997, 68–69).

The issue of collectivity versus individuality may well indicate a fundamental shift in the work of translators. Traditionally, translators have typically been depicted as lone hermits toiling in isolation. The picture may never have been all that accurate, but it is certainly ill-suited for many contemporary translation situations. In many industrial and administrative settings translators work as members of teams, and their input has to fit in with the larger project. Even home-based freelance translators are connected to a network of people and have to get used to having their texts revised and edited. It is even arguable whether literary translators, the epitomes of individualist translation, really work in such solitude and will continue to do so. A case in point is

feminist translation which is a mainly literary and scholarly activity. It is essentially a collective enterprise, based on coauthorship or collaboration between the author (or auther, as the neologism has it) and the translator, and further extended to like-minded readers. In other words, the radicalism of radical feminist translation practices is to be interpreted within this communal framework where there exists a tacit agreement over the basic principles and shared responsibility for the end product.

The ethical theories of both Bauman and Derrida are fundamentally individualistic, and they fail to acknowledge the collective aspects of moral issues. But in my view the sphere of ethics is irreducibly *both* individual *and* collective. Drawing on Biblical sources, the philosopher and theologian Terho Pursiainen has identified the two basic pillars of ethics as crystallised by the first two questions God asked humans: ‘Where are you Adam?’ and ‘Where is your brother Abel?’ (1999, 13). First of all, morality presumes identity, an awareness of where I stand and what I stand for. But it is equally important to know what my relation to others is, who and what I am responsible for. These two questions cannot, in fact, be answered separately. In the realm of translation, the first question refers to placing oneself in the historical, cultural and political context and determining what are the causes I see as essential to promote in this situation. The answer can be, for instance, cultural reform, feminism, or nationalism. The second question, then, sets the limits both to which causes are acceptable and which means can be used to promote them. For example, to what extent can a translator’s feminist approach colour the translations of those writers who do not share the same view (cf. Levine 1991)? As Eve Tavor Bannet puts it, ‘the ethics of translation is an ethics of responsibility – translation is a matter of what one person, one text, is doing to or for another’ (1993, 174). The second question also leads us back to Pym’s basic argument that translators are primarily responsible to other translators, to their profession. In accepting a commission, the translator makes a commitment not only as an individual but also as a representative of the profession. But whereas Pym plays down the individual aspects, answering the first question of identity can hardly be separated from dealing with the second question of responsibility. The two aspects are both intrinsically part of any translation: translating is both a social and a personal act (see also Chesterman 1997, 194; cf. Robinson 1991). Thus, the translator is also both an individual and a social actor, and the ethics of translation needs to cater for both aspects: ‘as a moral person, I am alone, though as a social person I am always *with* others’ (Bauman 1993, 60; italics in the original).

## Beyond textuality

Translation is not just about transferring texts to new contexts, it is about mediating ideas, views and preferences. The translator’s responsibility cannot therefore be considered on a textual level alone. The ethics of translation cannot be fully covered by regulating the relations between source and target texts, nor between the immediate participants in the translation process. In fact, Anthony Pym has even argued that the whole issue of ethics only arises if one ceases to perceive translation as a linguistic phenomenon only (1992a, 160). The extent of the translator’s responsibilities has been

expressed by Gillian Lane-Mercier as including, in addition to ‘the semantic responsibility’, ‘his or her aesthetic, ideological and political responsibility’ (1997, 44). This extension epitomises the difference between the ethics of sameness and the ethics of difference: once we abandon the quest for sameness, the multitude of differences opens the question of ethics into new domains. These domains have to some extent already been charted in descriptive and cultural translation studies, but the explicit extension of ethics outside the immediate textual context is a relatively recent development.

