# Cultural and ideological turns

> ## Key concepts
>
> - **The 'cultural turn': The term used in translation studies for the move towards the analysis of translation from a cultural studies angle.**
> - **Rewriting: translation as a form of 'rewriting' and the ideological tensions around the text.**
> - **Gender and translation: the feminists' translation 'project', and the question of language and identity.**
> - **Postcolonial translation theories: Translation has played an active role in the colonization process and the image of the colonized.**
> - **Translation, ideology and intervention: Translation manipulates the image of the source culture.**
> - **'Committed' approaches: Theorists have various agendas of their own.**
> - **Multilingualism: Much translation takes place within superdiverse societies where language is a marker of power and identity.**

## Key texts

**Bassnett, Susan** and **André Lefevere** (eds) (1990) *Translation, History and Culture*, London and New York: Pinter.

**Bassnett, Susan** and **Harish Trivedi** (eds) (1999) *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*, London and New York: Routledge.

**Harvey, Keith** (1998/2012) 'Translating camp talk: Gay identities and cultural transfer', in Lawrence Venuti (ed.) *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd edition, 2012, pp. 344–64.

**Lee, Tong-King** (2013) *Translating the Multilingual City: Cross-lingual Practices and Language Ideology*, Oxford: Peter Lang.

**Lefevere, André** (1992a) *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, London and New York: Routledge.

**Niranjana, Tejaswini** (1992) *Siting Translation: History, Post-structuralism, and the Colonial Context*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

**Simon, Sherry** (1996) *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*, London and New York: Routledge.

**Spivak, Gayatri** (1993/2012) 'The politics of translation', in Lawrence Venuti (ed.) *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd edition, 2012, pp. 312–30.

## **8.0**  Introduction

### **Watch the introductory video on the companion website**.

In their introduction to the collection of essays *Translation, History and Culture*, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere dismiss the kinds of linguistic theories of translation we examined in Chapters 3 to 6, which, they say, 'have moved from word to text as a unit, but not beyond' (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990: 4). Also dismissed are 'painstaking comparisons between originals and translations' which do not consider the text in its cultural environment. Instead, Bassnett and Lefevere focus on the interaction between translation and culture, on the way in which culture impacts and constrains translation and on 'the larger issues of context, history and convention' (ibid.: 11). They examine the image of literature that is created by forms such as anthologies, commentaries, film adaptations and translations, and the institutions that are involved in that process. Thus, the move from translation as text to translation as culture and politics is what Mary Snell-Hornby (1990), in her paper in the same collection, terms **'the cultural turn'**. It is taken up by Bassnett and Lefevere as a metaphor for this cultural move and serves to bind together the range of case studies in their collection. These include studies of changing standards in translation over time, the power exercised in and on the publishing industry in pursuit of specific ideologies, feminist writing and translation, translation as 'appropriation', translation and colonization, and translation as rewriting, including film rewrites.

 *Translation, History and Culture* constitutes an important collection and the beginning of a period in which the cultural turn held sway in translation studies.

In this chapter, we consider three areas where cultural studies has influenced translation studies: translation as rewriting, which is a development of systems theory studied in Chapter 7 (section 8.1); translation and gender (section 8.2), and translation and postcolonialism (section 8.3). The ideology of the theorists themselves is discussed in section 8.4 and other, more recent, work on translation, ideology and power in 8.5. It should be pointed out, however, that the chapter concentrates on studies that laid the foundation in this area; in order to give due representation to ongoing work from many other parts of the globe, the reader is referred to the ITS website at www.routledge.com/cw/munday for more case studies and research summaries.

## 8.1 Translation as rewriting

André Lefevere (1945–1996) worked in comparative literature departments in Leuven (Belgium) and then in the USA at the University of Texas, Austin. His work in translation studies developed out of his strong links with polysystem theory and the Manipulation School (see Chapter 7). Although some may argue that Lefevere sits more easily among the systems theorists, his later work on translation and culture in many ways represents a bridging point to the 'cultural turn'. His ideas are most fully developed in his book *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (Lefevere 1992a).

Lefevere focuses particularly on the examination of 'very concrete factors' that systemically govern the reception, acceptance or rejection of literary texts; that is, 'issues such as power, ideology, institution and manipulation' (Lefevere 1992a: 2). The people involved in such power positions are the ones Lefevere sees as 'rewriting' literature and governing its consumption by the general public. The motivation for such rewriting can be **ideological** (conforming to or rebelling against the dominant ideology) or **poetological** (conforming to or rebelling against the dominant/preferred poetics). An example given by Lefevere (ibid.: 8) is of Edward Fitzgerald, the nineteenth-century translator (or 'rewriter') of the *Rubayait* by Persian poet, mathematician and astronomer Omar Khayyám (1048–1131). Fitzgerald considered Persians inferior and felt he should 'take liberties' in the translation in order to 'improve' on the original. He made it conform to the expected western literary conventions of his time and the work was a phenomenal commercial success (Davis 2000: 1020).

> ### 8.1 Exploration: Rewriting
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> Lefevere (1992a: 9) claims that 'the same basic process of rewriting is at work in translation, historiography, anthologization, criticism, and editing'. Find examples of each type of rewriting and describe what they have in common.

The bringing together of studies of 'original' writing and translations shows translation being incorporated into general literary criticism. However, it is translation that is central to Lefevere's book:

> Translation is the most obviously recognizable type of rewriting, and . . . it is potentially the most influential because it is able to project the image of an author and/or those works beyond the boundaries of their culture of origin.
>
> (Lefevere 1992a: 9)

For Lefevere, the literary system in which translation functions is controlled by two main factors, which are: (1) professionals within the literary system, who partly determine the dominant poetics; and (2) patronage outside the literary system, which partly determines the ideology. The interrelation is expressed in Figure 8.1.

