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PETER NEWMARK

## A NEW THEORY OF TRANSLATION

### 1. Introduction: The Wider Context

After (1) the substantial changes, both in the numbers of countries and the dimensions of population groups since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, (2) the opening up of the virtual computer languages of blogging, e-mails, the web and the ipods, and (3) the huge increase in economic and political global migrations – transnational, transcontinental and intracontinental – the face of the world's linguistic map started on a radical transformation. Economic and asylum-seekers' migrations went hand in hand, first with the need for public service interpreters and translators at the national frontiers and then at the local government, health and education, offices, followed, in principle at least, by mass foreign language teaching classes for the new immigrants. Political migrations or asylum seeking, sometimes in the murderous form of ethnic cleansing, imposed similar consequences, though too often the fanatical and/or elderly immigrants were reluctant and sometimes refused to acquire their new 'home' languages.

These mass migrations have resulted in a steep decrease in the UK in the number of truly native speakers, and a rise in the number of 'semi-native' speakers who are often used as interpreters. As interpreters, they are usually competent, but as translators, they are not. Semi-native translations' of authoritative texts are dangerous; in tourist and publicity material, where they are common, they may be funny, but local authorities responsible for public notices, reputable hotels, restaurants and places of entertainment, where such semi-native translations are at last declining, should avoid them.

Concomitantly, there has been a substantial increase in the authority of international organizations (the UN, the European Union, UNESCO, WHO, and, to a lesser extent, the Arab League and the Organisation of American States.) Further, there has been an enormous gain in world prominence in the NGOs (non-governmental organisations), and in particular, the world charities and foundations, such as Amnesty International, Oxfam, Cathod, Action Aid, Live Aid, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation – all these originating, please note, in the UK – as well as Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) and the Soros Foundation. These are now

quite openly ‘politicized’ on the basis of the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Their ‘intervention’ can no longer be regarded as ‘interference’. (‘No country has a right to interfere in the internal affairs of another’, said Harold Macmillan in his 1960 ‘winds of change’ speech ... and then came the boycotts! The virtue of ‘obedience’ began to fade, and ‘for king and country’, long ago mocked by the poet Wilfred Owen, only survived as a faded metaphor. Robin Cook, the British Foreign Secretary, made a pioneering speech in 1997, declaring that British foreign policy would from then on have an ethical dimension, and would no longer be guided by purely national interests; human rights would be put at the heart of its policy; after his death, the policy was hardly pursued.)

On the other hand, with the present exception of the one world power, the influence of the nation-state, and with it, in some cases, nationalism, has declined, whilst that of two of the (religious) civilizations, the Moslem in Asia and the Evangelical Christian in the United States, has increased. Few would now die ‘for king and country’, but every day some die for Allah.

As a result of all these directly or indirectly linguistic factors, as well as the huge advances in technology, transport and communications, leading to globalization, that is, global trade, global investments and global labour interchange, there is not only an increased necessity for foreign language speakers and readers (‘linguists’) of two or three languages and for various modes of interlinguistic communication, notably for translation; there is also the need and the recognized presence of an international auxiliary lingua franca.

English has for decades been the international language of air transport and of meteorology. Geographically, owing to the positions occupied by the declining British Empire, on which the sun never used to set, and the complementary dominance of the United States, English could not have a more favourable starting point as an international language. Furthermore, its most useful characteristics are:

1. Its monosyllabism, which enhances its concision and its emphatic quality.
2. Its flexible word order, which enables it to vary its emphasis as flexibly.
3. Its word-class changes of monosyllables; for example: to round, the round, round the corner, a round run, turn round – often strengthening the force of a verb by converting it to a noun (e.g. it’s a con, a read, a let down).
4. Its phrasal verbs, sometimes converted to phrasal nouns (a ‘run down’) and occasionally adjectives (‘run down’); these are frequently both metaphorical and physical, in parallel with the mind and the brain, and therefore often widely polysemantic and sometimes subtly ambiguous.
5. Its enormous unique vocabulary, combining the, in principle, intellectual polysyllabic Grecolatin with the, in principle, physical monosyllabic Anglo-Saxon words.
6. Its porous nature, due to the fact that, unlike many other languages, its contacts with most other languages have rarely, except for a period in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, been resisted, thus ensuring, in principle, that only the fittest words have survived, though many beautiful words have been lost.