The rhetoric of responsibility emphasises the social aspects of translation: the translator is not alone in the situation but needs to take into account the values and needs of other participants in the process. In contrast to fidelity, where the only significant other is to be found in the source, the notion of responsibility encompasses both source and target sides. This inclusion immediately shifts the ethics of translation outside the realm of secure loyalty, introducing the possibility of conflicting interests. The translator has responsibilities not only towards the original writer but also towards the commissioner of the translation, towards its future readers, as well as towards other translators. In most discussions, this is where the list of ‘meaningful others’ ends (cf. Smart 1999, 89). A crucial question for the ethics of translation, however, is whether it is enough to keep those near and dear happy and satisfied, or whether the responsibility of translators can be seen to extend also to some other others not directly and actively involved in the translation process. In his postmodern ethics, Zygmunt Bauman stresses that a moral actor cannot ignore long-term and distant effects, even if they are necessarily covered in uncertainty. Any performance needs to be subjected to a second degree evaluation ‘by standards not necessarily specific to the task at hand and most likely to be oblivious to the direct or indirect gains and losses of its performer’ (1993, 221). In translation this would mean that the responsibility has to surpass the immediate participants, and the translator has to reflect on aspects outside the immediate textual reference. Morality presupposes ‘the sense of a responsibility without limits’ (Derrida 1992, 19). The limitless responsibility also entails that morality is always *à venir* (see *ibid.*, 27). It can never be achieved once and for all. But it still remains the responsibility of every translator to aim at morally tenable solutions in all cases.

Venuti’s and Pym’s translation ethics are both based on an understanding that responsibilities and moral commitments cannot be determined by focusing on the immediate translation commission alone. In addition to the immediate relationships between the author, commissioner, translator and reader, each individual translation project is also part of a larger network that needs to be taken into account in decision-making. For Venuti, the ultimate ethical and political implications of translation extend to issues like world peace and democratic geopolitical relations (1995, 20; 1998a, 25). Initially, Pym is averse to this kind of inclusion of extratextual concerns in discussions of translators’ ethics, maintaining that non-translational ideologies must lie beyond the space in which a *professional* ethics can be developed (1992a, 167). But the more he has concentrated on the issue of ethics, the more importance the wider social context has acquired in Pym’s texts, and while he refuses the possibilities of writing some kind of checklists of acceptable source text contents for professional translators, his own aim is to formulate the general social aims of the profession. For

instance, he ponders on the possibilities that translators have for bypassing ideal anonymity in the hope of exerting influence on the way cultures perceive each other (ibid., 62–63) and maintains that ‘the ultimate aim of translation is to improve the cultural relations with which they [translators] are concerned’ (ibid., 169). In an article published in 1995, Pym formulates this ultimate goal of translation in general within a wider social ethics as ‘the attainment of happiness’ (1995b, 602). *Pour une éthique du traducteur* (1997a), then, is an extended effort to think through the ways in which translators as a collectivity could fulfil this goal of ‘happiness’. In the end, Pym’s position is strikingly similar to that of Venuti. Similar to Venuti’s vision of resistant translators as promoters of more democratic cultural exchange, Pym’s intercultural professionals work to improve intercultural relations, the long-term benefits of social solidarity and mutual understanding transcending the immediate needs of a particular client (Pym 1997a, 132; see also Venuti 1998a, 84).

Linking the ethics of translation to a wider context logically leads to a certain relativisation. Since the contextual factors are particular to each case, the best practice cannot be determined in advance and collectively. Consequently, both Venuti and Pym have included relativising elements in their theoretical framework. Even though Venuti puts special emphasis on the foreignising method, he stresses that his preference is caused by the situational factors in contemporary Anglo-American culture. His notion of the ethics of location is a reminder that in different circumstances a different strategy may be more suited. Pym, then, situates all translators within the intercultural space and explicitly attempts to formulate a general and collective ethics for them. But the limits of such an enterprise are also acknowledged, even though they are best formulated in his critique of Berman, whom Pym accuses of excluding all those situations where relations with the foreign become complicated and of remaining silent on the socio-economic constraints and contextual factors affecting translations (Pym 1997a, 89).

