The Translator's Invisibility

A history of translation

Lawrence Venuti

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The Translator's Invisibility provides a thorough and critical examination of translation from the seventeenth century to the present day. It shows how fluency prevailed over other translation strategies to shape the canon of foreign literatures in English, and it interrogates the ethnocentric and imperialist cultural consequences of the domestic values that were simultaneously inscribed and masked in foreign texts during this period.

In tracing the history of translation, Lawrence Venuti locates alternative translation theories and practices which make it possible to counter the strategy of fluency, aiming to communicate linguistic and cultural differences instead of removing them. Using texts and translations from Britain, America and Europe he elaborates the theoretical and critical means by which translation can be studied and practiced as a locus of difference, recovering and revising forgotten translations to establish an alternative tradition.

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General editors' preface

The growth of translation studies as a separate discipline is a success story of the 1980s. The subject has developed in many parts of the world and is clearly destined to continue developing well into the twenty-first century. Translation studies brings together work in a wide variety of fields, including linguistics, literary study, history, anthropology, psychology, and economics. This series of books will reflect the breadth of work in translation studies and will enable readers to share in the exciting new developments that are taking place at the present time.

Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices, and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. But rewriting can also repress innovation, distort and contain, and in an age of ever increasing manipulation of all kinds, the study of the manipulative processes of literature as exemplified by translation can help us toward a greater awareness of the world in which we live.

Since this series of books on translation studies is the first of its kind, it will be concerned with its own genealogy. It will publish texts from the past that illustrate its concerns in the present, and will publish texts of a more theoretical nature immediately addressing those concerns, along with case studies illustrating manipulation through rewriting in various literatures. It will be comparative in nature and will range through many literary traditions, both Western and non-Western. Through the

concepts of rewriting and manipulation, this series aims to tackle the problem of ideology, change and power in literature and society and so assert the central function of translation as a shaping force.

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Susan Bassnett
André Lefevere

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Preface and acknowledgements

The Translator's Invisibility originates in my own work as a professional translator since the late 1970s. But any autobiographical elements are subsumed in what is effectively a history of English-language translation from the seventeenth century to the present. My project is to trace the origins of the situation in which every English-language translator works today, although from an opposing standpoint, with the explicit aim of locating alternatives, of changing that situation. The historical narratives presented here span centuries and national literatures, but even though based on detailed research, they are necessarily selective in articulating key moments and controversies, and frankly polemical in studying the past to question the marginal position of translation in contemporary Anglo-American culture. I imagine a diverse audience for the book, including translation theorists, literary theorists and critics, period specialists in various literatures (English-language and foreign), and reviewers of translations for periodicals, publishers, private foundations, and government endowments. Most of all, I wish to speak to translators and readers of translations, both professional and nonprofessional, focusing their attention on the ways that translations are written and read and urging them to think of new ones.

A project with this sort of intention and scope will inevitably come to rely on the help of many people in different fields of literary and critical expertise. Assembling the list of those who over the past several years read, discussed, criticized, or otherwise encouraged my work is a special pleasure, making me realize, once again, how fortunate I was: Antoine Berman, Charles Bernstein, Shelly Brivic, Ann Caesar, Steve Cole, Tim Corrigan, Pellegrino D'Acierno, Guy Davenport, Deirdre David, Milo De Angelis, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, George Economou, Jonathan Galassi, Dana Gioia, Barbara Harlow, Peter Hitchcock, Susan Howe, Suzanne Jill Levine, Philip Lewis, Harry Mathews, Jeremy

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L.V.
New York City
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Chapter 1

Invisibility

> I see translation as the attempt to produce a text so transparent that it
> does not seem to be translated. A good translation is like a pane of glass.
> You only notice that it's there when there are little imperfections—
> scratches, bubbles. Ideally, there shouldn't be any. It should never call
> attention to itself.
>
> Norman Shapiro

I

"Invisibility" is the term I will use to describe the translator's
situation and activity in contemporary Anglo-American culture. It
refers to two mutually determining phenomena: one is an
illusionistic effect of discourse, of the translator's own manipulation
of English; the other is the practice of reading and evaluating
translations that has long prevailed in the United Kingdom and the
United States, among other cultures, both English and foreign-
language. A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or
nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and
readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or
stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the
appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or
intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text—the
appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a
translation, but the "original." The illusion of transparency is an
effect of fluent discourse, of the translator's effort to insure easy
readability by adhering to current usage, maintaining continuous
syntax, fixing a precise meaning. What is so remarkable here is that
this illusory effect conceals the numerous conditions under which
the translation is made, starting with the translator's crucial
intervention in the foreign text The more fluent the translation, the

more invisible the translator, and, presumably, the more visible the writer or meaning of the foreign text.

The dominance of fluency in English-language translation becomes apparent in a sampling of reviews from newspapers and periodicals. On those rare occasions when reviewers address the translation at all, their brief comments usually focus on its style, neglecting such other possible questions as its accuracy, its intended audience, its economic value in the current book market, its relation to literary trends in English, its place in the translator's career. And over the past fifty years the comments are amazingly consistent in praising fluent discourse while damning deviations from it, even when the most diverse range of foreign texts is considered.

Take fiction, for instance, the most translated genre worldwide. Limit the choices to European and Latin American writers, the most translated into English, and pick examples with different kinds of narratives—novels and short stories, realistic and fantastic, lyrical and philosophical, psychological and political. Here is one possible list: Albert Camus's *The Stranger* (1946), Françoise Sagan's *Bonjour Tristesse* (1955), Heinrich Böll's *Absent Without Leave* (1965), Italo Calvino's *Cosmicomics* (1968), Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1970), Milan Kundera's *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1980), Mario Vargas Llosa's *In Praise of the Stepmother* (1990), Julia Kristeva's *The Samurai* (1991), Gianni Celati's *Appearances* (1992), Adolfo Bioy Casares's *A Russian Doll* (1992). Some of these translations enjoyed considerable critical and commercial success in English; others made an initial splash, then sank into oblivion; still others passed with little or no notice. Yet in the reviews they were all judged by the same criterion—fluency. The following selection of excerpts comes from various British and American periodicals, both literary and mass-audience; some were written by noted critics, novelists, and reviewers:

> Stuart Gilbert's translation seems an absolutely splendid job. It is not easy, in translating French, to render qualities of sharpness or vividness, but the prose of Mr. Gilbert is always natural, brilliant, and crisp.
>
> (Wilson 1946:100)

> The style is elegant, the prose lovely, and the translation excellent.
>
> (*New Republic* 1955:46)

In *Absent Without Leave,* a novella gracefully if not always flawlessly translated by Leila Vennewitz, Böll continues his stern and sometimes merciless probing of the conscience, values, and imperfections of his countrymen.

(Potoker 1965:42)

The translation is a pleasantly fluent one: two chapters of it have already appeared in *Playboy* magazine.

(*Times Literary Supplement* 1969:180)

Rabassa's translation is a triumph of fluent, gravid momentum, all stylishness and commonsensical virtuosity.

(West 1970:4)

His first four books published in English did not speak with the stunning lyrical precision of this one (the invisible translator is Michael Henry Heim).

(Michener 1980:108)

Helen Lane's translation of the title of this book is faithful to Mario Vargas Llosa's—"Elogio de la Madrastra"—but not quite idiomatic.

(Burgess 1990:11)

The Samurai, a transparent *roman à clef,* fluently translated by Barbara Bray, chronicles Ms. Kristeva's—and Paris's—intellectual glory days.

(Steiner 1992:9)

In Stuart Hood's translation, which flows crisply despite its occasionally disconcerting British accent, Mr. Celati's keen sense of language is rendered with precision.

(Dickstein 1992:18)

Often wooden, occasionally careless or inaccurate, it shows all the signs of hurried work and inadequate revision. […] The Spanish original here is 10 words shorter and incomparably more elegant.

(Balderston 1992:15)

The critical lexicon of post-World War II literary journalism is filled with so many terms to indicate the presence or absence of a fluent translation discourse: "crisp," "elegant," "flows," "gracefully,"

"wooden." There is even a group of pejorative neologisms designed to criticize translations that lack fluency, but also used, more generally, to signify badly written prose: "translatese," "translationese," "translatorese." In English, fluent translation is recommended for an extremely wide range of foreign texts—contemporary and archaic, religious and scientific, fiction and nonfiction.

> Translationese in a version from Hebrew is not always easy to detect, since the idioms have been familiarised through the Authorized Version.
>
> (*Times Literary Supplement* 1961:iv)

> An attempt has been made to use modern English which is lively without being slangy. Above all, an effort has been made to avoid the kind of unthinking "translationese" which has so often in the past imparted to translated Russian literature a distinctive, somehow "doughy," style of its own with little relation to anything present in the original Russian.
>
> (Hingley 1964:x)

> He is solemnly reverential and, to give the thing an authentic classical smack, has couched it in the luke-warm translatese of one of his own more unurgent renderings.
>
> (Corke 1967:761)

> There is even a recognizable variant of pidgin English known as "translatorese" ("transjargonisation" being an American term for a particular form of it).
>
> (*Times Literary Supplement* 1967:399)

> Paralysing woodenness ("I am concerned to determine"), the dull thud of translatese ("Here is the place to mention Pirandello finally") are often the price we more or less willingly pay for access to great thoughts.
>
> (Brady 1977:201)

A gathering of such excerpts indicates which discursive features produce fluency in an English-language translation and which do not. A fluent translation is written in English that is current ("modern") instead of archaic, that is widely used instead of specialized ("jargonisation"), and that is standard instead of colloquial ("slangy").

Foreign words ("pidgin") are avoided, as are Britishisms in American translations and Americanisms in British translations. Fluency also depends on syntax that is not so "faithful" to the foreign text as to be "not quite idiomatic," that unfolds continuously and easily (not "doughy") to insure semantic "precision" with some rhythmic definition, a sense of closure (not a "dull thud"). A fluent translation is immediately recognizable and intelligible, "familiarised," domesticated, not "disconcerting[ly]" foreign, capable of giving the reader unobstructed "access to great thoughts," to what is "present in the original." Under the regime of fluent translating, the translator works to make his or her work "invisible," producing the illusory effect of transparency that simultaneously masks its status as an illusion: the translated text seems "natural," i.e., not translated.