7. The unique ‘-ing’ combination, which can be used as an adjective, a present participle, a noun, a verb-noun, (seeing you was a surprise’), the five imperfective active tenses (I shall be doing, I am doing, I was doing, I have been doing, I had been doing), and the present passive tense (this is being done.)

8. Shakespeare’s universal moral wisdom, his philosophical thought and his poetic and euphonious words, including about 1700 neologisms which he created, and above all the influential semi proverbial idioms that are so frequently quoted without attribution, in his work characterise the language. (There are about 1200 Shakespeare quotations in the Chambers *Dictionary of Quotations*, many of which may be regarded as keywords in the language.) His introduction of new meanings for existing words and of Latin and French words is also notable. [I thank David Crystal for the first statistic.] The meaning of his lyrics has been enhanced not only by Finzi, Gurney, Vaughan Williams, Britten in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and others, and by Schubert himself in ‘Who is Sylvia?’ and ‘Hark! Hark, the lark!’

9. The extraordinary wealth of poetry, from Langland and Chaucer through Keats and Shelley to Auden and Larkin, of which many quotations have merged into prose and have become part of the language.

10. Spelling. The orthography is more remote from its sound sequence than it is in any other language, which is an obstacle to the non-native speaker. Its advantage is that in some cases, the spelling reveals the etymology of a word and helps the learner to find a bridge word (e.g. through – thorough – *durch* (Ger.) to memorize it, but spelling is still a considerable handicap to the language learner.

11. The non-cultural, non-allusive variation of English serves as an available auxiliary lingua franca, which is more readily translatable than the usual more comprehensive idiomatic version.

## 2. The Closer Context

The closer context for a fresh approach to translation shows that the present prevailing theories of translation are not helpful. I give some illustrations:

1. ‘The translator must reproduce every fact and idea in the original, even if it’s a blatant lie. It’s not his job to make a moral judgement. He has to reproduce the original as though it’s the gospel truth.’ J.D.Graham in *The Translator’s Handbook*. ASLIB. 1989.

2. ‘I am wary of introducing the moral dimension into translation...there must be no shirking, even when the translator is acting for a cigarette manufacturer wanting to promote his products in Third World countries...he must put across his clients’ views, however repugnant.’ Geoffrey Kingscott in *Language International* Vol 2, No. 6 Dec.1990. [I find these two approaches to translation truly shocking, and I doubt whether more than a few translators would dare to adopt them in 2007]

3. According to Descriptive Translation Studies, the translation scholar’s task

is to analyze objectively the translations that are published, and not to relate them to any standards of quality or of moral value.

4. In the recent Institute of Translation and Interpreting (I.T.I.) annual general meeting (AGM), Jean-Pierre Mailhac restricted 'pure theory' to description and confined 'applied theory' to translation training, thereby implying that deduction should precede induction, and passing over the 'hunch', the hypothesis that precedes theory. (Mailhac, who is addicted to clichés, accepts translation theory, but he appears to be unaware of the new factors that have to be taken into account, and of the necessity of a new translation theory, in the presence of so much disagreement about the purpose and methods of translation.

5. The functionalist or skopos theory of Kussmaul, Vermeer, Nord, Reiss etc, which regards a text as a tender and the reader/commissioner as a client; the purpose of the the text is overriding and excludes stylistic considerations.

6. An ideological or post-modernist approach to translation, ranging from 'manipulative' (Hermans, Peter France, Venuti etc) to post-colonialist and cannibalistic; both approaches see the translator as essentially distorting the narrative and the style of the source language text for her own propagandist or commercial or cultural purposes. [No translator can completely eliminate this effect, but a good translator, as she revises, is always attempting to reduce it.]