Even if theory, particularly through the notion of fidelity, has often excluded extratextual factors, translators have in practice always taken into account contextual factors. In different historical periods and different cultural contexts, the values and causes that govern the process of translation have differed. It is illustrative, for instance, to compare the moral commitments of the Chinese translator Lin Shu from the early 20th century (see Venuti 1998a, 179–180) with more contemporary ethical issues. Whereas Lin considered it as valuable to promote Confucian ethics, a contemporary translator might, for example, forward the feminist cause through particular textual strategies or selection of material, or promote ecological awareness and fight the dominance of transnational companies by placing a translation at the disposal of certain interest groups (see Robinson 1997b, 32–33).

Lin Shu’s translations were, according to Venuti, also intended to strengthen the imperial culture. These patriotic or nationalist tendencies have since fallen into disrepute, as indicated by Pym’s and Venuti’s united criticism of the nationalistic traits in Schleiermacher (see Chapter 4.1. above). But in judging earlier contributions on contemporary standards one overlooks the changes in the (geo)political context. For example, Schleiermacher’s Germany was composed of a fragmented set of little states, and the attempt to create a unified nation necessitated explicit and forcible announcements of national identity. Schleiermacher did not live in a contemporary

postmodern society, where multiculturalism and split identities are often considered valuable. For him, enforcing and enriching the culture he felt his own was a valuable goal, not a form of questionable ethnocentrism.

While it would be misleading to argue that the contemporary discourse on translation has no predecessors or that we are moving into completely new terrains, it is also essential to take into account the contextual differences. A similar point of historical contextualisation is made by Jean Delisle in his survey of the similarities between medieval French translators and contemporary feminist translators (1993). According to him, there are clear similarities between the strategies of these two groups, and one can also find parallel themes in the political motivation behind their work, but the socio-historical context is totally different, and the central issues that the translators confront are thus totally different, too. While the translation strategies of both groups are politically loaded, and while both attempt to affectuate a change in the social constellation, their target is different: whereas the medieval translators attack the dominance of Latin, the feminist translators unsettle the dominance of patriarchal language. Both groups are, in other words, situated in time and space, responding to the burning issues of their own socio-historical setting.<sup>43</sup>





## 6. Awakenings

In charting the postmodern tendencies in the study of translation it has been my conscious aim to try and reach beyond them towards a new terrain where undecidability and ambivalence are neither fought against or denied nor embraced and celebrated. In spite of the euphoria of some of its celebrants, postmodernity is not, and cannot be, a wholly new departure, neither in the sphere of academic research nor as a social system. Postmodern theories are valuable as critical voices and radical ways of rethinking, but trying to build on them one soon realises that the ground is not very solid. This is not to say postmodern theories are somehow inadequate or useless. The concept of postmodernity has successfully coordinated a variety of new forms of practice and social organisation with new ways of thinking and theorising. But at the same time, the critical and self-marginalising character typical of postmodern theories precludes the possibilities for radically new openings.

While representatives of the postmodern tendencies in translation theory, Rosemary Arrojo in particular, have engaged in a critical reevaluation of various other approaches, the contributions of deconstructive, feminist and postcolonial scholars (apart from Venuti) have solicited rather scant critical reflection within translation studies in general. Their work has been wholeheartedly embraced by some, and simply ignored by others. In this thesis it has been my goal to provide a critical overview of the postmodern tendencies in translation theories, with particular emphasis on deconstruction and associated theories. Within translation studies, the new approaches have successfully pointed out the failures and omissions of previous viewpoints, bringing to the forefront issues like the masculine bias of many translation theories or the limits of the Western/European perspective in translation studies. Reading the postmodern approaches together one can also identify several shared aspects, such as the need to overcome the logic of either/or, to acknowledge the situationality of translation, and to take into account both individual and collective aspects of morality and ethics, as well as the necessity to rethink the question of where to draw the limits of translators' contextual responsibilities. These features indicate directions for future discussions.

