

ENLARGING TRANSLATION, EMPOWERING TRANSLATORS

Maria Tymoczko



Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators

Maria Tymoczko

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2007 by St. Jerome Publishing
Second edition published 2010

Published 2014 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© Maria Tymoczko 2007, 2010

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notices

Knowledge and best practice in this field are constantly changing. As new research and experience broaden our understanding, changes in research methods, professional practices, or medical treatment may become necessary.

Practitioners and researchers must always rely on their own experience and knowledge in evaluating and using any information, methods, compounds, or experiments described herein. In using such information or methods they should be mindful of their own safety and the safety of others, including parties for whom they have a professional responsibility.

To the fullest extent of the law, neither the Publisher nor the authors, contributors, or editors, assume any liability for any injury and/or damage to persons or property as a matter of products liability, negligence or otherwise, or from any use or operation of any methods, products, instructions, or ideas contained in the material herein.

ISBN 13: 978-1-900650-66-3 (hbk)

Typeset by
Delta Typesetters, Cairo, Egypt

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Tymoczko, Maria.

Enlarging translation, empowering translators / Maria Tymoczko.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-900650-66-5 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Translating and interpreting. I. Title.

P306.T96 2007

418.02--dc22

2007017191

For my friends and colleagues whose own work made this book possible: A, A, A, A, A, A, A, B, C, C, C, D, D, E, E, E, F, G, H, I, J, J, J, J, J, J, K, K, L, L, M, M, M, M, M, M, M, M, M, M, N, N, N, O, P, R, R, S, S, S, S, S, S, T, T, T, T, U, V, W, X.

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
Introduction	1
PART 1: ENLARGING TRANSLATION	13
Chapter 1: A Postpositivist History of Translation Studies	15
1.1 Initial Considerations: Beyond Positivism	19
1.2 Periodization and Translation Theory	24
1.3 Philosophical and Linguistic Approaches to Translation	28
1.4 Functionalist Approaches to Translation	32
1.5 Descriptive Translation Studies	39
1.6 The Cultural Turn in Translation Studies: The Power Turn, Postcolonial Translation Studies, Translation and Gender	42
1.7 Deconstruction and Poststructuralist Approaches to Translation	46
1.8 The Definitional Strand in the History of Translation Studies	50
Chapter 2: Defining Translation	54
2.1 Varieties of Translation Types	60
2.2 Conceptualizations of Translation Worldwide	68
2.3 Approaches to Defining Translation in Translation Studies	77
2.4 Wittgenstein, Concept Formation, and the Definition of Translation as a Cluster Concept	83
2.5 Limitations of Viewing Translation as a Prototype Category	90
2.6 Conceptual Knowledge, Ethnocentrism, and Ethics	100
Chapter 3: Framing Translation: Representation, Transmission, Transculturation	107
3.1 Representation	111
3.2 Transmission and Transfer	115
3.3 Transculturation	120
3.4 Representation, Transmission, Transculturation, and Translation	127
3.5 Framing Translation: Theoretical Implications	134
Chapter 4: Research Methods in Translation Studies	140
4.1 General Considerations about Research Methods	144
4.2 Classification in Translation Studies Research	151

4.3 Principles of Validation in Translation Studies	155
4.4 Interdependence of Data and Theory in Translation Research	159
4.5 Experimentation in Translation Studies	168
4.6 Models in Translation Studies Research	171
4.7 Restructuring the Research System	175
PART 2: EMPOWERING TRANSLATORS	187
Chapter 5: Activism, Political Agency, and the Empowerment of Translators	189
5.1 Empowered Translators and the Translator's Political Agency: Evidence from Postcolonial Translation Studies	192
5.2 Modeling the Translator's Agency: Moving Beyond Postcolonial Translation Studies	200
5.3 Power and the Agency of the Translator	206
5.4 Two Metaphors for Agency and Activism: Resistance and Engagement	209
5.5 Empowerment and Self-Reflexivity in Translation Studies	216
Chapter 6: Cultural Translation and Empowerment	221
6.1 Theories of Cultural Translation	223
6.2 The Impact of Audience on Cultural Representation	228
6.3 A Holistic Approach to Translating Culture	232
6.4 Elements to Consider in Holistic Cultural Translation	238
6.5 Strategizing Cultural Translation	249
6.6 Cultural Translation, Ideology, and Self-Censorship	254
6.7 Cultural Translation and the Agency of the Translator	259
Chapter 7: Liberating Meaning, Legitimizing Translation	265
7.1 The Translator's Decision-Making Process and the Construction of Meaning	266
7.2 Where Does Meaning Reside?	276
7.3 A Brief Excursus on the Nature of Meaning	289
7.4 Overdetermination and Underdetermination of Meaning in Translation	297
7.5 Beyond Meaning to Generativity	304
Chapter 8: Enlargement, Empowerment, Ethics	310
Works Cited	327
Index	339

Acknowledgments

In 2002, after 25 years of working on translation studies, I was invited to give the annual lectures at CETRA, Europe's premiere post-graduate summer research institute in translation studies. It was a great honor to be named CETRA Professor, and the lectures I delivered at CETRA that year form the basis of this book. In fact the subtitle of the book could be "The CETRA Lectures". Each chapter grows out of one of the presentations that I delivered, though they have all been expanded considerably beyond the scope of the lectures themselves. It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge my indebtedness to the faculty at CETRA that year, most particularly José Lambert, as well as Andrew Chesterman, Theo Hermans, Dirk Delabastita, Christina Schäffner, Luc Van Doorslaer, Mona Baker, Reine Meylaerts, Stefano Arduini, Robert Hodgson, and Ubaldo Stecconi, all of whom challenged me in various ways, leading to a running conversation about central issues in translation studies for a full ten days. All the students deserve to be named with gratitude as well, but special in terms of their contribution to this book are Martha Cheung, Stefan Baumgarten, Katrien Lannoy, and Ilse Feinauer.

After delivering the CETRA lectures, I presented some of the material at other venues as well. My thanks to Giuseppe Castorina for sponsoring my lectures in Rome in spring 2003, and to Theo Hermans and Mona Baker for inviting me to be the 2003 annual lecturer at the Translation Research Summer School of University College London, the University of Manchester, and the University of Edinburgh. Much gratitude to Jacqueline Hurlley for her kind invitation to give two lecture sequences in 2004 as part of the doctoral program in Construction and Representation of Identities in the Facultat de Filologia of the Universitat de Barcelona; the sustained teaching in Barcelona was the occasion for which the text of this book began to take final shape. Thanks also to Yvette Torres who invited me to lecture in the Graduate Translation Program of the Facultat de Humanidades of the Universidad de Puerto Rico in San Juan, where several sections of the book were presented.

Chapter 1 initially grew out of the opening lecture of a series on "Western Translation Theory" presented to the M.A. Translation Program at Tianjin Foreign Studies University in Tianjin, China, in 2000; I am grateful to Lin Kenan for inviting me to Tianjin as lecturer in the program and to Jin Di for bringing me to Tianjin initially in 1996 and introducing me to the faculty there. The core of chapter 5 was first presented as a plenary lecture in 2001 at the VIII Encontro Nacional de Tradutores in Bel Horizonte, Brazil; my thanks to John Milton, Adriana Pagano, Fábio Alves, and Célia Magalhaes for the invitation and for their hospitality on that occasion. Each of these opportunities to speak contributed materially to the book, forcing me to confront objections, to sharpen my arguments, and to clarify explanations that were too cryptic.

Many individuals also deserve thanks for specific input, including Antonia Carcelen-Estrada, Georges Bastin, Elisabeth Camp, Daniela Fargione, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, Naomi Glenn-Levin, Gene Haley, David Lenson, Bruce McCandless, Carol Maier, Marilyn Robin, Ana Rona, James Scott, Mahasweta Sengupta, Linda and Phillip Summers, Julianna Tymoczko, and Else Vieira. I am also grateful to my graduate students whose lively and stimulating work in translation studies continually expands my ideas about the field; my thanks particularly to the students in Translation, Ethics, and Ideology in spring 2005 for their deep engagement with and stimulating thought about issues that motivate this book. Special gratitude to Portia Williams Weiskel, whose careful copyediting has vastly improved the text, and to Mona Baker in her role as editor, whose suggestions were as always extremely valuable. I am most indebted to the University of Massachusetts for granting me a Samuel F. Conti Faculty Research Fellowship for 2006, which provided me a full year of released time from teaching, during which I completed the manuscript of this book.

Warm gratitude to Kevin McCullough and Ann McNeal for their sustained and sustaining encouragement and friendship during the writing, and to my family for their interest and concern. A special blessing on Carrot for keeping me company.