7. Both Wittgenstein's famous remark, 'In most cases, the meaning of a word is its use', as well as much of the work in corpus analysis in the last thirty years, e.g. in John Sinclair's stimulating *Trust the Text* (Routledge 2005) have left the impression, particularly on translation scholars, that the meaning of a word can always be found in the 'living language of a text or a corpus, which is the only authority on the way words are used and make their meaning'; the dictionary is always secondary. This is mistaken. Words in translation texts and corpora are not infrequently misused and misplaced, and it may require the accumulated authority of a dictionary to correct them. A small example: for most of my life I thought that the meaning of 'mercenary' was 'mean'; as it is a pejorative word, it fitted various contexts and collocations, and I never learned its true meaning ('influenced by greed or desire for gain'), until I looked it up in a dictionary much later; I had surmised its meaning only from a number of contexts, and no one had explained it to me. I would say that in most, but not in all cases, a large up to date dictionary is more trustworthy than any single item in a corpus. All words have single basic meanings, which may be neutralised by some of the collocations or phrases or idioms of which they form a part; the more frequently used a word, the more subsidiary meanings it is likely to develop. (See G. Zipf's brilliant book *The Psychobiology of Language* (1935, reprinted 1965 Boston MIT Press).

8. Some of these idioms may be more frequently used than their independent forms. *Pace* John Sinclair, the basic meaning of 'to bet' is 'to wager', and that is how it is normally visualized; the fact that it is more commonly used in the two idioms 'I bet', where it means 'I guess' or 'I predict', and 'You bet', where it means, slightly more familiarly and insistently, 'Certainly' or 'You can be sure that...' without visualization, is irrelevant. Nevertheless, the analysis of large

texts and the appearance of the *Cobuild series*, directed and inspired by John Sinclair, have revitalized lexicography and benefited translators.

9. 'Translation theory? Spare us... That's the reaction to be expected from most practising translators...' (Emma Wagner)

### 3. Language Learning and Translation

Given the recent and present global migrations, my thesis is that language learning and translation, both of whose practitioners in the past have often shown a certain mutual hostility towards each other – they sometimes try to do each other out of their jobs – will have to be reconsidered, reassessed and reprogrammed in most countries in the world. The majority of recent immigrants will have a right to the services of public service interpreters and translators at the frontiers, at the local government offices, and at hospitals and social service offices. These services, as is now evident in the UK, are expensive, and immigrants, as new citizens, have the duty to learn at least how to speak, listen to and read the national language at say three month immersion courses. Desirably this would be without cost to themselves, and it would avoid later expense to the public. Many elderly, bigoted, uneducated and/or disabled people will object to this obligation, and a case can be made for some exemptions on health grounds. But the majority of these immigrants should take these language courses, seeing them as a necessary task, a grind, not an art or a skill, initially using their own language as a stepping stone, making use of translation *via* teachers and reference books. They would begin with words and with literally as well as idiomatically translated phrases – phrases and sentences in tourist phrase books should always be translated idiomatically and literally, but they never are – learning word groups categorized by basic subjects and by frequency. They should, as far as possible, acquire a 'semanticized' grammar (e.g. 'a transitive verb' as 'a verb requiring an object') to achieve short cuts, and stand no nonsense about suppressing their own language, since it remains so useful as the point of resemblance to or of contrast with the new home language.

The language world of today reflects a pendulum with language competence, at the end of one pole, and translating at its other end: the more language practice, the less translating, and vice versa; the more language speakers, the fewer translators, and vice versa. In principle, the first alternatives of the two pairs are politically more healthy and less costly to the state. Nevertheless there is a large quantity of important and serious contemporary non-literary and literary writing – I can hardly call it a residuum, although it is a fraction of 'popular' non-literary writing – that always needs translating. A certain amount of non-literary speaking also needs interpreting at conferences and formal interviews/meetings; furthermore, a considerable amount of the serious literary work of the past needs retranslating approximately every thirty years, or sometimes earlier, if it has not been well done. It is to this serious writing that I now turn.

