长沙理工大学

硕士学位论文

解构主义翻译伦理评析

姓名：郝妙文

申请学位级别：硕士

专业：外国语言学及应用语言学

指导教师：陈可培

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摘　要

近来，翻译的伦理问题成为翻译研究的重点，受到越来越多的翻译研究者的关注。正如伦理学家们对伦理学有不同的理解，翻译学者们也不能在翻译伦理的问题上达成共识。本论文探讨解构主义观照下的翻译伦理。

传统的翻译研究将"忠实"视为翻译的伦理标准。译文要尽量忠实地再现原文内容和作者的意图。任意的添加或删减都被斥为不忠实的翻译。虽然近期的翻译研究越来越重视差异，但很多翻译研究者仍将"忠实"看作翻译的伦理标准，只是对"忠实"的定义，也就是对什么忠实的问题上有不同看法。随着解构主义对翻译研究影响的深入，应该认识到仅仅将翻译伦理的研究停留在对"忠实"的重新定义上是远远不够的。解构主义从根本上颠覆了"忠实"作为翻译伦理标准的理论基础。

本文首先简要论述了列维纳斯的"他者伦理"。解构主义的伦理思想是对列维纳斯的批判性继承。列维纳斯认为，真正的他者是绝对外在性的他者，不能被自我和同一性还原、认知和占有。所以，列维纳斯的伦理就是这种他者和自我之间的关系，是他者对自我的质疑。德里达对这种"绝对他者"并不完全认同，但列维纳斯对逻各斯中心主义的批判态度与解构主义一致，并影响了德里达的伦理思想。

解构主义的翻译伦理是解构主义伦理在翻译活动中的映射。解构主义否定文本具有超验的、唯一的意义，认为意义是文本的作用而并非外在于文本，只能在阅读中体现出来，即"文本之外别无他物"。这样，作者无法预设和左右意义，也就是说作者的意图和文本产生的意义之间会存在差别，甚至相互矛盾。因此，解构主义提出用"双重阅读"颠覆对文本的传统解读。解构主义的伦理性就在于这种意义的"不确定性"。不确定性在解构主义的翻译中就是德里达提出的"相关"的翻译。在双

重阅读中发掘的传统的和反传统的意义都应该在翻译中体现出来。因此，解构主义的翻译伦理不仅仅是注重不同语言和文化之间差异性的列维纳斯式的"他者"的伦理，还应该是寻求不同理解方法的"求异"的伦理。

文章以韦努蒂的翻译伦理思想为例，分析了解构主义翻译伦理在翻译实践中的应用。文章认为韦努蒂的翻译研究具有明显的解构主义特征。其对归化和异化翻译策略的态度以及最后提出的"因地制宜"的翻译伦理可作为解构主义翻译伦理在文化层面翻译实践中的体现加以评述。

最后，综合了解构主义翻译伦理对翻译研究和翻译实践的贡献及其局限性，作者认为解构主义及其伦理思想是一个有力的批评和自我批评的方法，应当成为翻译工作者破除成见的必备工具。

关键词：解构主义；翻译伦理；德里达；韦努蒂

Abstract

Recently, more and more translation theorists have noticed the importance of translation ethics in translation studies. Like each ethical theorist conceives ethics in a personal way, translation theorists cannot agree with each other about translation ethics. This thesis is to discuss translation ethics according to deconstructive approach.

Traditionally, the ethical norm for translation is considered as "fidelity". The translation must faithfully show the original meaning and the author's intention, or it will be criticized as unfaithful. In spite of the shift of focus from sameness to difference in recent translation studies, most translation theorists still hold "fidelity" as the moral norm; the distinction is that they redefine "fidelity" differently. But such redefinition is far insufficient, especially when the philosophical foundation of fidelity is overthrown by deconstruction.

The thesis first introduces Levinasian ethics of the Other, which is critically inherited by deconstructive ethics. Levinas strongly questions the whole western philosophical discourse, which he criticizes as the totalization of the Other and otherness. According to him, the real Other is exteriority, which cannot be reduced to the Same, and which escapes the cognitive powers of the knowing subject. It describes the relation between the Same and the Other. Thus it is also called the ethics of the Other. Derrida does not totally agree with this exteriority, but the Levinasian ethics has an obvious influence on him.

Then, the thesis focuses on the ethics of deconstruction, which influences the translation ethics of deconstructive approach. Deconstruction

defies the convention that a text has an exclusive and transcendental meaning, or in Derrida's word, "There is nothing outside of the text". It argues that meaning is the effect of language and can only be obtained through reading or translating. So, deconstruction proposes *double reading* to overthrow the traditional understanding of the text. The ethical moment of deconstruction lies in this "undecidability" of meaning, which is reflected in translation as the "relevant translation". The traditional and anti-traditional meaning found in *double reading* should be both presented in translation. So, deconstructive translation ethics is not all about the ethics of the Other, which focuses on differences between languages and cultures; it is also about finding a different way of understanding meaning, which is the ethics of difference.

