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Difference/derivation: feminist translation under review

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approach (and the subsequent publication of the collection *The manipulation of literature: studies in literary translation*, (Hermans 1985b) (the contributors were mostly those who contributed to the proceedings volume for the "Literature and Translation" conference of 1976) which helped to establish translation studies as a discipline in its own right.

In the following paragraphs I will discuss two linguistically inspired approaches to translation influenced by the cultural turn and descriptive translation studies before attempting to explore the cultural studies approach itself and provide a more explicit context for feminist translation.

3.6.2 Functionalist approaches to translation

Functionalism is a broad term for various theories that focus on the functions of text and translations and not on equivalence between text and translation. These theories, developed mainly by German scholars, "seek to liberate translators from servitude to the source text, seeing translation as a new communicative act that must be purposeful with respect to the translator's client and readership." (Nord 1997, back cover). Like descriptive translation studies, functionalist theories arose in reaction to linguistic and equivalence-based theories and the dissatisfaction with the relationship between theory and practice. As Nord (1997: 8) explains it, the reason why some scholars became increasingly dissatisfied with equivalence-based approaches and instead turned to functionalism, was that they started to examine the profession for which they were training translators, and found that professional translating includes many instances where equivalence is not called for at all. Functionalist approaches to translation therefore have a lot in common with descriptive translation studies. Both approaches are primarily based on practice, albeit different kinds of practice, they are both target-oriented, focusing on the translation, and both approaches subscribe to the point of view that just as a text can have a dominant function, so too can a translation. The function of the translation does not have to be the same as that of the original. However, functionalism differs from descriptive translation studies in two important ways: it is a theory which is applied to practice, and not simply an observation of practice, and its aim, to teach translators, means that it is necessarily prescriptive. Nord (1997: 2-3) explains:

> Although functionalist approaches draw on practical experience of the translation profession, they are not just descriptive; they do not merely describe what can be observed in the process of translation or the results of this process.

> As we will see later on, functionalism makes use of descriptive methods (for example parallel text analysis) to locate and compare the communicative norms and conventions valid in various culture communities. Since functionalist approaches have been developed mainly within university translator-training institutions, they are normative or evaluative to the extent that they include the evaluation of translations with regard to their functionality within a given situation-in-culture; future professional translators must be trained not only to produce 'good' (that is, functional) translations satisfying their customers' needs, but also to find good arguments to defend their products against unjustified criticism from clients and users.

The first theory aiming to bridge the gap between theory and practice in this way is the *Skopostheorie* (skopos theory) of Hans Vermeer in Reiss and Vermeer (1984), which states:

> Each text is produced for a given purpose and should serve this purpose. The *Skopos* rule thus reads as follows: translate/interpret/speak/ write in such a way that enables your text/ translation to function in the situation in which it is used and with the people who want to use it and precisely in the way they want it to function. (Vermeer in Nord 1997: 29)

Thus, the prime principle determining any translation process is the purpose (*Skopos*) of the overall translational action. In skopos theory, which was developed as the foundation for a general theory of translation, Vermeer aims to solve the eternal dilemmas of free vs faithful translation, dynamic vs formal equivalence, good interpreters vs slavish translators, etc. Because the receiver or addressee is the main factor determining the target-text *Skopos*, *Skopostheorie* is often misconstrued to mean that a good translation must necessarily conform only to target-culture behaviour or expectations. In fact, the reverse is true: the *Skopos* of a particular translation task may require a 'free' *or* a 'faithful' translation, or anything between these two extremes, depending on the purpose for which the translation is needed.

The most influential proponent of the functionalist approach is Christiane Nord (1988, 1991, 1997). Strongly influenced by Vermeer's skopos theory (Reiss and Vermeer 1984), the gist of Nord's theory is that "[t]he function of the target text is not arrived at automatically from an analysis of the source text, but is pragmatically defined by the purpose of the intercultural communication". (Nord 1991: 9). To this end, she elaborates a translation-oriented model of text analysis in translation (Nord [1988], 1991) which includes the analysis of extratextual and intratextual aspects of the communicative action and is designed to identify the function-

relevant elements in both the existing source text and the prospective target text as defined by the translation brief. By comparing the skopos or translating instructions with the functions of the source text before starting to translate, translators should be able to locate the problems that may arise in the translating process (Nord 1997: 14).

Other translation scholars who draw on functionalism are Holz-Mänttäri (1984), Hönig and Kussmaul (1982), Kussmaul (1995) and Hönig (1993, 1995). For a general overview of their contributions, see Nord (1997).

3.6.3 Corpus-based translation studies

In recent years, the emphasis has shifted very gradually from the source to the target text, not only within descriptive translation studies and cultural studies, but also within corpus linguistics and translation (now referred to as corpus translation studies or CTS). Growing out of corpus linguistics and so having an inherent allegiance to linguistic approaches to translation, at the same time corpus translation studies is part of the turn away from prescriptive approaches to translation towards the descriptive and cultural approaches advocated by DTS and polysystems theorists. According to Baker (1996a: 176),

> For a long time, target-oriented translation studies was only target-oriented in the sense of not imposing the standards of the source text onto the target text, of allowing for the fact that different contexts and communicative goals may require different translation methods.

Text linguistics-based approaches to translation started with typologies of source texts and assumed that translators have to use different strategies for different source text types. Then theorists began to suggest that the function of the translation may sometimes be different from that of the source text. But, in Baker's (1996a: 176) view, pedagogical goals blinded them to the theoretical implications of this position, and instead of going on to develop a typology of translated text - because the implication here is that a translation, like any kind of text production, develops in response to the pressures of its own immediate context and draws on a distinct repertoire of textual patterns - they settled for suggesting that equivalence is a function of the assignment or commission that accompanies a request for translation. "Which means that we were still trying to justify translation methods rather than explain translation itself as a textual phenomenon". (Baker 1996a: 176)

From the early 1990s, therefore, Baker and a few colleagues (such as Laviosa 1997, Øverås 1996, and Munday, forthcoming) began to use the techniques and tools of corpus linguistics to study translation as a variety of language behaviour that merits attention in its own right: not in order to criticise or evaluate individual translations but in order to understand what actually happens in the process of translation; to determine whether in fact translated texts are systematically different from original texts in linguistically describable ways (Baker 1996a: 175). According to Baker (1993: 243), the most important task that awaits the application of corpus techniques in translation studies is "the elucidation of the nature of translated text as a mediated communicative event," i.e. CTS is promoted and justified on the grounds that such studies will uncover and establish universal features of translation. CTS thus focuses on both the process of translation and the products of translation, and it takes into account the smallest details of the translated text(s) as well as the largest cultural patterns both internal and external to the text(s).