#### 4. The Non-literary and the Literary

By non-literary writing, I mean factual writing, non-fiction, *Sachbücher*, subjects relating to the external reality, the product of the 'brain' as opposed to the 'mind', beginning with legal, scientific and technological texts, and extending to all descriptions of the physical world, occupations, leisure activities, and social events. In principle, such writing only admits of one interpretation, although this is in fact not so, owing to the different cast of translators' minds and the markedly different lexical and grammatical resources of all languages. However, since good non-literary (or specialized, or technical, or general) translations should be as accurate as is possible, the translation is likely to closely resemble the original, unless the latter is deficient in its veracity and its style. The translator, or, in some cases, the reviser, is the only person ultimately responsible for the truth, the content and the style of a non-literary translation; she cannot, in my opinion, offload this responsibility on to the author of the original.

By literary writing, I mean imaginative writing, that is, the creating of images in the mind and their realization on paper, the creation of 'fiction'. This writing normally implies a critical comment on life, on individuals and society – 'Art is a criticism of life' (Matthew Arnold) – or a deliberate turning away from them all. Directly or indirectly, it evaluates good and evil, right and wrong. It is, in the first place, serious poetry, short stories, novels and plays (i.e. tragedies, dramas, comedies, farces), all of which are essentially allegorical, figurative or metaphorical. These genres are positioned on a cline stretching between serious poetry – which is created through the translator's close working on the poem, with himself as the reader – and, at the other end, farce, which may also be serious, as in *Le bourgeois Gentilhomme* or Joe Orton's plays, but where the active engagement of the audience is an essential factor.

Imaginative literature is the product of the 'mind', which translates as the 'spirit' or the 'sense' in German, the 'spirit' in French, 'knowledge' in Russian, 'thinking' in Czech, but has direct equivalents in Spanish, Italian and Portuguese. In fact, the 'mind' is the spiritual element in a person – Freud refers to it as *das Seelische*, the 'soulful' element – since, as in the instance of the voice of a cherished person who has died many years ago, it is neither verifiable nor amenable to science, although one is entirely conscious of its existence.

As literary writing relates the mind to the external world, it is basically polysemantic, with elements of ambiguity ('this is so, isn't it?' – F.R. Leavis), but it can only be interpreted within certain limits; irony, however, which may appear anywhere, can subvert and may ambiguate the meaning of any sentence – unexpectedly, if the translator is not wary. Advertising, and most kinds of TV and radio fiction which convert written texts to sound, are genres of imaginative writing.

The translator is responsible for producing a valid and well written interpretation of a literary text; in translating novels and short stories, the main impact of the work on the reader will usually be that of the author; in translating or adapting poetry or drama, the translator's creative contribution will normally be much

greater, but the more serious the work, the more closely its universal component will be translated; the first line of Hamlet's most famous monologue is usually translated almost literally:

To be or not to be; that is the question.  
*Sein oder nicht sein, das ist hier die Frage.*

Fact and imagination may be merged in literary texts, in particular, autobiography or historical novels, where the translator may decide to emphasize the factual component to a greater degree than the original by reinforcing the relevant allusion.

Poetry is the most concise and most expressive form of literary language, since it brings in the vocal factor most compellingly. It is rebarbative to the majority of people owing to its 'artificial' tone of voice – its rhythms require a particular vocal effort. Its peculiar constraints, imposed by its various forms, some of which are more limiting than others, make poetry the most difficult and the most rewarding literary genre to translate, in particular where, as in the *Hamlet* quotation above, it comes closest to prose.

In terms of translation, as opposed to adaptation, I surmise that the translator of poetry is 40% to 60% creative, or up to 80%, if, like Rilke, he improves on a defective original. The translator of fiction is perhaps 20% to 30% creative; and the translator of factual texts 10% to 15%. The variations in percentage are related to the degree of difficulty of the texts.

I have hazarded these figures, first, to record my belief that all translation has an element of creativeness; secondly, that, in translating serious imaginative literature, the author is always more important than the translator because the translator serves the author – except sometimes in the translation of inferior poetry; thirdly, to show clearly my own perspective on translation, which may well be quite different from the reader's.