Maria Tymoczko

Introduction

When I was an infant, I lived in my grandmother's house with my young mother while my father served in the United States Army during World War II. I was raised in Cleveland, Ohio, one of the great industrial cities in the north of the United States. Cleveland is situated at a major intersection of the old transportation routes across the Midwest: the geography is such that all east-west traffic in that part of the country passes through the city. During my childhood iron ore came down the Great Lakes to Cleveland on the world's longest boats and coal came up by rail from Pennsylvania; where the two met there were great steel mills and foundries and manufacturing plants. This industry drew waves of immigrants from central and southern Europe in the early decades of the twentieth century, and the city was full of Poles, Bohemians, Slovaks, Lithuanians, Slovenians, Hungarians, Italians, Greeks, Lebanese, and many other nationality groups, as well as people from earlier waves of immigration such as the Germans and the Irish. Cleveland was also a major destination for the Great Migration, the movement north undertaken by so many descendants of the black slaves from the South. The park surrounding Liberty Boulevard in Cleveland had shrines to many of the nationality groups that had settled in large numbers in Cleveland, and there were dozens of shrines to be proud of because more than ninety cultures had formed the city.

My grandmother had come alone from eastern Slovakia to Cleveland when she was 16 years old. She spoke no English when she arrived. She was drawn to Cleveland because many people from her small village were heading there. It was a form of chain migration resulting in a Slovak community on the West Side of Cleveland, which she joined when she arrived. My mother was also born in Slovakia because her parents were of that breed of diasporic immigrants who went back and forth across the ocean, not fully severing their ties with their birth countries. My mother was born during one of the periods when the family was in Europe, and she first came to the United States by ship, passing through Ellis Island with her family when she was not quite four years old. She grew up in a tiny house in a mixed ethnic neighborhood, and it is to that home I was brought as a baby when my father went to war.

The neighborhood was entirely inhabited by immigrants who had not given up their native languages. It was an ordinary event to hear people speaking in Slavic languages and dialects of Italian and I no longer know what else, but probably German at least. No one assumed you would be able to communicate adequately in English, though English accented and inflected in various ways acted as a kind of link language for people. Absent a common language, people used gestures accompanied by disparate languages for communication or they relied on the kindness of others to facilitate transactions through translation or other types of intervention.

Because I spent my first two years of life in my grandmother's house in

Cleveland, I learned to speak in a place where many languages were part of daily life. The house lots were narrow, at most 25 or 30 feet (8 or 10 meters) wide, and many nationalities were packed close together. By the time I was two and a half years old, I had a passive rudimentary knowledge of three languages – Slovak, English, and Italian, probably in that order. My knowledge of Italian was the gift of our voluble Italian neighbors who lived only a few feet away and whose voices could easily be heard in our yard and in our house during the warm seasons of the year. In my grandmother's house any of the West Slavic languages (Polish, Bohemian, or Slovak) could be spoken and understood, and my grandparents spoke to each other in Hungarian when they wanted to communicate privately without being understood by their children. My mother and her siblings used English and Slovak by turns, or both together, depending on the occasion.

When you met a new person during the years I was growing up in Cleveland, the first question you asked after learning the person's name was "what is your nationality?" The question implied both ethnic group and nation-state affiliation. I had never met anyone who answered that question by saying "American" until I went to Harvard University (on a scholarship, of course) for my undergraduate education. In the world I grew up in, we identified ourselves as Slovak and German and Irish and Italian and Scottish and Polish and Russian and French and English (though I hadn't actually met any "English" people before I went to high school). It was a shock when I went to Harvard at age 17 to meet someone for the first time who said he was "American", end of story, no other nation, no other identity, no other language. I knew then I was in a different world from the one I had grown up in.

This world I am describing is a United States that no longer exists, and sometimes I feel swept away by time, stranded in a space-time continuum that is not quite my own. My childhood explains why I never think of myself as simply "American" or "Anglo", even though English is my first language. I am certainly not Anglo-Saxon, just as the Irish are emphatically not Anglo-Saxon or English or "Anglo", even though most of them also use the English language most of the time. Even my father's parents who came from families that had spoken English for many generations, some of whom had been in the United States for more than a century, did not think of themselves as English or even just American, for their people came from the Celtic fringe of the British Isles, mostly Scotland and Wales, and they self-identified as such.

I have begun my introduction by telling my own story because this is the environment in which I first learned about language, culture, and politics. In the ethnic world of Cleveland, Ohio, it was assumed that most people spoke at least two languages; it was normal to hear several languages in a single day, on a single street, at a single market; whole communities lived their lives using the many languages of Europe rather than English; and people were subject to asymmetries of power, resources, and prestige as a consequence of their languages and cultures. This is the context in which I first experienced translation and in

which I first began to conceptualize translation abstractly.

Most of the major industrial and commercial cities of the United States had this character in the middle of the twentieth century, as did many rural communities, and innumerable U.S. citizens have been formed by such environments. If you were a child in such a community or such a neighborhood, as I was, you were constantly the beneficiary of translation because your elders always knew and spoke languages that you did not and they passed their transactions on to you via translation. This ethnic life of my childhood is at the core of my conceptualization of translation and it colors the way I think about translation. I am grateful to many people with whom I grew up for their kindnesses in cultural and linguistic mediation.

As I say, this is a United States that no longer exists, and yet it is still possible to find places all around the country with similar character: sections of cities where you can live in Spanish, neighborhoods where Arabic is the dominant language, districts in most big cities where Khmer or Chinese is the norm. There are also many neighborhoods from Boston to Los Angeles where newly arrived immigrant groups mingle and recreate the sort of community I have been describing. The languages are now likely to be Latin American forms of Spanish and Portuguese, Caribbean creoles, Arabic, Hindi and other Indian languages, and various southeast Asian languages. My childhood experience, combined with my perception of the United States as a place where many cultures and many languages have homes, keeps the oral norms of translation foremost in my mind. It is probably my wide exposure to oral translation types – where interpretation between languages can be quite variable, from brief summaries or explanations to verbatim transfer – that leads me to think about translation theory as I do. Translation has been an open category for me since infancy. When I read for the first time the work of translation theorists such as Gideon Toury, Itamar Even-Zohar, and André Lefevere, I discovered words for experiences I had lived and concepts I was reaching for. This is the standpoint from which I speak about translation.

Growing up in a multilingual environment taught me that languages have their own palpable meanings, their own conditions of appropriateness, their own cultural underpinnings, and their own rankings in political hierarchies. I spoke an English saturated with Slovak words and concepts that had no English equivalents. When Carol Maier (2002) speaks of her own childhood experience in the United States as a seamless convergence of two unpaired domains, she speaks to my condition. The wisdom of linguistics is bred in the bone of children who have lived this way, and such children are found everywhere in the world.

My early experiences with languages, cultures, and translation are germane to this book which contests many dominant presuppositions of translation studies that impinge on the theory of translation. In the following chapters I take a variety of approaches to argue that translation studies must de-Westernize its perspectives on the nature of translation processes and products, reconceptualizing many of

the fundamental (though often unspoken) assumptions of the discipline. As I see it, a local form of knowledge about translation rooted in European languages and dominant European translation history has been promoted broadly and propagated internationally as a universal framework for conceptualizing translation theory and practice. The impetus to dislodge the way the discipline is imbricated in dominant Western thinking is reified in this volume, but it is not unique to my work. The commitment to rethink translation studies has been gathering momentum for almost a decade and many scholars have participated in the effort. My views are related to the work of those who write about postcolonial translation studies and those who have contributed to several recent collections taking up the theme of moving beyond Western models of translation, including *Beyond the Western Tradition* (2000), edited by Marilyn Gaddis Rose; *For Better or For Worse: Translation as a Tool for Change in the South Pacific* (2004), edited by Sabine Fenton; *Asian Translation Traditions* (2005), edited by Eva Hung and Judy Wakabayashi; and *Translating Others* (2006), edited by Theo Hermans. Individual scholars too numerous to mention here have contributed their own articles and monographs to this development, many of which will be cited in the following pages. In turn these scholarly studies are related to the increasing number of translation scholars who are active internationally in the field and who come from outside Europe and North America. A notable sign of the internationalization of translation studies is the formation of the International Association of Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS) which, recognized by UNESCO, has already held two very successful international conferences. My contribution to this development in translation studies is the exploration of the theoretical necessities for and the implications of moving beyond dominant Western discourses about translation.