During the course of this exploration of the ethics of translation it has become increasingly evident that ethics, postmodern ethics in particular, cannot provide translators with a ready-made set of solutions to all the moral problems. I do not have answers to all moral dilemmas a translator may have to face. But it may sometimes be even more important to ask the right questions. The task of ethical theory is not to give instructions, but this does not mean it could not have practical aims. By shedding light on the ethico-moral dimensions of translation I wish to challenge the reader to contemplate the issue, not necessarily agreeing with me but pausing to reflect on the matter seriously and thoroughly. Descriptivist tendencies in translation studies have advocated the image of an impartial and objective scholar, shying away from any

value judgements. My own view of the role of the scholar is different: I see it as the duty of the scholar to offer a wider theoretical perspective on issues relevant for practice, and also to use this theoretical vantage point in analysing and assessing the values and shortcomings of different approaches. I would like to see my position as a researcher as being rather similar to the role of the philosopher as expressed by Hannah Arendt: 'The role of the philosopher is not to rule the city but to be its 'gadfly', nor to tell philosophical truths but to make citizens more truthful' (cited in Critchley 1992, 237).

This added truthfulness is related to the notion of awakening that Zygmunt Bauman borrows from Levinas. This 'wondrous event' is the pre-ethical beginning and precondition of all morality. And importantly, awakening is conditional: one may awake, or one may remain asleep. 'Being moral is a chance which may be taken up; yet it may be also, and as easily, forfeited' (Bauman 1993, 76–77). The ability to act morally may be dormant, but it is there in every one of us. It is, in fact, impossible to discuss morality, or moral conscience, without presupposing a moral agent, aware of her/his actions and their consequences. The new approaches to translation build on the need for translators to be self-conscious and self-critical, taking responsibility for the translation and for the social reality. Feminist and postcolonial translators enlist their translations to forward a political agenda, Venuti and Pym assign translators the task of promoting democratic cultural exchange and of improving intercultural relations. And the whole notion of visibility presupposes that translators always both know what they are doing and why and are also willing and capable of explaining this to others.

Self-awareness is, in other words, a highly regarded virtue, often considered to be a sign of true professionalism. In Andrew Chesterman's schema, self-awareness is depicted as the final stage in the translator's path towards expertise. This self-awareness can, according to Chesterman, 'free one from inappropriate dogmas' and from translating blindly (1997, 163). The same idea of professionalism is expressed even more strongly by Rosemary Arrojo, according to whom research on visibility and the framework of deconstruction can raise awareness among practising translators and 'equip aspiring professionals with the critical background which will allow them to become fully responsible translators, well aware of their authorial voices' and help them make the transition from 'sensitive amateurs or talented craftsmen to self-conscious writers' (1998a, 44; see also Arrojo 1993, 145–147).<sup>44</sup>

While a certain amount of self-awareness and critical reflection on one's own work is, no doubt, a precondition for conscious moral, ethical, ideological or political choices, it is also, to some extent, a necessary illusion. A translator is in many ways in a position similar to that of the deconstructive critic:

And as she deconstructs, all protestations to the contrary, the critic necessarily assumes that she at least, and for the time being, means what she says. Even the declaration of her vulnerability must come, after all, in the controlling language of demonstration and reference. In other words, the critic provisionally forgets that her own text is necessarily self-deconstructed, always already a palimpsest.

*(Spivak 1976, lxxvii)*

But this provisional 'forgetfulness' is a necessary condition for avoiding the paralysing effect of undecidability:

If we want to start something, we must ignore that our starting point is, *all efforts taken*, shaky. If we want to get something done, we must ignore that, *all provisions made*, the end will be inconclusive. This ignoring is not active forgetfulness; it is, rather, an active *marginalizing* of the marshiness, the swampiness, the lack of firm grounding in the margins, at beginning and end.