The translator's degree of creativity is in no way correlative with the amount of time she devotes to her work. A tough technical text, requiring long periods of research and considerable writing skills, will be correspondingly well paid, but will not normally require extensive creative powers.

## 5. Writing and Speaking

I think that the received view among most linguists is still that speaking is more important than writing, and in fact that writing, since it follows speaking in time, is merely a pale imitation of speech; the great phonetician Henry Sweet, who was Bernard Shaw's model for Professor Higgins in *Pygmalion*, the play of *My Fair Lady*, (and the noted philosopher Jacques Derrida), exceptionally dissented from this view, and gave precedence to writing.

I believe that both writing and speaking, which to a degree run parallel to both literary and non-literary writing, and translation respectively, more often than not



have different functions: writing is used to document speaking or thinking. In relation to speech, writing is more lasting, more concise, more formal, more studied; speaking is more spontaneous, more natural, more diffuse, unless it is the reflection of dialogue in a play or is based on a written version of an address or a lecture. In value, neither has precedence, since both are now essential for a full life, but writing is likely to be the more permanent and the more aesthetic medium.

## 6. The Imagination and Translation

Essentially, the imagination is the act or power or faculty of forming pictures or images or concepts in the mind. The imagination, derided by the still fashionable translation scholar Itmar Even-Zohar in his *Polysystem Studies* as a ‘vague notion’, and avoided by Theo Hermans in his many vain attempts to hit on a definition of ‘literary translation’ in *A Companion to Translation Studies* (edited by Piotr Kuhiwczak and Karin Littau *Multilingual Matters*, 2007) is a powerful, indisputable but mysterious human force, rooted in memory and reminiscence, and expressed, indirectly, in the reflections of the five senses of the mind:

1. ‘Sonorization’, which is the surface of thought and thinking – one cannot think without speaking in the mind to oneself – is the most powerful of these reflections. It is the hearing in the mind of the voices of the dead one has known and has usually loved, and the living one knows, of the cries of the birds and the other animals, of the wonderful sounds and tones of serious and other music, all of which reflect, to a greater or lesser degree, the emotions common to the (universal) human voice – here I am expanding the thought of Nikolay Chernyshevsky’s *The Aesthetic Relations of Art to Reality* (1855), and opposing the eminent view that music is fundamentally an *abstract* art form. Sonorization may also reflect the sounds of nature (the winds in the trees), the breaking of glass, the thud of a parcel, the noise of any artefact. As a phenomenon, ‘sonorization’ is incontrovertible, but as a single word, it does not appear to exist in any language. It is an essential accompaniment to the translation of all imaginative texts, of their dialogue in particular, melding as it does the written word with the interior human voice, as Lev Vygotsky (*Thought and Language*) magisterially described it, but it is barely present in the reading or the skimming, let alone the translating, of non-literary texts.

2. Visualization, the creation of visual images in the mind, is an important process in translating virtually all kinds of texts – ‘if you can’t visualize the narrative of this paragraph, it cannot have any meaning, you must have made a mistake.’ The process is focussed on the clarity and the simplicity of the players’ outlines in the text’s narrative. Strangely enough, English appears to be the only language which has a single word for this process, although it has just appeared as *visualiser*, I assume calqued from English, in the 2006 *Collins-Robert Dictionary*. It is the most immediately attractive and perhaps the least cerebral of the five senses, hence the popularity of cinema and TV, where the visual image is dominant.

3. I tentatively call the other three mental sense-impressions, in order of strength, ‘odorization’, ‘gustation’ and ‘tactilization’. Normally, they would only occur typically in certain genres of text: odorization in texts about flowers and nature in general, and most repellently in the description of dead bodies- ‘the unmentionable odour of death’ (*1<sup>st</sup> September 1939*, W.H.Auden); ‘gustation’, in the now so trendy cuisine texts; ‘tactilization’ in brief references to the feel of touching human, animal or material surfaces, and notably in erotic texts, where masturbation reproduces the sense- impression. (‘Sexualization’, which is focussed primarily on the skin-tight male or female nates, could be regarded as the sixth, most powerful sense, acute but usually brief.) Again, I have found that other languages have no single word equivalents for these mental feelings, and admittedly, these three (or four) mental states only have an ancillary role in translation.

