

TRANSLATION

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Translating means always questioning—what does this mean, what does that mean? It is an incessant pursuit after the sense of things, which proliferates further and further as we try to explain it. Just like the “large bright thing” Alice is chasing with her eyes in the Sheep’s shop: whenever she looks hard at any shelf to make out exactly what that thing is, that particular shelf suddenly appears empty, and the “large bright thing” is always to be found in the next shelf above. “Things flow about so here!” she cries.¹ Translation is always a question, or rather—questions. Questions are a valuable instrument in the service of thought: they are like dice whose throw, an “aleatory point,” has what Gilles Deleuze calls a “redistributive function,” as the “paradoxical element which runs through the series, makes them resonate, communicate and branch out, and which exercises command over all the repetitions, transformations and redistributions.”² Questions then.

However, continuing with Deleuze’s claim presented above, we are not dealing here with just any sort of questions, but rather with a very specific kind. The interviewing kind of questions, the question-answer kind, namely questions that demand a simple answer, would be of no use. It is better to engage with problems, thought-provoking questions, which do not incite just one, simple answer; questions such as the ones that arise in the work of translation (what does this mean, and what does that mean, and how? What is the best way to say it anew?); questions of the kind that, when we stumble in circles around them, produce becomings that work in silence. Becoming does not mean representing, imitating, or “doing like,” nor does it mean conforming to a model (either of justice or of truth). Rather, becomings are phenomena of double-capture, for “as someone becomes, what he is becoming changes as much as he does himself” (e.g. when a man becomes-dog, the dog changes as much as the man does).³ When we work, Deleuze maintains, we are necessarily in absolute solitude; but this is an extremely populous solitude, filled with encounters which are very much the same as becomings. We encounter people (sometimes people we have never met or known), but also movements, ideas, events, entities. All these encounters are a sort of becoming, a mutual double-capture: every term meets the other in a single block of becoming, which is something that happens between the two and yet is external to them: “To encounter is to find, to capture, to steal,” but “stealing is the opposite of plagiarizing, copying, imitating or ‘doing alike.’ Capture is always a double-capture, the theft, a double-theft, and it is that which creates not something mutual, but an asymmetrical block, [...] always ‘outside’ and ‘between.’”⁴

But the translator must put an end to these questions, to all these encounters and becomings. The task of the translator is thus to choose, to fixate. The product, the translated text, can be compared to a snapshot, a photograph that fixates, in a manner which seems almost haphazard, some of the myriad possibilities reality sets before it. Taking a photograph,

one has no choice but to decide, to choose a moment and a frame, and press the button. Yet photographs usually announce a reverberation between the decision, the fixation—that which was captured in the camera lens and fixed by light and chemicals onto the paper—and that which was or was not there—everything that could have been captured in the lens, a bit to the right, a bit later. There are many photos that invoke memories in the viewer, memories that are not really her own. Many photos make her see that which could have come shortly after or that which is outside the frame; they make her reflect upon all those other possibilities the photographer had at hand. I believe this is true for translations as well: when translating one must also eventually choose, press the button and fixate the endless questions, the innumerable possibilities and encounters, into one framed photo. And just as in photographs, so in translations there remains a kind of reverberation; they too hint at the questions that were raised; they too allow the reader to reminisce in memories which are not really her own, to see that which is a bit to the right, that which could have come shortly after, to wander in the many paths not taken.

Therefore, a translation is a special kind of document: one that serves as a record, a frozen moment in time or a snapshot of the questions, the becomings and the encounters that came to pass during the act of translation. Borrowing Michel de Certeau's vocabulary, I believe translation to be a unique case of writing-reading or productive-consumption: a reading which, at the same time, also writes, a form of consumption which, at the same time, produces.⁵ While it may be said that every act of reading is a productive and creative act of re-writing, translation can be perceived as belonging to a subset of unique mechanisms (like citation and photography, for example) which serve as a testimony, snapshot, or trace of such processes of productive-consumption. Indeed, the product of translation, much like the photograph, freezes the process, denotes just one possible moment, one possible ordering, one possible solution among the many that existed while translating. However, just like a photograph, a translation too preserves many traces that hint at those questions and becomings; it too can be opened up so that it will reverberate.

The question 'what is translation' is inextricably bound together with the question 'what is a good translation.' In a sort of 'translation' of Derrida's discussion in "Relevant Translation," we can say that the question 'what is translation' returns to the question 'what should a translation be,' and that question, according to Derrida, "implies, as if synonymously, 'what should the best possible translation be.'"⁶ Since translation is simultaneously a theory and a practice, the question 'what is translation' always involves the question 'how to translate,' or rather 'how to translate well,' as well as possible. And the category of the 'well,' namely the category of the good, is always historical.

In this paper I wish to offer a definition of translation while re-examining its history and political implications. By disarticulating the concept of translation held by the narrator of Dezső Kosztolányi's "The Kleptomaniac Translator," I seek to detect a few customary definitions of translation. These definitions will also be drawn from various historical

figures, moments and places, which seem to indicate a change, a difference in relation to the previous approaches towards translation. My aim is not to delineate a comprehensive history of translation, but rather to identify a few models at those moments of change, in order to expand the repertoire of translation strategies at the disposal of translators, as well as to depict these strategies as historically constructed and contingent. The various models will not be presented as consecutive and as replacing one another. Rather, they will be viewed as piling up on top of one another, in an ever-shifting relationship: at any given moment some slip down to the bottom of the pile, while others mount to its top, yet all are still present today.

In order to examine the political significance of translation, I will compare the manner in which translation works with the way ideology works (especially according to Althusser), and then present the solutions Venuti and Spivak suggest for the problems raised by this comparison. Finally, I will suggest the possibility of thinking about translation as a political writing modus, a modus of a re-productive “imitation,” of “stealing” or “lifting,”⁷ a sort of “concealment” of the “original” or “canonical” text, in order to re-produce something minor out of it, in a manner which opens and spaces it out; a modus which gives way to the “original,” which makes the translator’s work visible and present, as an alternative to translation (and writing) strategies that tend to naturalize the many conditions under which they took place.

In a short story titled “The Kleptomaniac Translator,” by the Hungarian author Dezső Kosztolányi, the narrator, an esteemed author, reminisces over his old friend Gallus. Said Gallus is portrayed as a highly talented young man with spectacular language skills, who is, nonetheless, afflicted with a “fatal flaw,” an untamable impulse to steal, which perseveres in the face of his many attempts at rehabilitation. The unemployed Gallus has nothing to offer but his writing prowess. However, after being charged with theft, he is unable to write under his own name. Hence, the narrator introduces him to an editor, who is looking for a translator to work on an English detective novel. The young man takes on the task of translation and is so engrossed with it that he manages to submit the translation long before the deadline. Yet all his arduous work seems to be in vain when the editor rejects his translation. The surprised narrator decides to get to the bottom of this case and reads Gallus’ translation. As he reads he is filled with appreciation for Gallus’ meticulous work, which he glorifies as much better than the original. But when, upon the editor’s advice, he compares the translation with the original, he realizes the reason for the rejection: while the translation is indeed “fluent,” “artful” and “poetic at times,” it is afflicted with Gallus’ ‘disease’: the translator could not restrain himself from stealing. For example, while in the original English the main female character wears expensive jewelry, in the Hungarian translation there is no trace of it. The same goes for watches, chandeliers, rooms, rags, suitcases, silverware and even knickknacks such as toothpicks and handkerchiefs.⁸

In his reaction to Gallus’ disease, the narrator seems to manifest some of the more common notions regarding translation, which are founded on his essentialist conceptions of

language and the subject. The narrator's belief in the ability of written texts to safely store stable meanings—which should then be properly attributed to their authors' conscious intentions—gives rise to a radical differentiation between originals and translations, between authors and translators. From this perspective, translators like Gallus are viewed as mere copyists.⁹

Translation is the work of copying from one language to another

The Hebrew *Even Shoshan Dictionary* defines translation as nothing more than “the work of copying from one language to another.” The first Hebrew definitions for translation in the Babylon online dictionary—apart from the definition of translation as “the work of the translator”—are “to transfer from one language to another” and “to create a copy.” In other words, to translate is to copy texts from one language to the other, to pour meaning from one vessel to another one that is equivalent to the first. This concept of equivalence also lies at the heart of the Jerome model of translation.

Saint Jerome's Vulgate set the standard for translation in the West up until about two hundred years ago and is perhaps still dominant today. In a simplified manner, it might be described as follows: there is a text, and the task of the translator amounts to nothing more than transposing it into another language by identifying equivalents, and to do so as faithfully as possible due to the sacred nature of the single central text, the Bible. The early ideal of this fidelity found its ultimate expression in the interlinear translation, in which each word in the translation is supposed to match a word in the original and is written just below it. Despite the fact that this interlinear ideal could never be met—and maybe precisely because of that—it remained the ideal that haunted translations for centuries. Since the ideal could not be realized, there arose a practical necessity for compromises, which paved the way to countless debates over exactly how ‘faithful’ faithfulness should be and just how ‘equivalent’ is the equivalent. As the Jerome model elevated faithfulness to a central position, it necessarily reduced thinking about translation solely to the linguistic level. This reduction was achieved all the more easily since the central text for translation was seen as timeless and unchangeable due to its sacred nature.¹⁰

Copying, imitation, duplication—what of it? Why do I insist on calling it political? Already in Jerome's ‘copying mistakes’ we may glimpse a preface to the political aspects of translation. One of the most famous translation ‘blunders’ in history is Jerome's inaccurate translation of the second verse of the Song of Solomon: the verse “כִּי טוֹבִים דְּדֹיךְ מִיַּיִן” (“*ki tovim dodeicha miyain*,” literally: “for thy uncles/lovers/lovings are better than wine”) was translated into Latin in a manner similar to “for thy breasts are better than wine.” The Hebrew word דוד (*dod*), meaning both uncle-lover and the act of loving, was mistaken for the Hebrew word דד (*dad*), meaning breast. Thus, over the years and out of the Holy Scriptures, Jesus grew a pair of breasts, which decorated a few paintings in the late Middle Ages, as well as the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux, who imagined himself to be lying in the (feminine) bosom of Christ.¹¹ Over time, these breasts, which are not in the ‘original,’ served to shape Jesus' figure as a mother, a construction that had far-reaching political

and social repercussions, as the historian Caroline Walker Bynum comprehensively demonstrates.¹²

