

New Trends  
in Translation and Cultural Identity



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Edited by

Micaela Muñoz-Calvo, Carmen Buesa-Gómez  
and M. Ángeles Ruiz-Moneva



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Carmen Buesa-Gómez and M. Ángeles Ruiz-Moneva

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# INTRODUCTION

## AN APPROACH TO NEW TRENDS IN TRANSLATION AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

MICAELA MUÑOZ-CALVO, *UNIVERSITY OF ZARAGOZA, SPAIN*

A language, any language, is a map, a cartography, a representation of reality and an evolutionary device which has made the cultural identity of peoples possible with the best of its artistic and social expressions.

The utopias of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in search of a perfect tongue, of a universal language, have given way to another type of more pressing debate: economic predominance versus cultural identity in a world which is progressively less diverse.

It seems evident that subjects related to languages, and especially to translation, are of increasing interest. What is at stake is the very cultural identity itself, as well as the exchange of information and knowledge.

We are the generation, or generations, who are living a revolution in technology and communications. Globalization is a fact, for better or worse. There are few borders left that have not been breached by the great Internet, electronic mail and telecommunication. Borders may hardly remain but imbalances do, and the flow of information and the control of the media are hardly proportional.

The book I have the honour to introduce will undoubtedly serve to gauge both small and important questions: Are some languages endangered by the phenomenon of globalization? What sort of cultural and ideological confluences are taking place? Is it possible to forecast the future of communications? What language will our descendants speak? Will the exchange process enhance our view of the world or will it make it homogeneous, smudged and grey?

These are some of the reflections stimulated by a reading of this book with its varied research into translation and cultural identity. From different theoretical perspectives and frameworks, the authors provide a multinational reflection on translation issues, fostering intercultural knowledge and understanding, crucial to effective interlingual and intercultural communication transfer and exchange within the “global village”. It is a happy coincidence that this book is published precisely in 2008, the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

In November 2005 the XIII Susanne Hübner Seminar: *Translation and Cultural Identity* took place in Zaragoza (Spain). The Seminar was attended by participants and guests from 22 countries in 4 continents including Spain, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Portugal, Germany, Austria, Italy, Greece, Denmark, Latvia, Croatia, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Israel, Canada, The United States, Brazil, Bahrain, Nigeria, Nepal and India. This varied participation gave a multicultural flavour to the conference (character so identified with the topic of the conference itself). It was an important interlinguistic and intercultural encounter and a profitable experience for all the participants who could exchange ideas on the subject and learn from each other.

The Scientific Committee of the Conference revised the 90 summaries that were presented for the Seminar. Only 67 were accepted and delivered. After the event took place, every paper intended for publication was sent to two members of the Scientific Committee for evaluation. I considered it important both for the Publishing House's prestige and for the CVs of the contributors that the papers should be sent to two referees for evaluation, so that the papers included in the book would be of high quality, in accordance with the high standing of the referees who evaluated them.

As a result of this long process, thirty varied and enlightening articles were selected to be included in the book. I am sure every reader will find new and interesting things in this volume. New trends in translation and cultural identity can be found not only in the main focus of the essays published here but also in their connotations and implications.

The first part of the book, "**Cultural Identity, Ideology and Translation,**" includes twelve essays. **Michaela Wolf** (University of Graz, Austria) opens this section with a discussion of the main categories of Bhabha's cultural theory in view of their applicability to translation, especially in the context of the formation of "cultural identity". She states that this concept has to be re-defined particularly in terms of Bhabha's notion of "negotiation", which is inherent in any identity formation process and which enhances a view of translation as the reciprocal interpretation of Self and Other. **Isabel Alonso-Breto** (University of Barcelona, Spain) presents the poetry collection of a black Canadian poet and cultural critic, Marlene Nourbese Philip, as an outstanding example of how language can be used as a weapon to question and redefine one's socio-political role, and to assert an identity which rejects versions of the self imposed from the outside. The collection translates *English* from an imposed father tongue to a sustaining and nurturing mother tongue, a process which illustrates the tight correlation between language, culture, and self. **Nancy L. Hagedorn** (SUNY Fredonia, United States) focuses on the nature and process of cross-cultural translation in formal diplomatic exchanges between the English and the Iroquois in colonial northeastern North America and