The dominance of transparency in English-language translation reflects comparable trends in other cultural forms, including other forms of writing. The enormous economic and political power acquired by scientific research during the twentieth century, the postwar innovations in advanced communications technologies to expand the advertising and entertainment industries and support the economic cycle of commodity production and exchange—these developments have affected every medium, both print and electronic, by valorizing a purely instrumental use of language and other means of representation and thus emphasizing immediate intelligibility and the appearance of factuality.[1] The American poet Charles Bernstein, who for many years worked as a "commercial writer" of various kinds of nonfiction—medical, scientific, technical—observes how the dominance of transparency in contemporary writing is enforced by its economic value, which sets up acceptable "limits" for deviation:

> the fact that the overwhelming majority of steady paid employment for writing involves using the authoritative plain styles, if it is not explicitly advertising; involves writing, that is, filled with preclusions, is a measure of why this is not simply a matter of stylistic choice but of social governance: we are not free to choose the language of the workplace or of the family we are born into, though we are free, within limits, to rebel against it.
>
> (Bernstein 1986:225)

The authority of "plain styles" in English-language writing was of course achieved over several centuries, what Bernstein describes as

"the historical movement toward uniform spelling and grammar, with an ideology that emphasizes nonidiosyncratic, smooth transition, elimination of awkwardness, &c.—anything that might concentrate attention on the language itself" (ibid.:27). In contemporary Anglo-American literature, this movement has made realism the most prevalent form of narrative and free, prose-like verse the most prevalent form of poetry:

> in contrast to, say, Sterne's work, where the look & texture—the opacity—of the text is everywhere present, a neutral transparent prose style has developed in certain novels where the words seem meant to be looked through—to the depicted world beyond the page. Likewise, in current middle of the road poetry, we see the elimination of overt rhyme & alliteration, with metric forms retained primarily for their capacity to officialize as "poetry."
>
> (ibid.)[2]

In view of these cultural trends, it seems inevitable that transparency would become the authoritative discourse for translating, whether the foreign text was literary or scientific/technical. The British translator J.M.Cohen noticed this development as early as 1962, when he remarked that "twentieth-century translators, influenced by science-teaching and the growing importance attached to accuracy […] have generally concentrated on prose-meaning and interpretation, and neglected the imitation of form and manner" (Cohen 1962:35). Cohen also noticed the domestication involved here, "the risk of reducing individual authors' styles and national tricks of speech to a plain prose uniformity," but he felt that this "danger" was avoided by the "best" translations (ibid.:33). What he failed to see, however, was that the criterion determining the "best" was still radically English. Translating for "prose-meaning and interpretation," practicing translation as simple communication, rewrites the foreign text according to such English-language values as transparency, but entirely eclipses the translator's domesticating work—even in the eyes of the translator.

The translator's invisibility is also partly determined by the individualistic conception of authorship that continues to prevail in Anglo-American culture. According to this conception, the author freely expresses his thoughts and feelings in writing, which is thus viewed as an original and transparent self-representation,

unmediated by transindividual determinants (linguistic, cultural, social) that might complicate authorial originality. This view of authorship carries two disadvantageous implications for the translator. On the one hand, translation is defined as a second-order representation: only the foreign text can be original, an authentic copy, true to the author's personality or intention, whereas the translation is derivative, fake, potentially a false copy. On the other hand, translation is required to efface its second-order status with transparent discourse, producing the illusion of authorial presence whereby the translated text can be taken as the original. However much the individualistic conception of authorship devalues translation, it is so pervasive that it shapes translators' self-presentations, leading some to psychologize their relationship to the foreign text as a process of identification with the author. The American Willard Trask (1900–1980), a major twentieth-century translator in terms of the quantity and cultural importance of his work, drew a clear distinction between authoring and translating. When asked in a late interview whether "the impulse" to translate "is the same as that of someone who wants to write a novel" (a question that is clearly individualistic in its reference to an authorial "impulse"), Trask replied:

> No, I wouldn't say so, because I once tried to write a novel. When you're writing a novel [...] you're obviously writing about people or places, something or other, but what you are essentially doing is expressing yourself. Whereas when you translate you're not expressing yourself. You're performing a technical stunt. [...] I realized that the translator and the actor had to have the same kind of talent. What they both do is to take something of somebody else's and put it over as if it were their own. I think you have to have that capacity. So in addition to the technical stunt, there is a psychological workout, which translation involves: something like being on stage. It does something entirely different from what I think of as creative poetry writing.
>
> (Honig 1985:13–14)

In Trask's analogy, translators playact as authors, and translations pass for original texts. Translators are very much aware that any sense of authorial presence in a translation is an illusion, an effect of transparent discourse, comparable to a "stunt," but they nonetheless assert that they participate in a "psychological" relationship with the

author in which they repress their own "personality." "I guess I consider myself in a kind of collaboration with the author," says American translator Norman Shapiro; "Certainly my ego and personality are involved in translating, and yet I have to try to stay faithful to the basic text in such a way that my own personality doesn't show" (Kratz 1986:27).

The translator's invisibility is thus a weird self-annihilation, a way of conceiving and practicing translation that undoubtedly reinforces its marginal status in Anglo-American culture. For although the past twenty years have seen the institution of translation centers and programs at British and American universities, as well as the founding of translation committees, associations, and awards in literary organizations like the Society of Authors in London and the PEN American Center in New York, the fact remains that translators receive minimal recognition for their work—including translators of writing that is capable of generating publicity (because it is prize-winning, controversial, censored). The typical mention of the translator in a review takes the form of a brief aside in which, more often than not, the transparency of the translation is gauged. This, however, is an infrequent occurrence. Ronald Christ has described the prevailing practice: "many newspapers, such as *The Los Angeles Times,* do not even list the translators in headnotes to reviews, reviewers often fail to mention that a book is a translation (while quoting from the text as though it were written in English), and publishers almost uniformly exclude translators from book covers and advertisements" (Christ 1984:8). Even when the reviewer is also a writer, a novelist, say, or a poet, the fact that the text under review is a translation may be overlooked. In 1981, the American novelist John Updike reviewed two foreign novels for *The New Yorker,* Italo Calvino's *If On a Winter's Night a Traveller* and Günter Grass's *The Meeting at Telgte,* but the lengthy essay made only the barest reference to the translators. Their names appeared in parentheses after the first mention of the English-language titles. Reviewers who may be expected to have a writerly sense of language are seldom inclined to discuss translation as writing.

The translator's shadowy existence in Anglo-American culture is further registered, and maintained, in the ambiguous and unfavorable legal status of translation, both in copyright law and in actual contractual arrangements. British and American law defines translation as an "adaptation" or "derivative work" based on an "original work of authorship," whose copyright, including the

exclusive right "to prepare derivative works" or "adaptations," is vested in the "author."[3] The translator is thus subordinated to the author, who decisively controls the publication of the translation during the term of the copyright for the "original" text, currently the author's lifetime plus fifty years. Yet since authorship here is defined as the creation of a form or medium of expression, not an idea, as originality of language, not thought, British and American law permits translations to be copyrighted in the translator's name, recognizing that the translator uses another language for the foreign text and therefore can be understood as creating an original work (Skone James *et al.* 1991; Stracher 1991). In copyright law, the translator is and is not an author.[4]

The translator's authorship is never given full legal recognition because of the priority given to the foreign writer in controlling the translation—even to point of compromising the translator's rights as a British or American citizen. In subscribing to international copyright treaties like the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, the United Kingdom and the United States agree to treat nationals of other member countries like their own nationals for purposes of copyright (Scarles 1980:8–11). Hence, British and American law holds that an English-language translation of a foreign text can be published only by arrangement with the author who owns the copyright for that text—i.e., the foreign writer, or, as the case may be, a foreign agent or publisher. The translator may be allowed the authorial privilege to copyright the translation, but he or she is excluded from the legal protection that authors enjoy as citizens of the UK or US in deference to another author, a foreign national. The ambiguous legal definition of translation, both original and derivative, exposes a limitation in the translator's citizenship, as well as the inability of current copyright law to think translation across national boundaries despite the existence of international treaties. The Berne Convention (Paris 1971) at once assigns an authorial right to the translator and withdraws it: "Translations, adaptations, arrangements of music and other alterations of a literary or artistic work shall be protected as original works without prejudice to the copyright in the original work" held by the foreign "author," who "shall enjoy the exclusive right of making and of authorising the translation" (articles 2(3), 8).[5] Copyright law does not define a space for the translator's authorship that is equal to, or in any way restricts, the foreign author's rights. And yet it acknowledges that there is a material basis to warrant some such restriction.

Translation contracts in the postwar period have in fact varied widely, partly because of the ambiguities in copyright law, but also because of other factors like changing book markets, a particular translator's level of expertise, and the difficulty of a particular translation project. Nonetheless, general trends can be detected over the course of several decades, and they reveal publishers excluding the translator from any rights in the translation. Standard British contracts require the translator to make an out-and-out assignment of the copyright to the publisher. In the United States, the most common contractual definition of the translated text has not been "original work of authorship," but "work made for hire," a category in American copyright law whereby "the employer or person for whom the work was prepared is considered the author […] and, unless the parties have expressly agreed otherwise in a written instrument signed by them, owns ail the rights comprised in the copyright" (17 US Code, sections 101, 201 (6)). Work-for-hire contracts alienate the translator from the product of his or her labor with remarkable finality. Here is the relevant clause in Columbia University Press's standard contract for translators:

> You and we agree that the work you will prepare has been specially ordered and commissioned by us, and is a work made for hire as such term is used and defined by the Copyright Act. Accordingly, we shall be considered the sole and exclusive owner throughout the world forever of all rights existing therein, free of claims by you or anyone claiming through you or on your behalf.

This work-for-hire contract embodies the ambiguity of the translator's legal status by including another clause that implicitly recognizes the translator as an author, the creator of an "original" work: "You warrant that your work will be original and that it will not infringe upon the copyright or violate any right of any person or party whatsoever."