After this, Venuti's thought on translation ethics is taken as an example to show the application of deconstructive translation ethics in practice. There is an obvious tendency in Venuti's translation studies. His discussion about foreignizing and domesticating translation strategies and his "ethics of location" can be seen as realization of deconstructive translation ethics in translation practice in cultural level.

In the end, the author points out that, in spite of the limit of this approach, deconstruction and its ethical thought should be considered as a powerful weapon of (self-)criticizing for translation theorists.

Key words: deconstruction, translation ethics, Derrida, Venuti

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Introduction

0.1 Motivation and Significance

In the history of translating practice and translation study, the only ethical concept related with translation is fidelity. In certain degree, there is only immortal original text and no immortal translation. Ever since there is translation, the authorial meaning of the original text is seen as transcendent, while the translation and the translator take the secondary position. Translation ethics in this sense is the ethics of fidelity. Such an ethics is so taken for granted that any further discussion on this subject is seen as redundant. This is why translation ethics, if it is ever noticed, is not the key point in traditional translation studies. This opinion has never been questioned until deconstruction in the late 20th century breaks hierarchical oppositions like original/translation, speech/writing, author/translator, etc.

The western philosophy is rooted in ancient Greek and Hebrew civilization. So, the western translation theory, under the shadow of this philosophical thinking, is influenced by logocentrism and the translation of the *Bible*. This is the cause of transcendent meaning of the text and the ethics of fidelity. But the western philosophy is not unquestionable. Emmanuel Levinas advocates the attack upon metaphysics and logocentrism from the mid-20th century. His thinking can be seen as a predecessor of Derrida's deconstruction, which originates in France in the late 1960s and is characterized by its rebelling and revolutionary features against structuralism. Deconstruction is a strategy of analysis that has been applied primarily to linguistics, literature, and philosophy defying the "binary opposition" and the "only truth" in structuralism and metaphysics. It shakes the background of the

ethics of fidelity in translation, and calls for a rethinking on translation and translation studies.

Like western philosophy, the traditional western ethics also originates from these two traditions, namely, the Greek tradition and Judeo-Christian tradition. In the Greek tradition, ethics was conceived as relating to the "good life". Inquiry was directed toward discovering the nature of happiness; differences of opinion upon the characteristics of the happiest life and the means for achieving it are the main topic of ancient philosophers. While in the other tradition, the ideas of righteousness before God and the love of God and neighbor constitute the substance of morality. These two diverse traditions, together with many other historical and cultural factors, produce a multiplicity of systems in ethics. However, ethics of deconstruction is not related in either of these traditions, rather it is an ethics in Levinasian sense, which regards western philosophy as its target to break down.

Recent translation studies witness a shift of the ethics of the same toward the ethics of difference. Many translation theorists realize the importance of the issue of translation ethics. Yet for most translation theories translation ethics still refers to that of fidelity. This phenomenon is rather paradoxical. Fidelity cannot solve the ethical problem in translation all at once, especially in a post-modern background where the traditional philosophy is questioned. So, this thesis tries to work out the new ethics and its theoretical ground in deconstruction. I believe that deconstructive translation ethics could bring fresh breeze to prevalent translation studies.

Besides, in the current context of globalization, the traditional ways of thinking are correspondingly out of date and become invalid; while deconstruction, with its productive power, could bring some light for researchers to look for new way forward. I think this is especially true for the

influence of deconstructive translation ethics in translation studies.

0.2 Approaches and Arrangements

The previous translation studies seldom pay attention to the ethics of deconstruction. The author holds the opinion that an ethics of difference based on deconstruction has its root in the ethical moment of deconstruction. So, apart from its introduction and conclusion, this thesis consists of five chapters as follow:

In the first chapter, this thesis briefly reviews the studies on translation ethics and deconstruction, and points out that the relation between ethics and deconstruction is not brought into previous translation studies.

Then, in the second chapter, the thesis analyzes the ethical moment in deconstruction, and shows how deconstruction takes place ethically. Also, the influence of Levinas's thinking on Derrida is displayed.

The third chapter carries out a discussion of the relation between deconstruction and translation ethics. Deconstruction overthrows the traditional translation ethics of fidelity and sets up a new ethics of the Other and difference.

The forth chapter chooses Venuti and his argument on translation ethics to illustrate the application of deconstructive translation ethics in practice. In this chapter the present thesis proves the deconstructive tendency in Venuti's translation study and points out the value of his work.

In the last chapter, a critical viewpoint is made to show the contribution and limitation of deconstructive translation ethics. It broadens the mind of theorists and encourages them to seek new ways of thinking. Although it has obvious demerits, this translation ethics invites researchers to rethink their studying method and move forward in translation studies.

At last, the thesis draws a conclusion and makes some suggestions for further study.