The inner circle depicts the **professionals within the literary system**. These include critics and reviewers (whose comments affect the reception of a work), academics and teachers (who often decide whether a book is studied or not) and translators themselves, who decide on the poetics and at times influence the ideology of the translated text (as in the Fitzgerald example above).

The outer circle shows the **patronage outside the literary system**. These are 'the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature' (ibid.: 15). Patrons may be:

- influential and powerful individuals in a given historical era (e.g. Elizabeth I in Shakespeare's England, Hitler in 1930s Germany, etc.);
- groups of people (publishers, the media, a political class or party);
- institutions which regulate the distribution of literature and literary ideas (national academies, academic journals and, above all, the educational establishment).
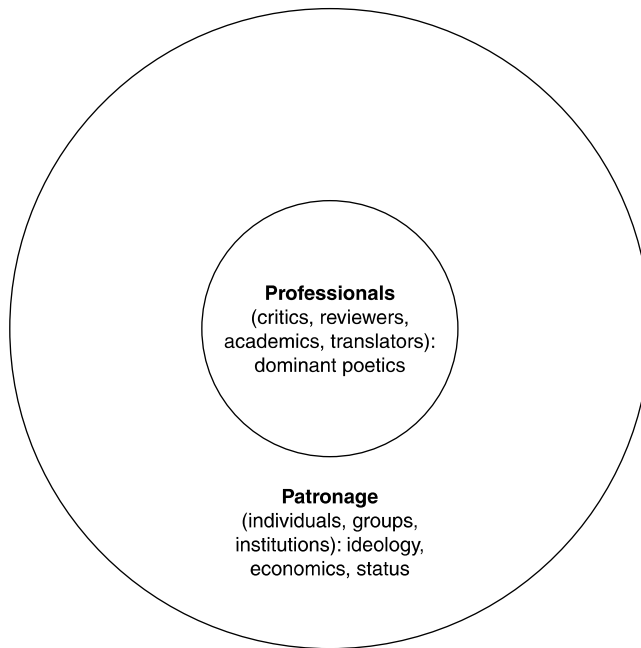
**Figure 8.1** Control factors inside and outside the literary system

Lefevere (ibid.: 16) identifies three elements to this patronage:

(1)  **The ideological component:** This constrains the choice of subject and the form of its presentation. Lefevere adopts a definition of ideology that is not restricted to the political. It is, more generally and perhaps less clearly, 'that grillwork of form, convention, and belief which orders our actions'.[1] He sees patronage as being mainly ideologically focused.

(2)  **The economic component:** This concerns the payment of writers and rewriters. In the past, this was in the form of a pension or other regular payment from a benefactor. Nowadays, it is more likely to be translator's fees and in some cases royalty payments. Other professionals, such as critics and teachers, are, of course, also paid or funded by patrons (e.g. by newspaper publishers, universities and the State).

(3)  **The status component:** This occurs in many forms. In return for economic payment from a benefactor or literary press, the beneficiary is often expected to conform to the patron's expectations. Similarly, membership of a group involves behaving in a way conducive to supporting that group: Lefevere gives the example of the Beat poets using the City Lights bookstore in San Francisco as a meeting point in the 1950s.

Patronage (ibid.: 17) is termed **undifferentiated** if all three components are provided by the same person or group. This might be the case with a totalitarian ruler whose efforts are directed at maintaining the stability of the system. Patronage is **differentiated** when the three components are not dependent on one another. Thus, a popular best-selling author may receive high economic rewards but accrue little status in the eyes of the hierarchy of the literary system.

Patronage wields most power in the operation of ideology, while the professionals have most influence in determining the poetics. As far as **the dominant poetics** is concerned, Lefevere (ibid.: 26) analyses two components:

(1)  **Literary devices:** These include the range of genres, symbols, leitmotifs and narrative plot and characters, which may become formalized as in the case of European fairytales (e.g. princesses, princes, evil stepmothers) or Japanese *manga* comics.

(2)  **The concept of the role of literature:** This is the relation of literature to the social system in which it exists. The struggle between different literary forms is a feature of polysystem theory (see section 7.1). Lefevere takes this idea further and looks at the role of institutions in determining the poetics:

> Institutions enforce or, at least, try to enforce the dominant poetics of a period by using it as the yardstick against which current production is measured. Accordingly, certain works of literature will be elevated to the level of 'classics' within a relatively short time after publication, while others are rejected, some to reach the exalted position of a classic later, when the dominant poetics has changed.
>
> (Lefevere 1992a: 19)

Classic status is enhanced by a book's inclusion in school or university reading lists, in anthologies or its use as a comparison in reviews (e.g. 'the new Hemingway'). With respect to an established canon, Lefevere sees 'clear indication of the conservative bias of the system itself and the power of rewriting' because such classics may never lose their status – they are reinterpreted or 'rewritten' to conform to changes in dominant poetics. This is the case, for example, with the Greek Classics, which continue to exert influence on western European literature. Thus, poetics may transcend languages and groups – Lefevere (ibid.: 31) claims that this occurs in the literary traditions shared by

the four thousand languages and communities of sub-Saharan Africa (ibid.: 31). But, importantly, in the final instance and at the higher level, the dominant poetics tends to be determined by ideology: for instance, the early spread of Islam from Arabia led to the poetics of Arabic being adopted by other languages such as Persian, Turkish and Urdu.