Contracts that require translators to assign the copyright, or that define translations as works made for hire, are obviously exploitative in the division of earnings. Such translations are compensated by a flat fee per thousand English words, regardless of the potential income from the sale of books and subsidiary rights (e.g., a periodical publication, a license to a paperback publisher, an option by a film production company). An actual case will make

clear how this arrangement exploits translators. On 12 May 1965, the American translator Paul Blackburn entered into a work-for-hire arrangement with Pantheon in which he received "$15.00 per thousand words" for his translation of *End of the Game,* a collection of short stories by the Argentine writer Julio Cortázar.[6] Blackburn received a total of $1200 for producing an English-language translation that filled 277 pages as a printed book; Cortázar received a $2000 advance against royalties, 7.5 percent of the list price for the first 5000 copies. The "poverty level" set by the Federal government in 1965 was an annual income of $1894 (for a male). Blackburn's income as an editor was usually $8000, but to complete the translation he was forced to reduce his editorial work and seek a grant from arts agencies and private foundations— which he failed to receive. Ultimately, he requested an extension of the delivery date for the translation from roughly a year to sixteen months (the contracted date of 1 June 1966 was later changed to 1 October 1966).

Blackburn's difficult situation has been faced by most freelance English-language translators throughout the postwar period: below-subsistence fees force them either to translate sporadically, while working at other jobs (typically editing, writing, teaching), or to undertake multiple translation projects simultaneously, the number of which is determined by the book market and sheer physical limitations. By 1969, the fee for work-for-hire translations increased to $20 per thousand words, making Blackburn's Cortázar project worth $1600, while the poverty level was set at $1974; by 1979, the going rate was $30 and Blackburn would have made $2400, while the poverty level was $3689.[7] According to a 1990 survey conducted by the PEN American Center and limited to the responses of nineteen publishers, 75 percent of the translations surveyed were contracted on a work-for-hire basis, with fees ranging from $40 to $90 per thousand words (Keeley 1990:10–12; *A Handbook for Literary Translators* 1991:5–6). A recent estimate puts the translation cost of a 300-page novel between $3000 and $6000 (Marcus 1990:13–14; cf. Gardam 1990). The poverty level in 1989 was set at $5936 for a person under 65 years. Because this economic situation drives freelance translators to turn out several translations each year, it inevitably limits the literary invention and critical reflection applied to a project, while pitting translators against each other—often unwittingly—in the competition for projects and the negotiation of fees.

Contracts since the 1980s show an increasing recognition of the translator's crucial role in the production of the translation by referring to him or her as the "author" or "translator" and by copyrighting the text in the translator's name. This redefinition has been accompanied by an improvement in financial terms, with experienced translators receiving an advance against royalties, usually a percentage of the list price or the net proceeds, as well as a portion of subsidiary rights sales. The 1990 PEN survey indicated that translators' royalties were "in the area of 2 to 5 percent for hardcover and 1.5 to 2.5 percent for paperback" (*Handbook* 1991:5). But these are clearly small increments. While they signal a growing awareness of the translator's authorship, they do not constitute a significant change in the economics of translation, and it remains difficult for a freelance translator to make a living solely from translating. A typical first printing for a literary translation published by a trade press is approximately 5000 copies (less for a university press), so that even with the trend toward contracts offering royalties, the translator is unlikely to see any income beyond the advance. Very few translations become bestsellers; very few are likely to be reprinted, whether in hardcover or paperback. And, perhaps most importantly, very few translations are published in English.

As Figures 1 and 2 indicate, British and American book production increased fourfold since the 1950s, but the number of translations remained roughly between 2 and 4 percent of the total—notwithstanding a marked surge during the early 1960s, when the number of translations ranged between 4 and 7 percent of the total.[8] In 1990, British publishers brought out 63,980 books, of which 1625 were translations (2.4 percent), while American publishers brought out 46,743 books, including 1380 translations (2.96 percent). Publishing practices in other countries have generally run in the opposite direction. Western European publishing also burgeoned over the past several decades, but translations have always amounted to a significant percentage of total book production, and this percentage has consistently been dominated by translations from English. The translation rate in France has varied between 8 and 12 percent of the total. In 1985, French publishers brought out 29,068 books, of which 2867 were translations (9.9 percent), 2051 from English (Frémy 1992). The translation rate in Italy has been higher. In 1989, Italian publishers brought out 33,893 books, of which 8602 were translations (25.4
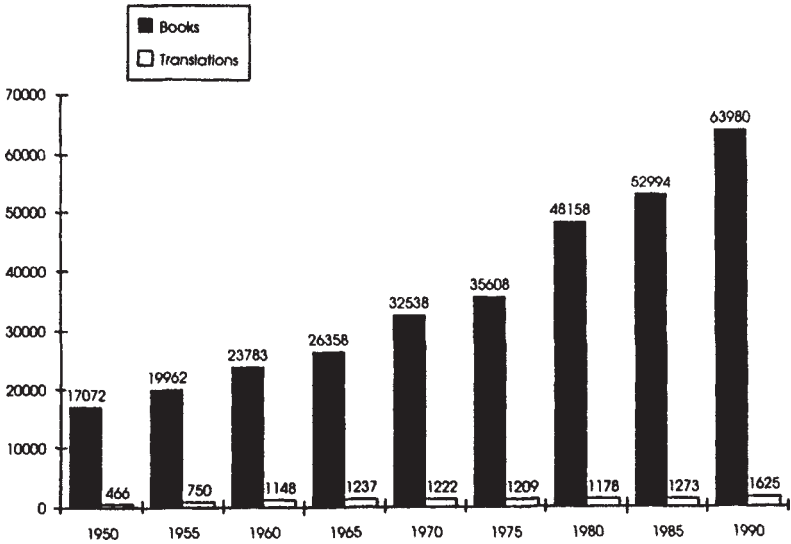
Figure 1 British publishing: Total book output vs. translations
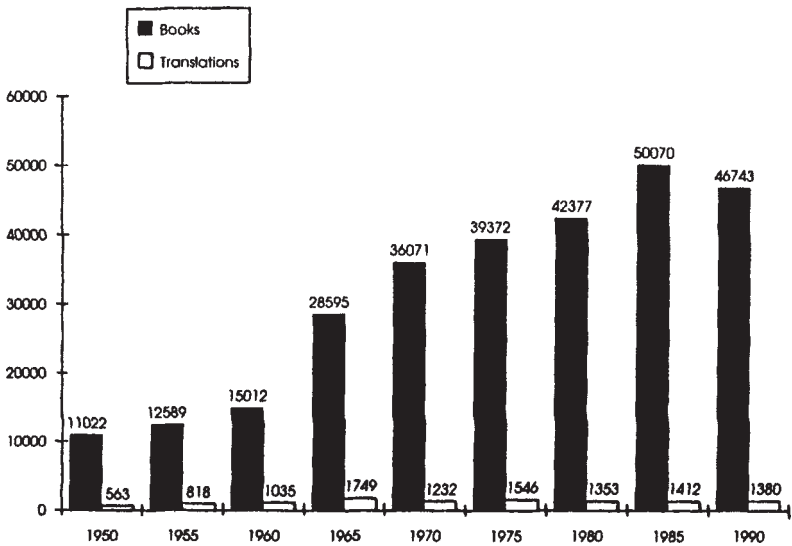
Figure 2 American publishing: Total book ouput vs. translations

percent), more than half from English (Lottman 1991:S5). The German publishing industry is somewhat larger than its British and American counterparts, and here too the translation rate is considerably higher. In 1990, German publishers brought out 61,015 books, of which 8716 were translations (14.4 percent), including about 5650 from English (Flad 1992:40). Since World War II, English has been the most translated language worldwide, but it isn't much translated into, given the number of English-language books published annually (Table 1 provides the most recent data).

These translation patterns point to a trade imbalance with serious cultural ramifications. British and American publishers travel every year to international markets like the American Booksellers Convention and the Frankfurt Book Fair, where they sell translation rights for many English-language books, including the global bestsellers, but rarely buy the rights to publish English-language translations of foreign books. British and American publishers have devoted more attention to acquiring bestsellers, and the formation of multinational publishing conglomerates has brought more capital to

Table 1 World translation publications: from selected languages, 1982-1984

	1982	1983	1984
English	22,208	24,468	22,724
French	6,205	6,084	4,422
German	4,501	4,818	5,311
Russian	6,238	6,370	6,230
Italian	1,433	1,645	1,544
Scandinavian[a]	1,957	2,176	2,192
Spanish	715	847	839
Classical, Greek, Latin	839	1,116	1,035
Hungarian	703	665	679
Arabic	298	322	536
Japanese	208	222	204
Chinese	159	148	163
World totals	52,198	55,618	52,405

[a]Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Islandic
Source: Grannis 1991, p.24

support this editorial policy (an advance for a predicted bestseller is now in the millions of dollars) while limiting the number of financially risky books, like translations (Whiteside 1981; Feldman 1986). The London literary agent Paul Marsh confirms this trend by urging publishers to concentrate on selling translation rights instead of buying them: "any book with four or five translation sales in the bag at an early stage stands a good chance of at least nine or 10 by the end of the process" (Marsh 1991:27). Marsh adds that "most translation rights deals are done for a modest return" (ibid.), but the fact is that British and American publishers routinely receive lucrative advances for these deals, even when a foreign publisher or agent pressures them to consider other kinds of income (viz. royalties). The Milan-based Antonella Antonelli is one such agent, although the figure she cites as an imprudent Italian investment in an English-language book—"If you pay a $200,000 advance, you can't make it back in Italy"—actually suggests how profitable translation rights can be for the publishers involved, foreign as well as British and American (Lottman 1991:S6). The sale of English-language books abroad has also been profitable: in 1990, American book exports amounted to more than $1.43 billion, with the export—import ratio at 61 to 39.