the roles played by the interpreters during these encounters. Although linguistic skills were essential, successful mediation between Indians and Europeans also required knowledge of the culture and customs of both groups. Interpreters performed a vital role as cultural brokers during all types of intercultural exchange and helped to mediate cultural differences during contact. **Beatriz Penas Ibáñez** (University of Zaragoza, Spain) proposes to dwell on the identitarian function of language, its status among the other functions of language, and the necessity for the translator of fiction to acknowledge the identity of both ST and TT as well as the identity of the voices that are heard within the S- and T-fictions if (s)he is to accomplish what is a highly complex hermeneutic task. The author places special emphasis on the implication of sociolinguistic notions like symbolic value, linguistic diversity, code-switching and identity-switching for translation theory and practice. **Elif Daldeniz** (Okan University, Turkey) compares some expectations from translators and translating in the European Union with insights gained by Translation Studies, using as an example the campaign “Fight the Fog” started by a group of European Commission translators. She discusses the postmodern impact on the notion of translation in and outside Translation Studies. **Assumpta Camps** (University of Barcelona, Spain) focuses both on the analysis of the effect of the cultural hybridization on the textual experience of borderland authors, and on what to live and translate from this liminal space means. Hybrid and multicultural textualities in a world of unstable cultures and identities lead to a new reformulation of the relationship between translation subject and object and to new approaches to translation and textual alterity. **Javier Franco Aixelá** (University of Alicante, Spain) describes the historical and literary background that seems to force the translator Casas Gancedo to carry out a systematic intensification of sexually-loaded passages and swearwords in the translation of *The Maltese Falcon* (Dashill Hammet, 1930). His study shows that the direction of ideological manipulation in translation need not always be conservative. **Elpida Loupaki** (University of Thessaloniki, Greece) explores the question of translation shifts in relation with linguistic choices that reflect involvement strategies in European Parliament Proceedings. The starting point for her research was the remark that Greek translations of EP proceedings give a generally fainter impression than speeches originally produced in the Greek language. She studies whether the shifts are imposed by the Target Language System or they result from parameters governing the translation activity. **Elena Bandín**'s (University of Leon, Spain) essay derives from a descriptive study on Shakespearian theatre translations between 1941-1952. The partisan selection of the plays, the style of production and the (almost) complete absence of any updating or revision are evidence that the translations were at the service of the Francoist ideology. She studies paratextual information such as the censorship files produced in this period and the reviews in the press. **Cristina**

**Gómez Castro** (University of Cantabria, Spain), taking a close look at the translation and censorship policies that operated in the years of Franco's dictatorship and in the first years of the so-called transition to democracy, outlines various preliminary norms that will show how the regime reacted to the high number of translations published in Spain during that period, in particular translations from English, and at a time when any foreign influence was considered to be "contaminating". **Marta Rioja Barrocal** (University of Leon, Spain) explores the most relevant conclusions obtained after a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the corpus O TRACEni (1962-1969) (TRADucciones CEnsuradas narrativa inglés), which at present contains 9090 entries of English narrative texts published in Spain during those years. She tries to determine if there are specific ways of translating in the ideologically marked contexts and if the linguistic-textual procedures found have to do with the ideology imposed on the final product. She considers that, on this basis, it is possible to establish regularities in the translating behaviour under Franco's regime and to formulate valid norms within the translation field of study. **Ibon Uribarry Zenekorta** (University of the Basque Country, Spain), who is also a member of the research group working on the TRACE project, studies the translation of German philosophy in Spain under the censorship of Franco's regime. Immanuel Kant was his first object of study and he catalogued and studied every censorship file. He gives us insight into the reception and the context of Kant's reception in Spain.