In this project these researchers endeavour to explore and systematise earlier conclusions drawn with regard to the characteristics of translated text, such as those of the Czech scholar Levý. In 1963, Levý was one of the first to analyse the overarching characteristics of translations, identifying two general trends in translation: lexical impoverishment (translators tend to choose more general and therefore more colourless vocabulary and reduce lexical variety by using fewer synonyms) and secondly, explicitation (translators tend to intellectualise the translated text by making it more logical, by explicitating the implicit, and by formally representing syntactic relations. (Fawcett 1997: 100). Since then, using computer-assisted research methods and very large electronic corpuses of text, researchers such as Blum-Kulka (1986) and Baker (1993) have found evidence to support Levý's theories and have formulated the so-called 'explicitation hypothesis' which states that translations will as a general principle be more explicit than the original text. Baker (1993: 243-5) also suggests that translated texts will simplify and disambiguate, naturalise and normalise in relation to originals. Toury (1995: 286-78) has brought the results together in his 'laws' of translation, one of which relates to the tolerance of specific languages for translationese, or 'interference'. CTS researchers examine comparable corpora (eg monolingual corpuses of original English in a specific genre compared to corpuses of translated English in the same genre) as well as parallel

or bilingual corpora (eg corpuses of translated English compared to corpuses in translated German) to gain insight into the particular translation practices and procedures which have been used by translators in a specific genre, which in turn allows for the specification of translation universals. Multilingual corpora, which consist of sets of two or more monolingual corpora of native (not translated) texts in different languages (Baker 1995), can be used in translator training, contrastive linguistics, materials writing and the development of machine translation software. They provide useful insights into the typical means employed by two or more languages to express similar meanings.

3.6.4 Cultural studies: translation as resistance, transgression and subversion

Although both Bassnett and Lefevere contributed to *The manipulation of literature: studies in literary translation* (Hermans 1985a), the book which marks the starting point of descriptive translation research for many scholars, their focus of interest was not so much corpora of texts and objective enquiry into translation as it was for mainstream descriptive translation studies theorists, but rather power and ideology as it manifests in translation and culture. Gentzler (1993: 189) elaborates:

> Lefevere argues that an analysis of literary texts, an analysis of how rewriting - translation being the most common form - insures the continuity of literature must always consider not only the influence of poetics and literary systems, but also ideology and institutions of power. Any approach which foregrounds merely one or the other, according to Lefevere, will be insufficient.

Thus, while those writing within the cultural studies paradigm adopt certain of the ideas put forward by descriptive translation studies, such as Even-Zohar's notion of the polysystem and Toury's concept of norms, as well as the idea that translation should be seen as a primary activity and not a secondary, derivative activity, cultural studies theorists reject descriptive translation theorists' attempts to be objective and simply to describe translational phenomena on the bases of corpuses of texts, choosing instead to foreground the subjective nature of their enquiry and their evaluation of the power play involved in translation, in the confrontation between identity and alterity, between author and translator, between original and translation. To this end, they focus almost exclusively on literary translation, whereas descriptive translation studies allows for the examination of all types of texts. Like DTS, the cultural studies paradigm defines itself somewhat in opposition to linguistic approaches to translation,

but cultural studies is all the more dismissive of linguistic approaches because it stems from a literary background, whereas DTS shares certain characteristics with linguistic approaches and therefore does not dismiss linguistics to the periphery quite so lightly.

In the preface to *Translation, history and culture* (Bassnett & Lefevere 1990), which amounts to a manifesto on the nature of the cultural studies paradigm, the editors are therefore quite categorical about what cultural studies is *not*:

> The reader will no longer find painstaking comparisons between originals and translations, largely because such comparisons, after paying lip-service to the text-as-unit, tend to fall victim to the 'invisible theory' of the *tertium comparationis* which is implicitly postulated to underwrite judgements on why a certain translation (usually the one proposed by the writer of the paper in question) is better than another (usually contained in the translation being compared with its original). Nor will the reader find suggestions for either the production of foolproof translations or the training of foolproof translators, simply because both are utopian chimerae, to say the least. (Bassnett & Lefevere 1990: 4-5)

Whereas in the past literary scholars, especially comparatists, seldom concerned themselves with translations as instruments of mediation and influence between national literatures, the shift of attention in literary studies to considerations of the impact, reception and communicative function of a literary work of art has acted as the motivating factor behind the study of literary translations and the role they play in the literary process. Translation/rewriting Studies therefore tends to deal with the constraints that enter into play during the process of both the writing and rewriting of texts. These constraints both belong to the field of literary studies 'proper' and transcend it. They ultimately have to do with power and manipulation, "two issues potentially of enormous interest not only to those engaged in literary studies, but also to all their victims outside." (Bassnett & Lefevere 1990: 12) For those working within the cultural paradigm, the study of translation practice has moved on from a formalist approach and turned instead to the larger issues of context, history and convention. The object of study has been redefined; what is studied is the text embedded within its network of both source and target cultural signs. In this way Translation Studies has been able both to utilise the linguistic approach and move out beyond it. Instead of debating the accuracy of a translation based on linguistic criteria, translators and translation scholars are tending to consider the relative function of the text in each of its two contexts. (Bassnett & Lefevere 1990: 12)

Thus, from the eighties onwards, descriptive translation studies and cultural studies in translation could be said to be the dominant discourses on translation. Literary theories-inspired translation theorists would have it that once the concept of equivalence had been dethroned and culture was recognised as a vital aspect of translation, linguistic-based theories of translation had nothing more to contribute to translation studies as a whole. For instance, in the preface to *Translation studies: an interdiscipline. Selected studies from the Translation Studies Congress, Vienna, 9-12 September 1992*, (Snell-Hornby et al. 1994), the editors explain that the contributions to the book reflect the subject areas which were focal at the congress: Translation, History and Culture, Interdisciplinary Research Projects from Vienna, Interpreting Theory and Training, Terminology and Special Languages and Teaching and Training in Translation. In their view, it "is probably significant for the present development in Translation Studies that the section on "Translation and Linguistics" turned out to be small at the Congress and did not yield enough material to be represented in this volume." Peter Fawcett, too, states: "What might be called the 'heroic age' of linguistically oriented translation studies extended from the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s" (Fawcett 1997: foreword). But Mona Baker (1996b: 15) points out that cultural studies theorists who tend to make this assumption may not be up to date with the most recent developments. She states: "Scholars who continue to attack linguistic approaches as irrelevant to the study of translation are often not aware of what has been happening in linguistics in recent years, nor of some of the more exciting work done on translation within the framework of modern linguistics."

Thus it is apparent that functionalism and corpus translation studies, although forming part of the 'cultural turn', differ quite substantially in outlook from cultural studies in the context of translation as put forward by theorists such as Bassnett, Lefevere, Venuti and others. This is due partly to the increasing influence of poststructuralist and deconstructionist theories, and the revisiting of pre-scientific metaphors of translation as part of the move away from any suggestion of a 'scientistic' investigation of translation. These influences will briefly be explored before I examine resistive translation theories in more detail and provide a more explicit context for feminist translation.

3.6.4.1 Influence of poststructuralism and deconstruction on translation

The rise of translation theory as an academic discipline coincided with the period of dominance of structuralist linguistics and was strongly influenced by structuralist linguistics, since this seemed to offer translation a systematic framework within which to work. But already at that time, in the writings of Roland Barthes, whose "Death of the Author" appeared only three years after Chomsky's *Aspects of the theory of syntax* and Catford's *A linguistic theory of translation*, approaches were beginning to emerge which, as they worked their way through a variety of disciplines towards the phenomenal success they currently enjoy in literary theory, would later have considerable influence on translation theory (Fawcett 1994: 247). In fact, theories of translation have generally drawn on three adjacent disciplines for their notions of the 'contents' and purposes of their study as well as for general methodological stances: linguistics, poetics, and philosophy. It is perhaps no accident that these three disciplines, as well as the many other areas of study for which they have provided models, have come to provide a focus of attention for poststructuralist inquiry. (Ingberg 1986: 146).