The consequences of this trade imbalance are diverse and far-reaching. By routinely translating large numbers of the most varied English-language books, foreign publishers have exploited the global drift toward American political and economic hegemony in the postwar period, actively supporting the international expansion of Anglo-American culture. This trend has been reinforced by English-language book imports: the range of foreign countries receiving these books and the various categories into which the books fall show not only the worldwide reach of English, but the depth of its presence in foreign cultures, circulating through the school, the library, the bookstore, determining diverse areas, disciplines, and constituencies—academic and religious, literary and technical, elite and popular, adult and child (see Table 2). British and American publishing, in turn, has reaped the financial benefits of successfully imposing Anglo-American cultural values on a vast foreign readership, while producing cultures in the United Kingdom and the United States that are aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign, accustomed to fluent translations that invisibly inscribe foreign texts with English-language values and provide readers with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other. The prevalence of fluent

Table 2 US book exports to major countries, 1990: shipments valued at $ 2500 or more

Country	($)	Type of book	($)
Canada	664,448	Dictionaries	4,659
United Kingdom	171,391	Encyclopedias	39,369
Australia	106,274	Atlases	6,725
Japan	87,562	Textbooks	128,431
Germany, West	42,244	Bibles & other	
Netherlands	33,715	religious	55,341
Mexico	32,337	Technical, scientific,	
Singapore	31,321	professional	322,647
France	20,144	Art & pictorial	12,242
India	17,576	Music	17,502
Taiwan	15,304	Children's picture,	
Hong Kong	12,853	coloring, drawing	12,875
Brazil	12,451	Other hardbound	42,194
South Africa	11,378	Rack-size	
Philippines	10,560	paperbound	49,956
Switzerland	9,854	Other	736,063
Italy	9,799		
Spain	9,687	Total	1,428,004
New Zealand	9,600		
Korea, South	8,245		
Ireland	7,946		
Sweden	6,597		
Argentina	5,746		
Finland	5,095		
Venezuela	4,772		
Israel	4,321		
Denmark	4,012		
Malaysia	3,998		
Portugal	3,881		

Source: Grannis 1991, pp. 21 and 22

domestication has supported these developments because of its economic value: enforced by editors, publishers, and reviewers, fluency results in translations that are eminently readable and therefore consumable on the book market, assisting in their commodification and insuring the neglect of foreign texts and English-language translation discourses that are more resistant to easy readability.

The translator's invisibility can now be seen as a mystification of troubling proportions, an amazingly successful concealment of the

multiple determinants and effects of English-language translation, the multiple hierarchies and exclusions in which it is implicated. An illusionism produced by fluent translating, the translator's invisibility at once enacts and masks an insidious domestication of foreign texts, rewriting them in the transparent discourse that prevails in English and that selects precisely those foreign texts amenable to fluent translating. Insofar as the effect of transparency effaces the work of translation, it contributes to the cultural marginality and economic exploitation that English-language translators have long suffered, their status as seldom recognized, poorly paid writers whose work nonetheless remains indispensable because of the global domination of Anglo-American culture, of English. Behind the translator's invisibility is a trade imbalance that underwrites this domination, but also decreases the cultural capital of foreign values in English by limiting the number of foreign texts translated and submitting them to domesticating revision. The translator's invisibility is symptomatic of a complacency in Anglo-American relations with cultural others, a complacency that can be described—without too much exaggeration—as imperialistic abroad and xenophobic at home.

The concept of the translator's "invisibility" is already a cultural critique, a diagnosis that opposes the situation it represents. It is partly a representation from below, from the standpoint of the contemporary English-language translator, although one who has been driven to question the conditions of his work because of various developments, cultural and social, foreign and domestic. The motive of this book is to make the translator more visible so as to resist and change the conditions under which translation is theorized and practiced today, especially in English-speaking countries. Hence, the first step will be to present a theoretical basis from which translations can be read as translations, as texts in their own right, permitting transparency to be demystified, seen as one discursive effect among others.

II

Translation is a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes the source-language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation. Because meaning is an effect of relations and differences among signifiers along a potentially

endless chain (polysemous, intertextual, subject to infinite linkages), it is always differential and deferred, never present as an original unity (Derrida 1982). Both foreign text and translation are derivative: both consist of diverse linguistic and cultural materials that neither the foreign writer nor the translator originates, and that destabilize the work of signification, inevitably exceeding and possibly conflicting with their intentions. As a result, a foreign text is the site of many different semantic possibilities that are fixed only provisionally in any one translation, on the basis of varying cultural assumptions and interpretive choices, in specific social situations, in different historical periods. Meaning is a plural and contingent relation, not an unchanging unified essence, and therefore a translation cannot be judged according to mathematics-based concepts of semantic equivalence or one-to-one correspondence. Appeals to the foreign text cannot finally adjudicate between competing translations in the absence of linguistic error, because canons of accuracy in translation, notions of "fidelity" and "freedom," are historically determined categories. Even the notion of "linguistic error" is subject to variation, since mistranslations, especially in literary texts, can be not merely intelligible but significant in the target-language culture. The viability of a translation is established by its relationship to the cultural and social conditions under which it is produced and read.

This relationship points to the violence that resides in the very purpose and activity of translation: the reconstitution of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs and representations that preexist it in the target language, always configured in hierarchies of dominance and marginality, always determining the production, circulation, and reception of texts. Translation is the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the targetlanguage reader. This difference can never be entirely removed, of course, but it necessarily suffers a reduction and exclusion of possibilities—and an exorbitant gain of other possibilities specific to the translating language. Whatever difference the translation conveys is now imprinted by the target-language culture, assimilated to its positions of intelligibility, its canons and taboos, its codes and ideologies. The aim of translation is to bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognizable, even the familiar; and this aim always risks a wholesale domestication of the foreign text, often in highly self-conscious projects, where translation serves an appropriation of

foreign cultures for domestic agendas, cultural, economic, political. Translation can be considered the communication of a foreign text, but it is always a communication limited by its address to a specific reading audience.

The violent effects of translation are felt at home as well as abroad. On the one hand, translation wields enormous power in the construction of national identities for foreign cultures, and hence it potentially figures in ethnic discrimination, geopolitical confrontations, colonialism, terrorism, war. On the other hand, translation enlists the foreign text in the maintenance or revision of literary canons in the target-language culture, inscribing poetry and fiction, for example, with the various poetic and narrative discourses that compete for cultural dominance in the target language. Translation also enlists the foreign text in the maintenance or revision of dominant conceptual paradigms, research methodologies, and clinical practices in target-language disciplines and professions, whether physics or architecture, philosophy or psychiatry, sociology or law. It is these social affiliations and effects—written into the materiality of the translated text, into its discursive strategy and its range of allusiveness for the target-language reader, but also into the very choice to translate it and the ways it is published, reviewed, and taught—all these conditions permit translation to be called a cultural political practice, constructing or critiquing ideology-stamped identities for foreign cultures, affirming or transgressing discursive values and institutional limits in the target-language culture. The violence wreaked by translation is partly inevitable, inherent in the translation process, partly potential, emerging at any point in the production and reception of the translated text, varying with specific cultural and social formations at different historical moments.

The most urgent question facing the translator who possesses this knowledge is, What to do? Why and how do I translate? Although I have construed translation as the site of many determinations and effects—linguistic, cultural, economic, ideological—I also want to indicate that the freelance literary translator always exercises a choice concerning the degree and direction of the violence at work in any translating. This choice has been given various formulations, past and present, but perhaps none so decisive as that offered by the German theologian and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher. In an 1813 lecture on the different methods of translation, Schleiermacher argued that "there are only two. Either the translator leaves the author in

peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (Lefevere 1977:74). Admitting (with qualifications like "as much as possible") that translation can never be completely adequate to the foreign text, Schleiermacher allowed the translator to choose between a domesticating method, an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home, and a foreignizing method, an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad.

Schleiermacher made clear that his choice was foreignizing translation, and this led the French translator and translation theorist Antoine Berman to treat Schleiermacher's argument as an ethics of translation, concerned with making the translated text a place where a cultural other is manifested—although, of course, an otherness that can never be manifested in its own terms, only in those of the target language, and hence always already encoded (Berman 1985:87–91).[9] The "foreign" in foreignizing translation is not a transparent representation of an essence that resides in the foreign text and is valuable in itself, but a strategic construction whose value is contingent on the current target-language situation. Foreignizing translation signifies the difference of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language. In its effort to do right abroad, this translation method must do wrong at home, deviating enough from native norms to stage an alien reading experience—choosing to translate a foreign text excluded by domestic literary canons, for instance, or using a marginal discourse to translate it.

I want to suggest that insofar as foreignizing translation seeks to restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation, it is highly desirable today, a strategic cultural intervention in the current state of world affairs, pitched against the hegemonic English-language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others. Foreignizing translation in English can be a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism, in the interests of democratic geopolitical relations. As a theory and practice of translation, however, a foreignizing method is specific to certain European countries at particular historical moments: formulated first in German culture during the classical and romantic periods, it has recently been revived in a French cultural scene characterized by postmodern developments in philosophy, literary

criticism, psychoanalysis, and social theory that have come to be known as "poststructuralism."[10] Anglo-American culture, in contrast, has long been dominated by domesticating theories that recommend fluent translating. By producing the illusion of transparency, a fluent translation masquerades as true semantic equivalence when it in fact inscribes the foreign text with a partial interpretation, partial to English-language values, reducing if not simply excluding the very difference that translation is called on to convey. This ethnocentric violence is evident in the translation theories put forth by the prolific and influential Eugene Nida, translation consultant to the American Bible Society: here transparency is enlisted in the service of Christian humanism.

Consider Nida's concept of "dynamic" or "functional equivalence" in translation, formulated first in 1964, but restated and developed in numerous books and articles over the past thirty years. "A translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of expression," states Nida, "and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture" (Nida 1964:159). The phrase "naturalness of expression" signals the importance of a fluent strategy to this theory of translation, and in Nida's work it is obvious that fluency involves domestication. As he has recently put it, "the translator must be a person who can draw aside the curtains of linguistic and cultural differences so that people may see clearly the relevance of the original message" (Nida and de Waard 1986:14). This is of course a relevance to the target-language culture, something with which foreign writers are usually not concerned when they write their texts, so that relevance can be established in the translation process only by replacing source-language features that are not recognizable with target-language ones that are. Thus, when Nida asserts that "an easy and natural style in translating, despite the extreme difficulty of producing it […] is nevertheless essential to producing in the ultimate receptors a response similar to that of the original receptors" (Nida 1964:163), he is in fact imposing the English-language valorization of transparent discourse on every foreign culture, masking a basic disjunction between the source-and target-language texts which puts into question the possibility of eliciting a "similar" response.