Even when translation is indeed an 'absolute copy,' a mere importation of the exact text from one place to another, a quotation, it already, in Walter Benjamin's words, "summons the word by its name, wrenches it destructively from its context, but precisely thereby calls it back to its origin."¹³ But Jerome's translation 'error' illustrates the fact that while this 'copying' in translation is indeed a repetition, it is forever a repetition with a difference. It is never a duplication, a mere copying of the same thing, but rather a *re-production*,¹⁴ a production starting anew, producing again. Jerome's reproduction is still centuries and worlds apart from Benjamin's concept of mechanical reproduction, and yet already this early version of reproduction reveals how this repetition with a difference "detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition" and "in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced," thus leading "to a tremendous shattering of tradition, which is the obverse of the contemporary crisis and renewal of mankind."¹⁵ Crisis and ruin—which are the task of translation, its condition and its destiny¹⁶—open the way to renewal. No longer a *dod*—meaning a lover or an act of love—that is better than wine, but a *dad*, a breast, a breastfeeding man. Even the most sacred and timeless original of them all "can undergo a maturing process" in translation,¹⁷ may unravel, open up and change, and it is precisely due to this change in the 'original,' that translation will never be a mere copy.¹⁸

Translation is interpretation

Another widespread notion the narrator in Kosztolányi's story manifests with regards to translation is that honorable writers will only translate "with their gloves on," without actually touching the text. Thus, the narrator's translation ethics replicates Jerome's translation ethics, as it accepts and promotes the possibility of translating without interpreting or re-writing the 'original,' and condemns the 'disease' of the translator, who interferes with the text and leaves traces behind, even if he does so stealthily.

However, Jerome's Vulgate signifies a conceptual break in relation to the Roman translation approach which preceded it. The significance of translation in Roman literary culture has often been used to accuse the Romans of lacking originality, creativity and imagination. In fact, the Romans perceived their culture as continuous with that of the Greeks, and this sense of continuity seems to have shaped their approach towards translation: instead of a rigid notion of 'fidelity,' they followed the principle of "not word for word, but sense for sense" (*non verbum de verbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu*), while stressing the aesthetic criteria of the translated product in their native tongue, which they endeavored to enrich.¹⁹

The Roman literary system was characterized by a strict hierarchy between texts and authors, a hierarchy that subverted linguistic borders. This system conformed with the Roman ideal of a centralized, hierarchical state, founded on the law of reason. This ideal

is echoed in the Roman approach to translation: Cicero draws an analogy between the way the mind dominates the body and the way the king rules his subjects, or the father his children, and claims that when reason deviates from this model and rules as a master rules over his servants, it oppresses and crushes its subjects. Therefore, in translation, one should imitate the source yet without crushing it under the weight of a too-strict reason.²⁰ In the Roman culture, fidelity was imbued with a new meaning: no longer equivalence or blind faithfulness—the rule of too-strict a reason that overpowers its subjects and crushes them—but rather a locus for negotiation and interaction between languages, cultures and their values. Horace’s “*fidus interpres*” did not signify fidelity to the text but rather to his clients, his contemporaries. A ‘*fidus*’ translator/interpreter²¹ was one who could be trusted to get the job done to the satisfaction of both parties, between which he had to negotiate.²² The task of the translator for Horace and Cicero consists, therefore, in the cautious interpretation of the ‘original’ so as to produce a text in their own language, which continues and develops the former text in innovative ways and through negotiations. These are indeed the next three definitions of translation in the (Hebrew) Babylon dictionary: “interpretation, explanation, glossing.” Translation is thus first and foremost a reading, a re-reading, an interpretation, all in order to re-produce the text in the target language, while negotiating with the other language and the other text, while continuing the text and drawing it out.

What makes Roman translation so different from translation nowadays is the preeminence of Greek as the language of culture, and the ability of educated Romans to read texts in the source language. In that context, the positions of the translator and the reader were interchangeable. The Roman reader, like the narrator in Kosztolányi’s story, was able to consider the translation in relation to the ‘original’: the translated text was read through the source text. Hence, the task of Roman translators could be perceived as an exercise in stylistics or interpretation, for they were relatively free from the exigencies of having to ‘report’ either form or content.²³ It was precisely in this culture, accused of being unimaginative, that translators were not obliged to subordinate themselves to the frame of the original.

Translation is a political act

‘When I use a word,’ Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, ‘it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less.’

‘The question is,’ said Alice, ‘whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.’

‘The question is,’ said Humpty Dumpty, ‘which is to be master—that’s all.’²⁴

A consciously political use of translation took place as early as the ninth century, when the English King Alfred (871-899) declared the purpose of translation to be to assist the English people in recuperating from the Danish invasions, which destroyed monastic learning centers and tore the country asunder. In order to revive education and learning,

Alfred strived to enhance the accessibility of texts by translating them into the vernacular, and thus to simultaneously raise the status of the English language.²⁵ The political use of translation became further apparent when the winds of the Reformation and seminal 'nationalistic' ideas began to blow in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The translation of the Bible became an urgent political issue, and the reformation translators emphasized notions of legibility and accessibility, guided by the idea that each man should be able to read the Bible in his own language and on his own terms.²⁶

But the politics of translation is far more mundane, widespread and covert than that. The oblivion to which Gallus' translation is condemned and the rejection of Gallus himself as "sick" and as "not worthy of the support of honorable people," for he has committed an "unforgivable" crime, demonstrate the exemplary punishment inflicted upon the translator who dared to compete with the 'original' author and threaten "the almost unquestionable sacredness of private property"²⁷ by leaving traces in the translated text, which is meant to be 'transparent,' i.e. to be read as if it were the original. Today we realize, of course, that any translator leaves his fingerprints in the text and that no text—translation or original—is an isolated monad of creation that can be attributed to a single author and to him alone. Moreover, we know that these 'illusions'—such as the consideration of the source text as the property of the author, a property no one should ever touch—are shaped by the ideological conceptions prevalent in a specific culture. I would like, however, to take this notion further and argue that translation in its customary definition, as it is portrayed by Kosztolányi's narrator—a fluent translation, which takes caution to conceal itself, to render its work invisible, a translation which gives the author full credit as the sole producer of the text—is not only influenced by ideology, but furthermore, *this translation's modus operandi corresponds with the way ideology works.*

In his essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Louis Althusser extracts from Marx's "German Ideology" a perception of ideology as "pure illusion," a "dream" that "all its reality is external to it." For Marx, Althusser contends, Ideology is "an imaginary construction whose status is exactly like the theoretical status of the dream among writers before Freud." Like the dream, "ideology, then, is for Marx an imaginary assemblage (*bricolage*), a pure dream, empty and vain, constituted by the "day's residues" from the only full and positive reality, that of the concrete history of concrete material individuals materially producing their existence."²⁸

This description of ideology as a dream or an illusion might be applicable to translation as well,²⁹ for its reality too is external to it (does it lie in the source? in the meaning? perhaps in the "pure language"?): it too might be thought of as a purely "imaginary construction," the result of dreaming 'reality,' a *bricolage* "'stuck together,' once the eyes had closed, from the residues of the only full and positive reality, the reality of the day." Like every ideology, translations too are never 'natural' or 'necessary,' rather they are provisional, contingent formations, ever-changing in accordance with their historical and material conditions. And just like ideology according to Marx, a translation too camouflages the fact that it is

an interested representation, and conceals the very struggle behind this representation.

However, whereas Marx's conception of ideology as a kind of *camera obscura*—a distorted, 'illusionary' representation of reality—is one that can be deciphered with the help of a little suspicion and some 'good intentions,' Althusser's conception of ideology is no longer a distorted representation of reality; in fact, it is no longer a representation of reality at all. Althusser defines ideology as a "'representation' of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence."³⁰ Going back to translation, we might say that translation is not a distorted representation of the original, but rather 'represents' the imaginary relation of concrete individuals to it. By 'concrete individuals' I refer not only to the translator laboring over the task of translation, but to his or her entire community, for the translator is, in a way, a "collective assemblage of enunciation" (I shall return to this point shortly).³¹

Since ideology does not correspond to reality, the question of the cause of the imaginary distortion of the real relations in ideology disappears, and is replaced, according to Althusser, with the question why is representation necessarily an imaginary one, and what is the nature of this imaginarity.³² The beginning of an answer to these questions appears when we note that Althusser's concept of ideology is predicated upon the concept of the imaginary subject as the decisive, central term of ideology: "there is no ideology except by the subject and for the subject." That is to say, when trying to establish its status as natural and obvious, any ideology relies primarily on the category of the subject. However, while "the category of the subject is the constitutive category of all ideology, at the same time and immediately," Althusser adds, "the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects."³³ We are faced therefore with a double, reciprocal constitution—ideology-subject, subject-ideology—in which none of the terms is chronologically or ontologically prior to the other.

Taking the analogy between ideology and translation further, we might say that while the category of the subject is constitutive of translation—there is no translation without authorship, without the borders of subjectivity, which allow for inter-subjective relations and negotiations—translation, in turn, has a function of constituting concrete individuals as subjects, but this time as subjects of a community.

Why does Gallus, the kleptomaniac translator, submerge himself with such enthusiasm in the work of translation? We might consider one of the reasons to be that possibility offered by translation: reestablishing his subjectivity as a productive, well-respected member of his community. Furthermore, why is the narrator of the story so upset with Gallus' 'sin'? The exposition of the story might provide a clue. The story begins with the narrator's friends—"poets and writers"—reminiscing about old acquaintances, among them Gallus.³⁴ Gallus' translation is therefore an expression of his community, and hence his 'shameful' theft reflects on the narrator and his entire milieu.

The translator as an ambassador is never a free agent, an autonomous monad; he is rather a collective assemblage of enunciation. He translates for his readers, and has to take their worldviews, their values, into account, at least to some extent. The translator's translation is testimony to the prevailing ideologies of her time, and to the struggles among them, since she has no privileged position outside discourse or ideology. At the same time, the translator is part of the process of inculcating these worldviews and values into her community. This is why Gallus' 'sin' is so "unforgiveable."