### 8.1.1  Poetics, ideology and translation in Lefevere's work

The interaction between poetics, ideology and translation leads Lefevere to make a key claim:

> On every level of the translation process, it can be shown that, if linguistic considerations enter into conflict with considerations of an ideological and/or poetological nature, the latter tend to win out.
>
> (Lefevere 1992a: 39)

For Lefevere, therefore, **the most important consideration is the ideological one**. In this case, it refers to the translator's ideology or the ideology imposed upon the translator by patronage. The poetological consideration refers to the dominant poetics in the TL culture. Together, ideology and poetics dictate the translation strategy and the solution to specific problems. An example given by Lefevere is taken from the Classical Greek play *Lysistrata* (411 @AC), by Aristophanes; there, Lysistrata asks the allegorical female peace character to bring the Spartan emissary to her, adding *En mē dido tēn cheira, tēs sathēs age* [lit. 'If he doesn't give you his hand, take him by the penis'].

Lefevere lists English translations over the years that have rendered *penis* variously as *membrum virile, nose, leg, handle, life-line* and *anything else*, often accompanied by justificatory footnotes. According to Lefevere, such euphemistic translations are 'to no small extent indicative of the ideology dominant at a certain time in a certain society' (ibid.: 41)[2] and they 'quite literally become the play' for the TT audience that cannot read the ST (ibid.: 42).

This is very much the case in Lefevere's discussion of the diary of Anne Frank, a young Dutch Jewish schoolgirl in hiding with her family during the Second World War. Anne Frank had begun to rewrite the diary for possible later publication before her family was arrested and sent to a concentration camp, where Anne died. Lefevere describes how the 1947 Dutch edition of the diary

– prepared in conjunction with (and 'rewritten' by) Anne's father Otto – alters the image of the girl by, for example, omitting paragraphs relating to her sexuality. 'Unflattering' descriptions of friends and family are also cut as are sentences referring to several people who collaborated with the Germans, the latter omissions made at the request of the individuals named.

Lefevere then examines the German translation published in 1950. This translation was done by Anneliese Schütz, a friend of Otto Frank, and contains both errors of comprehension and alterations to the image of Germans and Germany. Lefevere lists many of these discrepancies, including instances where derogatory remarks about Germans are omitted or toned down. References to the Germans' treatment of the Jews are also altered. The following is a clear example:

> Dutch ST: er bestaat geen groter vijandschap op de wereld dan tussen Duitsers en Joden
> [lit. there is no greater enmity in the world than between Germans and Jews]
> German TT: eine grössere Feindschaft als zwischen diesen Deutschen und den Juden gibt es nicht auf der Welt
> [lit. there is no greater enmity in the world than between these Germans and the Jews]
>
> (Lefevere 1992a: 66)

According to Lefevere, the decision to translate *Duitsers* ('Germans') by *diesen Deutschen* ('these Germans') rather than by simply *den Deutschen* ('the Germans') was taken by Schütz in conjunction with Otto Frank because they felt that this is what Anne 'meant' to say and also so as not to risk sales in postwar Germany by insulting all Germans. Such rewriting, before and during translation, is, in Lefevere's eyes, due to ideological pressures.

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### 8.2  Exploration: Control factors

Read the online article by Aksoy (2010) on the role of translation and ideology in the establishment of a national literature in Turkey. Make a list of examples of Lefevere's 'control factors' that affected this process.

## 8.2 Translation and gender

The interest of cultural studies in translation inevitably took translation studies away from purely linguistic analysis and brought it into contact with other disciplines. Yet this 'process of disciplinary hybridization' (Simon 1996: ix) has not always been straightforward. Sherry Simon, in her *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (1996), criticizes translation studies for often using the term culture 'as if it referred to an obvious and unproblematic reality' (ibid.: ix). Lefevere (1985: 226), for example, had defined it as simply 'the environment of a literary system'.

Simon approaches translation from a gender-studies angle. She sees a language of sexism in translation studies, with its images of dominance, fidelity, faithfulness and betrayal. Typical is the seventeenth-century image of *les belles infidèles*, translations into French that were artistically beautiful but unfaithful (Mounin 1955), or George Steiner's male-oriented image of translation as penetration in *After Babel* (see Chapter 10). Feminist theorists also see a parallel between the status of translation, which is often considered to be derivative and inferior to original writing, and that of women, so often repressed in society and literature. This is the core of feminist translation theory, which seeks to 'identify and critique the tangle of concepts which relegates both women and translation to the bottom of the social and literary ladder' (Simon 1996: 1). But Simon takes this further:

> For feminist translation, fidelity is to be directed toward neither the author nor the reader, but toward the writing project – a project in which both writer and translator participate.
>
> (Simon 1996: 2)

Simon gives the example of the committed '**translation project**' in which, in politically active 1980s Canada, feminist translators set out to emphasize their identity and ideological position that was part of the cultural dialogue between Quebec and Anglophone Canada. One of these, Barbara Godard, theorist and translator, is openly assertive about the manipulation this involved:

> The feminist translator, affirming her critical difference, her delight in interminable rereading and re-writing, flaunts the signs of her manipulation of the text.
>
> (Godard 1990: 91)

Simon also quotes the introduction to a translation of Lise Gauvin's *Lettres d'une autre* (1984) by another committed feminist translator, Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood. The latter explains her translation strategy in political terms:

> My translation practice is a political activity aimed at making language speak for women. So my signature on a translation means: this translation has used every translation strategy to make the feminine visible in language.
>
> (de Lotbinière-Harwood, quoted in Gauvin 1989: 9;
> also cited in Simon 1996: 15)

One such strategy discussed by Simon is the treatment of linguistic markers of gender. Examples quoted from de Lotbinière-Harwood's translations include using a bold '**e**' in the word *on**e*** to emphasize the feminine, capitalization of *M* in *HuMan Rights* to show the implicit sexism, the neologism *auth**e**r* (as opposed to *author*) to translate the French neologism *auteure*, and the female personification of nouns such as *aube* (*dawn*) with the English pronoun *she* (Simon 1996: 21).

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### 8.3  Exploration: The feminist translation project

What linguistic strategies are available for such a feminist translation project in translations into your languages? See the article by Wallmach (2006) available through the ITS website.