Typical of other theorists in the Anglo-American tradition, however, Nida has argued that dynamic equivalence is consistent with a notion of accuracy. The dynamically equivalent translation does not indiscriminately use "anything which might have special

impact and appeal for receptors"; it rather "means thoroughly understanding not only the meaning of the source text but also the manner in which the intended receptors of a text are likely to understand it in the receptor language" (Nida and de Waard 1986:vii–viii, 9). For Nida, accuracy in translation depends on generating an equivalent effect in the target-language culture: "the receptors of a translation should comprehend the translated text to such an extent that they can understand how the original receptors must have understood the original text" (ibid.:36). The dynamically equivalent translation is "interlingual communication" which overcomes the linguistic and cultural differences that impede it (ibid.:11). Yet the understanding of the foreign text and culture which this kind of translation makes possible answers fundamentally to target-language cultural values while veiling this domestication in the transparency evoked by a fluent strategy. Communication here is initiated and controlled by the target-language culture, it is in fact an interested interpretation, and therefore it seems less an exchange of information than an appropriation of a foreign text for domestic purposes. Nida's theory of translation as communication does not adequately take into account the ethnocentric violence that is inherent in every translation process—but especially in one governed by dynamic equivalence.

Nida's advocacy of domesticating translation is explicitly grounded on a transcendental concept of humanity as an essence that remains unchanged over time and space. "As linguists and anthropologists have discovered," Nida states, "that which unites mankind is much greater than that which divides, and hence there is, even in cases of very disparate languages and cultures, a basis for communication" (Nida 1964:2). Nida's humanism may appear to be democratic in its appeal to "that which unites mankind," but this is contradicted by the more exclusionary values that inform his theory of translation, specifically Christian evangelism and cultural elitism. From the very beginning of his career, Nida's work has been motivated by the exigencies of Bible translation: not only have problems in the history of Bible translation served as examples for his theoretical statements, but he has written studies in anthropology and linguistics designed primarily for Bible translators and missionaries. Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence in fact links the translator to the missionary. When in *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions* (1954) he asserted that "a close examination of successful missionary

work inevitably reveals the correspondingly effective manner in which the missionaries were able to identify themselves with the people—'to be all things to all men'—and to communicate their message in terms which have meaning for the lives of the people" (Nida 1975:250), he was echoing what he had earlier asserted of the Bible translator in *God's Word in Man's Language* (1952): "The task of the true translator is one of identification. As a Christian servant he must identify with Christ; as a translator he must identify himself with the Word; as a missionary he must identify himself with the people" (Nida 1952:117). Both the missionary and the translator must find the dynamic equivalent in the target language so as to establish the relevance of the Bible in the target culture. But Nida permits only a particular kind of relevance to be established. While he disapproves of "the tendency to promote by means of Bible translating the cause of a particular theological viewpoint, whether deistic, rationalistic, immersionistic, millenarian, or charismatic" (Nida and de Waard 1986:33), it is obvious that he himself has promoted a reception of the text centered in Christian dogma. And although he offers a nuanced account of how "diversities in the backgrounds of receptors" can shape any Bible translation, he insists that "translations prepared primarily for minority groups must generally involve highly restrictive forms of language, but they must not involve substandard grammar or vulgar wording" (ibid.:14). Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence in Bible translation goes hand in hand with an evangelical zeal that seeks to impose on English-language readers a specific dialect of English as well as a distinctly Christian understanding of the Bible. When Nida's translator identifies with the target-language reader to communicate the foreign text, he simultaneously excludes other target-language cultural constituencies.

To advocate foreignizing translation in opposition to the Anglo-American tradition of domestication is not to do away with cultural political agendas—such an advocacy is itself an agenda. The point is rather to develop a theory and practice of translation that resists dominant target-language cultural values so as to signify the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text. Philip Lewis's concept of "abusive fidelity" can be useful in such a theorization: it acknowledges the abusive, equivocal relationship between the translation and the foreign text and eschews a fluent strategy in order to reproduce in the translation whatever features of the foreign text abuse or resist dominant cultural values in the

source language. Abusive fidelity directs the translator's attention away from the conceptual signified to the play of signifiers on which it depends, to phonological, syntactical, and discursive structures, resulting in a "translation that values experimentation, tampers with usage, seeks to match the polyvalencies or plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own" (Lewis 1985:41). Such a translation strategy can best be called *resistancy*, not merely because it avoids fluency, but because it challenges the target-language culture even as it enacts its own ethnocentric violence on the foreign text.

The notion of foreignization can alter the ways translations are read as well as produced because it assumes a concept of human subjectivity that is very different from the humanist assumptions underlying domestication. Neither the foreign writer nor the translator is conceived as the transcendental origin of the text, freely expressing an idea about human nature or communicating it in transparent language to a reader from a different culture. Rather, subjectivity is constituted by cultural and social determinations that are diverse and even conflicting, that mediate any language use, and, that vary with every cultural formation and every historical moment. Human action is intentional, but determinate, self-reflexively measured against social rules and resources, the heterogeneity of which allows for the possibility of change with every self-reflexive action (Giddens 1979:chap. 2). Textual production may be initiated and guided by the producer, but it puts to work various linguistic and cultural materials which make the text discontinuous, despite any appearance of unity, and which create an unconscious, a set of unacknowledged conditions that are both personal and social, psychological and ideological. Thus, the translator consults many different target-language cultural materials, ranging from dictionaries and grammars to texts, discursive strategies, and translations, to values, paradigms, and ideologies, both canonical and marginal. Although intended to reproduce the source-language text, the translator's consultation of these materials inevitably reduces and supplements it, even when source-language cultural materials are also consulted. Their sheer heterogeneity leads to discontinuities—between the source-language text and the translation and within the translation itself—that are symptomatic of its ethnocentric violence. A humanist method of reading translations elides these discontinuities by locating a semantic unity adequate to the foreign text, stressing intelligibility,

transparent communication, the use value of the translation in the target-language culture. A symptomatic reading, in contrast, locates discontinuities at the level of diction, syntax, or discourse that reveal the translation to be a violent rewriting of the foreign text, a strategic intervention into the target-language culture, at once dependent on and abusive of domestic values.

This method of symptomatic reading can be illustrated with the translations of Freud's texts for the *Standard Edition,* although the translations acquired such unimpeachable authority that we needed Bruno Bettelheim's critique to become aware of the discontinuities. Bettelheim's point is that the translations make Freud's texts "appear to readers of English as abstract, depersonalized, highly theoretical, erudite, and mechanized—in short, 'scientific'—statements about the strange and very complex workings of our mind" (Bettelheim 1988:5). Bettelheim seems to assume that a close examination of Freud's German is necessary to detect the translators' scientistic strategy, but the fact is that his point can be demonstrated with no more than a careful reading of the English text. Bettelheim argues, for example, that in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1960), the term "parapraxis" reveals the scientism of the translation because it is used to render a rather simple German word, *Fehlleistungen,* which Bettelheim himself prefers to translate as "faulty achievement" (Bettelheim 1983:87). Yet the translator's strategy may also be glimpsed through certain peculiarities in the diction of the translated text:

> I now return to the forgetting of names. So far we have not exhaustively considered either the case-material or the motives behind it As this is exactly the kind of parapraxis that I can from time to time observe abundantly in myself, I am at no loss for examples. The mild attacks of migraine from which I still suffer usually announce themselves hours in advance by my forgetting names, and at the height of these attacks, during which I am not forced to abandon my work, it frequently happens that all proper names go out of my head.
>
> (Freud 1960:21)

The diction of much of this passage is so simple and common ("forgetting"), even colloquial ("go out of my head"), that "parapraxis" represents a conspicuous difference, an inconsistency in word choice which exposes the translation process. The

inconsistency is underscored not only by Freud's heavy reliance on anecdotal, "everyday" examples, some—as above—taken from his own experience, but also by a footnote added to a later edition of the German text and included in the English translation: "This book is of an entirely popular character; it merely aims, by an accumulation of examples, at paving the way for the necessary assumption of *unconscious yet operative* mental processes, and it avoids all theoretical considerations on the nature of the unconscious" (Freud 1960:272n.). James Strachey himself unwittingly called attention to the inconsistent diction in his preface to Alan Tyson's translation, where he felt it necessary to provide a rationale for the use of "parapraxis": "In German *'Fehlleistung,'* 'faulty function.' It is a curious fact that before Freud wrote this book the general concept seems not to have existed in psychology, and in English a new word had to be invented to cover it" (Freud 1960:viiin.). It can of course be objected (against Bettelheim) that the mixture of specialized scientific terms and commonly used diction is characteristic of Freud's German, and therefore (against me) that the English translation in itself cannot be the basis for an account of the translators' strategy. Yet although I am very much in agreement with the first point, the second weakens when we realize that even a comparison between the English versions of key Freudian terms easily demonstrates the inconsistency in kinds of diction I have located in the translated passage: "id" vs. "unconscious"; "cathexis" vs. "charge," or "energy"; "libidinal" vs. "sexual."