Moreover, it is not only that the translator as a subject-in-community is a precondition for translation, while translation constitutes the translator as a subject-in-community. Translation also constitutes the borders of the community itself. While translation presents itself as a highway bridging over the gap between two languages or cultures, it is in fact, by its very definition, one of the mechanisms that constitute those languages/cultures as separate and estranged.³⁵

For example, when in the second decade of the twentieth century Ze'ev Vladimir Jabotinsky took upon himself the task of translating Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" and "Annabel Lee" into Hebrew, he consulted with Haim Nahman Bialik (the prominent Hebrew poet at the time), as he was uncertain about his proficiency in the language.³⁶ The correspondence between Jabotinsky and Bialik, which yielded one of the masterpieces of the Hebrew canon, is already, literally, an example of a collective work. Furthermore, in translating Poe into Hebrew, Jabotinsky, as a subject-in-community, is not only the precondition for this translation, he is also constituted as a Hebrew-speaking subject and contributes to the constitution of the still-forming Hebrew-speaking community and to its becoming a separate, distinct community.

The decisions made by Jabotinsky in his translation of "Annabel Lee" (see appendix) testify to the way he imagined this community while being himself a part of it. His decision to maintain Annabel Lee as the name of the heroine is revealing. The trend at the time was to translate foreign literary names into Hebrew: thus Snow White became *Shilgiya* (שניגיה, from the Hebrew word for snow, שניג [sheleg]), and Alice in Wonderland became *Aliza* (עליזה, meaning joyful, a common Hebrew name). As opposed to a much later translation of "Annabel Lee" by Eliyahu Ziffer, who replaced the heroine's name with a Hebrew name—*Lee-Tina'am* (לי-תנעם, meaning "shall be pleasant to me," and rhyming with the Hebrew word for sea—ים [Yam]), Jabotinsky chose to keep Annabel Lee's name, and added an adjective after the word "sea" in the poem, in order to preserve the rhyme. He described the sea as *arpali* (ארפלי, a non-existing adjective, which relies on the noun *arpal* (mist, fog)). In so doing, Jabotinsky kept the story in a different place, one endowed with foggy seashores, noblemen and kingdoms. The Hebrew-speaking community Jabotinsky imagined and was part of regarded itself as a universal, intellectual community, part of the family of nations. Not an enclosed community but one that maintains relations with foreign cultures and languages, and makes the effort to get to know them.

When Ziffer translated the same poem during the 1990's, the community he imagined

and was part of was a completely different one: it was a community already confined within geographical borders, a community which knew no foreign names nor misty seashores. Ziffer's translation draws much more on the Hebrew Bible as a source for poetic language (whereas in Jabotinsky there is only one such Biblical reference), and concludes by turning the sea wave into a memorial monument (גל-עד, which in Hebrew literally means a wave [גל], which both testifies and stands forever [עד]). Thus, the translator's choices might be perceived as expressing a nationalistic community that is obsessed with its past and its memory, and especially with memorial monuments and with the scriptures as justifications for its existence.

In translation, then, the subject is constitutive and constituted as part of his or her community. While this might also be true with regard to specific ideologies (does not ideology hold a similar function of inscribing the limits of its community, the borders within which its subjects are confined?), the subject in translation is viewed in yet another way, which cannot be applied to the subject of ideology. As an ambassador, the translator is not only part of her community of readers: she also comes into contact with another community, negotiating with it, taking part in it. This is precisely one of the seductions of translation, as Gayatri Spivak argues, seeing translation as one of the ways to resist capitalist multiculturalism's invitation to self-identity. If language is one of the elements that allow us to make sense of things and of ourselves—thus not only producing meaning but also self-meaning, identity—then “one of the ways to get around the confines of one's ‘identity’ as one produces expository prose is to work at someone else's title, as one works with a language that belongs to many others.”³⁷ When the translator overtly gives up any claim for sole authority, when she writes under the name of another and in the language of many others, she is relieved of the responsibility of speaking in her own name, of being pegged as a specific subject. She therefore answers to the fundamental conditions of discourse itself, to the impossibility of one's own place in it, for the writing subject is forever deprived of an unalterable and stable ontological ground.

Is translation then constitutive of and constituted by subjects, or does it blur the very notion of the subject? I will not attempt to answer this question here, but I will note that it is plausible to understand this seduction of translation as characterizing the process more than the products of translation, products that tend to draw clear lines between self and other, one language and another. While Jabotinsky could immerse himself in Poe and in English-speaking kingdoms during the process of translating, his poem draws clear lines between himself and the author, and between the English-speaking community and the nascent Hebrew-speaking one. And yet, traces of the process can be seen in the product as well.

As discussed above, Althusser's theory of ideology is predicated upon the category of the subject. What is pertinent to my discussion of translation is that at the heart of the mechanism that constructs the imaginary constitution of the subject—the interpellation

that causes subjects to recognize and identify themselves as such, and thus to gain an assurance that they are indeed concrete, individual, distinguishable and (naturally) irreplaceable subjects—lies the function of *ideological recognition*: that certainty that the hailing policeman is indeed hailing at me, that obviousness that you and I are subjects, as well as the “obviousnesses of the ‘transparency’ of language,” that make a word “name a thing” or “have a meaning.” Althusser claims that Ideology produces obviousnesses that are always primary, and that they are an ideological effect, “the elementary ideological effect”:

It is indeed a peculiarity of ideology that it imposes (without appearing to do so, since these are ‘obviousnesses’) obviousnesses as obviousnesses, which we cannot fail to recognize and before which we have the inevitable and natural reaction of crying out (aloud or in the ‘still, small voice of conscience’): ‘That’s obvious! That’s right! That’s true! [oui, c’est bien ainsi, c’est bien vrai...]’³⁸

Hence, the mechanism of ideology is based on ideological recognition, on the act of recognizing a thing as such, as *obviously* such, with certainty.

Much like ideology, the customary translation strives to cover up the traces of its work and to represent its product as ‘natural,’ as a ‘that’s it!’, a simple obvious mirroring of reality, i.e. as the original. In his book *The Translator’s Invisibility*, Lawrence Venuti cites the renowned translator Norman Shapiro, who proclaims:

I see translation as the attempt to produce a text so transparent that it does not seem to be translated. A good translation is like a pane of glass. You only notice that it’s there when there are little imperfections—scratches, bubbles. Ideally, there shouldn’t be any. It should never call attention to itself.³⁹

That is to say, a ‘good’ translation is a fluent one, which creates the impression that it reflects the ‘genuine intentions’ of the author or ‘naturally’ represents the primary meaning of the text—in other words, it creates the impression that it is not a translation but the ‘original.’⁴⁰ This kind of fluent translation aims for naturalization; it conceals the numerous conditions under which it was conceived—first and foremost, the work of translation itself.

This situation is problematic not so much for the ‘inferior’ status it assigns to the translator as for the fact that this translation strategy masks the violence inherent in translation. Since every meaning is an effect of relations and discrepancies between signifiers along an open-ended chain (polysemous, inter-textual, subject to innumerable connections), it is forever changing, different and deferred, never present as an original unity. As a result, the text to be translated is a site of many different semantic possibilities that are provisionally disarticulated and reconstituted in any translation, on the basis of varying cultural suppositions and interpretive choices that are historically and geographically determined. These dismantling and (selective) reconstitutions are inevitable and intrinsically bound with translation; they might be characterized as acts of violence in reading.⁴¹

However, the violence or power exercised in translation is pertinent here not only due to the violence exercised on words and meanings in and of themselves—despite the fact that words are not merely spiritual ideas, but have their own materiality, body, flesh (Deleuze maintains that we can eat words,⁴² and Derrida reminds us of the word's [pound of] flesh⁴³). It is also due to the fact that words, as we have learned from Foucault, regulate not only what we can say or read but also what we can see, touch or do.⁴⁴ Or in Althusser's terms, "ideology has a material existence": ideas are articulated in materiality, and subjects act upon them in the real, inscribing them into their practices.⁴⁵ Thus, translation, just like ideology, does not begin and end with the idea, with the spiritual word. The reconstruction of a text in translation reproduces forms of power and knowledge that correspond to values, beliefs and representations already existing in the translating language and its culture.

Since translation is a site of negotiation and interaction between cultures, a locus where they rub against each other and influence one another,⁴⁶ this fluent translation strategy is problematic in yet another respect. It 'flattens' all others into a single unified language, allowing us the narcissistic experience of identifying ourselves in the other and of further distancing him or her out of our reach. The most drastic example of this strategy can be seen in translations into English. Gayatri Spivak, for instance, contends that all Third World literatures are translated in the same manner, so that a work written by a woman from Palestine begins to resemble a work written by a man from Taiwan—a translation strategy which, according to Spivak, betrays the democratic ideal and gives in to the law of the strongest.⁴⁷ In a world where American and British publishers sell translation rights for numerous English-written books, while rarely purchasing the rights to publish translations of foreign books, thereby contributing to the imperialization of the English-language culture and even reaping financial benefits from it; in a world where these publishers produce within their own countries aggressively monolingual cultures, unreceptive to foreign literatures, and accustomed to fluent translations that invisibly inscribe foreign texts with British and American values; in a world where this domestication has economic value and is therefore supported and enforced, in an approach that might be described as "imperialistic abroad and xenophobic at home,"⁴⁸—in such a world there is no real motion towards the other, and translation is no longer a locus of interaction and negotiation.

Nous autres, victoriens

The solution that Venuti offers to this problem is largely in line with Friedrich Schleiermacher's model of translation.⁴⁹ Following the romantic movement and the initial institution of national borders, a change arose in the approach towards translation. Unlike the Bible translators of the Reformation era, translators no longer felt obligated to the target language, to the vocation of enriching their native tongue, or to the task of speaking to the readers in their own language. Schleiermacher identified two alternate routes the translator is faced with: either bringing the author to the reader, as his predecessors did, or bringing the reader to the author. Schleiermacher unequivocally favored the second option and took issue with the automatic standardization—bringing the author to the

reader—created by the first. In his lecture “On the Different Ways of Translation,” he demands that translations from different languages into German will read and sound differently: the reader should be able to guess the Spanish or Greek behind the translation. When all translations sound alike, he maintains, the individuality of the source text is lost and flattened in the target language. Therefore, Schleiermacher stresses the importance of ‘foreignizing’ translation.⁵⁰

The desire to convey the remoteness of the original in time and space was common among Victorian translators, which held a deep respect, verging on adulation, for the original. The Schleiermacherian translator invites the erudite reader to share what he deems to be an enriching experience, either morally or aesthetically. Furthermore, the ‘original’ text is perceived as property, as an item of beauty to be added to a collection. This fascination with the foreign produced an image of the translator as a skillful merchant presenting exotic treasures to the keen-eyed elite. In producing consciously archaic translations in order to convey the remoteness of the original, these translators created an elitist literature intended for the intellectual few.⁵¹

It seems that, like Schleiermacher, Venuti too believes there are only two options—domestication or foreignization—and just like Schleiermacher he overtly prefers the latter as an ethics of translation. However, Venuti qualifies this view, and maintains that the ‘foreignness’ in the foreignizing translation “is not a transparent representation of an essence that resides within the foreign text and is valuable in itself, but rather a strategic construction whose value is contingent on the current target-language situation.” Hence, “foreignizing translation signifies the differences of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the translating language.”⁵² In a culture where domestication is the dominant translation strategy, Venuti argues, foreignization may be a form of resistance to ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism.⁵³ And what is more pertinent here, foreignization offers a way of resisting the obviousness of translation and the invisibility of its process.