Chapter 1
Literature Review

1.1 The Return to Ethics in Translation Studies

"Flowing beneath every human action is the current of ethical significance, and in all ages and places, questions about moral conduct and moral principles are posed and answers attempted."(Denise, White and Peterfruend, 2006:3) This partly explains the word "return" used by Anthony Pym in the *Introduction* of *The Translator*, Volume 7, Number 2, 2001. It is hard to define ethics because of its multiplicity of systems. Theorists like Aristotle and Kant conceive ethics so differently that a truly meaningful conception of it requires a great project of acquaintance with the ethical theories themselves. Yet it is generally agreed that ethics is about "the study and evaluation of human conduct in the light of moral principles" (Harris, William and Levey, Judith, 1975: 896). In this sense, translation ethics has a history as long as that of translation itself, yet it was almost invisible until 1984, when the French translation theorist Antoine Berman proposed this concept in an academic symposium. Still, it was "an unhappy word of over-reaction" until the end of the 20th century (Pym, 2001: 129).

Traditionally, the ethics of translation has often been sought for via the concept of fidelity (Koskinen, 2000: 13). Famous dictums like *traduttore, traditore* (the translator is a betrayer) and *belles infidèle* (unfaithful beauties) reveal the fact that fidelity is vital and hard to achieve in translating. In fact, most traditional translation studies hold an equivalence-based ethics: philological translation theorists attempt to explore the author's attention and reproduce it in the translation; theorists of linguistic approach think that there

is a pre-existed meaning waiting for a translator to find, and the translator's responsibility is to reproduce the original meaning in translation by grasping the transferring rules between two languages. As Pym (2001: 130) puts it, "a strong tradition in ethical questions is to consider the translator responsible for representing a source text or author. If something is in the source but not in the translation, the translator is at fault and is thus somehow unethical." Even among the revisionists of translation theory, there still seems to exist a hidden equation mark between fidelity and ethics (Koskinen, 2000: 20).

There are also some translation theorists who do not want to touch the issue of ethics. For example, descriptive translation theorists, especially Toury, forcibly avoid ethical aspects in translation studies because they believe setting up moral norms is against the principle of descriptive study (ibid: 18). This omission is unfortunate because choosing description against prescription is a moral-judgment by itself.

However, since translation is a complicated human act of choosing and decision-making (ibid: 14), and evaluation is an indispensable part of choosing (Bauman, 1993: 4-5); so translators cannot escape the ideological and cultural constraints which always tilt the translation in one direction or another. After the "cultural turn" came onto stage in 1990 with Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere's co-edited book *Translation, History and Culture*, translation studies began to focus on cultural impact and constraints on translation and on "the larger issue of context, history and convention"(Bassnett and Lefevere, 2004: 11). Current translation studies like feminist and postcolonial theories do not see translation as the reproduction of the original any more. A compass of fidelity is far too limited for a translator to work with in the environment of contemporary world. With the explanatory power of fidelity petering out, a reformulation of translation ethics is needed,

and a rethinking of translation ethics should be one of the key issues in today's translation studies.

1.2 Translation Ethics

Translation ethics can be seen as moral principles that govern translators' activity. Basically, one can interpret all translational rules as ethical decisions (Koskinen, 2000: 14). Since translation involves all kinds of participants and relations between them, translation ethics should be able to cover all the aspects.

Just as each ethical theorist conceives ethics in a personal way, translation theorists cannot agree with each other about translation ethics. Antonie Berman, the initiator of the concept, defines that the properly ethical aim of the translating act is "receiving the foreign as foreign" (Li Heqing, Huang Hao, Bo Zhenjie, 2005: 170). For Venuti (2004: 20; 1998: 25), the ultimate ethical implications of translation extend to issues like world peace and democratic geopolitical relations. For Pym, the most fundamental aspect for translators' ethics is the responsibility to the profession (Koskinen, 2000: 96). While the feminist translation theorists find translation ethics in unsettling the received ideas of women's condition and questioning the hegemonic power structures of patriarchy, postcolonial theorists find it in unsettling subaltern condition and questioning colonization (ibid: 43).

Chesterman (Pym, 2001: 130) concludes five approaches to talk about translation ethics: the ethics of representation (of the source text, or of the author), an expending ethics of service (based on fulfilling a brief negotiated with a client), a more philosophical ethics of communication (focused on exchanges with the foreigner as Other), and a norm-based ethics (where ethical behavior depends on the expectations specific to each cultural

location), and an ethics of commitment (an attempt to define the "good" ideally attained by translation, embodied in an oath that might work as a code of professional ethics for translators).

These five approaches cover almost all the participants and their relationship in translating process. They frequently overlap, and even conflict in translation practice. Yet this is what "decision making" is about, because only when confronted with several co-existing norms will the translator need to choose and decide in translating. If there were only one correct line of action, following it would not require consulting one's moral conscience; but as soon as there exist more than one option, choosing between them necessitates moral considerations, and the choice can also be judged by others from the point of view of ethics and morality (Koskinen, 2000: 14).

Among these approaches, the ethics of representation and communication are the special features that differentiate translation ethics from other applied ethics. These two aspects are the main concern of deconstructive translation ethics, which is the focus of this thesis.