The second part of this volume, "**Popular Culture, Literature and Translation**", consists of nine essays. **Karen Seago's** (London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom) study of nineteenth-century English translations of the German fairy tale "Sleeping Beauty" has established that these translations introduce historically specific, culturally specific and genre-specific ideas, changing the story's content and giving each translation localised meanings. She conducts a close textual analysis of the translations of "Sleeping Beauty" by Matilda Louisa Davis (1855) and Lucy Crane (1882) to identify translation strategies, procedures and choices. **Silvia Molina** (Polytechnic University of Madrid, Spain) explores the connection between "translation", "culture" and "identity" from a gender perspective in the translation into Spanish of *Feminisms, A Reader*, published by Routledge and edited by Sandra Kemp and Judith Squires in 1997. This case study examines how contemporary feminist translation and inclusive-language interpretations enhance our understanding of translation as a key interpretive move, also drawing attention to the conflictual implications of gendered language. **Ayşe Banu Karadağ** (Yildiz Technical University, Turkey) investigates under the aspect of "ideology" the role of both the translator and the act of translation in shaping a country's literary and cultural system. She questions the translations of classical works, in particular Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (for children) by Timaş

Publishing House, which openly admits that its publications pursue a certain ideology. She presents her bibliographical work on translations of *Robinson Crusoe* existing in the Turkish publishing system and she analyses the translation of Defoe's work by Ali Çankirili (2001) within the context of textual and paratextual elements with reference to concrete examples. **Isabel Herrando Rodrigo** (University of Zaragoza, Spain) explores the ways in which Jonathan Swift's novel *Gulliver's Travels* has been adapted to Spanish speaking children in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>. She complements the analysis with an ethnographic approach to calibrate the reception of the novel in different primary and secondary schools in Zaragoza, Spain. **Maurice Frank O'Connor** (University of Cadiz, Spain) studies Ben Okri's *Famished Road* trilogy and concludes that Okri, by weaving a West African epistemology into an English novel form, has produced texts that deconstruct the binary opposition of *self/other* by performing those cross-cultural links within apparently disparate discourses. Okri has created a discursive "newness" in the light of Homi Bhabha (1994); a literary discourse that has translated various cultural materials to produce a singular narrative that, while hybrid in nature, contains the incommensurable traces of cultural difference. **Javier Muñoz-Basols** (University of Oxford, United Kingdom) explores the difficulties involved in translating *With Love from Spain*, *Melanie Martin*'s humour in some of its different textual varieties: wordplay, jokes, puns, poems, nicknames—all of which could have restricted access to the full meaning of the source text. Muñoz-Basols demonstrates that translating sound-based humour, and humour in general, not only presupposes a thorough knowledge of both cultures and socio-cultural contexts; it relies greatly on the talent and resourcefulness of the translator to achieve a result that, despite cultural differences and idiosyncrasies, remains humorous, playful and spontaneous in the target language. **Carmen Valero Garcés** (University of Alcalá, Spain) explores the translation of four works written in English by two African writers, and translated by different translators. She studies the reality of translated African literature in Spain through the analysis of some external agents that influence translation and she focuses on the analysis of the translator's role and the strategies used to render cultural and identity elements in order to check the influence they may have in the vision that the Spanish readership has of the African continent and its people. **Juan Ráez Padilla** (University of Jaen, Spain) states that cultural identity is of utmost importance in the work of Irish authors writing in English and that for them national and linguistic identity are frequently at odds. He endeavours to illustrate the attempt of Seamus Heaney to relocate his Irishness at the centre of the literary canon by claiming the appropriation of the English language in a subversive way. Ráez Padilla concentrates on the Northern Irish poet's Irishized verse translation of *Beowulf*, the greatest epic poem in Old English. His main objective is to demonstrate Heaney's

patent concern with depriving his Irish psyche of all sense of marginality arising from language-loss, by showing to his audience that it is possible to be Irish and no longer be *at odds*, but *at ease*, with the English language. **Juan Miguel Zarandona** (University of Valladolid, Spain) compares both originals and its translations of Antonio Enrique's *Silver Shadow (2004): The Arthurian Poems*. Zarandona produces a general assessment of the author as a self-translator and analyses the different receptions enjoyed by the same departures from the canonical Arthurian motifs and plots applied by Enrique to his lines and stanzas. Zarandona states that what could be new for Spanish literature could be regarded as commonplace in English letters due to their much stronger modern tradition in the updating of the old matter of Britain.