  Bettelheim suggests some of the determinations that shaped the scientistic translation strategy of the *Standard Edition*. One important consideration is the intellectual current that has dominated Anglo-American psychology and philosophy since the eighteenth century: "In theory, many topics with which Freud dealt permit both a hermeneutic—spiritual and a positivistic—pragmatic approach. When this is so, the English translators nearly always opt for the latter, positivism being the most important English philosophical tradition" (Bettelheim 1983:44). But there are also the social institutions in which this tradition was entrenched and against which psychoanalysis had to struggle in order to gain acceptance in the post-World War II period. As Bettelheim concisely puts it, "psychological research and teaching in American universities are either behaviorally, cognitively, or physiologically oriented and concentrate almost exclusively on what can be measured or observed from the outside" (ibid.:19). For psychoanalysis this meant that its assimilation in Anglo-American

culture entailed a redefinition, in which it "was perceived in the United States as a practice that ought to be the sole prerogative of physicians" (ibid.:33), "a medical specialty" (ibid.:35), and this redefinition was carried out in a variety of social practices, including not only legislation by state assemblies and certification by the psychoanalytic profession, but the scientist translation of the *Standard Edition:*

> When Freud appears to be either more abstruse or more dogmatic in English translation than in the original German, to speak about abstract concepts rather than about the reader himself, and about man's mind rather than about his soul, the probable explanation isn't mischievousness or carelessness on the translators' part but a deliberate wish to perceive Freud strictly within the framework of medicine.

> (ibid.:32)

The domesticating method at work in the translations of the *Standard Edition* sought to assimilate Freud's texts to the dominance of positivism in Anglo-American culture so as to facilitate the institutionalization of psychoanalysis in the medical profession and in academic psychology.

Bettelheim's book is of course couched in the most judgmental of terms, and it is his negative judgment that must be avoided (or perhaps rethought) if we want to understand the manifold significance of the *Standard Edition* as a translation. Bettelheim views the work of Strachey and his collaborators as a distortion and a betrayal of Freud's "essential humanism," a view that points to a valorization of a concept of the transcendental subject in both Bettelheim and Freud. Bettelheim's assessment of the psychoanalytic project is stated in his own humanistic versions for the *Standard Edition's* "ego," "id," and "superego": "A reasonable dominance of our I over our it and above-I—this was Freud's goal for all of us" (Bettleheim 1983:110). This notion of ego dominance conceives of the subject as the potentially self-consistent source of its knowledge and actions, not perpetually split by psychological ("id") and social ("superego") determinations over which it has no or limited control. The same assumption can often be seen in Freud's German text: not only in his emphasis on social adjustment, for instance, as with the concept of the "reality principle," but also in his repeated use of his own experience for

analysis; both represent the subject as healing the determinate split in its own consciousness. Yet insofar as Freud's various psychic models theorized the ever-present, contradictory determinations of consciousness, the effect of his work was to decenter the subject, to remove it from a transcendental realm of freedom and unity and view it as the determinate product of psychic and familial forces beyond its conscious control. These conflicting concepts of the subject underlie different aspects of Freud's project: the transcendental subject, on the one hand, leads to a definition of psychoanalysis as primarily therapeutic, what Bettelheim calls a "demanding and potentially dangerous voyage of self-discovery […] so that we may no longer be enslaved without knowing it to the dark forces that reside in us" (ibid.:4); the determinate subject, on the other hand, leads to a definition of psychoanalysis as primarily hermeneutic, a theoretical apparatus with sufficient scientific rigor to analyze the shifting but always active forces that constitute and divide human subjectivity. Freud's texts are thus marked by a fundamental discontinuity, one which is "resolved" in Bettelheim's humanistic representation of psychoanalysis as compassionate therapy, but which is exacerbated by the scientistic strategy of the English translations and their representation of Freud as the coolly analyzing physician.[11] The inconsistent diction in the *Standard Edition,* by reflecting the positivistic redefinition of psychoanalysis in Anglo-American institutions, signifies another, alternative reading of Freud that heightens the contradictions in his project.

It can be argued, therefore, that the inconsistent diction in the English translations does not really deserve to be judged erroneous; on the contrary, it discloses interpretive choices determined by a wide range of social institutions and cultural movements, some (like the specific institutionalization of psychoanalysis) calculated by the translators, others (like the dominance of positivism and the discontinuities in Freud's texts) remaining dimly perceived or entirely unconscious during the translation process. The fact that the inconsistencies have gone unnoticed for so long is perhaps largely the result of two mutually determining factors: the privileged status accorded the *Standard Edition* among English-language readers and the entrenchment of a positivistic reading of Freud in the Anglo-American psychoanalytic establishment. Hence, a different critical approach with a different set of assumptions becomes necessary to perceive the inconsistent diction of the translations: Bettelheim's

particular humanism, or my own attempt to ground a symptomatic reading of translated texts on a foreignizing method of translation that assumes a determinate concept of subjectivity. This sort of reading can be said to foreignize a domesticating translation by showing where it is discontinuous; a translation's dependence on dominant values in the target-language culture becomes most visible where it departs from them. Yet this reading also uncovers the domesticating movement involved in any foreignizing translation by showing where its construction of the foreign depends on domestic cultural materials.

Symptomatic reading can thus be useful in demystifying the illusion of transparency in a contemporary English-language translation. In some translations, the discontinuities are readily apparent, unintentionally disturbing the fluency of the language, revealing the inscription of the domestic culture; other translations bear prefaces that announce the translator's strategy and alert the reader to the presence of noticeable stylistic peculiarities. A case in point is Robert Graves's version of Suetonius's *The Twelve Caesars*. Graves's preface offered a frank account of his domesticating translation method:

> For English readers Suetonius's sentences, and sometimes even groups of sentences, must often be turned inside-out. Wherever his references are incomprehensible to anyone not closely familiar with the Roman scene, I have also brought up into the text a few words of explanation that would normally have appeared in a footnote. Dates have been everywhere changed from the pagan to the Christian era; modern names of cities used whenever they are more familiar to the common reader than the classical ones; and sums in sesterces reduced to gold pieces, at 100 to a gold piece (of twenty denarii), which resembled a British sovereign.
>
> (Graves 1957:8)

Graves's vigorous revision of the foreign text aims to assimilate the source-language culture (Imperial Rome) to that of the target language (the United Kingdom in 1957). The work of assimilation depends not only on his extensive knowledge of Suetonius and Roman culture during the Empire (e.g. the monetary system), but also on his knowledge of contemporary British culture as manifested by English syntactical forms and what he takes to be the function of his

translation. His "version," he wrote in the preface, was not intended to serve as a "school crib," but to be readable: "a literal rendering would be almost unreadable" (ibid.:8) because it would adhere too closely to the Latin text, even to the Latin word order.

Graves sought to make his translation extremely fluent, and it is important to note that this was both a deliberate choice and culturally specific, determined by contemporary English-language values and not by any means absolute or originating with Graves in a fundamental way. On the contrary, the entire process of producing the translation, beginning with the very choice of the text and including both Graves's textual moves and the decision to publish the translation in paperback, was conditioned by factors like the decline in the study of classical languages among educated readers, the absence of another translation on the market, and the remarkable popularity of the novels that Graves himself created from Roman historians like Suetonius—*I, Claudius* and *Claudius the God*, both continuously in print since 1934. Graves's version of *The Twelve Caesars* appeared as one of the "Penguin Classics," a mass-market imprint designed for both students and general readers.

As J.M.Cohen has observed, the translations in Penguin Classics were pioneering in their use of transparent discourse, "plain prose uniformity," largely in response to cultural and social conditions:

> The translator […] aims to make everything plain, though without the use of footnotes since the conditions of reading have radically changed and the young person of today is generally reading in far less comfortable surroundings than his father or grandfather. He has therefore to carry forward on an irresistible stream of narrative. Little can be demanded of him except his attention. Knowledge, standards of comparison, Classical background: all must be supplied by the translator in his choice of words or in the briefest of introductions.
>
> (Cohen 1962:33)

Graves's version of Suetonius reflects the cultural marginality of classical scholarship in the post-World War II period and the growth of a mass market for paperback literature, including the bestselling historical novels by which he made a living for many years. His translation was so effective in responding to this situation that it too became a bestseller, reprinted five times within a decade of publication. As Graves indicated in an essay on "Moral Principles in

Translation," the "ordinary" reader of a classical text (Diodorus is his example) "wants mere factual information, laid out in good order for his hasty eye to catch" (Graves 1965:51). Although Apuleius "wrote a very ornate North African Latin," Graves translated it "for the general public in the plainest possible prose." Making the foreign text "plain" means that Graves's translation method is radically domesticating: it requires not merely the insertion of explanatory phrases, but the inscription of the foreign text with values that are anachronistic and ethnocentric. In the preface to his Suetonius, Graves made clear that he deliberately modernized and Anglicized the Latin. At one point, he considered adding an introductory essay that would signal the cultural and historical difference of the text by describing key political conflicts in late Republican Rome. But he finally omitted it: "most readers," he felt, "will perhaps prefer to plunge straight into the story and pick up the threads as they go along" (Graves 1957:8), allowing his fluent prose to turn transparent and so conceal the domesticating work of the translation.

This work can be glimpsed in discontinuities between Graves's translation discourse and Suetonius's particular method of historical and biographical narrative. Graves's reading of Suetonius, as sketched in his preface, largely agreed with the contemporary academic reception of the Latin text. As the classicist Michael Grant has pointed out, Suetonius

> gathers together, and lavishly inserts, information both for and against [the rulers of Rome], usually without adding any personal judgment in one direction or the other, and above all without introducing the moralizations which had so frequently characterized Greek and Roman biography and history alike. Occasionally conflicting statements are weighed. In general, however, the presentation is drily indiscriminate. […] the author's own opinions are rarely permitted to intrude, and indeed he himself, in collecting all this weird, fascinating material, appears to make little effort to reach a decision about the personalities he is describing, or to build up their characteristics into a coherent account. Perhaps, he may feel, that is how people are: they possess discordant elements which do not add up to a harmonious unity.

> (Grant 1980:8)

Grant's account suggests that the Latin text does not offer a coherent position of subjectivity for the reader to occupy: we are unable to identify with either the author ("the author's own opinions are rarely permitted to intrude") or the characters ("the personalities" are not given "a coherent account"). As a result, Suetonius's narrative may seem to possess a "relatively high degree of objectivity," but it also contains passages that provoke considerable doubt, especially since "his curiously disjointed and staccato diction can lead to obscurity" (ibid.:7–8). Graves's fluent translation smooths out these features of the Latin text, insuring intelligibility, constructing a more coherent position from which the Caesars can be judged, and making any judgment seem true, right, obvious.