(Spivak 1999, 175; italics in the original)

Awakening cannot only be interpreted as increased (self-)awareness, or else it would have to be interpreted as an increased awareness of the limits of such awareness. If anything, postmodern approaches such as Derrida's have made us more aware of the limits of self-awareness. Postmodern ethics accepts from the beginning the impossibility of knowing whether even our best intentions will lead to the intended results, as well as the impossibility of guaranteeing moral action by imposing any models. Ambivalence lies at the heart of both actions and humans. Ethics can never be resolved once and for all since moral aspects need to be continuously renegotiated as conditions and situations change. In discussions of ethics, the final conclusion can never be reached. This incompleteness is, in fact, the essence of morality, its opportunity and its hope.



## Notes

1. The European Union has often been criticised for the costs of translation. But the institutional attitude is also admirable in that unlike many other organisations it has refused to see the linguistic diversity in Europe as an obstacle and a ‘curse’ but rather as a richness to be valued and supported.
2. Steiner’s periodisation treats the period from Cicero to Hölderlin and Schleiermacher as a monolithic entity, but it is, of course, necessary to remember that the period contains various different approaches, some of them in dire opposition to the general trend.
3. The term ‘translation studies’ coined by James Holmes is sometimes used to refer to this group alone (e.g., Gentzler 1993), but in my usage it covers not only their approach but the whole discipline.
4. Skopos theory is also explicitly *not* limited to literary translation, and the components of text analysis and text typology have provided useful tools for both non-literary translation theory and practice (see, e.g., Nord 1991).
5. From the point of view of ethics and quality assessment, skopos theory may seem a straightforward theory: one just measures the extent to which the intended skopos has been fulfilled. It is, however, important to keep in mind that there can be several equally acceptable ways to produce a translation that meets a particular function. Roland Freihoff (1991) has drawn attention to the creative aspects of translation via comparing translation to architecture: even in the case of functionalist architecture one can argue that form does not simply follow function. While the function as well as other variables, such as the building site or budget, create a framework for the project, in the end the outcome is a result of a creative process. In fact, form follows the individual architect’s personal vision, her/his approach. This, in turn, opens up both architecture and translation from the sphere of functionality towards the realms of aesthetics, ethics and social responsibilities.
6. For a welcome attempt to historicise Derrida see Helmling 1994.
7. While I think that Airaksinen’s argument as such is nonsense, it is probably true that a postmodern approach to environmental issues is different from a modern one, the stress being on coexistence and mutual dependency rather than control and domination.
8. This accusation directed against postmodern theories quite admittedly finds ample support in, for example, Jean Baudrillard’s statements that all compassion and caring is in fact provocative or tactless (see, e.g., Baudrillard 1986). As I hope to show, it is less easy to find evidence of a similar withdrawal in Derrida’s texts.
9. For a representative sample of academic responses to Paul de Man’s war-time journalism see Hamacher et al. 1989. Among other contributions, representing both sides of the debate, the volume also contains a revised version of Derrida’s text ‘Like the Sound of the Sea Deep Within a Shell: Paul de Man’s War’, translated by Peggy Kamuf (pp. 127–164). For critiques of Derrida’s article, and Derrida’s rather furious response to the criticism, see also *Critical Inquiry* Vol 15, No 4 (Summer

1989). For an illustrative selection of both journalistic and academic criticism (mainly American) – ranging from accusations of nihilism and apocalyptic hype to critical terrorism – against deconstruction in general see Lehman 1991. Some of the critique collected by Lehman is directed at Derrida and French deconstruction, and some is expressed with reference to deconstruction within the American academic system, while some critics seem to use the term ‘deconstruction’ to refer to a wide range of phenomena in a sense similar to the concept ‘postmodern’ in my usage.