The third section, “**Translating the Media: Translating the Culture**”, includes five essays. **Natàlia Izard** (University Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain) describes the complexity of the audiovisual text, as well as the (also complex/very complete) process of audiovisual translation, to better understand the translation of an audiovisual text. **Antonia Montes Fernández** (University of Alicante, Spain) applies the norms of translation developed by Gideon Toury (1980, 1995) to the comparative analysis of advertising texts. She reconstructs the translator's decisions at every stage of the translation process by comparing an original advertisement in English and the corresponding translations into Spanish and German. **Fernando Repullés Sánchez** (University of Zaragoza, Spain) considers audiovisual humour a language that is sometimes as international as a *lingua franca*—a metaphor that implies effective communication. He focuses on a cartoon like *Shrek* (2001) to state that multiculturalism is of a great help in the functional translation of humorous material and leads to the success of a movie. **María Rox Barasoain** (University of Leon, Spain) explores the difficulties involved in translating some of the cultural references that Almodóvar uses in his films. Most of them reflect the impossibility of preserving the humorous message encapsulated in the source culture, as translators have for the most part subscribed to the norms that originate in the target culture to which these films are addressed: a US audience that significantly differs from the source one in many aspects such as religion, way of life, cultural background, etc. **M<sup>a</sup> Milagros del Saz Rubio** (Polytechnic University of Valencia, Spain) and **Barry Pennock-Speck** (University of Valencia, Spain) look at a corpus of British, Spanish and American commercials in order to assess the use of male and female *stereotypes* in the advertising of a range of products. They pay attention to the *voices* that advertisers give the characters that participate in the TV commercial (voice-over, participants) to show how the careful handling of an image coupled with the right voice triggers in the audience certain associations between the product advertised and the characters involved that might help to sell or promote the product.

The fourth part, “**Scientific Discourse: Discourse as Cultural Translation**”, consists of four essays. **Elena González Pastor** (University of Zaragoza, Spain) analyses the conceptual metaphors around the phrase “stem cell” and its most successful Spanish translation, “célula madre”. She also describes the cultural and cognitive models leading to those metaphors. **Gloria Martínez Lanzán** (University of Zaragoza, Spain) explains the language of wine tasting as well as its phases. She shows examples of wine tasting notes, mainly in English and Spanish and analyses the process of translation of these notes. Martínez Lanzán also reflects on the role of the translator that works in this field and on his/her responsibility, if any, to respect the spirit of wine when translated. **Ian A. Williams** (University of Cantabria, Spain) examines aspects of medical discourse and style in English-Spanish translation through the analysis of an extensive corpus of research articles. He finds out that translators do not apply a single norm in the translation process, but use a range of strategies, with evidence of standardisation, positive and negative transfer, and what is termed “levelling out”. He concludes that the style of these translations reflects the discourse of the source-language users more closely than that of the corresponding target-language community. **Celia Florén Serrano and Rosa Lorés Sanz** (University of Zaragoza, Spain) close this section and this volume. They present the design and application of ENTRAD, a computerized parallel corpus of English-Spanish translation, designed to be used (i) by students as an online tool for untutored translations from English into Spanish, (ii) by researchers interested in the process of translation.

These thirty articles will stimulate deep reflection for those interested in Translation and Cultural Identity and will be an important and useful resource tool for scholars, teachers and students working in this field.



PART I

CULTURAL IDENTITY,  
IDEOLOGY AND TRANSLATION



CHAPTER ONE

INTERFERENCE FROM THE *THIRD SPACE*?  
THE CONSTRUCTION OF CULTURAL  
IDENTITY THROUGH TRANSLATION

MICHAELA WOLF, *UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ, AUSTRIA*

## **Introduction**

The drive toward global uniformity we are witnessing today in cultures, lifestyles and mentalities is overtly counteracted by phenomena like fragmentation, hybridity or pluralism and has radically changed the criteria and agencies responsible for the construction of cultures in their multifaceted aspects. “Identity” undoubtedly is one of the keywords in these developments. In recent years, the central role played by translation in this scenario has been dealt with repeatedly (by, among others, Bassnett and Lefevere 1998, Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002, Cronin 2003) and particularly emphasized questions discussing the contribution of translation to the enactment of “identity” processes (Sidiropoulou 2005, Courtivron 2003, etc.). This paper will take up the discussion of identity and especially focus on central notions of Homi Bhabha’s cultural theory and their applicability to Translation Studies. It will attempt to illustrate this in the light of the implications of Bhabha’s key concepts on the phenomenon of translation whereby the term “identity”, notably in the context of translation, has to be re-defined taking particularly into account the practice of “negotiation” conceived of as the continuous production of new meaning.<sup>1</sup>