Consider this passage from the life of Julius Caesar:

> Stipendia prima in Asia fecit Marci Thermi praetoris contubernio; a quo ad accersendam classem in Bithyniam missus desedit apud Nicomeden, non sine rumorem prostratae regi pudicitiae; quern rumorem auxit intra paucos rursus dies repetita Bithynia per causam exigendae pecuniae, quae deberetur cuidam libertino clienti suo. reliqua militia secundiore fama fuit et a Thermo in expugnatione Mytilenarum corona civica donatus est.
>
> (Butler and Cary 1927:1–2)

> Caesar first saw military service in Asia, where he went as aidede-camp to Marcus Thermus, the provincial governor. When Thermus sent Caesar to raise a fleet in Bithynia, he wasted so much time at King Nicomedes' court that a homosexual relationship between them was suspected, and suspicion gave place to scandal when, soon after his return to headquarters, he revisited Bithynia: ostensibly collecting a debt incurred there by one of his freedmen. However, Caesar's reputation improved later in the campaign, when Thermus awarded him the civic crown of oak leaves, at the storming of Mytilene, for saving a fellow soldier's life.
>
> (Graves 1957:10)

Both passages rest on innuendo instead of explicit judgment, on doubtful hearsay instead of more reliable evidence ("rumorem," "suspicion"). Yet the English text makes several additions that offer

more certainty about Caesar's motives and actions and about
Suetonius's own estimation: the translation is not just slanted against
Caesar, but homophobic. This first appears in an inconsistency in the
diction: Graves's use of "homosexual relationship" to render
"prostratae regi pudicitiae" ("surrendered his modesty to the king")
is an anachronism, a late nineteenth-century scientific term that
diagnoses same-sex sexual activity as pathological and is therefore
inappropriate for an ancient culture in which sexual acts were not
categorized according to the participants' sex (*OED*; Wiseman
1985:10–14). Graves then leads the reader to believe that this
relationship did in fact occur: not only does he increase the innuendo
by using "suspicion gave place to scandal" to translate "rumorem
auxit" ("the rumor spread"), but he inserts the loaded "ostensibly,"
entirely absent from the Latin text. Graves's version implicitly equates
homosexuality with perversion, but since the relationship was with a
foreign monarch, there are also political implications, the hint of a
traitorous collusion which the ambitious Caesar is concealing and
which he may later exploit in a bid for power: the passage
immediately preceding this one has the dictator Sulla associating
Caesar with his archenemy Marius. Because the passage is so charged
with lurid accusations, even the conclusive force of that "however,"
promising a rehabilitation of Caesar's image, is finally subverted by
the possible suggestion of another sexual relationship in "saving a
fellow soldier's life."

Suetonius later touches on Caesar's sexual reputation, and here too
Graves's version is marked by a homophobic bias:

> Pudicitiae eius famam nihil quidem praeter Nicomedis
> contubernium laesit.
>
> (Butler and Cary 1927:22)

> The only specific charge of unnatural practices ever brought against
> him was that he had been King Nicomedes' catamite.
>
> (Graves 1957:30)

Where the Latin text makes rather general and noncommittal
references to Caesar's sexuality, Graves chooses English words that
stigmatize same-sex sexual acts as perverse: a question raised about
"pudicitiae eius famam" ("his sexual reputation") becomes a "specific
charge of unnatural practices," while "contubernium" ("sharing the

same tent," "companionship," "intimacy") makes Caesar a "catamite," a term of abuse in the early modern period for boys who were the sexual objects of men *(OED)*. As an archaism, "catamite" deviates from the modern English lexicon used throughout this and other Penguin Classics, a deviation that is symptomatic of the domesticating process in Graves's version. His prose is so lucid and supple that such symptoms can well be overlooked, enabling the translation to fix an interpretation while presenting that interpretation as authoritative, issuing from an authorial position that transcends linguistic and cultural differences to address the English-language reader. Graves's interpretation, however, assimilates an ancient Latin text to contemporary British values. He punctures the myth of Caesar by equating the Roman dictatorship with sexual perversion, and this reflects a postwar homophobia that linked homosexuality with a fear of totalitarian government, communism, and political subversion through espionage. "In the Cold War," Alan Sinfield notes, "prosecutions for homosexual 'offences' rose five times over in the 15 years from 1939," and "communist homosexual treachery was witch-hunted close to the heart of the high-cultural establishment" (Sinfield 1989:66, 299). Graves's fluently translated Suetonius participated in this domestic situation, not just by stigmatizing Caesar's sexuality, but by presenting the stigma as a historical fact. In the preface, Graves remarked that Suetonius "seems trustworthy," but he also suggested inadvertently that this Roman historian shared sexual and political values currently prevailing in Britain: "his only prejudice being in favour of firm mild rule, with a regard for the human decencies" (Graves 1957:7).

Foreignizing translations that are not transparent, that eschew fluency for a more heterogeneous mix of discourses, are equally partial in their interpretation of the foreign text, but they tend to flaunt their partiality instead of concealing it. Whereas Graves's Suetonius focuses on the signified, creating an illusion of transparency in which linguistic and cultural differences are domesticated, Ezra Pound's translations often focus on the signifier, creating an opacity that calls attention to itself and distinguishes the translation both from the foreign text and from prevailing values in the target-language culture.

In Pound's work, foreignization sometimes takes the form of archaism. His version of "The Seafarer" (1912) departs from modern English by adhering closely to the Anglo-Saxon text, imitating its compound words, alliteration, and accentual meter, even resorting to calque renderings that echo Anglo-Saxon phonology: "bitre

breostceare"/"bitter breast-cares"; "merewerges"/ "mere-weary"; "corna caldast"/"corn of the coldest"; "floodwegas"/"flood-ways"; "hægl scurum fleag"/"hail-scur flew"; "mæw singende fore medodrince"/"the mews' singing all my mead-drink." But Pound's departures from modern English also include archaisms drawn from later periods of English literature.

> ne ænig hleomæga
> feasceaftig ferð frefran meahte.
> Forpon him gelyfeð lyt, se pe ah lifes wyn
> gebiden in burgum, bealosipa hwon,
> wlonc ond wingal, hu ic werig oft
> in brimlade bidan sceolde.
> (Krapp and Dobbie 1936:144)

> Not any protector
> May make merry man faring needy.
> This he littles believes, who aye in winsome life
> Abides 'mid burghers some heavy business,
> Wealthy and wine-flushed, how I weary oft
> Must bide above brine.
> (Pound 1954:207)

The word "aye" ("always") is a Middle English usage that later appeared in Scottish and northern dialects, while "burghers" first emerges in the Elizabethan period *(OED)*. The words "'mid" (for "amid") and "bide" are poeticisms used by such nineteenth-century writers as Scott, Dickens, Tennyson, Arnold, and Morris. Pound's lexicon in fact favors archaisms that have become poetical: "brine," "o'er," "pinion," "laud," "ado."

Such textual features indicate that a translation can be foreignizing only by putting to work cultural materials and agendas that are *domestic,* specific to the target language, but also, in this case, anachronistic, specific to later periods. "The Seafarer" is informed by Pound's knowledge of English literature from its beginnings, but also by his modernist poetics, by his favoring, notably in *The Cantos,* an elliptical, fragmentary verse in which subjectivity is split and determinate, presented as a site of heterogeneous cultural discourses (Easthope 1983:chap. 9). The peculiarities of Pound's translation—the gnarled syntax, the

reverberating alliteration, the densely allusive archaism—slow the movement of the monologue, resisting assimilation, however momentarily, to a coherent subject (whether "author" or "seafarer") and foregrounding the various English dialects and literary discourses that get elided beneath the illusion of a speaking voice. This translation strategy is foreignizing in its resistance to values that prevail in contemporary Anglo-American culture—the canon of fluency in translation, the dominance of transparent discourse, the individualistic effect of authorial presence.

And yet Pound's translation reinscribes its own modernist brand of individualism by editing the Anglo-Saxon text. As the medievalist Christine Fell has remarked, this text contains "two traditions, the heroic, if we may so define it, preoccupation with survival of honour after loss of life—and the Christian hope for security of tenure in Heaven" (Fell 1991:176). However these conflicting values entered the text, whether present in some initial oral version or introduced during a later monastic transcription, they project two contradictory concepts of subjectivity, one individualistic (the seafarer as his own person alienated from mead-hall as well as town), the other collective (the seafarer as a soul in a metaphysical hierarchy composed of other souls and dominated by God). Pound's translation resolves this contradiction by omitting the Christian references entirely, highlighting the strain of heroism in the Anglo-Saxon text, making the seafarer's "mind's lust" to "seek out foreign fastness" an example of "daring ado,/So that all men shall honour him after." In Susan Bassnett's words, Pound's translation represents "the suffering of a great individual rather than the common suffering of everyman [...] a grief-stricken exile, broken but never bowed" (Bassnett 1980:97). The archaizing translation strategy interferes with the individualistic illusion of transparency, but the revisions intensify the theme of heroic individualism, and hence the recurrent gibes at the "burgher" who complacently pursues his financial interests and "knows not [...] what some perform/Where wandering them widest draweth" (Pound 1954:208). The revisions are symptomatic of the domestic agenda that animates Pound's foreignizing translation, a peculiar ideological contradiction that distinguishes modernist literary experiments: the development of textual strategies that decenter the transcendental subject coincides with a recuperation of it through certain individualistic motifs like the "strong personality." Ultimately, this contradiction constitutes a response to the crisis of human subjectivity that modernists

perceived in social developments like monopoly capitalism, particularly the creation of a mass work force and the standardization of the work process (Jameson 1979:110–114).