1.3 Research of Deconstructive Translation Ethics

The word "deconstruction" is coined by Jacques Derrida in France in the late 1960s and is characterized by its rebelling against structuralism. As one of the most influential theories in the western academic world, deconstruction involves the fundamental problems in philosophy, linguistics, history, literature, politics and ethics. Holding a significant position in translation and ethics studies, deconstruction has been hotly discussed by theorists in these fields and greatly influences the development of theories there.

With a philosophical origin, deconstruction is inherently related to translation and ethics. The problem of translation has a very essential position

in deconstruction, and Derrida considered it as "the problem of the very passage into philosophy" (Derrida, 1981: 72). Although it seems that Derrida used translation as a tool to solve philosophical problems since he was not a translation theorist, deconstruction does open a new direction for translation studies and make profitable contribution. It influences translation theorists like Lawrence Venuti, Rosemary Arrojo and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and provides theoretical support for feminist and postcolonial translation studies. It calls for rethinking of translation as well as translation ethics.

Although it is debatable whether Venuti should be labeled as a "pure" deconstructionist because of his affinities with Marxism and cultural materialism (see Koskinen, 2000: 41), he is the mostly discussed translation theorist with deconstructive tendencies and seen as the representative of this translation study approach. No one can talk about deconstructive translation theory without mentioning him. His work *The Scandals of Translation: Toward an Ethics of Difference,* as the name suggests, is reflection of his translation ethics thought. In his another work, *The Translator's Invisibility,* he builds his whole theoretical apparatus around the critique of invisibility, which is presently probably the most widely accepted ethical notion in translation studies (ibid: 98).

Efforts have also been made in Kathleen Davis' *Deconstruction and Translation* to portray the issue of ethics, or responsibility, in translation, which turns out to be a slim part of the book. In fact, deconstructive translation ethics is indispensable of the ethics of deconstruction. As Critchley (1999: 2) puts it, "the pattern of reading produced in the deconstruction of philosophical texts has an ethical structure: deconstruction 'is' ethical; or to formulate the same thought less ontologically, deconstruction takes place ethically, or there is duty in deconstruction." And the "ethics" here is not

understood traditionally. So, a research of deconstructive translation ethics should be a combination of the deconstructive ethics and translation in context, which is the starting point of this thesis.

Chapter 2
The Ethics of Deconstruction

The way in which the question of ethics will be raised within deconstructive reading will be through a *rapprochement* with the work of Emmanuel Levinas (Critchley, 1999:3). Derrida and Levinas share the same double tradition of phenomenology and Judaism, and Derrida inherits Levinas's thinking in a critical way. As Derrida says, "faced with a thinking like that of Levinas, I never have an objection. I am ready to subscribe to everything that he says. That does not mean that I think the same thing in the same way, but in this respect the differences are very difficult to determine. I tried to pose a certain number of questions to Levinas whilst reading him, where it may have been a question of his relation to the Greek *logos*, of his strategy, or of his thinking with respect to femininity for example, but what happens there is not of the order of disagreement or distance" (ibid: 10). These remarks show the importance of Levinas in Derrida's thinking. In fact, the ethics of deconstruction should be understood in Levinasian sense.

Compared with the traditional sense of ethics, the Levinasian concept of ethics is novel and its meaning is transferred, or in Derrida's words, "I believe that when Levinas speaks of ethics—I wouldn't say that this has nothing in common with what has been covered over in this word from Greece to the German philosophy of the 19th century, ethics is wholly other, and yet it is the same word" (Derrida, 1986, quoted in Critchley, 1999: 16). This is why it is essential to put Levinasian ethics at the starting point of the discussion in this chapter.

2.1 Levinasian Ethics

Levinas takes it as his responsibility to rethink and criticize the whole western philosophical tradition, which he considers ontological and cannot produce the real ethics. For Levinas, western philosophy has most often been what he calls "ontology", by which he means the attempt to comprehend the Being. It consists in suppressing or reducing all forms of otherness by transmuting their alterity into the Same. The ego, or "I", is the site for the transmutation of otherness. Thus philosophy is defined by Levinas as the alchemy whereby alterity is transmuted into sameness, by means of the philosopher's stone of the knowing ego (Critchley, 1999: 6).

If one says that (traditional) ethics occurs as the putting into question of the ego, the knowing subject, self-consciousness, or the Same by the Self; then the Levinasian concept of ethics is about putting into question of the Same by the Other. The Other, in Levinas's word, is the "alterity", or "exteriority", which cannot be reduced to the Same, and which escapes the cognitive powers of the knowing subject. For him, ethics is critique; it is the critical *mise en question* of the liberty, spontaneity, and cognitive emprise of the ego that seeks to reduce all otherness to itself (ibid: 5). Rather than ethics being understood as a traditional and regional component of philosophical thinking, built upon the ground of an ontological or logocentric metaphysics, Levinasian ethics disrupts ontology or logocentrism. It describes the relation between the Same and the Other. Thus it is also called the ethics of the Other.