This interest in moving beyond Western conceptualizations of translation is timely: the increasing push for globalization almost everywhere in the world has put translation at the heart of diverse international cultural, economic, and military enterprises. There are important questions that the nexus of translation and globalization raises for me as a translation theorist, as a postcolonial scholar who has investigated cultural exchange in situations marked by asymmetries of power, and as a politically engaged person interested in justice and equity in the world. Such questions speak directly to issues that have been central to my scholarship and my life since childhood. What types of cultural interface do we envision as a consequence of globalization and how will they differ from forms of cultural interface in the past? Who will define “culture” in such conditions of cultural interface and how will that definition be instrumentalized? To what extent will cultural exchange be multidirectional in the age of globalization, and to what extent will asymmetries of power, resources, and technologies mean that “cultural exchange” will become a euphemism for the acculturation to Western or dominant international standards of many peoples around the world who have heretofore led their lives within local frameworks of knowledge, belief, and values? To what

extent will “cultural exchange” become a banner for opening up and exploiting new markets around the world? What roles will translators and translations play in all this? Will translators be instrumental in defining culture and empowered to initiate and shape cultural interface? Or will translators and their translations be implicated in the destruction of the local by the global and serve primarily as instruments of dominant interests and powers? How we define and think about translation will have much to do with the answers to these questions.

Thus far translation studies in international contexts has developed primarily as a Western and Eurocentric discipline, largely because the two most important historical events motivating the development of the field as an academic subject involved Europe and North America in a primary way. First was World War II which initiated the early investigations of translation in terms of linguistics, specifically code switching, and in terms of function, focusing on the ways that translation can influence the reception context and shape the receiving culture itself. These early investigations of translation studies reflect the central preoccupations related to translation during World War II, namely the use of translation for cracking codes in intelligence operations on the one hand and for cultural production related to propaganda on the other. Translation in these spheres was seen as an important element in the victory of the Allies,¹ raising the value of translation as an academic, practical, and theoretical concern. Conversely it is no accident that both Germany and Japan have also had a sustained interest in translation in the last half century.

The second critical historical development that gave an impetus to translation studies was the emergence of the European Union and the decision of the E.U. to retain all its major languages as official ones, rather than to adopt a melting-pot model of political affiliation or even to choose to transact business in a restricted group of dominant languages. The result has arguably been the most extensive translational activity in the history of the world, with a consequent demand for translators and translator training that has required an academic field to meet the constraints of the political context. Although theory and practice of translation in this context have served very local needs and have thus been Eurocentric by definition, meeting the needs of the E.U. is correlated with a great deal of the growth and success of the discipline of translation studies worldwide.

Western perspectives in translation studies have also been privileged because of the dominant roles of Europe and North America in globalization itself as an economic and communicative process. Europe and North America have been key players in the extension of corporate economic activities to multinational

¹ Including the Soviet Union which subsequently invested heavily in translation during the Cold War, as part of its ideological program. As early as 1978 Holmes (1994:102) noted the importance of accessing Soviet work on translation theory, a desideratum that remains in the emerging international discipline of translation studies because the story of the development of this branch of translation studies remains to be told in one of the link languages that is used in the discipline internationally.

modes of operation, as well as in the proliferation of international and intergovernmental organizations.² Added to these factors is the leading role of North America in the development of the technological and informational vehicles for globalization. Thus, it is perhaps no surprise that Eurocentric and North American conceptualizations of language and cultural interface have been extended internationally by globalization.

In the international discipline of translation studies, these various historical factors have favored the primacy of Eurocentric and North American conceptualizations of translation both practically and theoretically. As a result translation studies has privileged a particularly Western view of translation, namely the view of translation as a ‘carrying across’, a ‘leading across’, or a ‘setting across’, the original meanings of the words in the major Western European languages for ‘translation’, including English *translation*, Spanish *traducción*, French *traduction*, and German *Übersetzung*. All these words privilege transfer as the basic mode of translation whether that transfer is figured in terms of transporting material objects or leading sentient beings (such as captives or slaves in one direction or soldiers and missionaries in the other) across a cultural and linguistic boundary.³ Theo Hermans notes that “if the etymology of the word ‘translation’ had suggested, say, the image of responding to an existing utterance instead of transference, the whole idea of a transfer postulate would probably never have arisen” (1999:52). It’s not so much that these Western views of translation are pernicious *per se* but that they constitute only one of many possible ways of conceptualizing translation: they are limited and they are also ideological. I believe that if the theory and practice of translation remain predicated upon and restricted to dominant Western European conceptions of translation, translators will *ipso facto* through their processes of translation, consciously or not, be enlisted in the political aspect of globalization from a dominant Western point of view, that is, the use of globalization to further the carrying across of Western dominance – military, political, economic, and cultural – in the world.

² Cronin (2003:109-11) discusses the role of the European Union in the increase of translation internationally; he also gives statistics related to the growth of NGOs and intergovernmental organizations since the beginning of the twentieth century. With respect to economic activities, Cronin (2003:134) notes that more than 60 per cent of world economic production is accounted for by the speakers of three languages, namely English, German, and Japanese, and that with French and Spanish, the figure rises to 75 per cent.

³ See below, chapter 2, as well as Tymoczko (2003, forthcoming b). The conceptualization of translation as a form of ‘leading across’ may be related to the practice of using captives of native tribes to serve as linguistic intermediaries by many of the early explorers; it can also be seen as a metaphor related to conversion both to Christianity and to European forms of culture. An early instance of the metaphor is found in the writings of St. Jerome where he says, “like some conqueror, [Hilary the Confessor] marched the original text, a captive, into his native language” (Robinson 1997b:26b). Note also the connection of translation as ‘leading across’ and words for ‘education’ in many European languages. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) discuss the importance of conceptual metaphors embedded in the meanings of words and in syntax.

Current models used to teach translation, to train translators, and to research the products and processes of translation are generally based on these narrow, dominant Western European practices of and discourses about translation. The problems with Western models are manifold, however. For example, they presuppose outmoded theories of meaning – either Platonic conceptions of meaning or positivist ones. Andrew Chesterman and Rosemary Arrojo observe that “The metaphor ‘translation is transfer’ . . . implies that something is indeed transferred, something that presumably remains constant throughout the process and is thus objectively ‘there’” (2000:153). More modern concepts of meaning, by contrast, view meaning as being constructed by cultural practices and cultural production, notably language, and inflected by the context. As a consequence the target text meanings can never be fully “the same” as source text meanings, nor is there a circumscribed meaning in a source text that awaits transfer or carrying across by a translator.⁴ Thus, insofar as a translator is taught to use a specific protocol for determining and transferring meaning, that protocol will narrow a translator’s choices and decision making; it will circumscribe the translator’s agency, and inscribe the translator within a dominant Western construction not only of translation but also of what counts as meaning.

Moreover, Western conceptualizations of translation can be associated with the metaphor of the translator as standing “between” in the transfer process. The metaphor of between suggests that the translator is neutral, above history and ideology; the translator can even be seen as an alienated figure in this construct, an alienation that can be passed off as the “objectivity” of a professional (cf. Tymoczko 2003). The consequence is the effacement of ideology and the evisceration of the agency of the translator as a committed, engaged, and responsible figure. Thus, the transfer metaphor implicit in Western conceptualizations of translation undermines the self-reflexivity and empowerment of translators, encouraging a sort of amnesia about ideology in translation processes that facilitates the unexamined ascendancy of the values of the dominant powers within a culture and throughout the globalizing world.

There are many other problems with basing translation studies on an implicit and unexamined foundation of Western views of translation. Eurocentric conceptions of translation are deeply rooted in literacy practices (as opposed to oral practices, still dominant in most of world). Indeed, Eurocentric ideas about translation are shaped by practices deriving from biblical translation in particular and by the history of translating Christian sacred texts. Western conceptions of translation are also heavily influenced by the tight connection of language and nation in Europe (which privileges the view that a nation should be united around a single language and that “normal” cultures are monolingual). The history of Eurocentric translation is connected with the practices of empire and imperialism

⁴ This argument is developed at greater length in chapter 7 below. See also Catford (1965), Nord (1997), Appiah (2000), Davis (2001).

as well. These are obviously not acceptable conceptual bases – much less ideal ones – for founding an international discipline of translation studies, for serving as the basis of translation theory around the world, or for providing international standards of translation practices. Certainly they do not conduce to developing internationalist approaches to translation that can facilitate an equitable relationship among peoples and mutuality in cultural exchange predicated on multidirectionality in a globalized world.