## **The cultural encounter in Homi Bhabha’s terms**

Homi Bhabha, theorist of cultural and literary studies, regards the production of symbols and meaning as a basis for the constitution of cultures, therefore viewing cultures as “symbol-forming and subject-constituting, interpellative practices”

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1 Parts of this essay have been elaborated in Wolf (2007).

(Bhabha 1990, 210). These practices permanently produce new meaning with an enduring potential for change and are open to the creation and adoption of new symbols. Homi Bhabha does not see subjects as acting a-historically in roles ascribed to them within social conventions and traditions, but stresses the sphere where diverging ethnical, racial and gendering ascriptions are transcended, thus producing the subject as a result of these interactions. This subject is called to go beyond the claims of identity made by traditional concepts of culture. In such a view, culture can no longer be seen as an agency securing tradition and identity, but is characterized by the confluence of plural codes and different discourse practices, thus constituting a network of symbols and meaning.

In Homi Bhabha's culture concept, the moment of encounter through migration is a central theorem, which generates permanent discontinuities, fractures and differences and results in hybrid constellations. Hybridity may have become almost a trendy term today, but the concept bears a certain explosive force, as its adoption, in the words of Robert Young, results in "questions about the ways in which contemporary thinking has broken absolutely with the racialized formulations of the past" (Young 1995, 6). Hybridity is seen as the product of contact moments of cultural spaces, thus resulting in the transformation of all subjects involved. It is founded on the presumption that cultures cannot be seen as homogenous or closed entities. If hybridity is conceived of as the result of the encounter of various cultures, the concept of culture is experiencing an additional dynamization: this is shown by Edward Said when he states that the permanent creation and re-creation of images, which a culture makes of itself, testifies the manipulation and falsification every cultural process is constituted of (Said 1997, 44, my translation, M.W.). Thus, Said not only foregrounds the powerful relations, which are characteristic for any constitution of culture, but also the hybrid character inherent in any culture: "All cultures are hybrid, none is [...] [pure] [...], none is constituted by a homogeneous tissue" (ibid., my translation, M.W.).<sup>2</sup>

According to Bhabha, the phenomenon of hybridity is to be associated with moments of transition and inevitably runs along borderlines. Thus, hybridity is not necessarily the result of cultural merging in the traditional sense of the word, but rather of "contact zones" (Pratt 1992, 6) between cultures, of the encounter of spaces, which now, as the product of "translation between cultures" can generate

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2 The concept of "hybrid culture" seems to be misleading in the sense that it implies the existence of a concept of "pure culture", thus essentializing the notion in question. Terry Eagleton points to this problem when he maintains that "hybridisation presupposes purity of species. Strictly speaking, only a pure culture can be hybridised"; Eagleton concedes, however, quoting Said, that "all cultures are interwoven, no culture is isolated and pure, they are all hybrid, heterogeneous, highly differentiated and not monolithic" (Eagleton 2001, 26, my translation, M.W.).

“borderline affects and identifications” (Bhabha 1993, 167). By transferring the cultural between former fixed territories, a “Third Space” is opened up:

[W]e see that all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the “third space” which enables other positions to emerge (Bhabha 1990, 211).