In Rosemary Arrojo's (1998: 25) view, the fact that translation has been conquering a more defined space within language and cultural studies since the 1980s can be linked to the increasing popularity in translation circles of the philosophical approaches to translation formulated in previous years and grouped under the umbrella term of poststructuralism. "As we regard translation as a form of transformation, we finally begin to move beyond the old stalemates which have paralysed reflection on the area for at least two thousand years." (Arrojo 1998: 25)

The first significant effect of these theories on translation is that postmodernist theories have proposed a radical revision of the traditional dichotomy that has always put practice under the alleged control of theory. According to Ingberg (1986: 6):

> Poststructuralist theorists have explored in detail the implications of the existence of varying perspectives for our understanding of the nature and function of discourse. They have argued that our traditional notions of the unity and self-sufficiency of textual products, including theoretical and ideological constructs, are largely illusions fostered by the blind spots each perspective creates.

Thus, poststructuralist approaches support a view of theory and practice as dialogically related, a view where neither concept governs the other but where both function as contesting and complementary, i.e. dialogical forces within discourse. Theory and practice, in such a view, are not thought of as essences or discrete functions or operations; rather they are seen to represent theoretical formulations of positions which in practice can be applied only temporarily and alternately (Ingberg 1986: 147). Arrojo (1998: 26) supports this, stating that only within a theoretical framework that does not depend on such a gap can the study of translation effectively grow and prosper. In her view, translation theorists have tended to propose a fundamentally authoritarian, generally fruitless relationship between theory and practice as they envision an ideal scenario in which what is commonly implied, in the name of science or rational expertise, is that it is the exclusive business of theory to establish definitions and models and to set translation rules and standards while it is the translator's role to accept and blindly follow them (Arrojo 1998: 26). Secondly, and no less importantly, poststructuralist conceptions of meaning have directed attention away from the authority of the author towards the role of the reader as well as undermining the notion of the 'original' as a stable, objectively transferable entity. This is a change which has far-reaching implications for translation theory. As Arrojo (1998: 26) puts it:

> If there is no stable 'original' to which one could be objectively faithful without interfering with its allegedly intrinsic meaning, the traditional issues which have concerned translators and theoreticians for as long as this complex activity has been practised take a radically different turn and begin to liberate the general reflection on translation from the unrealistic expectations and dead-end arguments which have transformed its study into a series of failed attempts at giving definite answers to the perennial question of how translators could possibly become transparent in order to be faithful to the languages and cultures involved in their task.

The affinities between the main issues raised by translation and some contemporary trends in non-essentialist philosophy and cultural studies, particularly deconstruction, have been emphasised by philosophers, students of cultural relations, and translation scholars interested in the transformation of thought about language and the subject, as well as in the implications of such developments for traditional philosophy and all the other disciplines that still rely on the possibility of stable meanings and transcendental truths. As Andrew Benjamin recognises, any discussion of translation is itself a discussion of the nature of the philosophical enterprise,

a conclusion which can be shared both implicitly and explicitly, by philosophers as apparently diverse as Davidson, Heidegger and Derrida (Benjamin 1989: 1). Benjamin, Heidegger, Gadamer, Derrida and, in what is called the 'analytical' domain of thought, Wittgenstein and Quine, cannot be said to have developed a philosophy of translation as such, but more of an symbiosis between philosophising and translating in which the notion of translation itself is examined conceptually. For instance, Benjamin's explicit goal in his *translation and the nature of philosophy* (1989) is to explore the fascination with translation which he detects within contemporary philosophical work that has turned translation into a concept in terms of which the possibility, if not the actual practice, of philosophy is discussed (1989: 9).

It is, however, in the work of Jacques Derrida that this intimate connection between the problematic of translation and the philosophical enterprise has been most fully explored: "The philosophical operation, if it has an originality and specificity, defines itself as a project of translation. More precisely, it defines itself as the fixation of a certain concept and project in translation" (Derrida 1985b: 119-20).

In Derrida's view, a philosopher is primarily concerned with truth or meaning, and since meaning is before or beyond language, it follows that it is translatable. Meaning has the commanding role, and consequently one must be able to fix its univocality, or, in any case, to master its plurivocality. Hence:

> if this plurivocality can be mastered, then translation, understood as the transport of a semantic content into another signifying form, is possible. There is no philosophy unless translation in this latter sense is possible. Therefore the thesis of philosophy is translatability in this common sense, that is, as the transfer of a meaning or a truth from one language to another without any essential harm being done... The origin of philosophy is translation or the thesis of translatability, so that wherever translation in this sense has failed, it is nothing less than philosophy that finds itself defeated. (Derrida 1985b: 119-20)

From such a stance, what have traditionally been regarded as the 'theoretical problems' of translation begin to be recognised as being part of a world view that insists on searching for the alleged hidden core or model that would finally put an end to all the 'relative', local, finite interpretations with which our perspectives are traditionally constructed.

Since it takes the implications of the Saussurian theorisation of the arbitrary, conventional sign to its last consequences, thereby questioning the possibility of stable meanings that could be reproduced and recovered in their sameness, deconstruction implicitly and explicitly challenges all the traditional notions usually associated with translation as an idealised form of meaning transferral from one language to another, and from one culture to another, without the interference of either the translator or his or her circumstances. If meaning cannot be fully repeated even within the domain of that which we still call the 'same' language, that is, if it is difference which is the basic trait of any process of signification, the traditional notion of the text as the immobile, protective container of its author's intentional, supposedly recoverable meaning is radically revised. If the text, like the sign, is no longer merely divisible into a signifier and a signified that could be clearly separated from each other, and if the signified is always already also a signifier in a process which never leads us to a pure, definite origin, the traditional notion of the 'original' and the relationships that it has been allowed to establish with translation and translators are also radically revised (Arrojo 1998: 41). From the point of view of deconstructive thought, since translation "practises the difference between signified and signifier", "we will never have, and in fact have never had, to do with some 'transport ' of pure signifieds from one language to another, or within one and the same language, that the signifying instrument would leave virgin and untouched" (Derrida 1987: 20). Consequently, translation begins to be recognised as a form of 'transformation': a regulated transformation of one language by another, of one text by another (Derrida 1987: 20). And it becomes possible to conceive of a theory of interpretation that is not constructed around the interrelated poles of loss and recovery[4].

Another important influence of deconstruction on translation can be found in the discussion of metaphor. Metaphor has traditionally been defined as a trope of resemblance, not just as resemblance between signifier and signified, but also the resemblance between signs, one of which represents the other. Derrida sets out to show that it is also a trope of difference. (Godard 1991: 112) This revisiting and rewriting of metaphor not as a trope of resemblance,

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[4] Cf. Derrida's *Living on Border Lines* (1979), *Des Tours de Babel* (1985a) and the *Ear of the Other - Otobiography, Transference, Translation* (1985b); *Difference in Translation* (Graham (ed) 1985), *Oficina de Tradução - A Teoria na Prática* (Arrojo 1986) and Gentzler's *Contemporary Translation Theories* (1993) to mention only a few.

but as a trope of difference has prompted translation theorists influenced by the poststructuralist paradigm to revisit metaphors relating to translation. In moving strongly away from any suggestion of a 'scientistic' investigation of translation, one of the important sources of resistance for these theorists are pre-scientific views of translation as reflected in metaphors of translation. These new metaphors have in turn inspired new approaches to translation.