4. The imagination represents the individual factor in translation; the sociological factor is represented by the context, where collocations, colligations and idioms bind the text to social groups and backgrounds, ‘proving’, as though proof were ever needed, that translation is not produced in a vacuum. This contrast may give rise to a conflict between fresh and stale writing. The imaginative may degenerate into quirky or pretentious idiosyncracies; the social, governed by a computer’s Translation Memory, into a string of ‘safe’ clichés and platitudes. It is regrettable that most translation scholars are sociologically rather than aesthetically inclined, and do not write well.

Lastly, ‘sensualization’ could be introduced as a generic term or hyperonym for having the senses in the mind.

## 7. The Context of Translation Theory

From the time of Cicero, up to that of Danica Seleskovitch, who was De Gaulle’s charismatic and erudite interpreter at E.S.I.T (the *Ecole Supérieure de l’Interprétation et de la Traduction*) at the Sorbonne in Paris, translators, translation students and lay persons have been arguing about whether they prefer sense for sense or word for word translation; Jean-Rene Ladmiral put it succinctly: *cibliste* or *sourcier* (which I translate as ‘targeteer’ or ‘sourcerer’)? Inclined to the source or to the target text? This dualistic approach to translation was continued by St Jerome, the patron saint of translators, Martin Luther, William Tyndale and Emile Dolet – the latter two martyred because they wanted to open up the truth of the scriptures to a new unlettered readership. It is paralleled by the ‘refined’ and ‘unhewn’ dualism in Chinese translation theory. (See *An Anthology of the Translation of Chinese Discourse*, ed. Martha Cheung. St. Jerome Press, 2006.) After a period of ‘servile’ translation during the Renaissance period, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1838) was the first to hive off business translation (more commonly oral than written) from serious translation texts. For the next 150 years some outstanding men of letters (among them Shelley, in his memorable essay *The Defence of Poetry*, W. Humboldt, Paul Valéry, Ortega y Gasset, Robert Frost,

(‘the poetry is lost in the translation’), and Robert Graves, declared the translation of poetry to be impossible, although some of these themselves translated poems from several languages.

After the second world war, the Nuremberg trials marked a turning point: translators and interpreters came into the limelight of international attention for the first time. Non-literary texts began to greatly exceed literary translations in quantity; literary and general translators in most countries formed separate associations; Eugene Nida established the importance of the readership as a distinct group representing the third player in the translation triangle. Previously, the translator had normally identified himself with the reader, an assumption now mainly valid for the translation of poetry, where the translator of a personal poem attempts to primarily record his own response to the poem in his translation and (almost?) forgets the dear old reader.

However, the dualistic approach to translation continued to prevail in Nida’s dynamic (later, functional) equivalence, in which ‘the message of the original text was so transported into the receptor language that the response of the receptor was essentially like that of the original receptors’. Nida preferred functional equivalence to formal correspondence, (where the grammatical structures and stylistic patterns of the original are retained in the translation), but pointed out that these were flexible and sometimes overlapping terms in this or that text.

The dualistic approach was also taken up by Juliane House in her ‘overt’ and ‘covert’ translation methods; in the latter, she introduced a ‘cultural filter’ for the purpose of ‘localizing’ a text. My own approach was also dualistic in applying ‘semantic’ (sourcerer’s) translation to authoritative and literary texts, and ‘communicative’ (targeteer’s) translation to general non-literary and technical texts.

However, given so much disagreement about translation theory, particularly in the new climate I have described, I think it is necessary to reconsider its purposes, to enumerate the factors that are missing in translation theory as it now exists, and then to propose a new theory, or perhaps a ‘theoretic’, which is a concatenation or a network of theories of translating and translation.