The narrow foundations of translation studies as a discipline are also reflected in central pretheoretical assumptions about text, the nature of translation in multilingual cultures, the normal model for translation processes, and so forth. The history of Western European translation privileges an implicit literalism that has been used to disseminate the empires of religion, secular rule, and commerce throughout the last five hundred years. For reasons such as these, I believe that translation studies thus far has taken a very local form of knowledge about translation based on these assumptions and universalized it as a general theory. Insofar as translation studies is intended to serve the needs of the European Union or North American countries, that basis for the discipline may be sufficient, but plainly it will not suffice in the context of globalization, nor does it suffice intellectually as a theoretical foundation for thinking about translation cross-culturally. Translation studies must move beyond Eurocentric conceptualizations and translators must become self-reflexive about their pretheoretical understandings and practices of translation, or else translation in the age of globalization will become an instrument of domination, oppression, and exploitation. When translators remain oblivious of the Eurocentric pretheoretical assumptions built into the discipline of translation studies, they not only play out hegemonic roles in their work, they willingly limit their own agency as translators.

In the simplest terms this book argues that translation studies needs to adopt a broader – in fact, an open – definition of the subject matter at the heart of the discipline, namely translation. Because the field has taken shape around a narrow Western definition of the matter, based on the conceptual metaphors embedded in Western European words for ‘translation’, and because a local set of knowledges and practices has become the basis of universalist claims about translation, much of what is argued in the field is partial, flawed, and in need of amendment and expansion. In thinking about these problems, I had the intuition that opening the definition of translation to include a larger range of ideas besides those currently dominant in the West, including ideas from beyond the Western sphere, would also lead to insights about the agency of translators and ultimately to the empowerment of translators. As I worked with the materials in the chapters below, I became ever more convinced of this connection. I argue that there is a recursive relationship between the openness of meaning in translation, the empowerment of the translator, and the enlargement of the concept translation beyond Western metaphors related to transfer.

Let me return to the question of my own formation as a translation studies

scholar to explain a bit more about how I arrived at my place of enunciation in this volume, challenging dominant and hegemonic pretenses of the Western world as a whole, despite the fact that I am an English-speaking citizen of the United States. My early experiences as a small child in a multilingual and economically disadvantaged context marked by secondary orality were later overlaid with a considerable amount of formal education relevant to translation. It is perhaps worth telling some of this story. My second language is actually French, which I began learning intensively from the time I was six in the Cleveland Public Schools. The school system stressed an audio-oral approach to learning languages that precluded translation and encouraged students to immerse themselves in French as an independent linguistic world, rather than referring everything back to English. We were taught with gestures and enactments instead of English when we needed explanations, and I remember my sixth-grade French teacher doing such things as jumping from his desk and flapping his arms when he wanted to convey the meaning of *voler*, 'fly'. Needless to say, these experiences taught me a great deal about language and meaning, and my English came to be permeated with French words and concepts as well as Slovak ones. French also gave me a mental home unlike that in any other language.

Equally important for the way I think about translation was my university work in medieval European languages and literatures. I was blessed with teachers like A.B. Lord and Louis Solano (himself from a multilingual immigrant family) who stressed the oral nature of medieval culture and the oral base of the medieval vernacular literature that has survived from those times. I was familiar with oral narrative because two of my grandparents were storytellers, and my father's mother was particularly influential on me in this regard. It became clear to me that translation and cultural transfer were intimately involved with the emergence of much of medieval European literature. I spent a great deal of time trying to image precisely the way Celtic, Latin, and Arabic stories had passed into Old French literature, the mechanisms of translation and cultural mediation that allowed the newness and difference from other cultures to be taken up in the forging of a great literature in its first stages of formation. Later when I was a graduate student, Máire MacNeill Sweeney, the former Secretary of the Irish Folklore Society, was teaching Irish folklore in the Celtic Department at Harvard; she provided me tools I needed to conceptualize the mechanisms of and resistances to intercultural transfer in oral conditions, including the transfer of stories and lore in oral traditional cultures. The various strands of my education and my upbringing – both stressing multilingualism, cultural difference, and primary and secondary orality – converged in my thinking to challenge the precedence of the written over the oral in many cultural contexts.

In addition my approach as a translation theorist has been shaped by my teaching of and research in medieval literature, which brought me into repeated contact with extremely diverse text types that resulted from the process of medieval translation or that were indigenous to medieval European cultures. Such text

types often do not fall neatly into any of the standard contemporary translation studies grids related to function, for example. The knowledge of medieval texts and translations has provided me another alternate set of standards for interrogating modern dominant Eurocentric norms of translation as I have attempted to theorize translation. The culture gap between the medieval and modern periods has also acted as a way of perceiving cultural difference in translation. For me distance in time has been an analogue to thinking about cultural asymmetries that distance in space provides many, even most, translation scholars. Finally, the irresolvable difficulties and uncertainties of understanding medieval cultures and medieval texts have permanently affected my thinking about difference between cultures, making me both more skeptical of my “certainties” and more respectful of the gulfs that can separate peoples and individuals alike.

It was certainly serendipitous for my understanding of translation to have found my way into Irish studies where I learned so much about the relationship between cultural production, ideology, and power, subjects that are central to thinking about translation. I am particularly grateful to the intelligence and kindness of Thomas Kinsella, at once a great poet and a great translator, who is so articulate about the position of literature and language in a nation that has been colonized and that inherits a dual tradition. My senior colleague in Irish studies at the University of Massachusetts, David Clark, was also a mentor, patiently teaching me much about writing, rewriting, and retelling in the Irish revival. From both I learned a great deal about the role of texts in identity formation and nation building in a bilingual postcolonial country in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Here I must also acknowledge the role played by my students and colleagues in Irish studies, many of them Irish and Irish American, who conveyed their thoughts and perceptions about ideology and the political dimensions of texts, rewritings, and translations with great passion and deep feeling. Rarely do cloistered medievalists see the world from perspectives such as those.

The process of actually translating medieval Irish texts into English was formative for me in terms of understanding the complexities of cultural interface in translation. I am grateful to the National Endowment of the Humanities for sponsoring my translations of early Irish stories and to Liam Miller and the Dolmen Press for publishing them as *Two Death Tales from the Ulster Cycle*. What followed was my real initiation into translation studies as a discipline. It was Marilyn Gaddis Rose who first invited me to a translation studies conference and André Lefevere who introduced me to the group of descriptive translation scholars that was beginning to coalesce into what Theo Hermans has called “an invisible college” (1999). These colleagues all enriched my life and my thinking about translation immeasurably. Marilyn’s conference started me on what has been a wonderful odyssey of thinking about language, literature, culture, politics, and ideology, as well as the relationship of translation to all of these.

My own personal history has been deeply connected with politics, ranging from work in the Civil Rights movement, radical student activism, and antiwar

demonstrations in the 1960s, to feminism and grass-roots politics in the 1970s, to electoral politics in the 1980s and thereafter. The ideological component in systems theory gave me ways to integrate my academic interests with my political commitments. Indeed systems theory became a way of conceptualizing and ordering many things that I had lived but had no way to write about, most especially power, politics, and ideological contestations.

I have been fortunate to teach in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, which has valued translation and has included translation theory and practice in its curriculum from the inception of the program. Warren Anderson and Fred Will were my senior colleagues when I first joined the department, both skilled in the methods of the Iowa workshop approach to translation, both skilled translators; they offered me implicit theoretical models of translation, as well as a great deal of encouragement, as did my other colleagues, all of whom have been translators to one degree or another. When Warren and Fred retired, I was fortunate to be given the graduate translation courses to teach. I am particularly indebted to Warren's help during those first few years of teaching translation; his ideas persist as a thread in my views of translation. Comparative Literature at the University of Massachusetts continues to be a vibrant place to think about and teach translation studies; when Edwin Gentzler joined us as a colleague in translation studies, it became my good fortune to have him as collaborator in both teaching and research.

The account of my journey into translation studies wouldn't be complete without acknowledging the contribution of Thomas Tymoczko, my husband of many years. He and I were graduate students at Harvard when translation was a hot topic, with people as diverse as Roman Jakobson, W.V.O. Quine, and Anthony Oettinger on the faculty. The philosophers were particularly engaged with the topic of translation. Tom's dissertation on Quine's thesis of the indeterminacy of translation and Tom's later work on translation, including his interest in and contact with Eugene Nida, gave my thinking about translation a philosophical edge. Tom was a good teacher, and our discussions of philosophy, language, and translation continue to stand me in good stead; it was he who brought Wittgenstein's thinking into my ambit as well. Tom's lucid accounts of difficult philosophical issues was also instrumental in prompting me to try to teach and write about translation without relying on jargon, using the strengths of ordinary language to make my arguments whenever possible.