3.6.4.2 Metaphor in translation as a trope of resistance

According to Lori Chamberlain (in Venuti 1992: 66),

> The metaphorics of translation is ..a symptom of larger issues of Western culture: of the power relations as they divide in terms of gender; of a persistent (though not always hegemonic) desire to equate language or language use with morality; of a quest for originality or unity, and a consequent intolerance of duplicity, of what cannot be decided.

In fact, metaphor is one of the richest sources of information about discourses on translation, revealing much about society's attitudes to the translation process. Researchers have found that metaphors of translation going as far back as Cicero tend to illustrate the inferiority of a translation in relation to the original in various ways. The original author is often seen as an 'inventor', free to express himself as he wishes, whereas the translator is merely an 'imitator', bound by the wording of the original. In many statements about translation, the translator is portrayed as a slave, and this slavery is then contrasted with the freedom and originality of the 'inventor'. Dryden, writing on the threshold of the eighteenth century, uses this kind of imagery:

> He who invents, is master of his thoughts and words: he can turn and vary them as he pleases, till he renders them harmonious; but the wretched translator has no such privilege: for, being tied to the thoughts, he must make what music he can in the expression; and for this reason, it cannot always be so sweet as that of the original. (Rener 1989: 93)

The slave metaphor is also characteristic of Dutch thinking around this period, *De Denker* of 1772 observing that

> "..wy, en zelfs Geleerden onder ons, [zijn] halve Slaaven geworden, en men let meer, wat [onze] Nabuuren vermoogen, dan men beproeft, wat men zeld zou kunnen voortbrengen"
>
> *[..we, and even the learned among us [have] become half slaves, and [we] pay*

more attention to what [our] neighbours are able to do instead of trying to create something of [our] own."](Korpel in Lambert & Lefevere 1993: 117)

In many vituperative statements about translation, the translator is, therefore, portrayed as a slave, and this slavery is then contrasted with the freedom of the 'inventor', thus giving strength to the argument that translation is a contemptible occupation. An often quoted passage containing this idea is that of Colletet (in Rener 1989: 93)

> C'est trop m'assujetir, je suis las d'imiter,
> La version déplait à qui peut inventer;
> Je suis plus amoureux d'un vers que je compose
> Que des livres entiers que j'ai traduits en prose.

Gender metaphors are also common in discourses on translation. Work by Lori Chamberlain on translation has shown that the most traditional and misogynist conceptions of gender roles and attributes have coloured much of the discussion on translation, coding it as a passive and subservient activity that simply reproduces someone else's real work. Traditionally, the act of translating has been viewed as something qualitatively inferior to the original act of writing - writing being original and 'masculine', and translating seen as being derivative and 'feminine.' (Chamberlain1992: 68) One famous quotation of this kind was made by John Florio, in ca. 1603, who, in commenting on the insufficiency of his translation, said: "Because they are necessarily defective, all translations are reputed females." Many metaphors of translation have historically been couched in terms of power relations within the family, focusing on the control of female sexuality by male authorities or male family members. The implication is that a text (and a woman) must be kept in check in order for the man/ husband to be sure that the offspring - the translation or the children - are legitimately his. An example of this kind is the tag '*les belles infidèles*' used to describe translation in 18th century France. Literally translated '*les belles infidèles*' means 'the beautiful unfaithful.' This expression implied that if translations (like women) were faithful, they were probably ugly, and if they were beautiful, they were likely to be unfaithful. This expression seems to have survived because it has captured a cultural parallel between the issues of fidelity in translation and in marriage, and there are a number of recent instances where it has been used. Steven Seymour, who was U.S. president Jimmy Carter's interpreter, once stated: "Translations are like women. When they are pretty, chances are they won't be very faithful." Roy Campbell (1949) echoes this in *Poetry*

Review: "Translations (like wives) are seldom faithful if they are in the least attractive." The South African Uys Krige, too, said this in his preface to the Afrikaans translation of *Twelfth Night*, ca. 1971: "As the French say, translating a great poem is like kissing another man's bride through a veil." Indeed, the discourse on translation is a discourse that has tended to maintain double standards based on traditional gender stereotypes. But, in recent years, as Barbara Johnson has so aptly put it,

> While the value of the notion of fidelity is at an all-time high in the audiovisual media, its stocks are considerably lower in the domains of marital mores and theories of translation (...) For while both translators and spouses were once bound by contracts to love, honour and obey, and while both inevitably betray, the current questioning of the possibility of conscious mastery makes that contract seem deluded and exploitative from the start. (Johnson in Graham 1985: 142,3)

It is in reaction to mysogynist statements like those quoted above that many women have chosen to use translation as a different type of metaphor. In fact, translation has become "a metaphor used by women writers to describe their experience; like translated texts they can be betrayed, transformed, invented and created" (Harwood in Homel and Simon 1988: 49). Like translations, they struggle to speak in a foreign language, the language of patriarchy. Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood (1991: 82) is particularly eloquent in this regard:

> Because we live under the phallic signifier, all women are bilingual. We speak the dominant 'he/man' language and our own muted tongue(s).
>
> translation: being so perfectly bilingual
> makes me just as marginal
> as being female.

The politics of gender can be said to overlap with the politics of colonialism. Traditionally, translation was literally a strategy of linguistic incorporation. In translations by the German Romantics, for example, the word *übersetzen* (to translate) was used interchangeably with *verdeutschen* (to Germanize). A sixteenth-century translator of Horace named Thomas Drant, also shows distinctly imperialist tendencies in the preface to his translation:

> First I have now done as the people of God were commanded to do with their captive women that were handsome and beautiful: I have shaved off his hair and pared off his nails, that is, I have wiped away all his vanity and superfluity of matter.. I have Englished things not according to the vein of the Latin propriety, but of his own vulgar tongue... I have pierced his reason, eked and mended his similitudes, mollified his hardness, prolonged his cortall kind of

> speeches, changes and much altered his words, but not his sentence, or at least (I dare say) not his purpose. (Chamberlain 1992: 62).

Chamberlain explains this quote by saying that Drant, as a clergyman translating a secular author, must make Horace morally suitable and transform him from the foreign, the alien, the 'other' into a member of the family, in the Old Testament tradition whereby a captive woman is transformed into a wife. The sexual violence allured to in this description of translation provides an analogue to the political and economic rapes implicit in a colonising metaphor. But just as women resist misogynist metaphors, so the colonised 'other' develops strategies to deal with linguistic imperialism. Bassnett (1991: 11) calls this the 'guerilla theory of translation': as a result of domination by other languages, a country or culture decides to appropriate the dominant country's texts, literature, their culture and, through translation, transforms this foreign matter into something of their own. She quotes a Czech nationalist scholar working in the 1840s as saying:

> If, to the detriment of the Slavs, the Germans, Italians and Hungarians have tried to denationalize both our common people and our higher classes let us use a more noble way of retaliation taking possession of anything excellent they have created in the world of the mind.(Bassnett 1991: 11)

In other words, this Czech nationalist is advocating resistance to domination by other nations, by other languages by taking possession of their text, of their literature, of their culture through translation, transforming it into something of their own. The language of the 'other' can serve a double purpose: it may be the arena for confrontation, for resistance to the 'other', but it may also be a means of self-liberation. As the Tunisian writer Adelwahab Meddeb (in Mehrez 1992: 123-4) insists:

> L'écriture française nous 'livre' à l'autre, mais on se défendra par l'arabesque, la subversion, le dédale, le labyrinthe, le décentrage incessant de la phrase et du langage, de manière que l'autre se perde comme dans les ruelles de la *casbah*.
>
> *[Writing in French 'surrenders' us to the other, but we will defend ourselves with the arabesque, the subversion, the maze, the labyrinth, the incessant decentering of the sentence and of language so that the other will get lost just as in the narrow streets of the casbah.]*