Levinas's thought is about an openness to the Other at the expense of the Self: the Other "persecutes" the Self, leaves no room for escape or evasion of responsibility. The Self must be hospitable to the Other, which means to welcome the Other, the stranger and in no small part. This involves recognizing the otherness of the stranger precisely as otherness, not as some

version of one's own thought. If the traditional philosophy is seen as extremely self-centered, Levinas's argument shows a tendency toward the other pole. For him, this is the way to eradicate violence and get rescued, because the respect of the Other can be real only when every self regards the other as Other. However, this is a dangerous and paradoxical argument because it depends on the assumption that the Other, the other Self, will perform the same ethical norm with the Self. Although he only demands of the Self to act morally without expecting anyone else to do the same (Koskinen, 2000: 58), it cannot be denied that his book is written to influence everyone, including the Other. Thus Levinasian ethics does not escape the logocentrism it tries to defy. This will be further explored in 2.3 below.

2.2 Ethics of Deconstructive Reading

As mentioned above, Levinas's influence on Derrida is obvious. Derrida's whole project can be seen as a Levinasian one, yet not the same. Deconstruction is always deconstruction of a text. Derrida's thinking is always thinking about a text, and deconstruction is always engaged in reading a text. An ethical moment is essential to deconstructive reading, or in other words, deconstruction takes place ethically. The question is: "How does deconstruction take place?" This will be answered with the following process.

2.2.1 *Logos* and Logocentrism

The term *logos* was first promoted by the famous Greek philosopher Heraclitus. It refers to "speech", "logic", "discourse" and "reason" in Greek, and "the Word of God" in biblical terms. Logocentrism is what western philosophy has been—the metaphysics of presence, which is the belief in a transcendent self-presence founded on the *logos*. Western philosophy relies

upon oppositions like meaning/form, soul/body, intuition/expression, literal/metaphorical, natural/artificial, intelligible/sensible, positive/negative, transcendental/empirical, content/form, original/translation, etc (see Davis, 2004: 29). In such oppositions, as Derrida describes, there is "not a peaceful coexistence of facing terms but a violent hierarchy. One of the terms dominates the other, occupies the commanding position" (Culler, 2004: 85). The superior term belongs to the *logos* and is a higher presence, and the inferior term makes a fall. Logocentrism thus assumes the priority of the first term and conceives the second in relation to it, as a complication, a negation, a manifestation, or a disruption of the first.

Logocentrism is phonocentrism, which presumes that the voice, often associated with breath and spirit, "has a relation of essential and immediate proximity with the mind" (Derrida, 1967: 11). It suggests that the speaker's consciousness is a fully isolable self-presence, an independent self-identity. Speech has been understood as the direct expression of this presence and the truth of its meaning. In speech there is already mediation but the signifiers disappear as soon as they are uttered; they do not obtrude, and the speaker can explain any ambiguities to insure that the thought has been conveyed. Writing, on the other hand, is understood as a derived system that simply represents speech in the absence of the speaker. Thus it breaks the unity of consciousness and poses a threat to the conveyance of truth. This is why philosophers do not think philosophy should be writing. Western philosophy treats writing as a means of expression which is at best irrelevant to the thought it expresses and at worst a barrier to that thought. As Richard Rorty puts it, "for philosophy, writing is an unfortunate necessity; what is really wanted is to show, to demonstrate, to point out, to exhibit, to make one's interlocutor stand at gaze before the world. . . . In a mature science, the words in which the investigator

'writes up' his results should be as few and as transparent as possible" (Culler, 2004: 90). This attitude is not held by natural scientists only. Saussure posits a typical logocentric relation between speech and writing: while speech is "natural", writing is "artificial"; speech forms the "true bond" of unity in language, while the bond of writing is "fictitious" and "superficial"; speech presents language directly, but writing obscures and disguises language (Saussure, 2001: 32, 25, 30).

To break down logocentrism or phonocentrism is an aim shared by Levinas and Derrida. It is of fundamental importance for the novel Levinasian ethics and Derrida's deconstructive project.

2.2.2 Difference and Trace

Derrida inherits Saussure's description of language as a system of differences:

> The conceptual side of value is made up solely of relations and differences with respect to the other terms of language, and the same can be said of its material side. Everything that has been said up to this point boils down to this: in language there are only differences. Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms. Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system. The idea or phonic substance that a sign contains is of less importance than the other signs that surround it. (Saussure, 2001: 117-118)

Consequently, Derrida observes, the signified concept is never present, or a present, in and of itself; rather, "every concept is inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concepts, by means of the

systematic play of differences" (Davis, 2004: 13). In this sense, there are only signifiers, since each signifier refers not to a signified presence outside of language, but to other signifiers. As a result, meaning is an effect of language, not a prior presence merely expressed in language. Deconstruction rejects the ideas that meaning is before or beyond language.