## 8. The Missing Factors in Translation Theory

There has always been a controversy about whether Translation Theory should be descriptive or prescriptive, that is, value-free or value-bound. I take the same view that C.P. Scott, the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, took of journalism, when he distinguished comment, which is free, from facts, which are sacred, stating that both are an essential part of a newspaper. In my view, there is no point in carrying out a translation analysis, which is descriptive, unless one also makes a value judgement, which has pedagogic, if not prescriptive, implications. Furthermore I have been stating for years, although this has escaped comment ‘in the literature’, that translation, contrary to the received opinion, is essentially a noble, truth-seeking profession or occupation; when it is successful, it is neither

treacherous nor deceitful nor parasitic nor ‘of secondary value’, as many academics have it, nor even ‘not innocent’ (Hermans); nor is it a mere echo (George Borrow), nor the reverse side of a tapestry (Cervantes), nor is it the image of a plain faithful or a beautiful unfaithful woman. When translation distorts the ideas of the original, it is a mistranslation, and it should be analysed critically, like all translations, not ‘descriptively,’ as though it were value-free.

Translation studies now are much concerned with its interdisciplinary aspects, which are undeniable, but some intrinsic factors are still missing in the descriptions of the essential theory:

1. The importance of the text’s language. To what extent does the degree of detail in the style, as opposed to the message, have to be reproduced? (Should ‘minuscule’ be differentiated from ‘tiny’?)

2. The seriousness of the text’s language. To what extent does the degree of urgency and emotional sincerity in the language have to be reproduced? (Distinguish ‘insistent’ from ‘emphatic’?)

3. The familiarisation / defamiliarisation effect. Normally, the language of the target language should, at its various stages, be roughly as frequently used as that in the source text. If the language at a particular place in the translation is less common than the original, it may appear as unduly emphasized, or as translationese, and it has therefore been mistranslated; if it is more common, it should be simplified, like so many common collocations that have become clichés. (‘At the end of the day’ becomes ‘finally’.)

4. A word’s degree of importance. Texts normally have keywords, often but not always repeated, representing the subject, the main points, and the conclusion of the narrative. Keywords such as ‘fundamentalism’ often have a long history, various etymologies and surprising translations (intégrisme, (French), a modulation that arises from a different point of view); they often appear context-free. They have to be distinguished and fully translated, whilst other parts of the text may be more summarily treated. (See Raymond Williams’ *Keywords*, which has been recently revised. Normally a keyword must be identified by the translator and be consistently translated by the same target language word. A passage, or a text, may be explicated, if it is important, or gisted, if it is less so.

## 9. The Truths of a Text

Essentially, the translator is concerned with two kinds of truths:

1. The factual truth of the external world; that is, the factual equivalence of the translation with the original; it is always approximately feasible to render this truth, when there are no cultural differences between the concepts and the objects of the source and target languages. Otherwise, the translator uses various explication procedures. I take it as axiomatic, that there is more that unites the different ethnic groups than divides them; that people laugh and cry in the same way, and for similar reasons; that mature people have similar values of right and

wrong, and of good and bad; and that we live in different villages, but in the same contracting world; that universals exist, particularly on the moral plane, but they are often obscured, and the translator has to uncover them.

2. Truth as the Ideal, *die Wahrheit* (see below), which is not the same in factual and imaginative texts, but where there are common factors. Like many concepts, truth as an ideal is most readily grasped if one indicates its opposite, which, in translation, is the unglossed use of morally prejudiced language, which may be sexist, racist, (or, more accurately, ethnic), or religious, or which may relate to sanity, age (both old age or youth) or physical appearance. Ageism is now particularly relevant, since the rise in the developed countries of a large, often unprepossessing generation, 70 to 100 years old, largely on medication, preserved from death by a mere pill – so don't be too harsh on the wicked capitalist pharmaceuticals – released into the open from carers, sheltered accommodation, residential homes or sanitized madhouses. This is the new fourth generation.