The metaphor suggested by Meddeb in this passage - to cause native speakers of French to lose their way in their own language just as they would lose their way in the meandering alleys of

the *casbah*, that is the old North African *medinas* or cities - is a most appropriate figurative rendition of the new demands of postcolonial bilingualism. Meddeb's use of the *casbah* as the other pole of the metaphor has the function of superimposing an unfamiliar model text (in this case, Arabic culture) which needs to be decoded if the entire francophone text is to be readable. (Mehrez 1992: 124). Thus, as for women translators, translation itself is also a metaphor for resistance. Translation can also be a metaphor for the postcolonial condition, whereby postcolonial writers seeks to decolonise themselves from two oppressors at once, namely the western ex-colonizer who naively boasts of their existence and ultimately recuperates them and the 'traditional', 'national' cultures which shortsightedly deny their importance and consequently marginalize them." (Mehrez 1992: 121). This is the light in which Briere (in Adejunmobi 1998: 164) describes Camara Laye's *L'Enfant Noir*: "Camara Laye's *L'Enfant Noir* is thus not simply an African novel in French but the author's attempt to translate the essence of his life as a Malinké."

But the most powerful metaphor of all, again derived directly from deconstruction, is that of *différance*. As Philip Graham (in Van den Broeck 1988: 138) explains: if deconstruction fosters an idea about the constitutive and therefore positive, function of *differences* in a language and linguistic utterances, its approach might involve consequences for translation theory that stand in pointed contrast to those of the dominant tradition, which construes the task of the translator in such a way that difference means defeat. Consider the way in which difference is valorised in the following quotations:

> Translation, writes Blanchot, is the sheer play of difference: it constantly makes allusion to difference, dissimulated difference, but by occasionally revealing and often accentuating it, translation becomes the very life of this difference. (in Venuti 1992: 13)

> [T]ranslation, when it occurs, has to move whatever meanings it captures from the original into a framework that tends to impose a different set of discursive relations and a different construction of reality... This difference that depends on the dissimilarity of the languages is the difference always already in translation. As the very ground of translation - its raison d'être and its principle - it cannot be overcome. The difference that blocked or deferred communication in the mythical Babelian situation may be glossed over, but it never completely disappears; translation never suppresses it totally. (Lewis in Graham 1985: 37)

Translation as difference is clearly at odds with translation as sameness. Take Snell-Hornby's (1988: 22) view that "equivalence is unsuitable as a basic concept in translation theory: the term 'equivalence', apart from being imprecise and ill-defined [..] presents an illusion of symmetry between languages." In resisting the symmetry that equivalence presents, and advocating 'difference in translation', rather than sameness or equivalence, theorists have simply reversed the dichotomy. Thus, despite protestations to the contrary, this type of translation discourse, like the others, operates in binary terms, defining itself in relation, or rather in opposition to other discourses, but at the same time denying this fact in order to be accepted as the dominant discourse.

Thus the postmodernist idea that close attention to the words, tropes and rhetorical postures of a culture gives one transmutative power over that culture has been appropriated in the context of translation. Revisiting traditional metaphors of translation has led to the establishment of approaches to translation which have taken up the call for resistance to established norms. Gross and Levitt (1994: 74) comment:

> *Resistance*, *subversion* and *transgression* are among the most popular postmodernist nouns, and the sense in which they are used clearly conveys the idea that bourgeois society, founded on racism, sexism and the enforcement of rigid social roles, is under attack, its vulnerabilities being exposed.

In fact, the act of resistance to established norms or subversion of these norms has in itself become not only a metaphor used in translation, but an approach to translation which can be categorised under the umbrella term of resistive approaches to translation or 'resistancy' (Venuti 1995). The most vocal proponent of these approaches to translation is Lawrence Venuti, the editor of *Rethinking translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology* (Venuti: 1992: 13), a book which groups together a number of articles with a common aim:

> It becomes essential to recognise that translation in its many aspects - from the selection of foreign texts to the implementation of discursive strategies to the reviewing and teaching of translations - wields enormous power in the construction of national identities and hence can play an enormous geopolitical role. The most useful form this recognition can take is the elaboration of the theoretical, critical and textual means by which translation can be studied and practised as the locus of difference. The essays that follow constitute a contribution to this project. (Venuti: 1992: 13)

Venuti (1995) uses the term 'resistancy' or 'resistance' to refer to the strategy of translating a literary text in such a way that it retains something of its foreignness; as such it is broadly synonymous with 'foreignizing translation'. This approach, strongly influenced by poststructuralist translation theory, was conceived as a way of challenging the assumption prevalent in Anglo-American culture that the only valid way of translating is to produce a target text which reads fluently and idiomatically and is so 'transparent' that it would seem to reflect the foreign writer's intention and the essential meaning of the foreign text, and could therefore be mistaken for a product of the target culture. The translation gives the appearance of not being a translation at all, but the 'original'. For Venuti, 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 - "[t]he more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator, and, presumably, the more visible the writer or meaning of the foreign text" (Venuti 1995: 1-2). Venuti also strongly criticises the idea that an idiomatic translation (or what he calls 'domestication') should be the default translation strategy taught to student translators and advocated for all types of text. Kwieciński (1998: 187) agrees with Venuti in criticising the implicit claim that "a functionalist domesticating stance represents some sort of indisputable natural law in translation, a claim which consequently reduces the epistemological self-awareness of the researcher and the translator and ultimately effaces the role of cultural politics in shaping translational behaviour." This approach clearly draws both upon the *identity/ alterity* dichotomy and on that of form versus content. In advocating 'foreignizing' translation, Venuti aims to make visible the 'otherness' of the source text in translation culture, often by foregrounding the foreign linguistic form. In practice, therefore, resistancy may involve the translator choosing to translate a text that challenges the contemporary canon of foreign literature in the target language, or it may involve the use of unidiomatic expressions and other linguistically and culturally alienating features in the translated text so as to create the impression of foreignness. In concrete terms, the latter strategy would entail not only a freedom from absolute obedience to target linguistic and textual constraints, but also where appropriate the selection of a non-fluent, opaque style and the deliberate inclusion of SL realia or TL archaisms; the cumulative effect of such features would be to provide TL readers with an "alien reading experience" (Venuti 1995: 20). Venuti (1995: 34) concedes that foreignizing translations are just as partial in their

interpretation of the foreign text as are domesticating translations, yet points out that they "tend to flaunt their partiality instead of concealing it." For Venuti (1995: 148):

> Foreignizing translation is a dissident cultural practice, maintaining a refusal of the dominant by developing affiliations with marginal linguistic and literary values at home, including foreign cultures that have been excluded because of their own resistance to dominant values. On the one hand, foreignizing translation enacts an ethnocentric appropriation of the foreign text by enlisting it in a domestic cultural political agenda, like dissidence; on the other hand, it is precisely this dissident stance that enables foreignizing translation to signal the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text and perform a work of *cultural restoration, admitting the ethnodeviant* and potentially revising *domestic literary canons.*

Translation therefore emerges as an active reconstitution of the foreign text mediated by the irreducible linguistic, discursive and ideological differences of the target-language culture. Venuti's stated aim 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 recognise the linguistic and cultural difference of foreign texts" (Venuti 1995: 42).