In order to describe the interpretation of meaning in this sense, it is necessary to bring forward the abstract concept of trace. As Derrida explains in *Positions*:

> Whether in the order of spoken or written discourse, no element can function as a sign without referring to another element which itself is not simply present. This interweaving results in each "element"—phonenem or grapheme—being constituted on the basis of the trace within it of the other elements of the chain or system. This interweaving, is the text produced only in the transformation of another text. Nothing, neither among the elements nor within the system, is anywhere ever simply present or absent. There are only, everywhere, differences and traces of traces. (ibid: 16)

A signifying element which is present is always related to those elements which are absent, and trace is the "place" where their relation is marked. With referring to other elements, no element is fully original; also, every text must carry traces of previous texts. Pursuing meaning is not a matter of revealing some hidden presence that is already there; rather, it is relentless tracking through an always moving play of differences.

In this sense, Derrida's famous remark "There is nothing outside of the text" (Derrida, 1967: 163) means that the general text is a limitless network of differentially ordered signs which is not preceded by any meaning, presence or transcendental signified, but rather which constitutes each of the latter (Critchley, 1999: 261). In this way, text is released from the restriction of the

timeless presence which it is supposed to represent, and this consequently causes significant change in reading and comprehending and eventually translating.

2.2.3 Authorial Intention

As mentioned before, writing has been seen not only a device of representation but also a distortion of speech. This judgment is as old as philosophy itself. In *Phaedrus* Plato condemns writing as a bastardized form of communication; separated from the father or moment of origin, writing can give rise to all sorts of misunderstandings since the speaker is not there to explain to the listener what he has in mind. Although this viewpoint is logocentrical, it holds the same argument with Derrida that the author's intention (if it exists) is distorted in the text. Of course the reasons are different.

For Plato and many other philosophers, writing is external and nontranscendental, and the threat posed by writing is that the operations of what should be merely a means of expression might affect or infect the meaning it is supposed to represent. However, to say an author intends to convey certain meaning in the text is to assume that the meaning pre-exists the text. Since meaning is the effect of language, it cannot precede and be extracted from the latter. So, the author's intended meaning "must await being said or written in order to inhabit itself, and in order to become, by differing from itself, what it is: meaning" (Davis, 2004: 53). And because the signifying elements present in the text is referring to and carrying traces of other elements, the author's intended meaning always get failed in the moving play of differences.

Besides, the concept of intention is also problematic. A pre-existing

intention can be produced only by a self-identical intending subject outside the system of differences, yet this is impossible because "there is nothing outside of text". As Derrida puts it, "the 'subject' of writing does not exist if we mean by that some sovereign solitude of the author. The subject of writing is a system of relations between strata" (ibid: 57). The author cannot function as ahistorical, isolated identities, and an author's work is "not the result of spontaneous inspiration, but is tied to the institutional systems of the time and space over which the individual author has little control or awareness" (Gentzler, 2004: 150). Therefore, the intended meaning of a text can not be transcendental and only emerges as it is read or translated.

2.2.4 Double Reading

Deconstruction takes places ethically, and what takes place in deconstruction is reading. Now it comes to answer the question of how deconstruction takes place.

What distinguishes Deconstructive reading with the reading in general concept is *double reading*, namely, a reading that interlaces at least two motifs or layers of reading, most often by first repeating what Derrida calls "the dominant interpretation" of a text in the guise of a commentary and second, within and through this repetition, leaving the order of commentary and opening a text up to the blind spots or ellipses within the dominant interpretation (Critchley, 1999: 23). The author's intended meaning, as mentioned above, relying on the play of differences, could be veiled, which means that the author did not mean to say what he actually said in a text. Thus there is space or distance between the authorial intention and the text, between what the author commands and fails to command in a language. This is the space that deconstructive reading occupies.

The first layer of double reading, the dominant interpretation, is the traditional logocentric reading which is the target of deconstruction. Although it "has always only protected and has never opened a reading", it is the "indispensable guardrail" in critical production (ibid.). This dominant interpretation of a text in reading can avoid to "say just anything at all", and Derrida has never "accepted saying, or being encouraged to say, just anything at all" (Derrida, 1967: 158). The second moment of double reading is the overcoming of the dominant interpretation. It brings the text into contradiction with itself by opening its intended meaning to an alterity which goes against what the text wants to say or mean. Derrida often articulates this double reading around a semantic ambivalence in the usage of a particular word, like *supplément* in Rousseau, or *pharmakon* in Plato's *Phaedrus*.

"Languages are made to be spoken; writing serves only as a supplement to speech," writes Rousseau (see Culler, 2004: 102). For him, the supplement is an inessential extra, added to something complete in itself. But a supplement is something that completes or makes an addition; it is added in order to compensate for a lack in what was supposed to be complete in itself. These two different meanings of supplement are linked in a powerful logic, and in both meanings, the supplement is presented as exterior, foreign to the essential nature of that to which it is added. These two meanings are both at work.

According to the second meaning, writing is added to speech only if speech is not a self-sufficient, natural plentitude, only if there is already in speech a lack or absence that enables writing to supplements it. For Derrida, Rousseau's various external supplements are called in to supplement precisely because there is already a lack in what is supplemented, an original lack (ibid: 103).