As I indicated earlier, I have given a very personal introduction to this book in part because I wish to indicate something about my place of enunciation. If indeed anthropology and translation studies have affinities, as has been so often argued, then perhaps translators and translation scholars will do well to borrow some of the emerging practices of anthropologists and ethnographers by prefacing our scholarship on translation with some account of our own formations, our views of language, our experiences of and attitudes toward cultural difference, our political loyalties, and the like, such that our positions on translation can be

more adequately assessed by readers. Although I come from the United States, at present the center of hegemony in the world, and although my languages and outlook are Western, I have tried to suggest why my thinking about translation has been formed by practices and experiences that stand at the margins of or even at times outside the dominant Western ideas that have shaped translation studies thus far. I understand experientially how different and asymmetrical languages are, how they remain unpaired domains for perceiving meaning in the world. My thoughts about translation have been formed by community interpretation and by knowledge of oral translation products and practices that stand outside the focus on the transfer of meaning associated with the words *translation*, *traduction*, and so forth. I have also been deeply involved with the activist use of translation for engaged and politicized purposes. Not least, I was educated in an environment where there was a reigning skepticism about the possibility of perceiving, transferring, or recuperating meaning in the translation process, as well as skepticism about the “sameness” of texts that are iterated by different speakers in different places at different times.

Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators deals with very large topics and attempts to draw together their implications for translation: among others, the course of modern history, the workings of geopolitical power, philosophical inquiry about meaning, insights from cognitive science about conceptual thinking, the nature of contemporary research methodologies, and understandings of ideology, ethics, and culture. Any one of these topics could be the focus of a book about translation in itself; thus each topic inevitably is treated in a somewhat summary manner. Nonetheless, it is at times useful to stand back and try to see a subject whole. This can only be done by taking on a large perspective in which things sizable in themselves assume their proper proportion in relationship to the subject in focus. In this book I try to present such a large view of translation, acknowledging both the strengths and limitations of my standpoint.

PART 1: ENLARGING TRANSLATION

This page intentionally left blank

1. A Postpositivist History of Translation Studies

When the first surviving pronouncements about the practice of translation appear in the records of Western culture – and they appear early, some two thousand years ago – it is assumed that translation is a defined process with a circumscribed domain. This is no surprise: to Cicero, whose comments in *De oratore* (ca. 55 B.C.E.) are generally recognized as offering the earliest Western norms for translation, the circumstances and function of translation are treated as self-evident. The languages (Greek and Latin) and their anisomorphisms are taken for granted; the text types are well known (oratory in Cicero's case) and considered unproblematic as types; the purposes of translation are presupposed (facilitating the formation of a Roman citizen, learning public oratory, developing more powerful models than Latin oratory itself could provide, increasing the vocabulary stock of Latin, defamiliarizing Latin rhetoric so that Cicero would not sound like Ennius); and the cultural context of both source and target text are assumed (Greek city-state rhetoric, public contexts in Rome such as the Roman Senate).¹

Before continuing, let me say a word about terminology. I am using the term *Western* to refer to ideas and perspectives that initially originated in and became dominant in Europe, spreading from there to various locations in the world, where in some cases, such as the United States, the Americas in general, and Australia, these ideas have also become dominant.² I am capitalizing the word to indicate that the term refers to a concept, not a direction. There is an obvious difficulty with the terms *East* and *West*, both of which imply perspective and position. East or west of what? In Chinese tradition where China is the “Middle Kingdom”, India is “the West”, but for the British India was part of “the East”. To the Romans the nations of southwestern Asia were considered “the East”, a perspective still encoded in the phrase “the Near East”. Moreover, at present, when Western ideas have permeated the world and there is widespread interpenetration of cultures everywhere, the terms West and Western have become increasingly problematic.

Şebnem Susam-Sarajeva (2002:193) discusses difficulties with this terminology including the polar opposite “non-Western”, which reduces the rest of the world to being defined (by contrast or opposition) in terms of the Western. She points out as well that the terminology aggregates vastly different cultures outside Eurocentric spheres and effaces great differences within Western cultures (epitomized by differences among Britain and the Celtic fringe – Ireland, Scotland, and

¹ Robinson's anthology of Western statements about translation includes the comments of Cicero (1997b:6-12) and his followers.

² For a discussion of how Latin American cultures constitute alternate ways of being Western, see Molloy (2005:372, 377n2 and n3) and sources cited.

Wales – or Switzerland and the United States). Although I basically agree with her assessment of the difficulties, I find her solution of using the discourses of center and periphery problematic. I see knowledge as ultimately local, with life being lived and experienced in a multicentered manner. Reification of some parts of the world as center and others as periphery undermines that the valorization of the multiplicity of perspectives in translation studies that constitutes one facet of the argument I am developing in this book. I believe that every place and every nation is a center of experience, knowledge, and wisdom, where I use *nation* in the oldest sense of the word, namely to indicate a people or a community. There is no ideal solution to these problems of terminology, especially at a time when Western culture is being rapidly taken up all around the world and naturalized to the local. Thus, although I use the term *Western*, I am also avoiding the term *non-Western* which constructs an implied binarism that effaces distinctions of cultures everywhere. Widely varied patterns of cultures are lumped together, particularly in the aggregate *non-Western*, and then collectively silenced.

Let us return to Cicero's statements about translation. These comments by Cicero were not, of course, the first reflections on translation in human history or even in Western history, but they are some of the earliest to come down to the present day because they are among the first associated with literacy practices in the various languages of the world.³ Thus they have survived the course of time. Before written comments about translation practice, there were certainly oral observations about the practice of translation or interpreting, but they have not been preserved because writing is one of the principal means by which humans transmit culture wholesale to the future. No doubt, however, oral statements about interpreting were equally straightforward, for again the situation of any particular oral practice of cultural exchange was well defined: the languages, the types of utterances, the persons communicating, the purposes of communication, and the cultural contexts were all ostensibly apparent.

Like most teachers of translation theory and practice, I dutifully include a unit in my classes in which I have students read surveys of early statements and pronouncements about translation such as those of Cicero, asking students to become familiar with various canonical texts about translation from the earliest period to the twentieth century. What I have realized over the years, however, is that I tend to approach this question of the history of translation theory and practice with a sense of dread. It was in part the investigation of the reasons for that dread that led me to write this book.

Translation is primarily instrumental for many of the early authors, facilitating activities that are themselves worth discussing. As a process translation often seems obvious to early commentators, as does their task as translators,

³ Cheung (2006a) contains early Chinese statements about translation, a number of which antedate Cicero.

which is to find solutions to the problems posed by translation as it is defined in their context. This is true even when the authors are promoting or prescribing a specific approach to translation as a whole. The presupposition that the problems of translation are obvious and that the solutions of the writers are clearly correct and generalizable is what makes most statements about translation before 1900 difficult to use and to teach as translation *theory*. These early statements have a transparency about them resulting from implicit assumptions that the activity of translation is circumscribed by the situations and presuppositions of the several writers; such assumptions thus offer a self-evident bottom line to any particular writer's inquiry about and position on translation.

This transparency in the early record stands in sharp contrast to the current problematizing of translation and the probing into its nature. It is as if before 1900 translation were conceived as a closed field, a field similar to the geography of a single country or even simple arithmetic calculation. One may continue to learn information virtually indefinitely about such a closed field by increasing the delicacy of the inquiry, but essentially the broad strokes of what can be learned and the boundaries of the domain are well defined at an early stage. In such inquiry the task of researchers is to fill in more and more detail on the basis of the given parameters and the structure of the defined domain.

Reading the early history of Western thinking about translation can be both stultifying and disturbing, therefore, because it consists of statement after statement about how to translate, statements that are delivered in positive, declarative, and definitive terms about issues that in modern approaches to translation are complex, open, and often indeterminate. The tone of the early statements is significant: the writers give prescriptive and definitive advice and they proclaim clear norms. It does not seem to matter to the writers that they contradict each other from decade to decade, from century to century, often knowingly.

When my students and I undertake this investigation together, I usually ask in an openended way what the students think about the reading. I am often amazed to hear them say that they find the sequence of statements interesting and useful: they say that the survey gives them ideas about how to translate and they report finding it gratifying to be given definite instructions about the process. The disjunction between my own response and those of my students ultimately caused me to begin to interrogate my own reactions: why *do* I find the early statements so unhelpful and in fact so frustrating? Why *do* I read such statements as I would read journal entries about travel abroad, revealing as much about the viewer as about the viewed? To a large extent I believe that the answers to these questions lie in my unease with and aversion to normative stances that are delivered without any indication of self-reflection and self-reflexivity about the speaker's own place of enunciation and without even minimal acknowledgment of the relationships binding the speaker's beliefs, actions, and ideological context.