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Other chapters in Simon's book revalue the contribution women translators have made to translation throughout history, discuss the distortion in the translation of French feminist theory and look at feminist translations of the Bible. Among the case studies are summaries of the key literary translation work carried out by women in the first half of the twentieth century. Simon points out that the great classics of Russian literature were initially made available in English in translations produced mainly by one woman, Constance Garnett. Her sixty volumes of translation include almost the entire work of Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Chekov and Gogol. Similarly, key works of literature in German were translated by women translators: Jean Starr Untermeyer, Willa Muir (in conjunction with her husband Edwin) and Helen Lowe-Porter.[3]

The important role played by women translators up to the present is emphasized by Simon's reference to the feminist Suzanne Jill Levine, the translator of Guillermo Cabrera Infante's *Tres tristes tigres*. In contrast to the self-effacing work of some of the earlier translators mentioned above, Levine collaborated closely with Infante in creating a 'new' work, as we discuss in Chapter 9. From the feminist perspective, however, it is not only Levine's self-confidence but also her awareness of a certain 'betrayal' – translating a male discourse that speaks of the woman betrayed – that fascinates Simon. She hints (ibid.: 82) at the possible ways Levine may have rewritten, manipulated and 'betrayed' Infante's work in her own feminist project.

## 8.2.1  Language and identity

Other research in translation and gender has problematized the issue of **language and identity**. One example, in queer translation, is Keith Harvey's study 'Translating camp talk' (Harvey 1998/2012), which involved combining linguistic methods of analysis of literature with a cultural-theory angle, enabling study of the social and ideological environment that conditions the exchange. Harvey draws on the theory of contact in language practice and on politeness to examine the homosexual discourse of camp in English and French texts and in translations. Contact theory[4] is used by Harvey to examine the way 'gay men and lesbians work within appropriate prevailing straight (and homophobic) discourses' (ibid.: 346), often appropriating language patterns from a range of communities. Thus, he describes (ibid.: 347–9) the use of girl talk and Southern Belle accents (*Oh, my!, adorable*, etc.), French expressions (*ma bébé, comme ça*) and a mix of formal and informal register by gay characters in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*.[5] Such characteristics are typical of camp talk in English. Harvey points out that French camp interestingly tends to use English words and phrases in a similar language 'game'. Importantly, Harvey links the linguistic characteristics of camp to cultural identity via **queer theory** (ibid.: 351–4). Camp then not only exposes the hostile values and thinking of 'straight' institutions, but also, by its performative aspect, makes the gay community visible and manifests its identity.

Harvey brings together the various linguistic and cultural strands in his analysis of the translation of camp talk in extracts from two novels. The first (ibid.: 354–9) is the French translation of Gore Vidal's *The City and the Pillar*.[6] There are significant lexical and textual changes in the French translation:

- The same pejorative word, *tante*/s ('aunt/s'), is used for both the pejorative *pansies* and the more positive *queen*.
- The phrase *to be gay* is translated by the pejorative *en être* ('to be of it/them'), concealing the gay identity.
- Hyperbolic gay camp collocations such as *perfect weakness* and *screaming pansies* are either not translated or else rendered by a negative collocation.

In general, therefore, markers of gay identity either disappear or are made pejorative in the TT. Harvey links these findings to issues of the target culture. He discusses how the suppression of the label *gay* in the translation 'reflects a more general reluctance in France to recognize the usefulness of identity categories as the springboard for political action' (ibid.: 358) and shows a 'relative absence of radical gay (male) theorizing in contemporary France' (ibid.: 359).

The second extract analysed by Harvey is from the translation into American English of a novel by the Frenchman Tony Duvert.[7] Here, he shows (ibid.: 360–4) how the translator's additions and lexical choices have intensified and made more visible some of the camp language, thus turning a playful scene into one of seduction. Harvey suggests that the reason for such a translation strategy may be due to commercial pressures from the US publishers, who were supporting gay writing, and the general (sub)cultural environment in the USA which assured the book a better reception than it had enjoyed in France.

## 8.3 Postcolonial translation theory

In *Translation and Gender*, Sherry Simon's focus centres on underlining the importance of the cultural turn in translation. In the conclusion, she insists on how 'contemporary feminist translation has made gender the site of a consciously transformative project, one which reframes conditions of textual authority' (1996: 167) and summarizes the contribution of cultural studies to translation as follows:

> Cultural studies brings to translation an understanding of the complexities of gender and culture. It allows us to situate linguistic transfer within the multiple 'post' realities of today: poststructuralism, postcolonialism and postmodernism.
>
> (Simon 1996: 136)

In subsequent years it is in fact **postcolonialism** that has attracted the attention of many translation studies researchers. Though its specific scope is sometimes undefined, postcolonialism is generally used to cover studies of the history of the former colonies, studies of powerful European empires, resistance to the colonialist powers and, more broadly, studies of the effect of the imbalance of power relations between colonized and colonizer. The consequent crossover between different contemporary disciplines can be seen by the fact that essays by Simon and by Lefevere appear in collections of postcolonial writings on translation, and Simon herself makes extensive reference to the postcolonialist Spivak. In particular, Simon highlights (ibid.: 145–7) Spivak's concerns about the ideological consequences of the translation of 'Third World' literature into English and the distortion this entails. Spivak has addressed these questions in her seminal essay 'The politics of translation' (1993/2012), which brings together feminist, postcolonialist and poststructuralist approaches. Tensions between the different approaches are highlighted, with Spivak speaking out against western feminists who expect feminist writing from outside Europe to be translated into the language of power, English. In Spivak's view, such translation is often expressed in **'translatese'**,[8] which eliminates the identity of individuals and cultures that are politically less powerful and leads to a standardization of very different voices:

> In the act of wholesale translation into English there can be a betrayal of the democratic ideal into the law of the strongest. This happens when all the literature of the Third World gets translated into a sort of with-it translatese, so that the literature by a woman in Palestine begins to resemble, in the feel of its prose, something by a man in Taiwan.
>
> (Spivak: 1993/2012: 314–16)

Spivak's critique of western feminism and publishing is most biting when she suggests (ibid.: 322) that feminists from the hegemonic countries should show real solidarity with women in postcolonial contexts by learning the language in which those women speak and write. In Spivak's opinion, the 'politics of translation' currently gives prominence to English and the other 'hegemonic' languages of the ex-colonizers. Translations into these languages from Bengali too often fail to translate the difference of the Bengali view because the translator, although with good intentions, over-assimilates it to make it accessible to the western readers. Spivak's own translation strategy[9] necessitates the translator's intimate understanding of the language and situation of the original. It draws on poststructuralist concepts of rhetoric, logic and the social. This topic is further discussed in Chapter 10.

Spivak's work is indicative of how cultural studies, and especially postcolonialism, has focused on issues of translation, the transnational and colonization. The linking of colonization and translation is accompanied by the argument that translation has played an active role in the colonization process and in disseminating an ideologically motivated image of colonized peoples. Just as, in section 8.2, we saw a parallel which feminist theorists have drawn between the conventional male-driven depiction of translations and of women, so has the metaphor been used of the colony as an imitative and inferior translational copy whose suppressed identity has been overwritten by the colonizer. Translation's role in disseminating such ideological images has led Bassnett and Trivedi (1999: 5) to refer to the 'shameful history of translation'.

The central intersection of translation studies and postcolonial theory is that of **power relations**. Tejaswini Niranjana's *Siting Translation: History, Post-structuralism, and the Colonial Context* presents an image of the postcolonial as 'still scored through by an absentee colonialism' (Niranjana 1992: 8). She sees literary translation as one of the discourses (the others being education, theology, historiography and philosophy) which 'inform the hegemonic apparatuses that belong to the ideological structure of colonial rule' (ibid.: 33). Niranjana's focus is on the way translation into English has generally been used by the colonial power to construct a rewritten image of the 'East' that has then come to stand for the truth. She gives other examples of the colonizer's imposition of ideological values. These vary from missionaries who ran schools for the colonized and who also performed a role as linguists and translators, to ethnographers who recorded grammars of native languages. Niranjana sees all these groups as 'participating in the enormous project of collection and codification on which colonial power was based' (ibid.: 34). She specifically attacks translation's role within this power structure:

> Translation as a practice shapes, and takes shape within, the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism.
>
> (Niranjana 1992: 2)

Furthermore, she goes on to criticize translation studies itself for its largely western orientation and for three main failings that she sees resulting from this (ibid.: 48–9):

(1)   that translation studies has until recently not considered the question of power imbalance between different languages;

(2)   that the concepts underlying much of western translation theory are flawed ('its notions of text, author, and meaning are based on an unproblematic, naively representational theory of language');

(3)   that the 'humanistic enterprise' of translation needs to be questioned, since translation in the colonial context builds a conceptual image of colonial domination into the discourse of western philosophy.

Niranjana writes from an avowedly poststructuralist perspective. The latter forms the basis of Chapter 10 where we consider the influence of the deconstructionists such as Derrida. This overlapping is indicative of the interaction of different aspects of cultural studies and of the way in which they interface with translation studies. It also informs Niranjana's recommendations for action, which are:

(1)   In general, the postcolonial translator must call into question every aspect of colonialism and liberal nationalism (ibid.: 167). For Niranjana, this is not just a question of avoiding western metaphysical representations. It is a case of 'dismantl[ing] the hegemonic west from within…', deconstructing and identifying the means by which the west represses the non-west and marginalizes its own otherness' (ibid.: 171). By identifying and highlighting the process, such repression can then be countered.

(2)   Specifically, Niranjana calls for an 'interventionist' approach from the translator. 'I initiate here a practice of translation that is speculative, provisional and interventionist', she proclaims (ibid.: 173) in her analysis of translations of a spiritual vacana poem from Southern India. She attacks existing translations (including one by the celebrated A. K. Ramanujan) as 'attempting to assimilate Śaivite poetry to the discourses of Christianity or of a post-Romantic New Criticism' (ibid.: 180), analogous to nineteenth-century native responses to colonialism. Her own suggested translation, she claims, resists the 'containment' of colonial discourse by, amongst other things, restoring the name of the poet's god Guhēśvara and the *linga* representation of light, and by avoiding similes that would tone down the native form of metaphorization (ibid.: 182–6).

   Asymmetrical power relationships in a postcolonial context also form the thread of the important collection of essays entitled *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*, edited by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (1999). In their introduction (ibid.: 13) they see these power relationships being played out in the unequal struggle of various local languages against 'the one master-language of

our postcolonial world, English'. Translation is thus seen as the battleground and exemplification of the postcolonial context. There is a close linkage of **translational** to **transnational**. 'Transnational' refers both to those postcolonials living 'between' nations as emigrants (as in the example of Salman Rushdie, discussed in Bhabha 1994) and, more widely, as the 'locational disrupture' that describes the situation of those who remain in the melting pot of their native 'site':

> In current theoretical discourse, then, to speak of postcolonial translation is little short of tautology. In our age of (the valorization of) migrancy, exile and diaspora, the word 'translation' seems to have come full circle and reverted from its figurative literary meaning of an interlingual transaction to its etymological physical meaning of locational disrupture; translation seems to have been translated back to its origins.
>
> (Bassnett and Trivedi 1999: 13)

Crucial, here, are the interrelated concepts of **'in-betweenness'**, **'the third space'**, and **'hybridity'** and **'cultural difference'**, which postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha uses to theorize questions of identity, agency and belonging in the process of **'cultural translation'** (Bhabha 1994: 303–7).