10. Different from Derrida’s own project, American deconstructionism is mainly a form of literary criticism, and for my present purposes Paul de Man the theoretician is of no particular importance (on the fortunes of the continental deconstruction in the United States see, e.g., Comay 1991, Lehman 1991 and Burke 1993, 162–169). I do not, therefore, want to dwell on de Man’s early writings, nor do I want to participate in extending or reactivating the ‘trial’. But in questioning the legitimacy of deconstruction as a whole – in fact, it has even been argued that the twin Heidegger and de Man scandals were ‘carefully orchestrated to delegitimize Derridean deconstruction’ (Jameson 1991, 257) – the controversy did have repercussions on Derrida. Amid the outcry, Derrida was the first to rise to defend Paul de Man against hasty judgements as de Man, having died a few years earlier, was no longer there to speak for himself. While Derrida, himself a Jew, has not been directly accused of anti-Semitism, his refusal to join the chorus of reproof made deconstruction even more suspect.
11. This ethical turn was, especially in its early stages during the 1980s largely effectuated in dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas. The scope and aims of this present study do not allow for an extensive analysis of their complicated relationship or of the intricacies of Levinas’s ethical thinking. For a multifaceted (re)reading of Levinas and Derrida see Bernasconi and Critchley (eds.) 1991; see also Critchley 1992 and Cornell 1992.
12. In fact, it has even been argued that deconstruction is *too* concerned with the ethical, tending towards excessive ‘ethicization’ (Laclau 1996, 66).
13. Derrida is himself largely to blame for the varied reception of his work. He quite deliberately avoids clear-cut messages of definitive positions and is notorious for contradicting himself. This tendency is amusingly described by Steven Helmling’s lament that ‘it would take a Borges to imagine the sort of alternative universe in which an interviewer asks Derrida a question in the form, “So, then, you are saying X, Y, and Z?” and Derrida replies, “Yes; exactly; quite so.”’ (1994, 4)
14. For a profound analysis of Barthes and Foucault on the subject – and Derrida, for that matter, since they are seen to form a group – see Burke (1993). Burke claims that the need to stress the death of the author only implies a continued obsession with the figure: ‘In texts which had somehow passed beyond the author, the death of the author would not be at issue’ (Burke 1993, 154). Discerning an eternal return of the author in Barthes’s and Foucault’s texts (agreeing that in Derrida’s writing the author was never really gone; see also Norris 1989, 218–223), Burke dismisses this internal contradiction as ‘a piece of logodaedaly, a legerdemain’ (1993, 30). A more empathetic reading might perceive a deconstructive move: the figure of the author, looming large and forming an obstacle for the new textuality,

had to be first dethroned (or even figuratively killed) before he (not yet 'she', as the feminist critique has often complained) could re-enter the scene in a new, 'deconstructed' form.

15. Following, not without irony, the deconstructive logic that the marginal may turn out to be more revealing than the central, the scandal of Paul de Man did, no doubt, effectively prove the point that authors and contexts cannot be ignored in reading. But in my view, this revelation of authorship is not in direct contradiction with Derrida's position on the issue.
16. See also 148 and 172–173; see also Koskinen 1994c; cf. Vermeer's very similar position within the framework of skopos theory in 1996, 89–93.
17. Sensitivity to the historical perspective has sometimes been manifestly absent from writings with postmodern tendencies. For a critique of the inadequate historical awareness within translation studies see Paloposki 1996.
18. In stressing freedom and play, Gentzler seems to continue the 'mistranslation' of Derrida's French 'jeu' as 'freeplay' in the English translation of 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences', the lecture at a conference at Johns Hopkins University in 1966 that inaugurated Derrida's fame and influence in American universities (Derrida 1986a; see Comay 1991, 50).
19. Interestingly, Gentzler characterises Derrida's writing in 'Des Tours de Babel' as 'quasi-religious' (1993, 166). In all likelihood Gentzler has failed to take notice of Derrida's typical style of interweaving his own arguments with the earlier text he is working on (in this case Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator'). In his texts, interlaced authorial voices are often hard to disentangle. However, the messianic style is in that particular text probably more Benjamin's than Derrida's. In another context, Derrida is openly critical of Benjamin's insistence on the messianic character of translation (1985b, 147).
20. Even though Gentzler does not explicitly endorse the interpretation of deconstruction largely adopted within American literary theory, and only refers to Paul de Man in reference to Walter Benjamin, his approach has some obvious affinities with American deconstructionism. The differences in Anglo-American and European responses to deconstruction suggest a complex set of factors related to both translation and dissemination of ideas (see Comay 1991; Simon 1996, 92–95). This line of investigation, intriguing as it is, remains outside the scope of the present thesis. It is, however, worth pointing out that while I have read some of Derrida's texts both in French and in English (and also in Finnish, those few that have been translated), in my interpretation I rely heavily on the English translations.
21. In her latest book, Spivak actually distances herself from postcolonial theory, arguing that much of academic postcolonialism in the United States is in fact 'bogus' (1999, 358).
22. Maria Tymoczko (2000) has analysed the recent theoretical interest in the possibility of using translation for geopolitical agenda and political engagement, developing a notion of translation *engagée*, translation with an activist component. She maintains that translation is always partial, and thus also partisan: engaged and committed,