By and large the attitudes of most early writers about translation reflect what

have come to be known as realist or positivist orientations to knowledge,⁴ but since the early decades of the twentieth century such uncritical and transparent approaches to knowledge have been increasingly discredited. The importance of acknowledging position and perspective has become almost universally recognized in academic discourses, and a certain metacommentary and self-reflexivity about the researcher's position and stance are now expected. These expectations are associated with the popular dictum in contemporary literary studies that the task is not to solve the problems but to problematize the solutions. Marilyn Gaddis Rose offers a similar judgement, observing that the history of early statements about translation is "essentially a record of successive guides to pleasing literary taste", and that these statements do not constitute theory *per se* in the contemporary understanding of that concept; instead they are "recommendations for adhering to accepted rhetorical practices as the recommender understands them" (1997:15). Similar issues have led Martha Cheung to title her collection of primary documents about translation in Chinese as *An Anthology of Chinese Discourse on Translation* (2006a), and she discusses in her introduction why she rejected calling these statements "theory" (cf. Lin 2002:162).

Thus, my dis-ease with the approaches of early writers to translation is not merely a matter of personal taste. To a large extent what is troubling about the early statements has to do with the huge shift in how knowledge itself has been viewed since the beginning of the twentieth century. Associated with the demise of positivism in the West, this shift makes it increasingly difficult to enjoin people to translate in any single way or, in fact, to take rigid normative stances toward any social practice and to view any subject from a single perspective exclusively, as the early statements about translation tend to do. Accordingly, it becomes increasingly difficult to use early pronouncements about translation and to recommend them to students without extensively contextualizing the material, showing how each statement served the ethos and logos of its day and how it can be related to its cultural moment. This work has not been systematically attempted in translation studies, and it is certainly beyond my own personal reach, particularly in an introductory course on translation theory and practice or even in a study such as I have undertaken here.

Since World War II and the coalescence of translation studies as an independent academic discipline,⁵ thinking about translation has had a definitional

⁴ Most of the early Western statements about translation in anthologies antedate positivism *per se* in its philosophical sense, but the authors' lack of self-reflexivity about the limitations of their own perspectives is often rooted in an ethos in which knowledge has an absolute-ness that converges with the attitudes of later positivists. Some of this ethos is attributable to imperialism, some to Christian views, and some rooted in realist epistemological orientations that go back to Greek philosophy.

⁵ I am using the term "translation studies" broadly and somewhat anachronistically to refer to all the postwar developments related to thinking about translation, even before the term was coined in the 1970s. In English the phrase was developed as an analogue to black studies or African American studies, women's studies, Irish studies, and so forth; such terms proliferated after 1960.

impetus that has grown out of and been motivated by postpositivist perspectives on the subject matter. This definitional impetus has increasingly revolved around two points. First, research and theorizing have steadily expanded, thus opening the domain of translation and problematizing many aspects of translation that were earlier taken as obvious or transparent. It is increasingly recognized that there are more and more strands involved in translation, more and more features of translation that vary across time and space and that must be accounted for and understood. Thus, what seemed transparent to early writers on translation because it was assumed (including characteristics of specific languages, anisomorphisms of specific language pairs, text types, cultural contexts, patronage, power relations, and ideology, to name but a few parameters) is not in fact uniform or even obvious across the whole range of translational phenomena. Indeed the elements of translation viewed by early writers as a matter of common sense are often merely a reflection of *idées reçues* associated with particular cultural situations or ideological positions of their own times. As areas associated with translation have become problematized, therefore, translation theory has also shown a continual tendency to expand the purview of translation, with a concomitant expansion of the scope of translation research.

Second, and clearly related to the first point, there has been a steady movement in the field toward greater self-reflexivity as scholars and translators have come to realize that their own perspectives on translation are not universal. That is, scholars have begun to understand that any perspective, even a dominant one, is only one way of looking at translation. This chapter will briefly trace these currents through the various developments and schools of translation studies in the second half of the twentieth century. It is not, of course, possible to deal with the history of translation studies as a discipline in detail in this context. Nonetheless the overview below offers a way to conceptualize both the history and structure of translation studies as a whole since World War II and to suggest ways of characterizing the discipline that can serve as alternatives to stereotypical ways of describing it found in the existing literature.

1.1 Initial Considerations: Beyond Positivism

Although the primary focus of this chapter is a brief survey of the major theories of translation that have emerged since World War II, some background material will be useful before turning to the survey so as to locate the various approaches in a broader pattern. In a sense it is possible to undertake a thematic overview of the field because translation studies has matured sufficiently so that the history of the field can be written. There are several collections of primary documents pertaining to pronouncements about translation through the centuries, notably André Lefevere's *Translation/History/Culture: A Sourcebook* (1992a), Douglas Robinson's *Western Translation Theory from Herodotus to Nietzsche* (1997b), and Martha Cheung's *An Anthology of Chinese Discourse on Translation*

(2006a). There are narrative overviews of such longitudinal views, most of them relatively short, such as chapters in Eugene Nida's *Toward a Science of Translating* (1964) and Susan Bassnett's *Translation Studies* (3rd. ed., 2002). The sequence of translation theories since World War II has been treated by Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* (2nd. ed., 2001); Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* (2001); and Mary Snell-Hornby, *The Turns of Translation Studies: New Paradigms or Shifting Viewpoints?* (2006). There are also detailed overviews of particular approaches to translation theory in the series titled "Translation Theories Explained" (currently titled "Translation Theories Explored") issued by St. Jerome Publishing: Christiane Nord, *Translating as a Purposeful Activity* (1997) on functionalist theories; Peter Fawcett, *Translation and Language* (1997) on linguistic theories; Jean Boase-Beier, *Stylistic Approaches to Translation* (2006), focusing on cognitive stylistics in particular; Theo Hermans, *Translation in Systems* (1999) on systems theories; Luise von Flotow, *Translation and Gender* (1997) on feminist theories of translation; Douglas Robinson, *Translation and Empire* (1997) on postcolonial theories; Marilyn Gaddis Rose, *Translation and Literary Criticism* (1997) on literary theories of translation; and Kathleen Davis, *Deconstruction and Translation* (2001). Leo Tak-hung Chan's *Twentieth-Century Chinese Translation Theory: Modes, Issues and Debates* (2004) broadens these considerations by anthologizing texts pertaining to modern Chinese translation theory. In addition, there are studies that look at longitudinal questions pertaining to translators and translation in context, such as the volume edited by Jean Delisle and Judith Woodsworth, *Translators through History* (1995). This is only a partial list of available studies, and I refer the readers of this book to these volumes for more detailed considerations of any one approach to translation studies discussed below, as well as for comprehensive bibliographical information.

What is almost universally true of the existing studies, however, is that the preponderance of data about translation processes and products, the overwhelming number of pronouncements about translation retailed, and the theories considered are drawn from Western materials and Western contexts.⁶ This is an issue worth pondering. Does it indicate basic ignorance of translation in worldwide contexts among most scholars in translation studies publishing for international contexts? Does it mean that (like some natural scientists) most translation scholars think there is little material worth considering outside Western contexts? Is it tantamount to saying that the only "real" translations and the only "real" thinking about translation have occurred in Eurocentric environments? Is it a sign of hegemonic thinking on the part of scholars in the field who do not

⁶ Delisle and Woodsworth (1995) stands out in this regard as offering a significant number of case studies that transcend Eurocentric contexts, as do, of course, Cheung (2006a) and Chan (2004). There is also a considerable amount of material dealing with traditions around the world in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Baker 1998), particularly in the historical section.

come from Western traditions? If any of these is true, how can the field improve in this regard? In this chapter I do not intend to recapitulate the disciplinary surveys that have been done, nor am I able to ameliorate them, but I will return throughout the rest of the book to historical considerations related to moving the field beyond Eurocentric interests and presuppositions.

Here I begin with a framework from Western intellectual history that may be helpful to schematize and organize some of the developments in translation theory during the last half century. I argue that the field has been gradually expanding to consider more and more facets of translation, more and more perspectives on translation, an expansion that is associated with the demise of positivism. It is an expansion, however, that at present is still severely limited by the primarily Western focus of translation studies as an international academic discipline. Thus, the question of enlarging translation – the primary subject matter of this book – takes its place in a trajectory that has already been established for decades in translation studies yet still remains curiously parochial and limited by persistent Western assumptions.