For example, Rousseau discusses education as an external addition to nature, which is in principle complete. But the description of this supplement reveals an inherent lack in nature: nature must be completed by education; the right education is needed if human nature is to emerge as it truly is. The logic of supplement thus makes nature the prior term, a plentitude that is there at the start, but reveals an inherent lack or absence within it, so that education becomes an essential condition of that which it supplements.

What Derrida finds in Rousseau is an endless chain of supplements. Writing is a supplement to speech, but speech is already a supplement (to children's weakness, for example). In this sense, effects of the original are made possible by supplementation. So, the secondary position of writing as supplement is deconstructed; writing is needed and called for by speech. Similarly, deconstructionists regard translation as supplement to the original, which will be discussed in chapter three.

In *Phaedrus* writing is described as a *pharmakon*, which means both "remedy" (a remedy for weakness of memory) and "poison". Socrates treats writing as a dangerous drug, although it is invented as a remedy for human beings. This double meaning of *pharmakon* proves essential to the logical placement of writing as a supplement: it is an artificial addition which cures and infects. *Pharmakon* is closely related to *pharmakeus* (magician, sorcerer, prisoner), a term that is applied in the dialogues to Socrates as well as to others. To his interlocutors Socrates is a magician who works by indirection and enchantment; in a strange town he would swiftly be arrested as a sorcerer; and in Athens when he is arrested and led to drink poison (*pharmakon*) it is for seduction of youth.

Though writing and the *pharmakon* were presented as artifice marginal to the order of reason and nature, the signifying relations imply a reversal of

this order and the identification of philosophy as a particular determination of the *pharmakon*. The *pharmakon* has no proper or determinate character but is rather the possibility of both poison and remedy. So, as Derrida argues, "the *pharmakon* is 'ambivalent' because it constitutes the element in which oppositions are opposed, the movement and play by which each relates back to the other, reverses itself and passes into the other: (soul/body, good/evil, inside/outside, memory/forgetfulness, speech/writing, etc.). It is on the bases of this play or this movement that Plato establishes the oppositions or distinctions. The *pharmakon* is the movement, the locus, and the play (the production) of difference" (see ibid: 143).

Derrida's reading of Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* is also deconstructive. There is an affirmation of logocentrism in Saussure's argument. The concept of the sign itself is based on a distinction between the sensible and the intelligible. The signifier exists to give access to the signified and thus seems to be subordinated to the concept or meaning that it communicates. He also relegates writing to a secondary and derivative status, and maintains that "the object of linguistic analysis is not defined by the combination of the written word and the spoken word: the spoken alone constitutes the object" (Saussure, 2001: 23-24). But Saussure's analysis of the nature of signs leads to the conclusion that signs are the product of a system of differences. Sound itself, he argues, cannot belong to the linguistic system, and "in the linguistic system there are only differences, without positive terms" (ibid: 120). This is a powerful critique of logocentrism. Thus Saussure's discourse deconstructs itself, and his argument leads to the reversal that speech is a form of writing. According to the characteristics traditionally attributed to writing, such as iterability, speech can be seen as a form of writing because only when it is repeatable can it function as a signifier (see

Culler, 2004: 101-102).

So we can see that in spite of Rousseau, Plato and Saussure's attitude toward writing, their argument on the secondary position of writing is self-deconstructive. In fact, the value and force of a text may depend to a considerable extent on the way it deconstructs the philosophy that supports it. That is what makes deconstructive reading productive and necessary.

2.3 Summary

Both Levinas and Derrida's thinking aim at disrupting the western philosophical tradition, i.e., the activity of assimilating all otherness to the Same, or logocentrism; but their ways of thinking are different. The crux of their disagreement , as Derrida writes, is that "the attempt to achieve an opening toward the beyond of philosophical discourse, by means of philosophical discourse, which can never be shaken off completely, cannot possibly succeed within language" (Culler, 2004: 133). That is to say, the only language available for Levinas to disrupt philosophy is that of philosophy, or logocentrism; when philosophy is down, its language must go down with it. Thus the paradox is that he has to use the resources of metaphysical discourse even when he tries to promote their displacement.

Unlike Levinas, although inflicted by the same problem, Derrida seeks to deconstruct logocentrism within itself. When it refers to the "goal" or "aim" of deconstruction, he writes (1967: 161-162): "We wanted to attain the point of a certain exteriority with respect to the totality of the logocentric epoch. From this point of exteriority a certain deconstruction of this totality could be broached." It is from such a point of exteriority that deconstruction could cut into or penetrate the totality, thereby displacing it. The goal of deconstruction, therefore, is to locate a point of otherness within philosophical or logocentric

conceptuality and then to deconstruct this conceptuality from that position of alterity. It is at this point to understand *double reading* properly: it is either commentary or interpretation; rather it enacts a destabilization of the stability of the dominant interpretation or intentional self-understanding of a text (see Critchley, 1999: 257). Deconstruction functions as a constant remainder that every approach has its reverse side, that every vision is limited. What is seen is always haunted by what remains unseen (Koskinen, 2000: 27). The ethical moment in deconstruction lies in "undecidability", or the attempt to break the univocality which risks an end of human thought. There should be more than one way of thinking, with different voices co-existing and competing.

