Introduction

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The honour of being the 2009 CETRA Professor gave me the privilege of writing a short introduction to this volume, "Translation Effects: Selected Papers of the CETRA Research Seminar in Translation Studies 2009." The title is chosen by Omid Azadibougar, one of the 2009 CETRA participants who is also the editor of this volume. He has selflessly devoted himself to editing this volume. I thank him for offering me the exclusive pleasure of writing this introduction.

A unique pleasure it is, because mixed with rich memories of the energizing experience I gained from the 14th CETRA Research Seminar in September 2002, when I was myself a participant. The presentation I gave as a CETRA student has resulted in the development not only of ideas that have informed my work since then, but also of a theme that ran through my 2009 CETRA lectures (I call it *voices on the margins*). That such a development is possible is due, in no small measure, to the stimulating input from the 2002 CETRA Professor, Maria Tymoczko, the CETRA staff, and my fellow students. Equally stimulating is the feedback I received from colleagues and participants of the 2009 CETRA. They have provided me with new sustenance. Excitement is one such nutrient. I am excited by the articles in this volume, for the echoes and reverberations which these articles set off with one another and with my CETRA lectures have inspired me to think about my own work in new and unexpected ways. I am also excited because I am convinced that in due course, some of these authors will return as CETRA Professors and add new vitality to the vibrant exchange of ideas which has been such a characteristic feature of the CETRA Research Seminar.

In one of my CETRA lectures I talked about why theories that are generally regarded as progressive and liberating in Western Europe and the US (such as postcolonialism, postmodernism, and post-structuralism) would, upon arrival in China via translation and/or other agents of transmission, often meet with vehement oppositions or would be dismissed or treated with suspicion by many intellectuals on the Chinese mainland.[1] By way of explanation, I borrowed a remark from a Chinese journalist-scholar in Hong Kong, "Your left is my right." The *post-* theories, many of which argue for (national) self-determination and resistance to all forms of intellectual hegemony and cultural imperialism – the positions of the Left – would easily be appropriated by the conservatives (the Rightists) to buttress the official line that China should go her own way and reject all attempts to meddle in her internal affairs – the better to suppress voices of dissent and other "subversive" activities. The challenge for those who subscribe to the importance of openness to ideas and practices emanating from other cultures, albeit the dominant cultures, therefore lies in devising ways to deal with the highly complex, highly problematic, at times even intriguing ways in which ideas/theories move across cultures, so that the transmutation that occur in the process would be conducive to local cultural rejuvenation. This topic, examined in the context of Brazil in the 20th century, is given a fascinating treatment by Alice Leal in her article "Anthropophagy and Translation." If in China, your left is my right, then in Brazil, your *noble savage* is my *evil savage*, and anthropophagy, a Brazilian way of responding to the

[1] My 2009 CETRA lectures have been revised for publication. Rather than a summary of their contents, I would instead provide publication details on them. The lecture, "Empowerment and Total Mobilization: Some Thoughts on the Selection of Teaching Materials for a BA Programme in Translation and the Use of these Materials," is published in *East Journal of Translation*《東方翻譯》 (2009, 1: 45-53). Another one, "The (Un)importance of Flagging Chineseness – Contextualizing Contemporary Chinese Discourse on Translation," is published in *Translation Studies* (2011, 4/1: 41-57). The lectures "Reconfiguring Translation – the Chinese Tradition (1)" and "Reconfiguring Translation – the Chinese Tradition (2)" have been condensed into one single article entitled "Reconceptualizing Translation – Some Chinese Endeavours" and it has been accepted for publication by META in March 2011, 56/1. The remaining one, entitled "Representation, Intervention and Mediation: A Translation Anthologist's Reflections on the Complexities of Translating China," has been revised and expanded for publication under the title, "Academic Navel Gazing? Playing the Game Up front?: Pages from the Notebook of a Translation Anthologist," and is now under review.

challenge of the foreign, is as multi-faceted a phenomenon as the Chinese attempts in the post Cultural Revolution era (i.e. post-1976) to negotiate a difficult path between tradition and modernity. Leal also provides an incisive delineation of how "the notion of anthropophagy acquired opposite connotations in Europe and in Brazil," thereby dispelling the common (mis)conception that anthropophagy is a predominant motif in Brazilian translation theory and practice. In the process, Leal raises a number of theoretical questions that stimulate me to rethink the question of how and why ideas travel, or fail to travel, and of how and why newness enters the world – to borrow an expression from Salman Rushdie.