To understand the implications of the demise of positivism, it will help to give some background on the philosophical movement of positivism itself. Positivism can be defined as “a philosophy asserting the primacy of observation in assessing the truth of statements of fact and holding that metaphysical and subjective arguments not based on observable data are meaningless”.⁷ Elaborated by Auguste Comte in the 1830s and thereafter, as a philosophical system, positivism recognizes only “positive” facts and observable phenomena, as well as the relations between specific facts, more general facts, and laws, thus privileging the “positive” sciences, principally mathematics and the physical sciences. In his *Tractatus* (1921) the early Wittgenstein is generally recognized as offering one of the most trenchant articulations and defenses of the later phrases of positivism in the early twentieth century. He encapsulated the doctrine in his aphorism, “What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must consign to silence”.⁸

Views of knowledge that underpinned nineteenth-century conceptions of the university and university curricula in the West were grounded to a large extent in the philosophical framework of positivism and presupposed tenets associated with Western imperialism. It is not surprising that the central fields of the humanities (including the study of languages and literatures) were constituted during that period as disciplines of their time, thus rooted in both positivism and imperialism. In Eurocentric domains thus far, academic thinking about translation has taken shape principally within humanist disciplines and it has inherited these orientations. In part because of its positivist framework, much research in the humanities

⁷ Cf. *American Heritage Dictionary*, “logical positivism”, s.v.

⁸ “Was sich überhaupt sagen lässt, lässt sich klar sagen; und wovon man nicht reden kann, darüber muss man schweigen” (Wittgenstein 1961:2-3).

in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was focused on the collection of observable data, including such things as the elucidation of difficult languages, the preparation of editions of primary texts, and the attempt to determine such factors as textual authorship, historical context, and the biographical particulars of specific individuals.

The impact of Western imperialism on academic subjects was not limited to the humanities; indeed presuppositions associated with imperialism affected all branches of knowledge. Academic investigations generally excluded concepts of mathematics, medicine, alternate views of nature, and approaches to scientific questions developed outside Western contexts. The social sciences reduced “non-Western” cultures to primitive curiosities and “non-Western” individuals to objects, institutionalizing aspects of an imperial or colonizing gaze in the protocols of anthropology and other observational disciplines that focused on peoples from beyond the Western ambit. These imperialist premises of academic disciplines were in turn interconnected with positivism, for positivism implicitly and uncritically asserts the dominant (and, hence, Western) perspective as the basis of observation, taking one specific cultural viewpoint as the correct or “objective” perspective for assessing the truth of statements of fact and for garnering positive, observable data. Thus a local Eurocentric perspective was presumed to be the only possible neutral view of the world.

These frameworks began to break down in the first quarter of the twentieth century, eroding rapidly as the century progressed. For example, in his mature work, *The Philosophical Investigations* (1953), Wittgenstein offered shattering examples and arguments that undermined positivism. Wittgenstein began to address issues of perspective, the habits of human communities, the difficulties and arbitrariness in human communication, the incommensurability of life forms, and the importance of convention, among others. His work converged with and extended developments in the natural sciences and mathematics, as well as other fields. As a consequence of these varied developments, positivism as an approach to knowledge and the production of knowledge had been largely abandoned by the end of World War II in most intellectual circles.

In this trajectory the work of three figures stands out – Albert Einstein, Werner Heisenberg, and Kurt Gödel. Although an exploration of their accomplishments is beyond the scope of the present study, we can note briefly some aspects of their impact. Einstein’s challenges to Newtonian physics and his relativity theories, Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle (1927), and Gödel’s incompleteness theorem (1931) held implications not merely for their own specific disciplines but for the concept of knowledge itself. All of these theories turn on the significance of perspectives and frameworks, as well as loci of uncertainty, in physics and mathematics. Scientists were not the only figures involved in the shift away from positivism. Figures such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung played a role, and artists such as James Joyce and Picasso were important as well, problematizing “objectivity” and anticipating in their work discourses about perspective that

emerged later in academic fields.

The changing views of knowledge in the twentieth century undermined nineteenth-century epistemological and ideological premises of the traditional humanities and, indeed, of academe as a whole, thus challenging orientations in Western culture that go back to the Greeks. It is no accident that arguments for enlarging the conception of translation can be connected with the postpositivist views of the later Wittgenstein, as we will see below. In the second half of the twentieth century, postpositivist views of knowledge shifted inquiry in the humanities and the social sciences away from research oriented toward digging out and amassing observable “facts”, to self-reflexive interrogations of perspective, premises, and the framework of inquiry itself. It is in part for this reason that literary studies have become increasingly focused on theory and metatextual questions, while history has undertaken a reconsideration of the very postulates that have guided the construction of the past.

This intense interest in theory and frameworks has been one of the most extraordinary developments in the humanities and the social sciences during the last quarter century. Connected with the so-called “generation of 1968” – the student radicals in Europe, North America, and elsewhere – theory became the passion of a generation of students who were radicalized by the politics of the period. In turn many of these students became the teachers of today, asking metaquestions not only about texts and language, but about the very disciplines having to do with texts and language. They have turned a self-reflexive eye on what constitutes knowledge, the knowing subject, and the knowing institution, that is, academe.

Changes in the conception of knowledge traceable to the demise of positivism and the erosion of imperialism have been accelerated by the more recent phenomena of globalization.⁹ Earlier ideological and self-reflexive investigations of both history and literature had resulted in inclusionary approaches, transforming the canons of literature and admitting alternative histories, as the validity of perspectives other than those dominant in the West has been gradually asserted, and as the inequities, injustices, and violence of colonialism, patriarchal culture, and other forms of oppression have been acknowledged. Nonetheless, globalization has introduced new factors that have furthered these and other changes. Although the phenomena and implications of globalization are hotly debated, it is evident that the interpenetration of cultures, the shrinking of both spatial and temporal distancing, and the ascendancy of new technologies are all having a transformative effect on many aspects of knowledge production, transmission, and preservation in the new millenium.¹⁰

It is against this large intellectual backdrop that the following discussion

⁹ Globalization has also undermined other ideologies, notably nineteenth-century views of nationalism.

¹⁰ For example, see the discussion in Cronin (2003).

of the development of translation studies since World War II must be set. What I argue for is a full integration into translation studies of postpositivist understandings of data collection and theory formation. Such understandings recognize that there are multiple perspectives on the natural and social worlds, that such perspectives need to be explicitly recognized and acknowledged, and that perspectives utilized within the field of translation studies should increasingly include perspectives from outside dominant spheres. An expanded framework of this sort will include perspectives on translation that interrogate hegemonic impositions and that will nurture self-definitions of the nature and practice of translation throughout the world. This is a direction that I believe the field has been lurching toward for decades, but in an inchoate and somewhat random manner: a general broadening of perspectives and conceptualizations, including a developing habit of self-reflexivity, has been intertwined with clear retrogressions. In part I am writing to promote a more conscious awareness of the large philosophical issues that translation studies is grappling with, so as to facilitate a greater awareness of and consensus about the direction that the field is taking.

1.2 Periodization and Translation Theory

Let us make a short detour to consider the periodization of writing and thinking about translation proposed by George Steiner in *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (1992:236 ff.). Steiner divides statements about translation (in the West, of course) into four periods (1992:248-50). His first period runs from Cicero's precept of 46 B.C. to Hölderlin's commentary of 1804; Steiner says that this period is characterized by statements of translators with an immediate empirical focus. The second period, spanning roughly 150 years, from 1792 to 1946, he describes as dominated by hermeneutic inquiry. Steiner's third period begins in the late 1940s; he observes that "in many ways we are still in this third phase" (1992:250), a period characterized by the attempt to apply linguistic theory and statistics to translation and the endeavor to map the relations between formal logic and linguistic transfer. The fourth period Steiner dates from the early 1960s, when translation study had become a point of contact between established and newly evolving disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, and sociolinguistics.

Periodization is difficult in any field, but Steiner's attempt to schematize the development of translation inquiry is particularly strange, a lopsided and asymmetrical way to divide the development of a field of thought that spans more than two thousand years. Not only do his periods cover vastly different amounts of time but the last two also overlap. Part of Steiner's difficulty in attempting to establish periodization results from mixing together temporal periods properly speaking and movements related to translation methods. Fundamentally, however, I see Steiner's asymmetrical division as motivated by the huge shift in the way knowledge has been viewed since the abandonment of positivism. It is

telling that his first two periods cover roughly two thousand years and the last two merely 50 years, the decades in which postpositivist epistemology began to shape thought about translation. In essence, without labeling it as such, Steiner gives us a periodization in which Western thinking about translation is implicitly divided by the postpositivist revolution, confirming the postwar era as the period in which the modern discipline of translation studies was established.