either implicitly or explicitly. The political aspect would thus be present in every translation, but Tymoczko's prime interest is directed to cases where translations are actually used to advance particular social movements and to achieve demonstrable social and political change (such as feminist or cannibalist translation). Venuti's theoretical framework or postcolonial theories in their present state do not, Tymoczko argues, offer us usable analytical tools or theoretical concepts to describe and analyse translation and engagement. The most promising directions for a suitable theoretical framework she finds in a more mature phase of postcolonial theories or in developing approaches to translation based on deconstruction. But the most sobering advice in the article may well be the one based on her personal experience: 'I personally would recommend that if a person were interested in being engaged, he or she should undertake direct action rather than sublimated textualized political involvement' (ibid., 41).

23. Even though this dualism was formalised and extensively debated during the Romantic period, it is not an exclusively Romantic invention. According to George Steiner, it is 'a rough and ready division' running through the history and practice of translation (1992, 264).
24. An extreme example of the revival can be found in Susan Bassnett's (probably not altogether serious) proposal. Drawing on Hélène Cixous's views of reading as lovemaking, she has called for 'an orgasmic theory of translation' (cited in Arrojo 1995, 68). In opposition to 'colonialist' and 'sexist' conceptions of translation, this theory would perceive translation as a fusion of elements in an encounter that is mutual, pleasurable and respectful.
25. Incidentally, in aiming to criticise Venuti's claim of fluency as a radically English phenomenon, Anthony Pym almost accidentally indicates that Toury's tentative law on 'major' languages/cultures being less tolerant of interference might be equally suspect. Pym uses Toury's argument to claim that fluency is a natural option for 'a culture as relatively major, prestigious and big as Anglo-Americandom' and indicates that other cultures in a similar position do the same. Compared to his previous analysis of the Brazilian tendency towards fluency, the naturalistic explanation seems rather lame. If Toury's law was correct, we should be able to infer that Brazil is 'major and prestigious', and Pym had just claimed the opposite to be the case (Pym 1996, 170–171).
26. An interesting parallel to Pym's rereading of the *Blending* as an inherently positive identity as opposed to a previous negative interpretation given by Schleiermacher is to be found in Bauman's discussion of parvenus and pariahs as the heroes and victims of modernity (Bauman 1997, 71–82).
27. This is an example of the *Argumentum ad Nazium* typical of many discussions on ethics, aiming to challenge relativism by using Nazism as a paradigm of evil (see Benn 1998, 16–17; cf. the Paul de Man controversy discussed in Chapter 2.2. above; see also Bauman 1993, 227–228).
28. This is not to be interpreted as an attempt to exclude money from ethical considerations. On the contrary, in today's consumer society money can be a significant force either for or against a particular ethics. But it is another thing completely to base an ethics on a calculation of economic gains and losses (cf.



Bauman 1993, 11).