This view of translation as difference ties in very closely with those of Philip Lewis's concept of abusive fidelity, which evolved partly as a result of problems created by the daunting task of translating Derrida's inventive and self-reflexive writing into English. In discussing an English-language version of Derrida's essay "La mythologie blanche", Philip Lewis argues for a more sophisticated translation strategy that acknowledges the complications poststructuralism has brought to translation, particularly the concept of meaning as a differential plurality, and that therefore shifts in the translator's attention away from the signified "to the chain of signifiers, to syntactic processes, to discursive structures, to the incidence of language mechanisms on thought and reality formation, and so forth." (Lewis in Graham 1985: 31-62). What is at stake here is a 'new axiomatics of fidelity' which Lewis terms 'abusive': the translator seeks to reproduce whatever features of the foreign text abuse or resist dominant cultural values in the source language, yet this reproductive effort requires the invention of anologous means of signification that are doubly abusive, that resist dominant cultural values in the target language, but supplement the foreign text by rewriting it in that language. Lewis observes that

> the real possibility of translation - the translatability that emerges in the movement of difference as a fundamental property of languages - points to a risk to be assumed: that of the strong, forceful 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 in Graham 1985: 41).

Abusive fidelity clearly entails a rejection of the fluency that dominates contemporary translation in favour of an opposing strategy that can aptly be called resistancy. Hence, Venuti (1992: 12) asserts, it has so far proved most useful in translating texts that foreground the play of the signifier by cultivating polysemy, neologism, fragmented syntax, discursive heterogeneity - namely poststructuralist theoretical statements, postmodern narratives, and feminist experiments in prose and poetry that reflect Hélène Cixous' concept of *écriture féminine*.

According to Venuti (1992: 13), this view of translation as difference, however, has yet to gain acceptance in Anglo-American culture, not only because translation has for so long remained discursively concealed and culturally marginalised, supporting a process of assimilating rather than living difference, but also because English and English-language values achieved global dominance in the post-war period, establishing in the US and Britain nationalist cultural environments receptive to foreign texts mainly when they are or can be read as ideologically compatible. But in some minority cultures, translation as difference is an explicit and accepted form of resistance to foreign cultures. In Brazil, for instance, one explicit metaphor of resistance used in translation is that of cannibalism.The philosophy of 'Antropofagia' remains quite alive in Brazilian culture and the re-evaluation of the metaphor and movement has been a telling feature of the Brazilian literary and artistic activity from the mid 60s on. Cannibalism, initially a form of resistance, becomes a metaphor expressing a philosophy of culture and an attitude towards relationships with hegemonic powers which involve the acceptance of foreign nourishment but a denial of imitation and influence in the traditional sense. It is in this climate that Brazilian translators have revolutionised translational praxis by using cannibalism both as a metaphor and a philosophy of translation. (Vieira 1994: 67) This represents the ultimate attempt to collapse the *identity/alterity* dichotomy - instead of rejecting the foreign 'other', the 'other' is accepted and provides nourishment for the minority culture.

The work of Brazilian critics, poets and translators, brothers Augusto and Haroldo de Campos[5], provides clear examples of this philosophy. "My way of loving them is translating them. Or devouring them, according to Oswald De Andrade's anthropophagic law, " states Augusto de Campos, a leading Brazilian translator associated with the Concretist movement in poetry (Vieira 1994: 67). For A.Campos, to translate means to cannibalise, to absorb and transform, to feed on the texts he translates. This approach is apparent even in the preface to his *Verso, Reverso, Controverso* (1978), which he terms **Intradução**, a fusion of 'introdução' (introduction) and 'tradução' (translation). The intro/intradução carries two signatures, that of Bernart de Vendadorn, one of the medieval poets A. Campos translates, and Campos' own, and Ventadorn's and Campos' texts are printed together, not side by side, but one interpenetrating the other, Ventadorn's text recognisable only by the Gothic letters and linguistic code (Vieira 1994: 68). A similar approach can be seen in the work of Haroldo de Campos, one example of which is his translation of Goethe's *Faust*. Instead of being entitled *Faustus*, the translation is entitled *Deus e o Diabo no Fauso de Goethe* (*God and the Devil in Goethe's Faustus*), (1981) signalling to the Brazilian contemporary reader the nourishment derived from Glauber Rocha's film *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (*God and the Devil in the Land of the Sun*). According to Vieira (1994: 69), the intertext present in the title symbolises the interpenetration and transformation of the foreign culture by the receiving culture which is found throughout the translation.

Indeed, the most rapid area of growth in cultural studies in translation has been research into the confrontation between minority and majority cultures. From African literary texts written in the language of the colonial 'other', but which, far from seeking to eliminate language difference, seek to make it visible and prominent in order to preserve the foreignness of the foreign text (Adejunmobi 1998: 166), to Irish-English translations whose fluent strategies may represent the key to their very survival (Cronin 1998: 147), the attempt in translation theory to integrate the sociology of interculturality into the colonial and post-colonial contexts has

[5] Their translations span the last thirty years, during which time they have translated amongst others, cummings, Mallarmé, Joyce, Pound, the Provençal troubadours, Donne and the English Metaphysicals, Dante, Goethe, Maiakovski and other 20th century Russian poets.

led to interesting new insights. As we shall see in the next chapter, this thrust towards translation as a metaphor of resistance and as an icon of difference is echoed in the concerns of feminist discourse as a whole and of Canadian feminist discourse in particular, and it is the juxtaposition of cultural approaches to translation with Canadian feminist concerns that have ultimately produced the phenomenon of feminist translation. What will also become clear is that feminist translation, originating as part of a translation discourse of resistance that defines itself in opposition to established norms, must maintain the appearance of that resistance at all costs.

Chapter 4

Language, literature, translation, feminism: inscriptions of 'difference' in Canadian discourse

> More and more, in an era reacting against the great hegemonies of identity, we realize that it is difference which interests us today (Simon 1990: 97).

4.1 Introduction

Feminist translation is a phenomenon which is influenced not only by the sociocultural context in Canada, but also by the type of writing it translates and the type of discourse in which it is embedded. The present chapter therefore begins by examining the notion of language and literature as *inscriptions* of 'difference' in Canadian society, and the position and function of the concept of translation as 'difference' in the Canadian discursive system. This provides the sociocultural and ideological background for a discussion of the discourses of Canadian feminism and feminist translation.

4.2 Language, literature and translation in Canadian discourse

4.2.1 Language as an inscription of 'difference' in Canada

In the mythologies of modern nations, one particular dimension of cultural identity seems to take on overwhelming importance in defining difference. Few would dispute that the strong explanatory powers given to class in Great Britain or race in the United States are given in Canada to language. While the differences between English and French Canadians include differences in ethnicity, religion and social class, language has been persistently maintained as the essential sign of difference between the two groups (Simon 1992: 159).