In the final chapter of his book, Venuti tries to relate his resistance strategy to the notion of minorization, as articulated in Deleuze and Guattari’s writings. Indeed, Venuti’s foreignization does call to mind their idea of minor literature, which produces a foreign dialect within its own language.⁵⁴ However, while this minor foreignization may serve as a mechanism for subversion and resistance when ‘translating’ a literary work from a major language, in the case of translating a work from a ‘minor’ culture this foreignization verges on blindness towards the other, as it is produced in terms of the target language alone and loses sight of the source language. Venuti’s hypothesis is somewhat analogous to Foucault’s “repressive hypothesis”: Venuti claims that we do not speak of the other—or rather, that we do not speak *the* other—and tries to incite us to such a discourse. However, not only do we incessantly speak of the other, but furthermore, Venuti’s attempt at inciting us to speak ‘Otherese,’ some kind of ‘minor’ version of our own language, does not solve the problem and does not speak the other. Venuti strives to relate his theory to the poststructuralist

discourse, but it seems as though it does not significantly exceed that of Schleiermacher. Just like the translation strategy Schleiermacher offers, Venuti's strategy also appeals to an elite of readers, who have the necessary time and leisure, who are familiar with archaic uses of their own language, and who are able to decipher a convoluted syntax due to their acquaintance with the source language. Moreover, this glorification of foreignness ambles dangerously close to the pitfall of exoticizing the other and the stranger—or to be more precise, otherness and strangeness in and of themselves—ending up in a kind of neo-orientalism.

For readers of translated works, Venuti recommends nothing other than a symptomatic reading—a term coined by Althusser, who is not mentioned in Venuti's book even once. Venuti understands symptomatic reading as a useful device in demystifying the illusion of transparency, which characterizes domesticating translations, since it “locates discontinuities at the level of diction, syntax, or discourse that reveal the translation to be a violent rewriting of the foreign text, a strategic intervention into the target-language culture, at once dependent on and abusive of domestic values.”⁵⁵ He understands symptomatic reading as a tool for both historicizing translations—through the uncovering of the canons of accuracy, according to which they are produced and judged, canons which are “culturally specific and historically variable”⁵⁶—and for foreignizing a domesticating translation—through highlighting its points of discontinuity, since the translation's dependence on the dominant values in the target-language and culture is most apparent at those places where it departs from them. At the same time, Venuti insists that “this reading also uncovers the domesticating movement involved in any foreignizing translation by showing where its construction of the foreign depends on domestic cultural materials.”⁵⁷

Translation is reading

If Venuti speaks in terms that might remind the reader of Deleuze and Guattari's minor literature, Gayatri Spivak's approach towards translation and the other calls to mind their concept of becoming. In her article “The Politics of Translation,” Spivak, who finds translation to be “the most intimate act of reading,” maintains that when she translates she surrenders to the text. However, “reading and surrendering take on a new meaning in such a case. The translator earns permission to transgress from the trace of the other.”⁵⁸ Spivak summarizes her own translation strategy as follows:

At first I translate at a speed. If I stop to think about what is happening to the English, if I assume an audience, if I take the intending subject as more than a springboard, I cannot jump in, I cannot surrender. My relationship with Devi [Mahasweta Devi, the translated poet in question] is easygoing. I am able to say to her: I surrender to you in your writing, not you as intending subject. There, in friendship, is another kind of surrender. Surrendering to the text in this way means, most of the time, being literal. When I have produced a version this way, I revise. I revise not in terms of a possible audience, but by the protocols of the thing in front of me, in a sort of English. And I keep hoping that the student in

the classroom will not be able to think that the text is just a purveyor of social realism if it is translated with an eye towards the dynamic staging of language mimed in the revision by the rules of the in-between discourse produced by literalist surrender.⁵⁹

The recurrent use of the word 'surrender' might lead to the belief that in the dilemma between the self and the other Spivak chooses the position of the Hegelian slave. However, this kind of surrender-in-friendship far more resembles a process of becoming, a sort of becoming-other: a constant movement towards the other, always in the middle. This is a process in which the 'translation' surrenders to the 'original' only insofar as the 'original' surrenders to the 'translation.' The Deleuze-Guattarian becoming is always reciprocal: the Wolf Man becomes a wolf as much as the wolf becomes a man; the minoritarian becoming affects the majority as well, for there is "an asymmetrical and indissociable block of becoming, a block of alliance: the two 'Mr. Kleins,' the Jew and the non-Jew, enter into a becoming."⁶⁰

Thus, in the process of translation, not only the translating language undergoes changes in the encounter with the other culture; in this alliance of becoming, the translated language and culture too change, open up and are revived by the mere fact of re-reading. Translation is again transparent, but not in the sense Venuti speaks of—the invisibility of the translator and of his or her work—but rather in the sense invoked by Benjamin: it is a translation that does not cover over its 'original,' but echoes it in accord, complements it, expands and spaces it up, and also works back on it.⁶¹ It is the transparency of the becoming-imperceptible, the becoming everybody/everything (*tout le monde*), a worlding (*faire monde*) achieved by conjugating, by producing a world that can overlay the first one, the original, with the transparency of animal elegance; by producing a world in which it is *the* world which becomes,⁶² by continuing the lines of the real world, of the 'original,' towards a new course: just as the tangent touches a circle, so "a translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux."⁶³

Drawing on post-structuralism, Spivak sketches the staging of the agent within a tripartite notion of language as rhetoric, logic, and silence. Like Benjamin and others before him, Spivak emphasizes the form, the rhetoric, over the content, the logic. If logic is the element which enables us to skip from one word to the other by means of clearly indicated connections, then rhetoric is the element that works in silence between and around words, and allows us to discern what works and to what extent. "If we emphasize the logical at the expense of these rhetorical interferences," writes Spivak, "we remain safe." But this is a risky game: the very manner in which rhetoric or figuration interrupt and disturb logic already points to the possibility of random contingency, to a dissemination and fraying of language, to the possibility that things will not always be semantically organized. "Such a dissemination cannot be under our control. Yet in translation, where meaning hops into the spacey emptiness between two named historical languages, we get perilously close to

it.” By juggling the disruptive rhetoricity that breaks the surface, we feel the remains of the fabric of language giving way.⁶⁴

The translator, claims Spivak, “must solicit the text to show the limits of its language, because that rhetorical aspect will point at the silence of the absolute frying of language that the text wards off, in its special manner.”⁶⁵ Spivak emphasizes the importance of silences and rhetoric, and the importance of reading and being attentive to them. The reason for this might be that “the relationship between logic and rhetoric, between grammar and rhetoric, is also a relationship between social logic, social reasonableness, and the disruptiveness of figuration in social practice.” Hence, following rhetoric to the possibility of randomness, of contingency as such, opens up the possibility that things (not just in the text) “might not always be semiotically organized.”⁶⁶

Spivak’s endorsement of symptomatic reading becomes much clearer when she turns to discuss “translation in general,” with the help of the notion of the reader-as-translator. She suggests a “sympathetic reading as translation, precisely not a surrender but a friendly learning by taking a distance.”⁶⁷ In this context, writes Spivak, the good-will approach (“she is just like me”) will be of no use; in translation, friendship—which presupposes differences, boundaries between agents, even subjectivity—will be far more helpful than identity or analogy. It is this intention that Benjamin writes about: these fragments of a vessel that are not alike or analogous but rather complementary, intended towards that vessel which is still gaped, offering an opening.⁶⁸

Through the reader-as-translator, Spivak strives to illustrate the politics of a specific kind of post-colonial reading (and writing), which makes use of the source, what Spivak calls the “master marks,” to compose a history. She points out, for instance, Tony Morrison’s refusal to give up Paul de Man’s *The Purloined Ribbon* (which he himself stole from Rousseau), and which Morrison then weaves into her book *Beloved*, imbuing it with a different voice, “a roaring”. After describing Paul D. finding a red ribbon tied to a curl of wet wooly hair, Morrison invokes a frayed passage: “This time, although he couldn’t cipher but one word, he believed he knew who spoke them. The people of the broken necks, of fire-cooked blood and black girls who had lost their ribbons. What a roaring.”⁶⁹ Just like the kleptomaniac translator, Morrison steals, lifts, robs, re-appropriates something out of the canonic text, the ‘original,’ in a manner that calls to mind Jean-Luc Nancy’s concealed thinking (*pensée dérobée*).