Newness enters the world in many forms and via many channels, one of which is translation, provided that the conditions are right. To the question of what are the conditions that would allow translation to realize its effect of engendering newness in the world, some pertinent answers can be found in July de Wilde's article, "Diverging Author/Translator Interventions in the Dutch, French and US Translations of the Cuban Novel *Tres tristes tigres*: Some Explanatory Factors." Putting the case study approach to excellent use, and supplementing the theoretical framework – drawn from Bourdieu's concepts of capital and field – with the ethnographic mode of inquiry (i.e. interviews), de Wilde's article unveils conditions that are rooted in history but embodying insights for both translators and translation theorists. The single most important insight is that translators do have power – a point which I have also stressed in my CETRA lectures. Contrary to the age-old image of the translator as dancing in shackles, the shackles being conservative views of language, of creativity and of cross-cultural communication that shape behaviour in the target culture, translators could, should they feel committed enough to a particular set of values that rebel against the governing norms, bring newness – new values, new ideas, alternative mindsets – into the world, at least into the world in which the effects of their translations can be felt. The sense of newness to be effected by translation will be much stronger if the translator,

the author, and/or the commissioner all hold a view of translation as "unlimited creation" (de Wilde: 23), or would allow such a view to override the considerations against it. The similarity between the author of *Tres tristes tigres*, Guillermo Cabrera Infante's view of translation as an opportunity for "correction and improvement" and as "refurbishing" of his own work (de Wilde: 3), and the English translator, Suzanne Jill Levine's view that "an effective translation is often a '(sub)version', latent version, 'underneath', implied in the original, which becomes explicit" (de Wilde: 21) is a crucial reason why the experimental features of *Tres tristes tigres* can be re-created in Levine's translation.

Another reason is of course the translator's competence. The equally dynamic rendition of the baroque extravagance of *Tres tristes tigres* by the Dutch translators can also be accounted for by the editor's enthusiasm to have this novel translated into Dutch at a time when Spanish-American literature had already lost its prestige, and one of the two Dutch translators, Fred de Vries's view that translation should rise to the linguistic, stylistic, literary and meta-literary challenges posed by the novel (according to de Wilde, the other Dutch translator had died in 2000, before she started this project). Shared enthusiasm and shared views certainly explain why, even though the English translation was published in 1970 and the Dutch translation published twenty-seven years later, they are alike in their achievements. In contrast, the French translator's unwillingness to deviate too much from the inhibiting norms of the French translation culture is the main reason why, even though the translation was carried out at more or less the same time as the English translation, and even though the author was also involved in the project, the French translation emits a weaker sense of radical newness than that of the English or Dutch translation.

Yet another condition for the newness to emerge via translation is when there is a need in the target culture for new values. This is the finding presented in Sofia Loden's article, "To

Omit or not to Omit a Character: Translating *Le Chevalier au lion* in the Nordic Countries." Her research question is: why is the knight Kay, a character in Chrétien de Troyes' late twelfth century romance *Le Chevalier au lion*, missing in the thirteenth century Old Norse translation *Ívens saga* but kept in the fourteenth century Swedish translation *Herr Ivan*, even though both were made at the order of the Norwegian court? Weaving a narrative that is punctuated with elements of suspense worthy of a gripping detective novel, Loden solves the mystery of the presence of Kay in *Herr Ivan* by tracing the reason to the need of the Swedish culture to incorporate the values of chivalry, which were the French courtly values, into the building of a new social class in Swedish society in the fourteenth century.