The recognition that knowledge in any field is affected by time and space, viewpoint, immediate context, and long-term history, as well as by factors such as social context, subject position, and place of enunciation (particularly within the humanities and social sciences), has been generally presupposed in recent decades. Accounting for such factors is especially important in a field like translation studies where scholars and practitioners alike grapple with cultural frameworks in an explicit manner. Thus, it makes sense that Steiner's periodization of translation studies should reflect the huge gulf in Western thinking before and after World War II, a convenient marker for the ascendancy of postpositivist approaches within academe and for a major epistemological shift in much of the world.

World War II is a watershed for views of translation in other ways as well. Before the war, during the 1930s in particular, people had begun to exploit the relation of language, cultural production, and social manipulation. Social engineering through textual and cultural production, especially by means of language, was practiced assiduously and dramatically by both fascist and socialist governments throughout the 1930s. This relationship can be seen in the film industry of the Soviet Union, for example, where important figures such as Sergei Eisenstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin viewed film as a means to consolidate and unify the new post-Revolutionary state. They were followed in the West by the film-making of directors such as John Grierson in the United Kingdom and Grierson's followers in Canada, Ireland, and elsewhere (cf. White 2003).

During World War II these approaches to culture became generalized throughout the world and the war brought renewed interest in culture overall. Understanding cultural interface and adjudicating cultural differences were equally critical for maintaining alliances across cultural boundaries and for struggling against enemies. Whether friend or foe, it was essential to understand the culture of the other. Moreover, the war brought greater clarity about the role of power in shaping and defining culture and about the reciprocal role of culture in establishing and consolidating power. This relationship was manifest in the case of people who were subjugated, such as the Chinese during the Japanese occupation or the Jews in Europe. The ideological construction of others during the war also clearly demonstrated how perception, knowledge, and meaning were shaped and controlled by cultural context.

During the war cultural interface and ideological agendas also brought into focus the importance of sign systems as such, building a foundation for the later focus on semiotics in the humanities and social sciences. Interest in linguistic and cultural sign systems moved to the center of many operations around the

globe, for such information was central to intelligence on both sides of the global conflict. Radical differences in language and culture across the lines of allies and enemies alike made it imperative to understand how to negotiate sign systems of many types.

Semiotics assumed crucial pragmatic and tactical importance in two critical areas during World War II. First was the widespread awareness of the necessity of understanding the codes of others broadly construed, because understanding and “cracking” codes was a precondition of the success of intelligence operations, particularly for military purposes. During World War II there were many people involved in coding and decoding all around the world and operatives were translating to and from more languages than had ever before been used concurrently for strategic purposes. Because the war had a global scale and reached into normally isolated areas, an awareness of the range and diversity of the world’s languages and cultures came to the fore, even as translation among them was necessitated. This awareness coincided with an intensive effort on each side of the conflict to develop and decipher codes and encryption techniques. Experiences with natural languages and artificial codes during the war resulted in radical gains in understanding how languages work and how they relate to one another in translation.¹¹

Expertise in and understanding of the workings of propaganda were also at a premium during wartime. Again, both sides of the conflict recognized the necessity of knowing how to design cultural artifacts (including slogans, posters, radio broadcasts, films, images, and representations) in order to shape public opinion, cultural response, definitions of identity, allegiance, and so forth. During the war, therefore, many people were engaged in creating texts and other cultural products to achieve targeted effects on specific groups of people – from recruiting efforts and war propaganda to film making, song writing, and *rapprochement*. Translation was central to all of these wartime activities involving intercultural communication and propaganda, with reliable translators at a premium in many phases of the operations.

The demands of the war had tremendous repercussions in the postwar period. Almost every facet of life around the world was changed in some respect by World War II and the effects of the war continue to shape our lives. It was the outcome of the war that determined many national boundaries and divided the world into spheres of influence, domains that continue to motivate geopolitical strife in the twenty-first century. More to the point for the issues at hand, the interest in shaping cultural production fueled the postwar boom in advertising,

¹¹ General interest in natural languages was also heightened by experiences such as the use of the Navajo code talkers who were able to transmit secret messages for the Allies simply by communicating directly to each other in their own little-known language, a strategy adopted after the Germans succeeded in breaking all the codes and encryption techniques of the Allies.

spurring the use of propaganda to pursue capitalist and socialist economic policies and ideological and political aims. Propaganda became central to politics and the shape of the polity itself in the postwar period, prefiguring the present in which elections in most countries have become media events and global advertising is a central economic activity. The war transformed intellectual life worldwide as well. For instance, it was the Strategic Bombing Survey undertaken in Europe and Japan by the United States Army in 1945 that developed the statistical methods – including survey and sampling techniques – that transformed the social sciences after the war and that continue to be the foundation of much academic inquiry and general intellectual assessment.

In such circumstances it is no surprise that insights, attitudes, and practices developed during the war should have influenced the realm of translation – not only the practice of translation but its conceptualization and theorization as well. From the postpositivist awareness of difference in perspective and position, to new sensitivities about the workings of signs and codes, to concrete understandings of how textual production is related to power and ideology, wartime concerns had immediate applications for translation. It was inevitable that these considerations should have stimulated and shaped translation studies in the postwar period. The perspectives on translation that surfaced during and immediately after the war are mirrored in the trajectory of translation studies in the last 50 years.

Thus, ironically, there is something fundamentally perceptive in Steiner's choice of 1946 as the major transition point in the periodization of (Western) thinking about translation and in his view that the last two "periods" of conceptualizing translation actually overlap and are inextricable. It is no accident that the interest in translation exploded in the postwar period and that the main schools of thinking about translation that emerged initially after the war can be related directly to postpositivist intellectual interests that were also central to wartime activities. First were linguistic approaches to translation, a school of thought about translation that inherits the wartime interests in cracking codes, the central concern of intelligence operations. Second were the functionalist schools that inherit the legacy of expertise pertaining to propaganda and the manipulation of target audiences through textual and cultural production, honed to perfection during the 1930s and 1940s.

To summarize, therefore, postwar developments with an emphasis on postpositivist epistemology, a new awareness of the nature of linguistic codes, and new textual practices related to the manipulation of culture are all germane to the strange periodization offered by Steiner and more importantly to the character of the schools of translation theory and practice that emerged after World War II. I turn now to a very brief overview of the history of translation studies, suggesting ways that perspectives from (Western) intellectual history illuminate the development of the discipline translation studies in the last half century.

1.3 Philosophical and Linguistic Approaches to Translation

Many of the initial postwar reflections on and theorizations of translation reflect postpositivist orientations to language and culture in an immediate way. For the purposes of this brief survey, I will discuss the theoretical work on translation of Roman Jakobson, W.V.O. Quine, and J.C. Catford, whose writings in various ways represent postwar philosophical and linguistic approaches to translation and illuminate the concerns being traced here. My intention is not to give a complete survey of all the linguistic approaches to translation that have developed and evolved in the last half century and that remain vigorous in their contributions to translation studies, but to concentrate on the early linguistic approaches to the nascent field.¹²

Despite its brevity Roman Jakobson's short essay "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" (1959) has remained one of the foundational statements for the modern development of thinking about translation. The essay exemplifies central features of translation studies as it has emerged as an international academic field and thus it is no accident that Jakobson's essay is almost universally taught in translator training programs and quoted ubiquitously by scholars a half century after it was written. This is not merely a pietistic trope, for Jakobson homes in on central features of language, culture, and translation that radically differentiate postpositivist approaches to translation from virtually everything written on translation before World War II. He emphasizes contrastive linguistics, clearly identifying the asymmetries and anisomorphisms of different languages. He argues that different languages provide fundamentally incommensurate frameworks for thought and culture in their obligatory features, but at the same time he remains committed to the proposition that translation as such is a possible activity: "Languages differ essentially in what they *must* convey and not in what they may convey" (1959:236). Jakobson implicitly problematizes the question of language itself as the central feature of translation, and from this problematic emerges his famous definition of three types of translation: intralingual translation or rewording; interlingual translation; and intersemiotic translation (1959:233).¹³ He also relates thinking about translation to discourses about the relationship between language and experience in the world, thus raising problems of reference and meaning.

These fundamental arguments stand at the heart of contemporary translation theory, and their relationship to the postpositivist concerns we are tracing is clear. Jakobson works from a postpositivist emphasis on perspective, within which the

¹² A more extensive survey of linguistic approaches to translation is found in Fawcett (1997).

¹³ Because of questions about the nature of a language as such, this distinction can in turn be seen as problematic. Davis (2001:23) discusses Derrida's critique of Jakobson; cf. Halverson (1999a:13) who also analyzes Toury's objections.