The examples from Graves and Pound show that the aim of a symptomatic reading is not to assess the "freedom" or "fidelity" of a translation, but rather to uncover the canons of accuracy by which it is produced and judged. Fidelity cannot be construed as mere semantic equivalence: on the one hand, the foreign text is susceptible to many different interpretations, even at the level of the individual word; on the other hand, the translator's interpretive choices answer to a domestic cultural situation and so always exceed the foreign text. This does not mean that translation is forever banished to the realm of freedom or error, but that canons of accuracy are culturally specific and historically variable. Although Graves produced a free translation by his own admission, it has nonetheless been judged faithful and accepted as the standard English-language rendering by academic specialists like Grant. In 1979, Grant published an edited version of Graves's translation that pronounced it accurate, if not "precise":

> [It] conveys the peculiarities of Suetonius's methods and character better than any other translation. Why, then, have I been asked to "edit" it? Because Robert Graves (who explicitly refrained from catering for students) did not aim at producing a precise translation—introducing, as he himself points out, sentences of explanation, omitting passages which do not seem to help the sense, and "turning sentences, and sometimes even groups of sentences, inside-out." […] What I have tried to do, therefore, is to make such adjustments as will bring his version inside the range of what is now generally regarded by readers of the Penguin Classics as a "translation"—without, I hope, detracting from his excellent and inimitable manner.
>
> (Grant 1980:8–9)

In the twenty-two years separating Graves's initial version from the revised edition, the canons of accuracy underwent a change, requiring a translation to be both fluent and exact, to make for "vivid and compulsive reading" (ibid.:8), but also to follow the foreign text more closely. The passages quoted earlier from the life of Caesar were evidently judged accurate in 1979, since Grant made only one revision:

"catamite" was replaced by "bedfellow" (ibid.:32). This change brings the English closer to the Latin ("contubernium"), but it also improves the fluency of Graves's prose by replacing an archaism with a more familiar contemporary usage. The revision is obviously too small to minimize the homophobia in the passages.

Pound's version of "The Seafarer" also cannot be simply questioned as too free because it is informed by the scholarly reception of the Anglo-Saxon text. As Bassnett has suggested, his omission of the Christian references, including the homiletic epilogue (ll. 103–124), is not so much a deviation from the text preserved in the Exeter Book, as an emendation that responds to a key question in historical scholarship: "Should the poem be perceived as having a Christian message as an integral feature, or are the Christian elements additions that sit uneasily over the pagan foundations?" (Bassnett 1980:96). In *English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest,* for example, Stopford Brooke asserted that "it is true, the *Seafarer* ends with a Christian tag, but the quality of its verse, which is merely homiletic, has made capable persons give it up as a part of the original poem" (Brooke 1898:153). Pound's translation can be considered accurate according to early twentieth-century academic standards, a translation that is simultaneously a plausible edition of the Anglo-Saxon text. His departures from the Exeter Book assumed a cultural situation in which Anglo-Saxon was still very much studied by readers, who could therefore be expected to appreciate the work of historical reconstruction implicit in his version of the poem.

The symptomatic reading is an historicist approach to the study of translations that aims to situate canons of accuracy in their specific cultural moments. Critical categories like "fluency" and "resistancy," "domesticating" and "foreignizing," can only be defined by referring to the formation of cultural discourses in which the translation is produced, and in which certain translation theories and practices are valued over others. At the same time, however, applying these critical categories in the study of translations is anachronistic: they are fundamentally determined by a cultural political agenda in the present, an opposition to the contemporary dominance of transparent discourse, to the privileging of a fluent domesticating method that masks both the translator's work and the asymmetrical relations—cultural, economic, political—between English-language nations and their others worldwide. Although a humanist theory and practice of translation is equally anachronistic, inscribing the foreign-language

text with current domestic values, it is also dehistoricizing: the various conditions of translated texts and of their reception are concealed beneath concepts of transcendental subjectivity and transparent communication. A symptomatic reading, in contrast, is historicizing: it assumes a concept of determinate subjectivity that exposes both the ethnocentric violence of translating and the interested nature of its own historicist approach.

III

The project of the present book is to combat the translator's invisibility with a history of—and in opposition to—contemporary English-language translation. Insofar as it is a cultural history with a professed political agenda, it follows the genealogical method developed by Nietzsche and Foucault and abandons the two principles that govern much conventional historiography: teleology and objectivity. Genealogy is a form of historical representation that depicts, not a continuous progression from a unified origin, an inevitable development in which the past fixes the meaning of the present, but a discontinuous succession of division and hierarchy, domination and exclusion, which destabilize the seeming unity of the present by constituting a past with plural, heterogeneous meanings. In a genealogical analysis, writes Foucault, "what is found at the historical beginnings of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity" (Foucault 1977:142). The possibility of recuperating these "other" meanings explodes the pretense of objectivity in conventional historiography: its teleological emphasis betrays a complicity with the continuance of past domination and exclusion into the present. Thus, history is shown to be a cultural political practice, a partial (i.e., at once selective and evaluative) representation of the past that actively intervenes into the present, even if the interests served by that intervention are not always made explicit or perhaps remain unconscious. For Foucault, a genealogical analysis is unique in affirming the interested nature of its historical representation, in taking a stand vis-à-vis the political struggles of its situation. And by locating what has been dominated or excluded in the past and repressed by conventional historiography, such an analysis can not only challenge the cultural and social conditions in which it is performed, but propose different conditions to be established in the future. History informed by genealogy, Foucault suggests, "should become a differential knowledge of

energies and failings, heights and degenerations, poisons and antidotes. Its task is to become a curative science" (ibid.:156). By constructing a differential representation of the past, genealogy both engages in present cultural debates and social conflicts and develops resolutions that project utopian images.

The Translator's Invisibility intervenes against the translator's situation and activity in contemporary Anglo-American culture by offering a series of genealogies that write the history of present. It traces the rise of transparent discourse in English-language translation from the seventeenth century onward, while searching the past for exits, alternative theories and practices in British, American, and several foreign-language cultures—German, French, Italian.[12] The chapters form an argument pursued chronologically, showing that the origins of fluent translating lie in various kinds of cultural domination and exclusion, but also that translation can serve a more democratic agenda in which excluded theories and practices are recovered and the prevailing fluency is revised. The acts of recovery and revision that constitute this argument rest on extensive archival research, bringing to light forgotten or neglected translations and establishing an alternative tradition that somewhat overlaps with, but mostly differs from, the current canon of British and American literature.

This book is motivated by a strong impulse to *document* the history of English-language translation, to uncover long-obscure translators and translations, to reconstruct their publication and reception, and to articulate significant controversies. The documentary impulse, however, serves the skepticism of symptomatic readings that interrogate the process of domestication in translated texts, both canonical and marginal, and reassess their usefulness in contemporary Anglo-American culture. The historical narratives in each chapter, grounded as they are on a diagnosis of current translation theory and practice, address key questions. What domestic values has transparent discourse at once inscribed and masked in foreign texts during its long domination? How has transparency shaped the canon of foreign literatures in English and the cultural identities of English-language nations? Why has transparency prevailed over other translation strategies in English, like Victorian archaism (Francis Newman, William Morris) and modernist experiments with heterogeneous discourses (Pound, Celia and Louis Zukofsky, Paul Blackburn)? What would happen if a translator tried to redirect the

process of domestication by choosing foreign texts that deviated from transparent discourse and by translating them so as to signal their linguistic and cultural differences? Would this effort establish more democratic cultural exchanges? Would it change domestic values? Or would it mean banishment to the fringes of Anglo-American culture?

Throughout, the emphasis is on "literary" translation in a broad sense (mainly poetry and fiction, but also including biography, history, and philosophy, among other genres and disciplines in the human sciences), as opposed to "technical" translation (scientific, legal, diplomatic, commercial). This emphasis is not due to the fact that literary translators today are any more invisible or exploited than their technical counterparts, who, whether freelance or employed by translation agencies, are not permitted to sign or copyright their work, let alone receive royalties (Fischbach 1992:3). Rather, literary translation is emphasized 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. As Schleiermacher realized long ago, the choice of whether to domesticate or foreignize a foreign text has been allowed only to translators of literary texts, not to translators of technical materials. Technical translation is fundamentally constrained by the exigencies of communication: during the postwar period, it has supported scientific research, geopolitical negotiation, and economic exchange, especially as multinational corporations seek to expand foreign markets and thus increasingly require fluent, immediately intelligible translations of international treaties, legal contracts, technical information, and instruction manuals (Levy 1991:F5). Although in sheer volume and financial worth technical translation far exceeds the translation of literary texts (a recent estimate values the corporate and government translation industry at $10 billion), literary translation remains a discursive practice where the translator can experiment in the choice of foreign texts and in the development of translation methods, constrained primarily by the current situation in the target-language culture.

The ultimate aim of the book is to force translators and their readers to reflect on the ethnocentric violence of translation and hence to write and read translated texts in ways that seek to recognize the linguistic and cultural difference of foreign texts. What I am advocating is not an indiscriminate valorization of every foreign culture or a metaphysical

concept of foreignness as an essential value; indeed, the foreign text is privileged in a foreignizing translation only insofar as it enables a disruption of target-language cultural codes, so that its value is always strategic, depending on the cultural formation into which it is translated. The point is rather to elaborate the theoretical, critical, and textual means by which translation can be studied and practiced as a locus of difference, instead of the homogeneity that widely characterizes it today.

Chapter 2

Canon

Words in One Language Elegantly us'd
Will hardly in another be excus'd,
And some that *Rome* admir'd in *Caesars* Time
May neither suit *Our Genius* nor our *Clime*.
The *Genuine Sence, intelligibly* Told,
Shews a *Translator* both *Discreet* and *Bold*.

<div align="right">Earl of Roscommon</div>

Fluency emerges in English-language translation during the early modern period, a feature of aristocratic literary culture in seventeenth-century England, and over the next two hundred years it is valued for diverse reasons, cultural and social, in accordance with the vicissitudes of the hegemonic classes. At the same time, the illusion of transparency produced in fluent translation enacts a thoroughgoing domestication that masks the manifold conditions of the translated text, its exclusionary impact on foreign cultural values, but also on those at home, eliminating translation strategies that resist transparent discourse, closing off any thinking about cultural and social alternatives that do not favor English social elites. The dominance of fluency in English-language translation until today has led to the forgetting of these conditions and exclusions, requiring their recovery to intervene against the contemporary phase of this dominance. The following genealogy aims to trace the rise of fluency as a canon of English-language translation, showing how it achieved canonical status, interrogating its exclusionary effects on the canon of foreign literatures in English, and reconsidering the cultural and social values that it excludes at home.