Lest it be said that this volume articulates an over-optimistic view of the positive effects of translation, another article should be cited to balance the picture. Xuefei Bai's "Woman and Translation: Beyond the Myth of Europa," exposes the less than flattering effects of translation. Rather than introducing new values to a target society in need of them, translation could become an instrument for reinforcing and perpetuating old values, values that are biased, distorted, and yet stubbornly predominant. Focussing on the highly acclaimed Titian painting, *The Rape of Europa* (1562, oil on canvas), and reading it as a visual translation of one of the rape narratives of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Bai uses this appropriately selected specimen of intersemiotic translation to alert her readers to the multiple ways in which translation, in its different modes of realization, can bring about the naturalization of "a heterosexual paradigm of powerful men raping, i.e. 'conquering', women," all the while ascribing the cause and effect of said violence to women" (Bai: 4). She alerts her readers too, to the fact that translation does not live outside such a paradigm.

Constantly mired in sexist language and described in terms of the behaviour of women, translation is subject to the same logic of violence operating in the paradigm even as it helps

to perpetuate the phallocentric ideology that underlies the unequal powerful relation between the sexes, between translations and their originals. With a vision encompassing translation, literature, criticism and art, Bai calls for a concerted effort to promote the feminist epistemology propounded by feminists in literary and translation scholarship. Such an effort, pursued in the form of concrete actions aimed at consciousness-raising, at nurturing the agency of women (translators) and at challenging positivism and encouraging declared positionality, will ultimately enable women to recover their lost voice(s), re-write *his-story* from the perspective of *her-story*, and, through such translation of values, bring newness into the world, bring a new world to humanity. If my CETRA lectures have unveiled the plight of scholars in China, and by extension, scholars working on the other side of the unequal power divide to make their voices heard, Bai's article is a sonorous addition to the voices on the margins.

Newness can also enter the world via the examination of data through a new perspective or the re-drawing of boundary for the introduction of new categories. The former is what Kristiina Taivalkoski-Shilov attempts to do in her article "When Two Become One: Reported Discourse Viewed through a Translatological Perspective," and the latter is the objective of Danuta Przepiorkowska's piece, "An Interpreted Focus Group Interview as a Type of Interpreter-Mediated Event." Taking an interventionist approach and with the provocative question, "Why would we bother studying translations if there was nothing new there to be found?" (Taivalkoski-Shilov: 13), Taivalkoski-Shilov argues that the seven types of speech representations propounded by Brian McHale in his narratological typology can be expanded if the perspective opened up by the concept of translating as speech reporting is adopted by researchers in narratology. Such a perspective, Taivalkoski-Shilov further argues, would likewise benefit the discipline of translation studies. The concept that translating is speech reporting highlights the subjectivity and personal role of the translator

in the translation process and hence it is an empowering concept for translators. It also allows researchers to access the attitude of the translator. And that, according to Taivalkoski-Shilov, "is exactly what makes translations interesting" (Taivalkoski-Shilov: 13). Bai Xuefei would most probably see this perspective as a welcome addition to the feminist epistemology she advocates.

The subjectivity and personal role of the translator is stressed too, in the neighbouring domain of interpreting studies. In an illuminating illustration of how experience could be fruitfully used to inform theoretical thinking and research design, Danuta Przepiorkowska selects for her research a methodology – autoethnography – that is grounded in her experience of being an interpreter, specifically her 15 years of experience of focus group interpreting in Poland – and argues that fresh understanding of interpreting as a form of interlingual and intercultural mediation can be gained by carving a new category for study. Focus group interviews in cross-cultural contexts constitute such a new category, even though the borderline with other categories of interpreting remains fluid rather than clear-cut. Przepiorkowska's sharp acumen, based no doubt on her first-hand experience of conducting cross-cultural focus group interviews, enables her to identify the features that make the events in this category distinct and worthy of consideration as constitutive of a separate category. Notwithstanding the difficulty of obtaining data for analysis, a point admitted openly by Przepiorkowska, some of those features she singles out for discussion – the "'clandestine' nature of interpreter's intervention, […] unidirectionality, hybrid and multimodal input, […] semi-structured conversation" (Przepiorkowska: 1) – are suggestive enough to persuade the readers, at least the present reader, that focused research on this category would yield new and fascinating insight into how an interpreter's subjectivity and agency operate in events of such nature.