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### 8.4 Exploration: In-betweenness and the 'third space'

Read the journal article by Batchelor (2008) available through the ITS website and note how the above highlighted concepts have been related to translation. See also the discussion on **in-betweenness** in Tymoczko (2003) and Bennett (2012).

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For Bhabha, the discourse of colonial power is sophisticated and often camouflaged. However, its authority may be subverted by the production of ambivalent cultural hybridity that allows space for the discourse of the colonized to interrelate with it and thus undermine it. The consequences for the translator are crucial. As Michaela Wolf (2000: 142) states, 'The translator is no longer a mediator between two different poles, but her/his activities are inscribed in cultural overlappings which imply difference.' Other work on colonial difference, by Sathya Rao (2006), challenges Bhabha's view that postcolonial translation is subversive. Rao proposes the term 'non-colonial translation theory', which

'considers the original as a radical immanence indifferent to the (colonial) world and therefore untranslatable into it' (ibid.: 89). This calls for a 'radically foreign performance' or non-translation.

The contributions contained in Bassnett and Trivedi's book show that postcolonial translation studies take many forms. Several chapters are based on the theory and practice of translation from an Indian perspective: 'Indian literary traditions are essentially traditions of translation', says Devy (1999: 187), and studies are included of the work of renowned translators B. M. Srikantaiah (Viswanatha and Simon 1999) and A. K. Ramanujan (Dharwadker 1999). In the latter case, Dharwadker reacts against Niranjana's attack on Ramanujan, stating that Ramanujan had worked from an earlier and different version of the poem, that Niranjana ignores the translator's commentary on the poem, and that the goal of the translation was to orient the western reader to cross-cultural similarities.

> ## 8.5 Exploration
>
> See the ITS website for a discussion of postcolonial translation in the Irish context.

## 8.4 The ideologies of the theorists

One consequence of this widening of the scope of translation studies is that it has brought together scholars from a wide range of backgrounds. Yet it is important to remember that theorists themselves have their own ideologies and agendas that drive their own criticisms. These are what Brownlie (2009: 79–81) calls **'committed approaches'** to translation studies. Thus, the feminist translators of the Canadian project are very open about flaunting their manipulation of texts. Sherry Simon is also explicit in stating that the aim of her book on gender and translation is 'to cast the widest net around issues of gender in translation . . . and, through gender, to move translation studies closer to a cultural studies framework' (Simon 1996: ix).

To be sure, these new cultural approaches have widened the horizons of translation studies with a wealth of new insights, but there is also a strong element of conflict and competition between them. For example, Simon (1996: 95), writing

from a gender-studies perspective, describes the distortion of the representation in translation of the French feminist Hélène Cixous, since many critics only have access to that portion of her work that is available in English. However, Rosemary Arrojo, writing from a postcolonial angle, claims that Cixous's own appropriation of the Brazilian author Clarice Lispector 'is in fact an exemplary illustration of an aggressively "masculine" approach to difference' (Arrojo 1999: 160).

Such differences of perspective are inevitable and even to be welcomed as translation and translation studies continue to increase their influence. In many ways, it is part of the rewriting process described by Lefevere. Furthermore, the anthologizing, canonizing process can be seen everywhere. The present book, for example, cannot avoid rewriting and to some extent manipulating other work in the field. The cultural turn might also be described as an attempt by cultural studies to colonize the less established field of translation studies.

Additionally, postcolonial writers have their own political agenda. Cronin, for instance, posits the potential for English-speaking Irish translators to 'make a distinctive contribution to world culture as a non-imperial English-speaking bridge for the European audiovisual industry' (Cronin 1996: 197). This, he feels, can be achieved 'using appropriate translation strategies', although he does not give details except for 'the need to protect diversity and heterogeneity'. The promotion of such translation policies, even though it is from the perspective of the 'minority' cultures, still involves a political act and a manipulation of translation for specific political or economic advantage.

## 8.5  Translation, ideology and power in other contexts

The question of power in postcolonial translation studies, and Lefevere's work on the ideological component of rewriting, has led to the examination of power and ideology in other contexts where translation is involved. Several volumes have been published featuring one or other of these terms: Venuti's (1992) *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*, Flotow's (2000) *Translation and Ideology*, Gentzler and Tymoczko's (2002) *Translation and Power*, Calzada Pérez's (2003) *Apropos of Ideology*, and Cunico and Munday's (2007) *Translation and Ideology: Encounters and Clashes*. The concept of ideology itself varies enormously, from its neutral coinage by Count Destutt de Tracy in 1796 to refer to a new science of ideas to the negative Marxian use as 'false consciousness', or misguided thinking and even manipulation. Much research

from an ideological perspective is interested in uncovering manipulations in the TT that may be indicative of the translator's conscious 'ideology' or produced by 'ideological' elements of the translation environment, such as pressure from a commissioner, editor or institutional/governmental circles. This is particularly the case in the translation and adaptation of news translation. Linguistic models that have been employed for analysis include those from discourse analysis (Hatim and Mason 1990, 1997, see this volume, Chapter 6), critical discourse analysis (following Fairclough 2001, 2003, see Munday 2007a) and narrative theory (Baker 2006).

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### 8.6 Exploration: Ideology

Consult some of the volumes mentioned in the paragraph above and compare the different definitions of 'ideology'. Note examples of forms of manipulation in translation.

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The harsh, macro-contextual constraints of censorship that may exist in authoritarian regimes are perhaps the most obvious example of ideological manipulation. Kate Sturge (2004) looks at the ideology behind the selection of texts in Nazi Germany. Using material on book production and sales, Sturge shows that texts from cultures deemed to be kindred were encouraged, hence the promotion of Scandinavian and Flemish/Dutch texts. Reviews in the authorized press also supported the racist official policy of eliminating 'all elements alien to the German character' that were felt to be characteristic of foreign literature.