Nancy defines concealed thinking as the next horizon of our contemporary thought, which is caught in a crisis. *Dérobée* means covered, veiled, concealed; however, in French concealing and veiling also mean disrobing, undressing, unveiling. And even this—the mutual source of dressing and undressing, veiling and unveiling—is but one aspect of the term, for “the robe would, in the first instance, be a garment seized by a thief [or better yet, a robber].”⁷⁰ Thus, concealed thinking veils itself, undresses itself until completely naked, while at the same time robbing, stealing, and sneaking. Concealed thinking conceals itself from itself, from “the expectations and demands of knowing,” and yet remains thinking,

precisely since it no longer thinks anything but itself, in its nudity, in its stealthy theft.⁷¹ As a thought of not-knowing it is merely self presence and nothing else, without any content or object: we are “not concerned here with the texts,” Nancy proclaims, “rather, it is the movement of thinking which demands our attention.”⁷² Concealed thinking, then, while indeed naked but not empty, is a thinking which thinks itself, its very act and motion of unveiling/covering/stealing; it enables thought to be a thought of crisis without being in a crisis itself.⁷³

Sense too operates in a similar manner and “senses itself concealing itself.”⁷⁴ However, when Nancy moves from the thought of thinking to the thought of sense, it is no longer a matter of a thought folding over itself in a somewhat Hegelian manner. According to Nancy, while we are able to give sense, even able to think it, this power of sense, a power which is neither simply within us nor external to us, is in fact the power of self-concealment, of sense itself or of the truth of sense: sense gives itself only in the passage from one to another, a passage within which sense is concealed from the one as much as it is concealed from the other. Therefore, language too is what it is only when it is between us. Nonetheless, Nancy asserts, between us there is nothing. If we have to make some sense of this “between us,” it will be nothing other than the sense of the passage from one to another. The “between us” is precisely the place of the sense of sense, a passage in every sense of the word—transmission and transgression. The between us is always the in-between of the concealment, of the sneaking, the stealing, the undressing and the veiling. At the same time, the passage itself is a concealment, as it preserves its sense only in the incessant passage from one to another.⁷⁵

Moreover, being concealed means being taken by surprise, caught by surprise. Thought cannot anticipate that which is veiled, which conceals itself from it, but by so doing conceals thought from itself as well.⁷⁶ Seizing means seizing opportunities—a chance which indicates that the passage does not conform to an exterior necessity.⁷⁷ This passage from one to another, which consists of surprises, of chance, is indeed thought itself, in the sense that it conceals itself in the truth of sense. Concealed thinking is communication, concealment is our being in common.

Deleuze emphasizes the element of “between us,” the being-in-common, by turning the theft into a double-theft. As mentioned above, Deleuze describes encounters—in the process of writing, but also in general—as theft, as a becoming, in which two terms interact without losing themselves in each other, without becoming one, while still implicating one another: “to encounter is to find, to capture, to steal.” However, “capture is always a double-capture, the theft, a double-theft, and it is that which creates not something mutual, but an asymmetrical block, [...] always ‘outside’ and ‘between.’”⁷⁸ With Deleuze, as with Nancy, the seizing or capture is always accidental. There is no method for becoming: one always stumbles upon it, and it is always triggered by something unexpected.⁷⁹ Hence it is never necessary nor under the control of one side or the other.

The translating reading-writing—as concealed thinking, as double-theft—is a reflexive

motion thinking its own concealment. It is this motion of veiling-undressing-stealing-sneaking, this passage—transmission, transgression, translation—that demands our attention. However, albeit its nudity, albeit the reflexive motion (or perhaps precisely due to this nudity, as Nancy might suggest), the sense of translating is always “between us,” in the transmission, in the passage, in the double-capture of becoming. This is the place Nancy calls sense, or the truth of sense. Translation, characterized by the fortuitous order of the snapshot, is also an act of seizing opportunities, which is not determined by an external necessity or controlled only by one side of the equation. On the contrary, it is that double-theft, a mutual capture. The ribbon Morrison steals illustrates such a passage, a thought that evokes thinking itself, sneaking into the realms of the other while concealing itself from it, but which nevertheless has no meaning, no sense, except for the in-between. Gallus’ burglary, the concealed theft of words and things from the text, although done covertly, also has no meaning except in its exposure, when it is caught red-handed, with its pants down, naked; it too emphasizes the passage, the presence of sense and thought in the very motion of concealment and in-between. This sort of double-theft will hopefully become clearer in the next section, in which I will present the last model of translation.

The fact that, in their search for ‘good’ translation strategies, both Venuti and Spivak come back to the practice of reading is significant here, since, as I suggested at the beginning of this essay, translation may be understood as a documentation of a creative, productive reading. Therefore, it is not surprising that the question ‘how should we translate’ comes down to ‘how should we read.’ Both Spivak’s sympathetic reading, which emphasizes sites of silence and resistance to the ruling ideology, as well as Venuti’s symptomatic reading bring to mind Althusser’s notion of symptomatic reading. Since the frame of our discussion so far has been Althusser’s essay on ideology, it seems reasonable to return to his writings and to attempt to discern what kind of reading he promotes, in order to explore the kind of creative reading we want to document in translations.

When Althusser takes upon himself the task of defining the object of Marx’s philosophy, he proclaims that “Marx’s methodological reflections in *Capital* do not give us a developed concept, nor even an *explicit* concept, of the *object* of Marxist *philosophy*.” Hence, our question “demands more than a mere literal reading, even an attentive one: it demands a truly *critical* reading.” Otherwise, not only will we be left unsatisfied, but we might “*miss the question altogether*.”⁸⁰

Consequently, Althusser is critical of Rosenthal’s work, for example, since “it merely paraphrases the immediate language with which Marx designates his object and his theoretical operations, without supposing that Marx’s very language might often be open to this question.”⁸¹ Althusser, like Spivak, finds that the rhetoricity of the text is as valuable as its logic, and that a genuine critical reading and interpretation constitutes a sort of translation that does not merely paraphrase the content, but is reconstructive of the text, through the questions its language raises.

In order to redefine the object of Marx's philosophy as "a theory of scientific practice, i.e. a theory of the conditions of the process of knowledge,"⁸² Althusser implements such a method of critical reading that he terms "symptomatic reading," and which he explains as follows:

At certain moments, in certain symptomatic points, this silence emerges as such in the discourse and forces it against its will to produce real theoretical lapses, in brief blank flashes, invisible in the light of the proof: words that hang in mid-air although they seem to be inserted into the necessity of the thought, judgments which close irreversibly with a false obviousness the very space which seemed to be opening before reason. All that a simple literal reading sees in the arguments is the continuity of the text. A *'symptomatic'* reading is necessary to make these lacunae perceptible, and to identify behind the spoken words the discourse of the silence, which, emerging in the verbal discourse, induces these blanks in it, blanks which are failures in its rigour, or the outer limit of its effort: its absence, once these limits are reached, but in a space which it has *opened*.⁸³

In a footnote, Althusser elaborates further on the nature of these silences, and claims that we can treat a silence in one of two ways: either by taking it for a silence that "goes without saying," because its content is the dominant theory (in this case, empiricist philosophy); or "by treating it as a limit and a problem. A *limit*: the furthest point to which Marx took his thought; but then this limit, far from returning us to the old field of empiricist philosophy, opens a new field before us. A *problem*: what precisely is the nature of this new field?"⁸⁴

The problem with these sites of silence is that they can just as easily be filled with ideology instead of "scientific discourse," as in the case of Marx's "too hurried readers [who] can be attacked for not having *heard his silence*."⁸⁵ "Marx himself," Althusser asserts,

has provided our fundamental principles [...] from which we can see the difference between the ideological treatment of a theoretical silence or emptiness, and its scientific treatment: the former confronts us with an ideological *closure*, the latter with a scientific *openness*. Here we can see immediately a precise example of the ideological threat that hangs over all scientific labour: ideology not only lies in wait for science at each point where its rigour slackens, but also at the furthest point where an investigation currently reaches its *limits*. There, precisely, philosophical activity can intervene at the level of the life of the science: as the theoretical vigilance that protects the openness of science against the closure of ideology.⁸⁶

Therefore, although Althusser defines a scientific discourse as one which is deprived of all ideology, a subject-less discourse⁸⁷—which today seems impossible—we might understand this term differently: scientific discourse is one that offers an opening instead of a closure, one that listens to the silence, follows it to the limits of the text and raises problems, *questions*. A scientific reading, or a scientific translation (as a writing-reading),

will be a translation attentive to the silence and rhetoricity of the text, following them to their limits, thereby opening up a new field of problems/possibilities and refraining from closing them up again.

Althusser himself scatters silences throughout his texts; some of them are lacunae in his arguments, some are concrete blanks, missing spots, marked by ellipses (...),⁸⁸ much like the kleptomaniac translator who literally leaves behind empty spaces in his text, robbing it of certain words. This spacing up of the text—a sort of distancing and making room, which infuses it with “the privilege of ambiguity and instability”—is, according to Maurice Blanchot, the mark of good translations. Such instability makes many of these works “threaten at each moment to return to their language of origin and oscillate mysteriously between many forms whose perfect suitability is not enough to restrain them.”⁸⁹ When a translation is good, claims Blanchot, it brings along, without incoherence, a “feeling of a light space between the words and what they aim at, of a possibility for them to slip outside of this form they have been given.”⁹⁰ The feeling of imperfect communication—brought about by the fact that the characters in the translated text are foreign to their own words, not fully responsible for those words, which are only halfway their own—“involves us in restoring to them in silence all that the passage from one language to another has made them lose, and all that no language would ever have allowed them to express.”⁹¹ Blanchot sees in good translation the quintessential literary act, one that all literature should strive for, since that slight gap which indicates that what we are reading is not really what we should be reading, which reveals our ignorance of the text that is nonetheless presented to us, turns us into more active readers and opens up a sea of possibilities and meanings.⁹² A good translation, like a good text, is one that leaves room for symptomatic reading; it is spacious.

A good translation is therefore not just a symptomatic reading of a previous text, or texts, one that explores their silences the way Althusser explores Marx's, but also one that opens itself up for symptomatic readings, one that leaves enough spaces and silences, one that is characterized by a polysemous rhetoric. Returning to the Hebrew translations of Poe introduced earlier, one may claim that while both Jabotinsky and Ziffer perform symptomatic readings of Poe's poem—they both read into his silences and take the liberty of expressing them differently—Ziffer's translation does not lend itself to a symptomatic reading while Jabotinsky's does. Although Ziffer's translation seems to follow the logic of Venuti's foreignizing translation—it is written in archaic Hebrew and thus seems remote to the reader—it is a fluent translation, which does not disclose the fact that it is a translation but creates the illusion, the obviousness, that it is the original, or at least a clear representation of the original. It does not leave room for reverberations: there are no silences, no gaps to be filled. It is a Hebrew-written text, which closes itself up the way an ideological discourse does. Jabotinsky's translation, on the other hand, although not devoid of ideology, does not cover over Poe's poem. It testifies to the fact that it is translated (by retaining the foreign name of the heroine, for example), and leaves some gaps, some silences, which activate the reader and more readily allow for a symptomatic

reading (for instance, what is *arpaly*? And what does the phrase “noblemen of the Galilee” mean?).