This “Third Space”, a sort of “in-between-space”, is located between existing referential systems and antagonisms, and it is in this “Third Space” that the whole body of resistant hybridisation comes into being in the form of fragile syncretisms, contrapuntal re-combinations and acculturation.<sup>3</sup> The insights to be gained from this “Third Space” are manifold. First, it seems important to stress that it cannot be seen as another concept in the series of models of interculturality, as a space, where we can witness the harmonious encounter of cultures to be translated or the limitless productivity and abundance of inventive inspirations (Bachmann-Medick 1999, 525). It is rather to be seen as the contact zone of controversial potentials, presaging powerful cultural changes (Bhabha 1994, 38), which, however, do not strive for cultural hegemony. It is a space-in-between, a space of transition, which helps to make visible “the idea of something incompatible, concealed, unconscious” (Hárs 2002, my translation, M.W.).

Not surprisingly, Bhabha sees the Third Space as the potential location and starting-point for—not only post-colonial—translation strategies:

It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew (Bhabha 1994, 37).

When exploring the Third Space, polarity can be avoided and the Self can be experienced as the Other (Bhabha 1994, 39), thus foregrounding communication forms such as translation and stressing its pluricentric character. The concept makes it possible to view translational activity as an interactive process, a meeting place where conflicts are acted out and the margins of collaborations explored. As a consequence, *negotiation* is required to debate the differences in culture and identity. This negotiation in the Third Space has been interpreted as a precondition for translation<sup>4</sup>

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3 Bhabha’s “Third Space” of representation, in the post-colonial context has already been discussed and shaped in other discourses under different forms. See details in Wolf 2000, 135ff. and Wolf 2002, 186ff.

4 Heide Ziegler sees negotiation as the “only means for fostering the translatability of cultures” (Ziegler 1999, 18).

inasmuch as the effort to translate demands the negotiation of cultural contradictions and misapprehensions (see Bachmann-Medick 1997, 15). The contribution of the concept of negotiation to exploring the translation process and its impact is best explained by Bhabha when he states that “[w]hat is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These ‘in-between’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood [...] that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation [...]” (Bhabha 1994, 1f.). The Third Space can thus be interpreted as a common space of interaction of the agents involved in the translation process inasmuch as it serves as a transition zone where conflicts are—through negotiation—transposed into productive elements. These negotiations result in translation strategies, which attempt to take into account the controversial features and disrupting moments which characterize any “translation between cultures”, without, however, rushing to produce a unity of the social and cultural antagonism or contradiction. In such a context, cultural difference, inherent in any translation process, is no longer seen as the *source* of conflict, but as the *effect* of discriminatory practices.<sup>5</sup>

## Negotiating borderlines with Homi Bhabha

The feasibility of applying the Bhabhian notions of hybridity, Third Space and negotiation to the practice and theory of translation seems obvious. In the wake of what has often been labelled the “cultural turn”, it has been revealed that also in the context of translation, stable boundaries between the Self and the Other imply the essentialization of cultural difference, thus giving space to a view of translation between cultures which are already marked by pluralism. Yet, hybridity is a very controversial term, as it implies cultural pluralism, whose logic does not transcend the dialectics of inclusion and exclusion. The translator as one of the major agents in the translation field must be aware of this ambiguous situation and try to act accordingly. Similarly, she/he must be aware of the ambiguity of the term globalization as it is used today. Politically, Western societies are drawing their curtains and getting ready to build fortresses; culturally, these societies are pleading for transcultural flexibility. Difference and alterity may have become legitimate, but they do not necessarily imply the basic right of equality. The translator—and of course, correspondingly, all other agents involved in translation—as a supposed

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<sup>5</sup> See Wolf 2004 for more details of Bhabha’s cultural concept and its implications for translation.

“mediator between cultures” has a paramount role in this “global play” and is necessarily caught within the web of the implications of the power relations inherent in these cultural and political formations.<sup>6</sup> In a situation of hybridity, the translator operates in an environment characterized by the hybridisation of language, culture, behaviour, institution and communication. She/he becomes shaped by a sort of exile, involved in, yet still on the borderline of, culture and is no longer a mediator between two different poles, but her and his activities are inscribed in cultural overlappings which imply interactive and refractive difference.