Other research has focused on the disparity of power between **languages**, most specifically on the growth of English as a lingua franca globally (see House 2014b) and what this asymmetry means in the translational context in non-literary genres. Karen Bennett (2006, 2007, 2011) writes on the 'epistemicide' caused by the dominance of English scientific and academic style, which effectively eliminates (or, at least, massively overshadows) more traditional, discursive Portuguese writing in those fields. To be accepted in the international academic community (including in translation studies) now increasingly means conforming not only to accepted English style for those genres and text types but also to the ways of formulating and expressing ideas which this entails.

To be sure, language imbalance (and the economic and political power behind it) has been a constant backdrop to translation through the ages. This has encompassed the hegemony and prestige of Classical languages such as Greek, Latin and Sanskrit which constrained translation of sacred scriptures and scientific texts into vernacular languages. More recent political developments include the creation of Bahasa Malaysia as a language distinct from Bahasa Indonesia to promote national unity in Malaysia, the promotion of 'lesser-spoken' languages such as Irish and Basque in Europe, and the division of Serbo-Croat into distinct languages (Serbian and Croatian) for political and identitary reasons.

Recent research has also begun to pay more attention to the fact that much translation takes place informally between co-existing linguistic communities in multilingual cities rather than between participants living in separate countries and speaking different national languages. In *Cities in Translation*, Sherry Simon (2012: 3) considers the cases of linguistically divided 'dual cities', where 'two historically rooted language communities … feel a sense of entitlement to the same territory'. The cities she considers are Barcelona, Calcutta, Montreal and Trieste. A slightly different example is Singapore, which has four official languages (English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil) but one (English) dominates in the public realm (law, government, etc.) even though Mandarin is the first language for half the population. Lee (2013) investigates the dynamics of translation for the Chinese community in Singapore and what this reveals about cultural identity and power relations. Such complex, 'superdiverse' societies are home to dynamic, multilingual forms of communication, including the phenomenon of 'translanguaging' (Garcia and Li Wei 2014) which values language diversity.

## Case study

This case study concerns *The Last Flicker* (1991), the English translation of Gurdial Singh's Punjabi novel *Marhi Da Deeva* (1964).[10] Punjabi and English have shared an unequal and problematic power equation owing to a long history of British rule in India and the imposition of the English language during that time. In more recent years, the native literature of the Punjab has become more valued, and no writer more so than Gurdial Singh, joint winner of India's prestigious Jnanpith Literary Award in 1999.[11]

It is significant first of all that his novel should have been selected for translation, even twenty-seven years after the publication of the ST. This fact immediately

raises the status of a novel in its source culture. Its enormous success in its other translations, in Hindi and Russian, may have assisted its publication in English, which coincided with the release in India of a film based on the novel. There may be other political and cultural reasons too: the publisher of the translation, Sahitya Akademi, is the national organization set up by the government of India 'to foster and co-ordinate literary activities in all the Indian languages and to promote through them the cultural unity of India'.[12] In this instance, therefore, English is being used as a tool both nationally and internationally.

The translation is by Ajmer S. Rode, a Punjabi settled in Canada. The fact that the book has been translated by a fellow countryman, but one who is settled in a western country, that it has been promoted by a central government organization and that it is written in the hegemonic language of English immediately raises a complex range of cultural issues concerning the power structures at play in and around the text and translator.

A further factor is added by the setting of the novel in an isolated village in the Malwa region of Punjab. The poorly educated characters converse with each other in the local Malwai dialect of Punjabi. Their colloquial dialogue constitutes a crucial element of the fictional discourse, with the third person narrator portraying characters and situations through the character's speech rhythms and the cultural environment they evoke.

In the English translation, the dialogue shows a mix of registers: there are archaic insults (*wretched dog!*) and others that combine slight archaism with the reference points of rural life (*that oaf, big-boned like a bullock*), alongside modern American (or mock-American) expletives (*asshole, Goddam dumb ox, fucking God, fucking piece of land, king shit!, bullshit, bloody big daddies*) and speech markers (*huh, yeah, right?*). Lexis such as *Goddam, bullshit, fucking God*, etc., clearly points to a cultural context very different from the one within which the novel was conceived, uprooting the characters from rural Punjab and giving them the speech accents of street-smart urban North America.

The mixing of registers in the translation also affects kinship markers. Culturally loaded as they often are, they are sometimes replaced by their nearest English equivalents and on other occasions are retained in their original form for emphasis. For instance, *Bapu*, a term used for father or an elder, is preserved in its original form while the overtly Americanized *mom* and Anglicized *aunty* replace *Maa* and *Chachi/Tayyi*.[13] Kinship culture in Punjab is inextricably bound up with notions of hierarchy and status-consciousness, as well as revealing the emotional bonds between characters. At times, the emotional bonds are indicated by Americanized terms of endearment, such as the use of *honey* by a father to refer

to his daughter. This points to a disruption in translation of a central theme from the source culture.

Nevertheless, it is also true that this kind of text would pose problems for any translator. The translation of a Punjabi regional novel for the international audience will inevitably involve spatial and cultural dislocation. What the translator has done is to translate the regional and social dialect of a small village community with the sociolect of urban working-class North America, where he has lived for several years. This may prove problematic for those reading the text in English in India, since the indicators of the dislocation towards the hegemonic Anglo-Saxon culture – as Spivak or Niranjana might call it – would be very noticeable. Yet the mix of registers also serves to make apparent that we are reading a translation. The result is not exactly the 'with-it translatese' bemoaned by Spivak nor the dominant Anglo-American domesticating translations castigated by Venuti (1995/2008; see Chapter 9); it is rather a dislocationary translation practice that brings into sharp relief the clash of different cultures. The characters are dislodged from their source culture, but they are also made to come alive and challenge the English-language reader. This is the kind of complex interventionist approach the translator has carried out, but he leaves himself open to the criticism that he has chosen to superimpose the sociolect of the hegemonic power.