In this context, it is interesting to note that both Thomas Hobbes and John Locke—each of whom, in his own way, laid the groundwork for liberal political thought—fought against rhetoric and sought to purify language of rhetorical means, mainly those that leave room for polysemy or gaps in the text, such as metaphors and other uses of figurative language. In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke writes:

Since wit and fancy find easier entertainment in the world than dry truth and real knowledge, *figurative speeches* and allusion in language will hardly be admitted as an imperfection or *abuse* of it. I confess, in discourses where we seek rather pleasure and delight than information and improvement, such ornaments as are borrowed from them can scarce pass for faults. But yet if we would speak of things as they are, we must allow that all the art of rhetoric, besides order and clearness; all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheats: and therefore, however laudable or allowable oratory may render them in harangues and popular addresses, they are certainly, in all discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, wholly to be avoided; and where truth and knowledge are concerned, cannot but be thought a great fault, either of the language or person that makes use of them. [...] It is evident how much men love to deceive and be deceived, since rhetoric, that powerful instrument of error and deceit, has its established professors, is publicly taught, and has always been had in great reputation [...] *Eloquence*, like the fair sex, has too prevailing beauties in it to suffer itself ever to be spoken against. And it is in vain to find fault with those arts of deceiving, wherein men find pleasure to be deceived.⁹³

And Hobbes, in his *Leviathan*, assails rhetoric—and primarily metaphors—since, in his view, they incite controversy and hinder any attempt at reaching agreement. For Hobbes, the path leading from controversy—and, by extension, from polysemy—to violence and war is very short: when there is a controversy, “in all debates of what kind so ever,” the two parties must set up some external arbitrator or judge, otherwise “their controversy must either come to blows, or be undecided.”⁹⁴ Hence, even though Hobbes himself makes ample use of rhetorical devices, including metaphors (what is the Leviathan if not one vast metaphor?), he attacks rhetoric, which in his view is epitomized in metaphors, and maintains that controversy, and controversy-inciting language, should be entirely avoided: “in demonstration, in council, and all rigorous search of truth [...] metaphors [...] are in this case utterly excluded. For seeing they openly profess deceit, to admit them into council, or reasoning, were manifest folly.”⁹⁵

Hobbes seems to find the instability of the sign—the possibility of attributing different meanings to the same word—outrageous, for this polysemy might lead to controversy and

allows prophets, juggling with rhetoric, to tear his country asunder. It is quite telling that Hobbes specifically targets metaphors, since the Greek word ‘metaphor’ (*metapherein*, in the verb form)—which indicates a substitution of one word for another, and literally means to carry over—was translated into Latin and German as translation (*translatus, übersetzen*).⁹⁶ Trying to gaze beyond the horizon of liberal thought, we should perhaps value the way in which translation, in placing one word over another, carries us beyond the borders of language, creates a passage, produces a reverberation of meanings. Perhaps nowadays the good translation is precisely the one that allows polysemy, that does not cover over its process, hence revealing this polysemy; a translation that comes into existence between us, in a conversation between many, that opens itself up for a symptomatic reading and renders the reader active, thereby giving her back the duty and the right to contemplate and judge for herself. Hobbes was convinced that such activities are dangerous, for he did not trust the reader/listener and his judgment, and therefore shackled his ears to the mouth of the sovereign with the chains of law.⁹⁷

Translation is Writing

I would like to explore one more model, taken from the late Middle Ages, in order to elucidate this sort of “good” translation. Bassnett and Lefevere argue that the Jerome model overshadowed the Roman model up until two hundred years ago.⁹⁸ However, a close examination of translation practices in the Middle Ages reveals a continuation of the Horace model into the Middle Ages, as well as a further transformation of it into an even more radical approach.

Alongside the rise of early vernacular glosses—which were inserted into Latin manuscripts, and which relinquished stylistic excellence in favor of a word-for-word translation⁹⁹—the Middle Ages also witnessed the rise of translation as paraphrase. Translation was perceived as a useful exercise for improving oratorical style and writing abilities, and therefore constituted a significant component in the medieval educational system, which was based on the study of the Seven Liberal Arts. The Roman theoretician Quintilian, whose ideas were among those handed down via this system, emphasized the efficacy of paraphrasing in assisting the student in developing both his analytical skills and his style, and in enhancing his creativity. Thus, the Roman notion of translation as negotiation, interpretation and reproduction, made its way into the Middle Ages. Moreover, the Middle Ages could be characterized as an era where citation, rewriting and imitation (*imitatio*) were accepted means of learning and thinking. ‘Originality’ gradually came to lose its high status, and an author’s skills were measured by his reworking of established themes and ideas. Thus, the lines between translation, writing, citation and plagiarism became rather blurred. Translation was viewed as a skill intimately related to reading and interpretation of the ‘original,’ which was a proper source material for the writer to draw upon and think along with.¹⁰⁰

In a letter written by Petrarch (1304-1374 AD) to Boccaccio, in which he confesses to a blatant act of plagiarism that filtered into his writings, Petrarch defends his honor as

a writer by differentiating legitimate models of imitation from plagiarism, using three different similes. This letter testifies to the fact that when Petrarch writes about writing it is as if he almost cannot conceive of writing without imitating, without reading, without a model, without relying on his predecessors. Therefore, these similes might also be seen as three perceptions of writing.

The first simile, which describes the kind of imitation Petrarch condemns, depicts the relationship between a 'new' creation and its 'original' as that of a painted image to its original. This comparison is ridiculous, Derrida would say.¹⁰¹ Another simile, which is derived from Seneca (and Horace), compares the relationship between a 'new' text and its antecedent to the relationship between honey and the flowers from which it is produced.¹⁰² In other words, the work of writing does not merely imitate or copy, but rather strives to extract and convey the essence of the previous text. But it is not the message that is passed along in the good translation, Benjamin will say, for "what does a literary work 'say'? [...] it 'tells' very little."¹⁰³

To indicate the kind of imitation or writing he endorses, Petrarch uses another simile, depicting the relationship between a new creation and its predecessor as that between the face of a father and that of his son: "While often very different in their individual features, they have a certain something our painters call an 'air,' especially noticeable about the face and the eyes, that produces a resemblance."¹⁰⁴ In this kind of imitative writing, the author positions himself within philosophy's family tree, subtly rewriting his ancestry, responding to it, conducting a humble, intimate dialogue with it, shaking a branch here and there, yet keeping the 'familial resemblance'—this certain 'air' which passes from the father's face to his son's—intact. Interestingly, this reproductive metaphor appears in Derrida's writing as well, when, following Benjamin, he describes translation as a marriage contract or *hymen*: the original grows in translation like a child, Derrida asserts, "its own, no doubt, but with the power to speak on its own which makes a child something other than a product subjected to the law of reproduction."¹⁰⁵

Even when Petrarch engages in the writing of 'original' pieces, he actually 'translates' his predecessors. In his letter known as "The Ascent of Mount Ventoux," Petrarch is first and foremost a reader: as he writes this letter, he reads Cicero's letters, Livy's *History of Rome*, and Augustine's *Confessions*, amongst other texts. Nevertheless, Petrarch is not a 'mere' reader; he is, rather, an active one. His activeness as a reader is evident in its literal, most basic sense already from the fact that his reading of Cicero's collection of letters compels him to write and gather a collection of his own; from the fact that his reading of the story of Philip of Macedon's ascent of Mount Haemus impels him not only to write a story of an ascent, but to actually climb a mountain; and from the fact that his reading of the tenth book of Augustine's *Confessions*, as well as the unmentioned reading of Augustine's conversion in book eight, inspire Petrarch to attempt a conversion of his own.¹⁰⁶ All these texts comprise Petrarch's major language, within which he writes a minor literature. They are his *exempla*.

I would like to follow Victoria Kahn, who argues that “the central concern of the text is not the religious issue of Franciscus’ [Petrarch’s] sinfulness or the psychological dilemma of his divided will, but rather the problem of defining the will itself as a faculty of interpretation.”¹⁰⁷ The focus of this text is then an intensive writing-reading. Therefore, while *exempla* usually denote models of the ‘right’ religious life, I would like to argue that the *exempla* Petrarch sees before his eyes in the “Ascent” are primarily ones of reading, models to be read (and written and lived) ‘correctly.’¹⁰⁸ But does Petrarch actually try to read (and write) them ‘correctly’? It seems as though he fails to adopt these models (save for the notion of the assembling of letters, based on Cicero’s collection), and his imitation is forever the ‘inaccurate’ imitation of the willful (mis-)reader, the thief; it always emphasizes differences and leaves behind some spaces.

The way Petrarch reads (and writes) the classics seems to testify to his awareness of the fact that his own literary voice speaks from the depths of a shared language, which echoes not only his contemporaries’ voices but also voices from the past. This language is constituted through networks of letters and relations with the writings of his contemporaries and his predecessors. Moreover, this concept of writing as (a translating or “stealing”) imitation allows Petrarch to beget Augustine and Livy ‘children,’ who testify to the fact that these exemplary texts are not as monolithic and impervious as they were traditionally considered to be, and that “even words with fixed meaning can undergo a maturing process.”¹⁰⁹

This kind of translation, in the broader sense of the term, bears witness to the conception of reading-writing in the late Middle Ages, a conception which did not distinguish between the two components as sharply as we do. Every writing required reading and working with previous texts (vertical translation) or with contemporary texts (horizontal translation) and thus was more of a collective work. Furthermore, Petrarch’s ‘imitations’ or ‘translations,’ which begot the Roman fathers new offsprings, were perceived as a legitimate and prevalent writing practice and not as a perverse reproduction, as Deleuze, writing in the twentieth century, describes his ‘translations’ of his philosophical fathers.¹¹⁰

The Petrarch model provides writing with a certain alternative. In this model, every writing is primarily a reading, which consists in re-producing a text, and renders the positions of producer and consumer, sender and receiver, original and copy interchangeable, thus dismantling the traditional hierarchies between them. As de Certeau puts it, this tactic permeates the text as a squatter, appropriates it and renders it habitable, while regarding the text—just as the poets of the Middle Ages regarded the form of the sonnet—as no more than an assemblage of constraints stimulating new discoveries.¹¹¹ This kind of writing does not prize originality and does not perceive the author as the sole authority of the text.