In order to understand the reasons for the importance of language in the Canadian context, one need only look at history. In the race for the new world, France claimed and settled New France (now Quebec) in the early 17th century. Then New France, along with other French territories, was ceded to Britain in 1763, forming part of British North America, and in 1867 joined the *Confederation* which became the Dominion of Canada. Thus, from 1763 onwards, Quebec has continually struggled to preserve, protect and assert its right to maintain its

language, culture, civic laws and its Roman Catholic religion. From that time, and even after the Official Languages Act in 1969 declared French and English the official languages of Canada, English-speaking Canada has resisted offering education in French or public and legal services in French. Although Quebec represents almost 25% of the population of Canada and 85% of Québécois claim French as their mother tongue, Quebec, given its North American context, sees the survival of French as constantly under threat. Thus, conceptions of cultural difference are shaped by a kind of internal colonialism, which makes the officially equal union of ten provinces seem to Quebec much more like the empire of one Canada over the other. Although the English have never constituted one unified ethnic group and French-Canadians are themselves divided by relations of class, the overwhelming cultural, religious, and economic differences between the two groups are most often understood in terms of an unequal, dual relationship - English speakers being at all times dominant. (Simon 1992: 162)

Very little has changed in modern times, for despite the fact that modern Canada now has a flag free of British iconography, and a 'nation-building' state bureaucracy which promotes the twin ideals of 'bilingualism and biculturalism' (Schwartzwald 1990: 16), the asymmetrical relationship between Québécois and English-Canadians has persisted. Jean Delisle (in Shek 1988: 85) sums up the diglossic and therefore hierarchical relationship between the two official languages and cultures: "Le Canada est d'abord conçu en anglais, puis traduit pour la collectivité francophone."

Matters did not improve with the failure of the Lake Meech constitutional talks in 1990 and the refusal of the provinces of Canada to recognise Quebec as a 'distinct society' within Canada and to charge its government with protecting and promoting that distinctness (Schwartzwald 1990: 14). In addition, the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement has exacerbated fears of assimilation into the United States and put further pressure on Quebec to help create national unity, in the oft-repeated argument that Canada would otherwise be indistinguishable from the United States. According to Robert Schwartzwald,

> this double bind of calling on Quebec's 'distinctness' but being unwilling to acknowledge it within a new constitutional arrangement explains why many Québécois feel they are held hostage by English Canada which, unsure of its identity, 'needs' Quebec to prove its difference. (Schwartzwald 1990: 18)

All of this has of course had a profound effect on those living in Quebec, who feel that Québécois discourse is under threat from the English-speaking Canadian majority. As a result, the Québécois attempt to affirm their identity by claiming the inviolable specificity of their own discourse and the 'otherness' of the alien discourse, in this case, English. This is particularly apparent with regard to official political and administrative policy. In order to exclude official English discourse, administrative language is borrowed from official French in France, since France is no political threat to Québécois autonomy (Robyns 1994).

4.2.2 'Difference' in Canadian literature: images of the other

With regard to literature, however, difference is doubled: the 'other' for the Québécois is not only English-speaking Canada, but also culturally dominant France. This double domination has undeniably influenced both male and female writers in Quebec. Quebec's relatively limited cultural *repertoire* in relation to France has also meant that literary works are imported from an 'alien' discourse as a way of contributing to Québécois literature. According to Karen Gould (1981: 619),

> the frustration of political powerlessness, coupled with a devalorization of the québécois language and culture in English Canada, have conjoined over the years to produce an acute and distinctly québécois malaise about speaking and writing, a theme that permeates many 'colonized' literatures and one that can easily be traced in numerous texts by male and female Quebec writers alike.

This is supported by Gauvin and Miron:

> Que signifie écrire en français? Toute la littérature quebécoise est traversée et hantée par une sorte de surconscience linguistique qui a provoqué, au cours des époques, les stratégies textuelles les plus diverses. Mais cette surconscience est aussi une conscience de la langue comme d'un laboratoire de possibles, d'un materiau dont les donnés sont en constante mutation. Le Français pluriel maintenant revendiqué et pratiqué par les écrivains de la francophonie conduit à repenser les notions de norme et d'écart et à revoir le dialogue du centre et de la périphérie (Gauvin and Miron 1989: 24).

This history of political subjugation and linguistic colonization has meant that despite strong differences of opinion on key strategies regarding gender politics and class struggle, during the past twenty years Quebec nationalism has shared a mutual and uniquely québécois concern with feminism over such issues as collective autonomy and self-determination, cultural recognition, language rights, and the demystification of a church-dominated society. This has

gradually led to an appreciation of Québécois identity; its 'otherness' in English-dominated North America becoming a source of pride:

> Sur plusieurs tons et dans des manières qui de plus en plus déjouent toute attente de folklore et d'exotisme, la littérature québécoise dit *autrement* l'Amérique (Gauvin et Miron 1989: 24).

Blodgett (1982: 16) believes that the literature of Quebec is more important ideologically than that of Canada because of the nationalistic value of the French language. In his view, Quebec writing has set out to reclaim the globality and virtualities of its own culture. To do so, it has increasingly situated itself such that the dichotomy it addresses is no longer between English and French, whether understood as language or cultures in a majority/ minority Canadian context. Instead, it explores the heterogeneity of language in Quebec itself, including interactions among world languages and confrontations between different registers of French. But what about English-speaking Canada? Although seen by the Québécois as dominant, English-speaking Canada is itself dominated by English and American cultures, and suffers from a similar identity crisis. As for Québécois writers (and contrary to Gould's view that this is a distinctly québécois malaise), this is expressed in language. Dennis Lee, in his article "Cadence, country, silence: writing in a colonial space" (1974), describes the problem:

> Any man aspires to be at home where he lives (...) In my case, then, cadence seeks the gestures of being a Canadian human: *mutatis mutandi*, the same is true for anyone here - an Israeli, an American, a Quebecker. But if we live in a space which is radically in question for us, that makes our barest speaking a problem to itself (...). And alienation in that space will enter and undercut our writing (...). The act of writing 'becomes a problem to itself' when it raises a vicious circle: when to write necessarily involves something that seems to make writing impossible. (...) I am struck by the subtle connections people here have drawn between words and their own problematic public space (...) To explore the obstructions to cadence is, for a Canadian, to explore the nature of colonial space (Lee in Moss 1987: 71).

It is hardly surprising that writers such as Dennis Lee believe that "to explore the obstructions to cadence is to explore the nature of colonial space" (in Moss 1987: 71), for critics have traditionally found Canadian literature aesthetically lacking in comparison to the dominant cultures such as the United States and Britain. One such critic is Northrop Frye (in Moss 1987: 72) who, in his conclusion to the *Literary History of Canada*, bemoans the absence of "genuine classics" in the Canadian literary canon and states somewhat condescendingly that:

> [it] is much easier to see what literature is trying to do when we are studying a literature that has not quite done it. If no Canadian author pulls us away from the Canadian context toward the centre of literary experience itself, then at every point we remain aware of his social and historical setting. The conception of what is literary has to be greatly broadened for such a literature (...) Even when it is literature in its orthodox genres of poetry and fiction, it is more significantly studied as a part of Canadian life than as a part of an autonomous world of literature.

Heather Murray (in Moss 1987: 73, 78) contends that there is an implied distinction here between Literary and literary and that Frye's mistake is to look for coherence, for similarity to great international literature, for sameness in an 'other' literature. She refers to some theoretical systems which seem at times very remote from Canadian literary study (specifically, marxist, deconstructionist, psychoanalytic and feminist modes of inquiry) to suggest that these may be ways of reading more suited to and accepting of the already contradictory writing of colonial space. In her view, these ways of reading may help Canadians to develop a criticism attentive to both literature and history which allows for reading for contradiction and not coherences, reading for 'otherness'.