29. For a critique of instrumentalism in translation theory see Robinson 1991.
30. The allusion to Ulysses is borrowed from a similar finding in a different context in Kuhalampi 1994.
31. Pym frequently stresses translators' anonymity, and the collective nature of the profession, eschewing all individuality. It is therefore an interesting contradiction that he wants to emphasise that he is searching for an ethics of the *translator*, not *translation* (1997a, 19; also, interestingly, he claims to be conducting the search as a translator, not a theorist, see *ibid.*, 68). I am, however, not sure how these two can be divided: the moral principles of the translator affect the translations, and all translations are manifestations of the ethics followed by a particular translator.
32. Cf. Susan Bassnett's definition of translation as 'a set of textual practices with which the writer and reader *collude*' (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998, 39; emphasis added).
33. On the importance of *pretending* in the translator's professionalisation process see Robinson 1997b, 196–202.
34. Interestingly, engineers are presently engaged in a similar attempt to formulate a professional ethics of their own, and they now have a specific 'Archimedean Oath' maintaining that engineers are always to work towards the benefits of both nature and human life.
35. Or, Pym might want to add, the one who does not get wrecked on the Derridean Islands of deconstruction (see Pym 1995a; cf. Koskinen 1996).
36. Ethics has recently become a 'trendy' topic in many spheres of social life. New codes of practice are being called for and formulated for professions and groups from EU institutions to ice hockey leagues. In corporations' marketing strategies ethics is rapidly replacing ecological awareness as a key to commercial success (on ecology and marketing see Beck 1995, 75–78), and many firms are beginning to polish their image by the means of ethical codes of practice. There is, of course, nothing wrong with raising awareness of the importance of ethical issues, and it is no doubt useful and necessary to discuss these matters and to aim at generally accepted instructions. But the existence of an ethical code is in itself little more than a marketing gimmick or a convenient way of lulling one's conscience. If those involved do not make a personal moral commitment to it, a code of practice has very limited value.
37. After receiving a complaint, a Finnish national authority sent the complainer the directive at issue in English. When the incident was made public, one journalist asked whether the recipient spoke English. The answer was revealing: 'I have a college diploma and I have studied English for more than ten years. The directive was double Dutch to me.' (*Helsingin Sanomat* 4.4.1997, my translation; for similar problems in the Finnish Parliament see *Helsingin Sanomat* 21.3.1997)
38. This typology refers to outgoing translations (an overwhelming majority of translations, if not all, in 'small' languages like Finnish belong to this type, but the situation in French and English is remarkably different). Incoming translations can

naturally be divided similarly, but the strategies for translating them are in most cases likely to be based on their future use which, I assume, would normally be for in-house information.

39. The new and strange eurolect has not met with unanimous support back home in any member state. The English have called it 'eurofog', the French *brouillard linguistique* and so on (see also Koskinen 2000).
40. There are fascinating differences in attitudes and approaches in different language units, and, keeping in mind the centrality of assumed equivalence, it would be both interesting and illuminating to conduct an extensive comparative analysis of all language versions of particular documents.
41. A similar tendency away from binarism can be seen in notions related to the fuzzy logic and prototype theories (within translation studies see, e.g., Snell-Hornby 1988).
42. Saarikoski's role as a translator, and his continuing special status within the field of Finnish literary translation would merit a study in its own right. It is indeed a pity that while new research on Saarikoski is published almost annually in Finland, none of it has so far concentrated on his numerous translations.
43. It is also useful to keep in mind that the turns of history are sometimes unpredictable. 'History has a way of playing tricks on its principals' (Tymoczko 2000, 42). Lin Shu's attempt to strengthen imperial culture eventually contributed to the emperor's demise by helping to bring modernity to China (see Venuti 1998b, 141). Similarly, the heroic image of the Irish constructed in English translations of early Irish literature was a successful component in the fight for Irish independence, but in the end it became a 'cultural prison' and contributed to the violent conflicts in the North (Tymoczko 2000, 43).
44. There is, in contemporary theoretical accounts of translation, little room for translators' idiosyncrasies, intuition, or gut reactions (for an exception, see Robinson 1991). However, I suspect that in translators' everyday work, these phenomena will always have their role to play.

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