3. *Die Wahrheit* is most brilliantly explained by Mozart and Schikaneder in *The Magic Flute*, where, after a nice little reflection on colour prejudice in relation to Monostatos, Papageno asks Pamina what he is going to tell Sarastro, the High Priest or God-figure, to explain his presence in the palace.

‘The Truth! The Truth, even if it were a crime’  
*Die Wahrheit, die Wahrheit, war 'es ein Verbrechen!*

Pamina replies in sublime musical tones that go far beyond the particular situation and prose.

This ideal truth has five main components:

1. The factual truth, which applies always to factual but also to realistic imaginative texts. The translator, who must be at least a temporary expert in the subject and the background of the text, is finally responsible for the accuracy of the facts in her translation, and must also check them in the original.

2. The logical truth, which applies to every type of text except fantasy. The logical truth particularly applies to connectives of causality, time and enumeration, some of which may be ambiguous, e.g. ‘then’, ‘next’, ‘secondly’, ‘finally’, ‘at the end of the day’, and must therefore be clarified.

3. The moral truth, which is more likely to be implicated in persuasive (propaganda) and imaginative texts than in others; the translator's business is not to impose or insert any moral truths on her readers, but to expose any variety of prejudiced language in the original as explained above, on the basis, never of her own views, but of the international human rights declarations.

4. The aesthetic truth, which is of two kinds: firstly, in its bearing on factual texts, where it is focussed on clarity, brevity, simplicity and fresh language; secondly, in its bearing on imaginative texts, where its purpose is to render the author's manner and matter as accurately as possible, within the limits of the

translator's credibility, the target language's resources and the familiarisation effect produced by two or three readings.

5. The truth of pure language, which posits that the expression of any thought existing in the source language, even if it has not yet appeared in the target language, can be literally translated into it, provided it is glossed: 'I wish you a lucky hand, as the Germans say.'

'In principle', which usually means 'not yet', the translator is himself finally responsible for the validity, that is, the truth, the content and the form of the translation. Many translations require a lot of collaboration, but eventually they should be the responsibility of one person.

### 10. A New Theoretic of Translation

My correlative theory of translation, which is: (1) The more serious and important the language of the text, the more closely it should be translated; (2) The less serious and important the language of a text, the less closely it needs be translated; (3) The better written a text, the closer should be the translation; should be put within the framework of the above-mentioned sections VI and VII. 'Closely' should be regarded as on a cline from literal translation, retaining the same emphases and Functional Sentence Perspective, continuing through idiomatic and synonymous, and extending to paraphrastic translation, but keeping within the bounds of good sense.

Further,

1. The translator is 'invisible' within the text, but must be visible extratextually; she or he establishes her identity by her attribution on the title page of the text, and, in the case of a book, on its cover. The book should contain a translator's introduction, explaining her take on the translation, and, where appropriate, essential notes at bottom of page, end of chapter or of text. The extratextual components are an integral part of the translation. Occasionally the translator may make a disclaimer between square brackets and an enforcing [*sic*] ('this is hard to believe!') within the text. The purpose of these extratextual components is not to impose the translator's views, but, among other things, to ensure that the readership is never misinformed or deceived. This surely is any translator's main moral responsibility.

2. Slips, misspellings, obvious mistakes, incorrect personal and place names should be corrected unobtrusively within the text, and should be notified to the commissioner of the translation.

3. Translating is a continuous decision making and revising process, as Jiří Levý, a fine Jewish Czech literary theorist and translator put it, and it has to be performed at many levels.

## 11. Conclusion

In this essay, I have attempted to provide a useful model of how translation can be characterized at the present time, and how standards of translation could be improved. I have tried to show that a serious source text is not always sacred, and that when a text is written for a readership, the readership must not be misled by it. I hope that my model will serve some purpose, even if it merely assists translators or readers who disagree with it to improve or adjust their own models of translation.

### Note

I delivered an embryonic version of this paper on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2007 in the Department of English and American Studies of the Masaryk University of Brno, on the occasion of my being awarded the University's honorary doctorate. I gratefully dedicate the paper to Jan Firbas's Department.

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