Interpreting is indeed a fertile ground for new discoveries, discoveries that could also benefit translators. The potential is tapped and highlighted by Paula Gorszczyńska in her article, "The Potential of Sight Translation to Optimize Written Translation: the Example of the English-Polish Language Pair". Taking heed of the notion of "constructive intersubdisciplinary collaboration" proposed by Miriam Shlesinger, and drawing from her own experience of being both an interpreter and a translator, Gorszczyńska advocates the use of sight translation – a pedagogical tool favoured by teachers of interpreting – in the training of professional translators. Her hypothesis is that this type of intersubdiscipinary exploration would enhance the efficiency of translators without compromising the quality of their translated texts. The implications of the experiment designed by Gorszczyńska for testing this hypothesis are huge. Why is it that the use of sight translation in the training of translator can result in a faster speed of translating and the result is not all that different? What does that say about current methods used in the training of translators, and about current pedagogic philosophies and paradigms of thinking about translation-training? Gorszczyńska's article is tantalizingly thought-provoking. What new translation didactics are likely to emerge from this pilot study, and the larger research project which it supports?

Potential is also what I see in Hanna Pięta's article "Portuguese Translations of Polish Literature Published in Book Form: Some Methodological Issues." My interest in this article could well be based on bias. I am particularly receptive to voices on the margins, voices from the peripheries, and Pięta's research on the cultural relations between Poland and Portugal through translation is, to quote her, also an exploration of "the way in which cultural relations between two (semi)peripheral languages (in this case Polish and Portuguese) are shaped" (Pięta: 2). Personal preference aside, Pięta shows an astute awareness of methodological problems – the vexing problem of the entangled relation between data collection and the definition and redefinition of the object of study, for

example – and an ability to solve the problems that give her article the appeal of a reflective piece of meta-discourse. This is no mean achievement, especially since Pięta, at the time she wrote this piece, was at an initial stage of her research. The article is exemplary in articulating how problems encountered in the process of research, and solutions to those problems, can be theorized. By showing that difficulties, which are an integral and inescapable part of research, can be handled, and in a way which has relevance beyond the merely incidental, the article makes for a reading that is both refreshing and psychologically liberating.

Exemplary too, is the attention given to methodological issues by Elisabet Tiselius in her article "A Sociological Perspective on Expertise in Conference Interpreting: A Case Study on Swedish Conference Interpreters." In addition to using focus group interviews and other relevant tools to obtain a more in-depth understanding of how Swedish interpreters with Swedish as A-language and working in international institutions perceive the concept of expertise in their profession, Tiselius also compares the results thus obtained with the findings of a survey of the official discourse of conference interpreting in major European institutions and discourse produced by the International Association of Conference Interpreter (AIIC). That way, she hopes to establish evidence of the presence or otherwise of norms-related activities and of a common habitus. The pitfalls of focus group interview as a method are spelt out, and measures are devised to reduce as far as possible the risk of having the answers obtained at focus group interviews steered by the questions asked. The meticulous care with which Tiselius handles that, and the highly scrupulous way she assesses the claims she could make and those that she is reluctant to make – these qualities make her article required reading, not only for those planning to use focus group interviews in their research, but also, and especially, for those who are sceptical of the reliability of the

findings. Reading Tiselius's article reminds me in some ways of reading Jane Austen's novel – writing done with "a fine brush on two inches of ivory." [2]

In one of my CETRA lectures, "Reconfiguring Translation – The Chinese Tradition," I ended my reading of Chinese attempts in different historical periods to define and redefine *fanyi* ("translation" in English) with the summative remark: "the energy of the –ing." I would like to end this short introduction with the same remark. It is "the energy of the –ing" generated by the sense of potential, of synergies, of newness ensuing from the articles in this collection that will drive our discipline forward and enable it to grow, to flourish… .

[2] The exact quotation – a typically self-effacing comment Jane Austen made on her own works – reads: "The little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush as produces little effect after much labour." Letter to J. Edward Austen (1816-12-16).