The Third Space, as we have seen, is a space of interactive encounter which involves re-contextualization and the production of meaning. In this space the translation activity thus cannot be reduced to the “original” or to the “target text”. It rather implies that any hierarchical view of transmission is transcended by the futility of claims concerning “purity” or “transparency”—in the Third Space enunciations inevitably lose their univocality and are always contaminated by the Other. As a consequence, the borderlines between—already hybrid—cultures become the potential location for new cultural production, and the theorem of the Third Space is associated with a concept of translation seen both as *location* and as *production*.<sup>7</sup> In more concrete terms, the Third Space can be seen as the place where translators and other agents of the translation field discuss and arrange a translation for its reception. It is a place where different cultural constellations cross each other in a continuous movement, provoking diverging moments and contradiction. Bhabha reminds us that it is the “inter—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space—that carries the burden of the meaning of culture” (Bhabha 1994: 38, emphasis in the original), which ultimately means that culture mediators are operating at the fracture points of cultural encounter from where they continuously occupy new positions, thus contributing as “contaminated yet connective tissue” to “the impossibility of culture’s containedness” (Bhabha 1993, 167).

The social interactions which take place in the Third Space open the door for negotiation—another key Bhabhan key concept, as has been shown—and make this negotiation essential for the existence of the Third Space. Negotiation is performed against the various experience backgrounds of the agents involved in the production and reception processes of translation who virtually meet here in order to “translate each other”. For them—this means, for the agents particularly involved in transfer mechanisms—the same feature is valid as for the culture(s) from which they

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6 See Wolf 2000 for the discussion of the translator’s role in the context of hybrid postcolonial cultures.

7 The contact zone, where cultures meet, can also be seen as the location of translation of cultures, thus leading to a view of culture *as* translation (see Bachmann-Medick 1997, 13).

originate: they are hybrid subjects which are the (preliminary) result of cultural overlappings in the in-between space, the (preliminary) product of intersection of permanent transfer processes. The position of these mediation agents operating in the midst of complex cultural networks can be seen, for example, in the Habsburg Monarchy, where translations between the Monarchy's languages and the languages spoken outside the Monarchy were not performed in a sort of monolingual transfer, but between already hybrid communities: see the century-long presence of Italian culture, especially in urban centres, in all social groups, or the existence of intellectual networks between Vienna and other centres of Central Europe or between Vienna and the Habsburg periphery. All these encounters have a significant discursive impact on the creation of the products "negotiated" in the Third Space. And it must not be forgotten that through the process of mediation and the act of negotiation the cultural products to be negotiated—texts, signs, and others—become intricate and ambiguous; they are "thickened" through the multiple voices of all the agents involved (Scherpe 2001).

The contribution of Bhabha's central concepts to translation theory is equally significant (see, for example, Simon 1997, Wolf 2000, *Across Languages and Cultures* 2001, among others). By way of illustration, two points will be discussed here briefly: one is the potential of Bhabha's theoretical concepts in the contribution to further developing Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic forms as being adopted in the analysis of the phenomenon of translation; another is its potential in "dynamizing" or extending the polysystemic approach.

Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of culture draws on various key concepts, including among others field, capital and habitus. The notion of field refers to a social arena within which struggles and manoeuvres take place over specific resources and access to such resources. A field is a structured system of social positions occupied by individuals and institutions and is therefore heavily marked by power relations. The main functioning mechanisms of this field, however,—which can be reconstructed as a political, economic, religious or literary field—are not sufficient for the reconstruction of a translation or mediation field, mainly because of the translation field's temporary character, which undermines the establishment of the features responsible for its autonomous status and for the dynamics of a more or less durable struggle of the agents involved in the translation process. Thus, a translation field is characterized rather by weak structures, which, as long as they continue existing, have to be permanently re-negotiated and re-defined. In contrast, as already mentioned above, the Third Space as a space of mediation disposes of the core features which meet the requirements of a transition field: temporary character, changing agents, thinking in continuous processes (the last point is of course also true for any Bourdieusian field). The continuum of the moment of movement inscribed in the Third Space evokes the re-contextualization of signs, without,