This writing practice does not belong to Petrarch’s days alone, nor does it fit only literary works. Michel Gondry’s film, *Be Kind Rewind* (2008), demonstrates how visual texts nowadays may take on the task of the translator. In this movie, the protagonists wish to resist the power of the power plant, which is presented by one of the characters as controlling their minds and lives. When all of the movies in their video store are erased

through some kind of eerie accident, they adopt the transparency of translation in recreating the lost titles. They re-produce some of Hollywood's most memorable films using their own 'minor' language, using their own 'poor' means—a single video camera, the members of their community, their everyday scenery and homemade props. They face the double impossibility that lies at the foundation of every minor literature: the impossibility of not writing and the impossibility of writing in the major language,¹¹² that of Hollywood. Thus, as writers who are merely looking for a way out, they are forced to “tear minor literature away from its own language,” “to become a nomad and an immigrant and a gypsy in relation to one's own language,”¹¹³ and they do so by means of translating the major language into a minor one.

Their translations consists in re-reading the 'major' films, dismantling them and creating them anew, in their own language, one that makes the “original” thinner, that makes it stutter, that creates a constant reverberation between the original and its copy (and all its other possible translations). This is a visual manifestation of a writing-reading, of productive-consumption, which renders the positions of the creator and the audience, the producers and consumers, interchangeable and less distinct.

This re-productive citation, or translation, restores some of the advantages Benjamin attributed to the art of cinema. Benjamin described cinema as a form of art that had lost its aura, its authenticity, its uniqueness (which is inseparable from its being imbedded in the fabric of tradition), the unique fingerprint of a genius artist. He characterized cinematic artwork as a kind of work which does not encourage the spectator to slip into bourgeois contemplation—in which he or she can abandon themselves to their associations—but rather as carrying the spectator in a flow of movements and changes, before which he or she cannot linger or contemplate, and which he or she share with a community of spectators.¹¹⁴ It seems, however, that cinema today is no longer experienced in this manner. We no longer share the experience of watching films with a collective audience; rather, we watch them in our own homes, in front of television and computer screens, and even when we visit the cinema we are separated from each other by many empty seats, by armrests and a condensed darkness. And while films are indeed massively reproduced, we tend to attribute them to some kind of genius artist or to this or that great actress, bestowing the product of reproduction with an aura.

The translating practice chosen by Gondry, however, brings the notions of 'original' and 'copy' back to our attention, and thus undermines these prevailing conceptions of the cinema. The work of translation, the 'stealing,'¹¹⁵ or the 'inaccurate' reproduction, shatters the status of the creator as an artist of great genius, who produced the work of art all by herself, and as the sole proprietor of the product. Moreover, this practice undermines the status of the cinematic work of art itself, for it raises questions about the nature of the 'original' as a unique work of art endowed with an aura, and about the tradition in which this 'original' is embedded. For, as mentioned above, this kind of reproduction “detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition” and “in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates

the object reproduced,” thus leading “to a tremendous shattering of tradition which is the obverse of the contemporary crisis and renewal of mankind.”¹¹⁶ Therefore, not only are these translations historical, they also play on history and open it up.¹¹⁷

Furthermore, this translational practice necessarily places the audience in an active position, the position of the symptomatic reader: the viewers must juxtapose the ‘original’ and the ‘copy,’ find the gaps and spaces, the sites of concealment and theft; they must conduct comparisons and ask themselves what are the ‘errors’ in the translation, what kind of hybrids have been created in this encounter, and what do they mean? In this way, this ‘transparent’ becoming-imperceptible, which creates *a* world in which it is *the* world (in the case of *Be Kind Rewind*, Hollywood’s classics, but also the characters’ ‘real’ world, including the characters themselves) that becomes, calls forth “the pure language,”¹¹⁸ invokes it from its depths, and brings to mind all the other possibilities for translation, all those other “monstrous children” that could have been born in the encounter between Gondry and the ‘original’ films.

Yet, it is important to note that this practice was possible for Petrarch due to the fact that, as in the Roman era, in Petrarch’s time—a time that witnessed the rise of vernacular languages alongside the return to Roman Latin—the translator or writer could still assume that his (intellectual) readers were familiar with the (mostly Latin) sources. Similarly, Gondry is able to assume his audience’s acquaintance with Hollywood cinema. Therefore, both are relatively relieved of the duty to pass on ‘information’: their writing is aimed at echoing the source text, leaving the task of comparison and the right of symptomatic reading to the readers. They are thus fairly free to stray away from the source, working in relation to it, complementing or continuing it.

This begs the question: can this alternative modus of translation, which resists the *modus operandi* of translation as ideology—namely the production of obviousnesses, of the sense that a translation naturally and obviously represents the “original,” the constitution of us readers as its subjects, as its community, in a material manner, etc.—can this alternative translation only exist when readers are able to read the source themselves? Would the theft of the kleptomaniac translator be utterly devoid of sense were it not for the narrator’s ability to compare his translation to the previous text? Is there no other course of action, as Spivak claims, but learning her mother tongue?¹¹⁹ Or perhaps there is a way to chip away at the transparency of the translator’s work, or at the opacity of the translation masquerading as original, even when the source is inaccessible to the reader? Is it possible to leave behind enough gaps, spaces, traces, veils and revelations, marks of theft and stealth in the translated text, to incite the reader to take action, to become active, so that she can exercise a symptomatic reading in the text? And another question, from a different perspective: following the comparison of translation to ideology, will it be possible to conduct a symptomatic reading of ideology as well?

In the aftermath of the 'cultural turn' in translation,¹²⁰ it seems as though everyone is aware of the impact power-relations have on translations: Bassnett and Lefevere write in the introduction to their book—the very book that marked and constituted that turn—that every rewriting reflects a certain ideology, whether intentionally or unwittingly, and that any translation is a manipulation in the service of power or in the hands of resistance.¹²¹ Venuti, as discussed above, points out the manner in which translation renders itself invisible and produces an obviousness that 'it is really that,' that it in fact represents the original, while flattening and domesticating the foreign text. Spivak also urges us to pay attention to the power structures that underlie customary translation strategies. Returning to Althusser, however, I would like to stress that he reminds us of the fact that this realization that we are indeed constructed subjects who "constantly practice the rituals of ideological recognition" is not enough, since it

only gives us the 'consciousness' of our incessant (eternal) practice of ideological recognition—its consciousness, i.e. its *recognition*—but in no sense does it give us the (scientific) *knowledge* of the mechanism of this recognition. Now it is this knowledge that we have to reach, if you will, while speaking in ideology, and from within ideology we have to outline a discourse which tries to break with ideology, in order to dare to be the beginning of a scientific (i.e. subject-less) discourse on ideology.¹²²

In "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Althusser seeks to initiate precisely this kind of project: he seeks to explain the mechanism of ideological recognition, to construct a theory which demonstrates, in a concrete manner, by what means ideology makes individuals act on their own without attaching a policeman to their behinds. Therefore, I sought to adhere to the main question posed by Althusser, the "how" question, namely "how does it work," and have thus attempted to understand the mechanism of translation: that is to say, to examine how translation works in relation to concrete individuals, how it creates obviousnesses or makes us act on our own, how it makes us believe in its invisibility, accept the translated text as an objective truth, consume it as an original, and take on the role we are given, that of the believing reader who forgets the gap, the way, the accompanying act of mediation. I felt that we must understand the means by which this mechanism operates, in order to be able to overturn or circumvent it. Hence, it seems that, like Althusser's "ideology in general," this "translation in general" that I have presented here, as a structural definition of translation required by the lexical format, has no history: it is an a-historical or omni-historical concept, in as much as its structure and functioning, its status as a representation of an imaginary relation to the real, its materiality, its reciprocal constitutive relation with the subject, its creation of a sense of obviousness, its nature as a documentation of the process of translation—all might indeed be perceived as immutable or trans-historical.

On the other hand, I also sought to present here various historical models, and to demonstrate how specific translations (both as processes and as products) are always

historical, since the work of translation is a procedure of questioning, of innumerable encounters that trigger becomings. As a becoming, it is a process of a double-capture, a double-theft, in which both elements in the encounter influence one another. At its finest, this is a process of interpretation which is particularly attentive to the rhetoric and the silences of the other text, while attempting to space and open it up; a re-production of sorts that is always historical and plays on and within this history, which detaches the text from its tradition and opens it up to a re-reading and a re-writing. As such, the act of translation subverts not only the place of the ‘original’ in the tradition, but also the property rights of the previous writer and her status as the sole proprietor of the work. This act of translation sneaks in and conceals, uses the “master marks” in an ‘inaccurate,’ minor way, plants its fingerprints in the text and thereby announces its presence, its motion of concealment as it thinks itself, the very motion of veiling, of disguise, which is at the same time a motion of undressing, unveiling and stealing, an action which is forever in the passage—*trans*—in-between, between us, and which is the very sense of our being-together. The good translation will leave behind traces of such a process of translation: it will flourish with an abundance of gaps and empty spaces, which allow for symptomatic readings; it will hold itself open, thereby rendering the reader active, a participant in the act of writing.

At different points in time, each translation strategy has different political implications. I chose to promote here a certain definition of ‘good’ translation that is constructed upon my own political views, here and now. Hopefully, I have left enough gaps for the reader to translate this in her own way.

Appendix – Two Hebrew translations of Poe’s Annabel Lee: <http://mafteakh.tau.ac.il/en/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/translation-appendix.pdf>

Endnotes

1. Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass* (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2004 [1871]), pp. 208-209.
2. Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, translated by Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 56.
3. Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 1-2.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
5. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. xii. De Certeau assumes that although we might not be able to disregard the ‘consumption’ of culture—the mechanism by which each one of us ‘consumes’ ideology (and produces it)—we might still be able to take part in and document the concealed,

invisible production operating on these 'products' as they are being consumed; to focus our attention on the "ways of operating," or, using language as an analogy, to privilege speaking: "speaking operates within the field of a linguistic system; it effects an appropriation, or reappropriation, of language by its speakers; it establishes a *present* relative to time and place; and it posits a *contract with the other* (the interlocutor) in a network of places and relations" (ibid., p. xiii).

6. Jacques Derrida, "What is a 'Relevant' Translation," translated by Lawrence Venuti, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, edited by Lawrence Venuti (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 430.

7. In the Hebrew version of this text, I use the word קליטה, which in Hebrew is slang for a stealthy theft. At the same time, this word was also suggested by Oded Schechter as a translation of the Hegelian term *Aufhebung*, since it means to swear off, eradicate, hide and lift.