Margaret Atwood (1972), however, does try to read for coherence. In the belief that every country or culture has a single unifying symbol at its core she tries to find a central unifying symbol for Canada which compares to 'The Frontier' for America and 'The Island' for Britain - and finds it, she believes, in the theme of 'Survival':

> For early explorers and settlers, it meant bare survival in the face of 'hostile' elements and/or natives: carving out a place and a way of keeping alive. But the word can also suggest survival of a crisis or disaster, like a hurricane or a wreck, and many Canadian poems have this kind of survival as a theme; what you might call 'grim survival' as opposed to 'bare' survival. For French Canada after the English took over it became 'cultural survival', hanging on as a people, retaining a religion and a language under an alien government. And in English Canada now while the Americans are taking over it is acquiring a similar meaning. (Atwood 1972: 32, 33)

But Atwood (1972) sees survival in another sense, too: "survival can be a vestige of a vanished order which has managed to persist after its time is past, like a primitive reptile. This version crops up in Canadian thinking too, usually among those who believe that Canada is obsolete." Thus, she believes, the *leitmotif* of Canadian literature is not the excitement and sense of adventure or danger which The Frontier holds out, not the smugness and/ or sense of security,

of everything in its place, which The Island can offer, but an almost intolerable anxiety - "Our stories are likely to be tales not of those who made it, but of those who made it back, from the awful experience - the North, the snow-storm, the sinking ship - that killed everyone else. The survivor has no triumph or victory but the fact of his survival; he has little after his ordeal that he did not have before, except gratitude for having escaped with his life" (Atwood 1972: 32, 33). Margaret Laurence's *A Jest of God* ([1966], 1974) typifies this theme; the novel's heroine is a woman hovering on the brink of despair, desperately struggling to communicate, to survive, to find freedom and release. Victim of deceit and pettiness - her own as much as others - Rachel Cameron is chained to a tyrannical, invalid mother in a small, stultifying Manitoba town. Her struggle is a struggle with herself and her world and, having once experienced love, she is grateful to have survived the ordeal and to have found the strength to come to terms with her past, confront her own limitations and attempt to build a life of her own.

Atwood (1972: 34) finds that the survival theme reoccurs in both prose and poetry texts from across Canada spanning four decades, from the thirties to the early seventies. She also points out that the flip side of Survivalism can be the failure to survive, or the failure to achieve anything beyond survival, an attitude which may be imposed not by a hostile outside world, but from within. It is this attitude which in her view accounts for the pessimism of so much Canadian literature, for the fact that so many Canadian heroes die or fail. She then offers a theory to account for this phenomenon, which is that Canada as a whole should be seen as a victim, or an "oppressed minority", or "exploited" as a result of its colonial past. (Atwood 1972: 35) Various types of victims may refer to a victimised country, a victimised minority group or a victimised individual. She says:

> It's a model about victims for the simple reason that I found a superabundance of victims in Canadian literature... Stick a pin in Canadian literature at random, and nine times out of ten you'll hit a victim.(Atwood 1972: 39)

Other themes and motifs which to some extent mark out the nature of the collective literary imagination in Canada, many of which bear close relation to the survival theme and the solitude syndrome, are the archetypal importance of the bush and the garden, the Frontier, the West and North, the opposition between the country and the city, seen as more than mere geographical settings by a number of critics, including Wilfrid Eggleston, Jack Warwick,

Antoine Sirois, Richard Chadbourne and Elizabeth Allison Mitcham. Other critics such as Margot Northey, John Lennox and Milan Dimić have also pointed out the curious importance of gothic modes, the obsession of Canadian writers with death and evil, the prominence of an atmosphere of fear and horror, the departure from realistic mimesis, and the use of the gothic and the grotesque both as symptoms of cultural crisis and of new growth, and the existence of an obtrusive pattern of double menace in the shape of the dual dangers of natural and civilised life (Dimić 1988: 149).

But despite the range of themes found in Canadian literature as a whole, there is one theme which is hardly ever covered in fiction: Canada's cultural duality. Dimić (1988: 148) can think of only two titles in this regard: Hugh MacLennan's *Two Solitudes* and Jacques Godbout's *Le Couteau sur la Table*. In *The Oxford Book of Canadian Verse*, A.J.M. Smith (in Blodgett 1982: 19) observes that, from earliest times, Canadian poets, both French and English, have held, consciously or unconsciously, to one of two distinct and sometimes divergent aims. The English-Canadian group has made an effort to express whatever is unique or local in Canadian life, while the French-Canadian group has concentrated on what it has in common with life everywhere. The poets of the first group sought to discover something distinctively and essentially 'Canadian' and thus come to terms with what was new in the natural, social, and political environment in which they found themselves or which they helped to create; the others made an effort to escape the limitations of provincialism or colonialism by entering into the universal civilizing culture of ideas. Thus, whereas Jean Falardeau characterises English-Canadian literature as "un axe horizontale: la relation homme-milieu ou homme-société", in contrast, Québécois literature is seen as occupying the vertical axis: "il est donné par la relation homme-destin ou homme-absolu" (in Blodgett 1982: 17,18). Of course, the vertical axis never intersects with the horizontal, signifying the lack of exchange of the two cultures. In his article on "Canada's Two Literatures", Stratford (1979: 133) concludes: "it is necessary to add that no Quebec writer of any stature has ever been conspicuously influenced by an English-Canadian or vice versa". E.D. Blodgett (1982: 8) arrives at an even broader negative diagnosis: "Canada is not a unified country in either a political or a cultural sense, and therefore to seek some common thread in its literatures is a vain enterprise indeed." For him, Margaret Atwood's lines "a duet/with two deaf singers" typify the relationship between Canada's literatures. (Blodgett in Dimić 1988: 148)

Thus, linguistic and cultural difference is part of the very fabric of Canadian society, both past and present. As Godard (1990: 155) so aptly puts it: "Like other postcolonialist literatures caught in this paradoxical position, what began as a thematic representation of difference in the nineteenth century, a difference between Quebec and Canadian literatures and those of the mother countries, has become in contemporary Canadian and Quebec literatures a *difference within,* linguistically inscribed."

4.2.3 Translation as a metaphor of 'difference' in Canada

In a society where language is a source of conflict, a representation of the body politic, it is hardly surprising that translation too is a vital sign of difference. As Blodgett observes, "because Canada is officially bilingual, translation is more than a mere craft, it is, and has been for generations, a political necessity." (Blodgett 1991: 199). It is for this reason that, despite the sheer mass of translation activity in Canada and its obvious incidence on intercultural relations, translation has not been a popular subject of investigation in cultural studies:

> Too closely associated with humanistic ideals of transparence and tolerance, too obviously linked to the political sphere (the final resting place of language issues in Canada), the subject of translation for a long time conjured up pious images of bridges and brotherhood, clearly out of sync with the realities of Canadian cultural politics. (Simon 1990: 96)

Sherry Simon divides translation in Canada into two different categories. The first category is a translated text whose value is essentially in *replacing* a previous text; it is undertaken by obligation (by law or by commercial necessity) and is basically an operation aiming at functional equivalence. This type of translation predominates in Canada:

> translation required by law which declares that one language appear where the other was, and whose most important goal is to produce a message not recognisable as a translation (Simon 1990: 98).

The second type of translation occurs when a text is produced which has a cultural function: it is considered *supplemental* and is generally more durable than the first category, and

> brings to the receiving culture something which it recognises as 'additional'. It is concerned with relations of Otherness, with the ways in which language in its very materiality reveals the double nature of the translated text (Simon 1990: 98).

These two kinds of translation are institutionally separate in Canada, the first kind generally