Interestingly enough, the translation of *Marhi Da Deeva* was followed by the translation of two other Singh novels: *Adh Chanani Raat* (*Night of the Half-Moon*, Madras: Macmillan, 1996) and *Parsa* (National Book Trust, 1999); these translations brought Singh to the attention of an even wider audience and are perhaps indicative of the success of the first translation.

## Discussion of case study

This case study, which looks at the language of the TT and sees cultural implications in the choices made, has examined a novel from a minority language that has been translated into the hegemonic international language (English) under the patronage of a centralized national organization (the Sahitya Akademi). The language of the characters becomes mingled with that of the colonizer, and their identity – embedded in their Punjabi cultural milieu – is blurred. While postcolonial theories help to understand the power relations that operate around the translation process, it is also clear from this brief analysis of *The Last Flicker* that a whole range of interacting factors are at work. These include the perhaps

inevitable dislocation of the source culture, the dislocation of the Punjabi translator in Canada and the location of the patronage within India itself. It would now be interesting to compare the translation strategies employed in the other novels. The aim would be to see how far this translation strategy is due to translation policy or to the way literary translators function in general. The latter is an issue that will be considered in the next chapter.

## Summary

This chapter has focused on the varieties of cultural studies in translation studies. Linguistic theories of translation have been sidelined and attention has centred on translation as cultural transfer and the interface of translation with other growing disciplines within cultural studies. Those examined in this chapter have been:

- section 8.1: translation as rewriting, developed from systems theories and pioneered by André Lefevere, studying the power relations and ideologies existing in the patronage and poetics of literary and cultural systems that interface with literary translation;
- section 8.2: translation and gender, with the Canadian feminist translation project described by Sherry Simon, making the feminine visible in translation; it also encompasses work (Harvey) on the translation of gay texts where, again, language partly constructs identity;
- section 8.3: translation and postcolonialism, with examples from Spivak, Niranjana and Cronin comparing the 'dislocature' of texts and translators working in former colonies of the European powers or in their languages;
- sections 8.4 and 8.5: translation and ideology: a theory or an individual translation may be a site of ideological manipulation, but the struggle is also between asymmetric languages in international organizations and in multilingual societies.

The next chapter now turns to examine the role of translators themselves at the translation interface.

## Further reading

For an introduction to cultural studies, read Longhurst et al. (2013) or During (2005). For translation as rewriting, and adaptations, read additionally Lefevere

(1985, 1993) and Raw (2012); see Abend-David (2014) for examples of adaptation in the dubbing and subtitling of films. For an introduction to gender issues, read Butler (1990) and Richardson and Robinson (2007). For translation and gender, read Godard (1990), Santaemilia (2005), Larkosh (2011) and von Flotow (2011); for an analysis of gender in audiovisual translation, see De Marco (2012); for a bibliography of queer translation, see https://queertranslation.univie.ac.at/bibliography/. For an introduction to postcolonialism, read Said (1978) and Young (2003). In addition, for translation and postcolonialism, see Cheyfitz (1991), Rafael (1993), Bhabha (1994), Robinson (1997a) and Simon and St-Pierre (2000). For the use of Bhabha's 'cultural translation', read Trivedi (2005).

For translation from Arabic, see Faiq (2004) and Selim (2009), and the translation studies portal (http://www.translationstudiesportal.org/home) for the Arab world, Turkey and Iran; from China and Japan, see Cheung (2009), St André and Peng (2012), Hung and Wakabayashi (2005) and Sato-Rossberg and Wakabayashi (2012); see also the range of studies in Hermans (2006a, 2006b). For Africa, see Bandia (2008, 2010), Batchelor (2009) and Inggs and Meintjes (2009). For India, see Kothari (2003), Wakabayashi and Kothari (2009) and Burger and Pozza (2010).

For translation, power and ideology, see Flotow (2000), Gentzler and Tymoczko (2002), Calzada Pérez (2003), Cunico and Munday (2007) and Lee (2013). For censorship, Billiani (2007), Seruya and Lin Moniz (2008), Rundle and Sturge (2010) and Woods (2012). For translation and nationalism see Bermann and Wood (2005). For translanguaging, see Garcia and Li Wei (2014) and the journal Translation and Translanguaging in Multilingual Contexts (ed. Laviosa).

### Discussion and research points

1 Lefevere identifies two factors (the professionals and patronage), combined with poetics and ideology, which control the literary system. Examine how each functions in specific translations in your own culture. Which seems to be the more important? Are there other factors which you would add?

2 Should women writers ideally be translated by women only? What about male writers? Look at published translations and their prefaces to see how often this is considered.

3  Choose a 'classic' work from your own language and culture. What seems to have consolidated its position as a classic? Research details of its translations. Has it been translated more than once? How do such (re)translations express the dominant poetics of the time?

4  What research work has been carried out on postcolonialism and translation in your own context and language(s)? Do the results correspond to those discussed here?

5  How is power difference manifested or contested in large organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, or multinational companies? See the European Commission report *Lingua franca: Chimera or reality*? (2010).

6  Think of further examples of 'dual cities' and of multilingual 'superdiversity'. Investigate how translation operates in one of these sites.

**The ITS website at www.routledge.com/cw/munday contains:**

■  a video summary of the chapter;
■  a recap multiple-choice test;
■  customizable PowerPoint slides;
■  further reading links and links to freely available journal articles;
■  more research project questions;
■  more case studies.