8. Dezső Kosztolányi, "Le traducteur kleptomane," in *Le traducteur kleptomane et autres histoires*, translated by Maurice Regnaut (Aix-en-Provence: Alinea, 1985), pp. 7-13.

9. Rosemary Arrojo, "Writing, Interpretation, and the Control of Meaning: Scenes from Kafka, Borges and Kosztolányi," in *Translation and Power*, edited by Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Genzler (University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), p. 74.

10. Susan Bassnett, André Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998), p. 2. At this point, it is worth mentioning that according to Jerome's own account, he tried to follow the Ciceronian guidelines and to translate sense for sense. However, the fine line between stylistic freedom and heresy encouraged him to closely adhere to the original. See Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 1.

11. Bernard of Clairvaux, "Sermons on The Song of Songs," sermon 74: II.6, translated by Gillian Rosemary Evans, in *Bernard of Clairvaux: Selected Works*, edited by G. R. Evans (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 207-278.

12. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as a Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

13. Walter Benjamin, "Karl Kraus," in *Reflections*, translated by Edmond Jephcott (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1978 [1931]), p. 269.

14. Jacques Derrida insists that translation is not reproduction (see Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel," translation by Joseph Graham, in *Difference in Translation*, edited by Joseph Graham [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985], p. 180). However, I believe that when one understands re-production as a production anew, again, and not as duplication, it is permissible to use this term to better understand the concept of translation.

15. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1986 [1936]), p. 221.

16. "But perhaps a translation is devoted to ruin, to that form of memory or commemoration that is called ruin; ruin is perhaps its vocation and destiny that it accepts from the very outset" (Derrida, "What is Relevant Translation," p. 429).

17. Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," translated by Harry Zohn, in *Selected Writings, Vol. I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University press, 2004 [1923]), p. 256.

18. Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel," p. 179.

19. Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, pp. 48-49.
20. Ibid., pp. 49-51.
21. "Interprete/interpreter are commonly used to mean *translator*" (George Steiner, *After Babel* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1975], p. 28).
22. Bassnett and Lefevere, *Constructing Culture*, pp. 3-4.
23. Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, p. 50.
24. Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*, p. 219.
25. Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, p. 55.
26. Erasmus of Rotterdam, who was one of the translators, declared: "I would desire that all women should reade the gospel and Paules epistles and I wold to God they were translated in the tongues of all men so that they might not only be read and knowne of the scotes and yrishmen But also of the Turkes and the Sarracenes" (cited in *ibid.*, p. 53.)
27. Kosztolányi, "Le traducteur kleptomane," p. 13.
28. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, translated by Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971), p. 160.
29. For comparisons of translations and dreams, see Rosemary Arrojo, "Writing, Interpretation, and the Control of Meaning," in *Translation and Power*, edited by Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler (University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), p. 63; Edwin Gentzler, "Translation, Poststructuralism and Power," in *ibid.*, p. 199.
30. Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," p. 162.
31. A term borrowed from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, translated by Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986 [1975]).
32. Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," p. 164.
33. Ibid., pp. 170-171.
34. Kosztolányi, "Le traducteur kleptomane," pp. 7-8.
35. A Foucauldian "turning on its head" of the concept of translation, which Naoki Sakai performs in his *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).
36. Joseph B. Schechtman, *The Life and Times of Vladimir Jabotinsky: Rebel and Statesman* (Silver Spring, MD: Eshel Books, 1986), vol. 1, p. 170.
37. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Politics of Translation," in *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), p. 179.
38. Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," pp. 171-172.
39. Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 1.
40. What I find particularly interesting in Venuti's survey of translation reviews is the vast amount of words at the service of critiques to describe the fluency or hesitancy of a translation. See *ibid.*, pp. 2-4.

41. See, for example, Jacques Derrida, "Différance," in *Margins of Philosophy*, translated by Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 3-27.
42. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, pp. 23-27.
43. Jacques Derrida, "What is a 'Relevant' Translation," pp. 430-431.
44. See, for example, Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock, 1972).
45. Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," pp. 165-167.
46. As seen in Bhabha's notion of cultural translation. See Homi K. Bhabha, "How Newness Enter the World: Postmodern Space, Postcolonial Times and the Trails of Cultural Translation," in *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 212-235.
47. Spivak, "The Politics of Translation," p. 182.
48. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, pp. 12-13.
49. Friedrich Schleiermacher, "On Different Methods of Translating," in *Theories of Translation*, edited by Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), pp. 36-54.
50. Schleiermacher, "On Different Methods of Translating," pp. 36-54; Bassnett and Lefevere, *Constructing Culture*, pp. 7-8.
51. Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, pp. 71-74.
52. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 20.
53. Ibid., pp. 15-18.
54. Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p.58.
55. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 25.
56. Ibid., p. 37.
57. Ibid., p. 30.
58. Spivak, "The Politics of Translation," p. 180.
59. Ibid., pp. 189-190.
60. Deleuze and Guattari refer here to Joseph Losey's film *Monsieur Klein* (1976). See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2004 [1980]), pp. 320-321.
61. Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," translated by Harry Zohn, in *Selected Writings, Vol. 1* (Harvard University press, 2004 [1921]), p. 260.
62. Deleuze and Guattary, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 308.
63. Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," p. 261.
64. Spivak, "Politics of Translation," p. 180.
65. Ibid., p. 183.
66. Ibid., p. 187.
67. Ibid., p. 197.
68. Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," p. 260.

69. Tony Morrison, *Beloved*, as cited in Spivak, "The Politics of Translation," p. 200.
70. Jean-Luc Nancy, "Concealed Thinking," in *A Finite Thinking*, translated by James Gilbert-Walsh (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 39.
71. Ibid., p. 37.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., p. 33.
74. Ibid., p. 39.
75. Ibid., pp. 38-40.
76. Ibid., p. 38.
77. Ibid., p. 41.
78. Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 5.
79. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 322.
80. Louis Althusser, "The Object of Capital," translated by Ben Brewster, in Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital* (London and New York: Verso, 2009 [1970]), pp. 80-81.
81. Ibid., p. 84.
82. Ibid., p. 95.
83. Ibid., pp. 94-95.
84. Ibid., p. 99.
85. Ibid., p. 98.
86. Ibid., p. 99.
87. Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", p. 173.
88. For example in Althusser, *Reading Capital*, p. 147, 158.
89. Maurice Blanchot, "Translated From..." translated by Charlotte Mandell, in *The Work of Fire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 180.
90. Ibid., p. 187.
91. Ibid., p. 189.
92. Ibid., pp. 189-90
93. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, edited by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975 [1690]), p. 508.
94. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, edited by Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1651]), pp. 32-33.
95. Ibid., p. 52.
96. Paul de Man, "The Epistemology of Metaphor," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 5, No. 1 (1978), p. 17.
97. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 147.
98. Lefevere and Bassnett, *Constructing Culture*, p. 3.
99. Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, p. 55.
100. Ibid., pp. 56-58.

101. Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel," p. 199.
102. Francesco Petrararch, "Fam. XXIII, 19: To Giovanni Boccaccio, concerning a young man who has been assisting him with transcriptions; and that nothing is so correct as not to lack something," in Petrararch, *Letters on Familiar Matters, vol. 3, books XVII-XXIV*, translated by Aldo S. Bernardo (New York: State University of New York Press, 1985), pp. 301-302.
103. Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," p. 253.
104. Petrararch, "Fam. XXIII: 19," pp. 301.
105. Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel," p. 191.
106. Francesco Petrararch, "Fam. IV, 1: To Dionigi da Borgo San Sepolcro of the Augustinian Order and Professor of Sacred Scripture, concerning some personal problems," in Petrararch, *Letters on Familiar Matters, vol. 1, books I-VIII* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 172-180.
107. Victoria Kahn, "The Figure of the Reader in Petrararch's 'Secretum,'" *PMLA*, vol. 100, No. 2 (1985), p. 155. Though in this excerpt Khan is referring to the "Secretum," these words are relevant to the "Ascent" as well, since in the following pages Khan recognizes the inter-textual connections between the two texts, and ascribes similar themes to the "Ascent."
108. At this point I am inverting Nancy Struever's claim, that Petrararch's writing is intended primarily to investigate the question "how should one live," and argue that he focuses on the question "how should one read (and write)" in order to see into the ethical question. See Nancy Struever, "Petrarchan Ethics: Inventing a Practice," in *Theory as Practice: Ethical Inquiry in the Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), pp. 3-4.
109. Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," pp. 253-263.
110. "I belong to a generation, one of the last generations, that was more or less bludgeoned to death with the history of philosophy. The history of philosophy plays a patently repressive role in philosophy, it's philosophy's own version of the Oedipus complex: 'You can't seriously consider saying what you yourself think until you've read this and that, and that on this, and this on that.' [...] But I suppose the main way I coped with it at the time was to see the history of philosophy as a sort of buggery or (it comes to the same thing) immaculate conception. I saw myself taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous. It was really important for it to be his own child, because the author had to actually say all I had him saying. But the child was bound to be monstrous too, because it resulted from all sorts of shifting, slipping, dislocations, and hidden emissions I really enjoyed' (Gilles Deleuze, "Letter to a Harsh Critic," translated by Martin Joughin, in *Negotiations: 1972-1990* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1995], p. 6).
111. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xxii.
112. Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 16.
113. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
114. Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."
115. It is interesting to note that in *Be Kind Rewind*, the characters are accused of *stealing* the movies, and the law officials destroy the reproduced movies.
116. Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," p. 221.
117. I am indebted here to Ariella Azoulay's reading of Benjamin. See Ariella Azoulay, *Once Upon*

a Time: Photography following Walter Benjamin (Tel-Aviv: Bar Ilan University Press, 2006) [in Hebrew].

118. “All superficial kinship between languages consists in this: in every one of them as a whole, one and the same thing is meant. Yet this one thing is achievable not by any single language but only by the totality of their intentions supplementing one another: the pure language” (Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” p. 257).

119. Spivak, “The Politics of Translation,” p. 191.

120. The “cultural turn” in translation took place during the early 1990’s, and its point of eruption is usually marked by the publication of an anthology edited by Andre Lefevere and Susan Bassnett in 1990, titled *Translation, History, Culture* (see following endnote). In this book, Lefevere and Bassnett endeavored to explicate the changes affecting the translation world in terms of ideological powers.

121. Andre Lefevere and Susan Bassnett, “Introduction,” in *Translation, History, Culture*, edited by Lefevere (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. xi.

122. Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” p. 173.