however, ascribing this space an inexhaustible productivity or abundance of creative incentives.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, the polysystemic approach in Translation Studies can be dynamized through some of Bhabha's theorems. Although the conceptualisation of polysystem theory has brought about fruitful insights into the functioning of translated literature within broader literary and historical systems of the target culture, some of its components have been critically questioned over the years. Some of them focus on the dichotomic view inherent in its "toolbox" of binary oppositions, others on the highly abstract level of this theory, which, according to Edwin Gentzler, "seldom relates texts to the 'real conditions' of their production" (Gentzler 1993, 123). Now, the relevance of a postcolonial view of culture like Bhabha's, which points both to the relational and procedural character of culture and questions stable units created through the quest for authenticity, seems obvious for the discussion of the polysystem's functioning mechanisms. In a first step it could be linked up with the heuristic construct of the Third Space in order to transcend the dichotomies inherent in the polysystem, thus enabling the productive dismantling of structuralist visions and opening up the potential for visualizing the inherent changes of context. In a second step, this theoretical framework could take account of the symbolical acting of the various agents emerging from pluricentric societies and hybrid identities, a condition which applies both to contemporary and historical social orders.

## **Bhabha and the construction of identity through translation**

The illustration of the potential contributions of Homi Bhabha's key concepts to translation practice and theory might be deepened by asking how these notions can be linked up with or made responsible for the formation of identity in the particular context of translation. The question of identity is always under debate, when the Self and the Other seek representation. Especially in Western societies, the "acceptance of difference has become a foremost ethical claim", and the Other has become the central value of postmodern culture (Assmann 1996, 99). In the wake of the 1989 revolutions and of globalization in general, clear-cut identities—if they ever had existed as such—are dismantled and new in-between spaces characterized by cultural dislocation and social discrimination open up. As a consequence, the search for identity has been relocated to new contexts which are heavily marked by asymmetric relations of exchange and which have given space to various forms of

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8 See Wolf 2005 for details concerning the question of dynamizing Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of culture by means of some of Homi Bhabha's concepts.

acculturation, syncretism and hybridisation. In such a view, the production of social identities is the result, in the contemporary world, of the crossing of contradictory logics of contextualisation and decontextualisation. Edward Said in his *Orientalism* (1978) has shown us the manipulative potential of identity, and Frantz Fanon has emphasized its character as a construct with famous quotations such as “[w]hat is often called the black soul is a white man’s artefact” (Fanon 1986, 16).<sup>9</sup> Such complex identity concepts go far beyond essentialist concepts of authenticity and beyond the attempt to see identity absorbed in frames of universalism. The discursive construction of cultural identity should rather be conceived of as a never-ending practice, where the Self and the Other are determining each other in a variable, dynamic process of differentiated opposition.

As translation, seen as cultural representation, constantly challenges the Other, identity has always been a key notion in translation studies. After the “cultural turn”, translation no longer confirms borders or inscribes the dichotomy of centre versus periphery; it moreover identifies “pluricentres”, where cultural differences are constantly being negotiated. Questions concerning identity are reflected in discussions like these, which concern the fragmentation of cultural representation. The subjects involved in these representation processes cannot be pinned down to ethnical or other positions, but are rather circumscribed by the transgression of diverging ethnical, class specific and gender specific ascriptions, which in their convergence make up for the (hybrid) individual subject in the translation field. Thus translation takes place in a context where tradition and identity are no longer homogenizing, unifying forces and where the subjects operate in complex networks of symbols and meaning which call for permanent interaction. In such a context, translation is conceived as the reciprocal interpenetration of Self and Other where negotiation becomes a necessity. Once identity is understood as described above, identity construction is performed through the negotiation of the conflicts arising from cultural difference and the different social discourses involved in these conflicts. The permanent creation of identity in the Third Space implies therefore a fluid concept, which is always renewed through negotiation. Salman Rushdie’s words “I, too, am a translated man. I have been borne across” are perhaps the most obvious evidence for the need of re-formulating the concept of identity in the context outlined in this paper.

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9 For Bhabha, the colonizer and the colonial subject both undergo a splitting of their identity positions, “a splitting that occurs through their mutual imaginary identification (pictured in terms of mimicry)” (Fludernik 1998, 14). This view of identity as a construct of course cannot only be attributed to postcolonial societies, but equally applies to historical contexts such as the Habsburg Monarchy, which has come to be labelled as a “testing laboratory of identity constructions” (Pfeuffer 1997, 12).

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