Thus I should argue that Levinas makes a transformation from ethics of sameness toward ethics of the Other, focusing on the ethics of communication which deals with exchanges with the foreigner as Other; while Derrida makes it more toward ethics of differences, focusing on the ethics of representation of the source text. Both of these two transformations cause significant change in translation studies.

Chapter 3
Deconstruction and Translation Ethics

Although Derrida is not a translation theorist and deconstruction is not a translation theory, the problem of translation is never fully absent in Derrida's texts. According to Derrida, all of philosophy is centrally concerned with the notion of translation: "the origin of philosophy is translation or the thesis of translatability" (Gentzler, 2004: 147). As ethics, translation, as well as translation ethics, undergoes a transformation by deconstruction.

3.1 The Overthrow of Fidelity

Although in contemporary translation theories the notion of ethics is often touched upon, and many translation theorists with a variety of different theoretical backgrounds stress the need to rethink the issue of ethics, the supremacy of fidelity is still holding its own. It seems that fidelity is still perceived as the word to be used in speaking about translation and ethics. For example, Sherry Simon's interpretation of the feminist version of fidelity is that, instead of being faithful to the author or the reader, fidelity is to be directed towards the writing project itself (Simon, 2001: 309). In other words, even if there is among feminist translators "deep suspicion of rules defining fidelity" (ibid: 315), the explanatory power of fidelity itself is not truly questioned as long as the rules for definition are agreed on. So, what really happens is redefinitions of fidelity. Yet today's translation theory requires much more than this.

Fidelity relies on the presupposition that there is pre-existing meaning, a remote truth, in the original text (ibid: 321). The logocentric binary opposition

that separates language and meaning is the theoretical ground of fidelity. It is believed that the source text has a determinable meaning which can be translated into another system of signification. The translator's task is to approach and reproduce this meaning. Thus, in translation studies, what has been mainly focused on is the issue such as whether a target text is faithful or not.

Such a translation ethics is overthrown with the deconstruction of logocentrical binarity. According to deconstruction, signifiers only refer to other signifiers rather than to some signified presence, and meaning is an effect of language, generated through play of differences. Therefore, it cannot be simply extracted from language and transferred. This does not mean that texts are untranslatable, rather that the source text for translation is already a site of multiple meanings and intertextual crossings. In this sense, the author cannot control the play of differences to make sure his intended meaning conveyed; also, the translator can never simply re-present an intended meaning.

Ultimately, in the perspective of deconstruction, where there is no meaning before or beyond texts, or no intended meaning can be found in reading or translating, ethics of fidelity loses its theoretical background in translation studies.

3.2 Deconstruction on Translation

Derrida's argument about translation can be found in many of his works, two of which are chosen here to illustrate his main opinion on translation. But the discussion should start with Benjamin, who is considered as the predecessor of deconstructive translation, and his famous essay on translation, "The Task of the Translator", which proposes the concepts of "afterlife" and

"pure language" that influence Derrida's thinking.

3.2.1 Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator"

In his famous essay "The Task of the Translator", a preface to his 1923 translations of Baudelair's *Tableaux Parisiens*, Walter Benjamin shows a deconstructive attitude toward translation. He revises the original/translation relation and advances the concept of "pure language". His thought on translation influenced that of Derrida, and his essay is often cited by Derrida and most deconstructive translation theorists.

According to Benjamin, the translation is not dependent upon the original for its existence; rather, the original depends upon the translation for its survival (Davis, 2004: 40), and the translation is the "afterlife" of the original: "Translations that are more than transmissions of subject matter", writes Benjamin, "come into being when in the course of its survival a work has reached the age of its fame. ... The life of the originals attains in them to its ever-renewed latest and most abundant flowing" (Benjamin, 1969: 72). Derrida also adopts Benjamin's term "survival" to explain how translation modifies or supplements the original. The "task" of the translator, argues Derrida, adopting Benjamin's argument, is no less than to insure the survival of language and, by extension, the survival of life, and his essay is about giving life, transforming the source text so that it "lives on", that it "lives more and better", that it lives "beyond the means of the author" (Gentzler, 2004: 162-3).

Benjamin also claims that translation has nothing to do with communicating content or information. Rather, it "ultimately serves the purpose of expressing the central reciprocal relationship between languages" (ibid.). He argues that pursuing faithfulness is not the purpose of translation:

"Instead of resembling the meaning of the original, (a translation) must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel" (ibid: 79). The whole vessel, for Benjamin, is the language of God, or the "pure language". "Languages are not strangers to each other" (ibid: 73), they are pale shadows of the divine language. Benjamin defines this divine language as "[A] suprahistorical kinship of languages [which] rests in the intention underlying each language as a whole — an intention, however, which no single language can attain by itself but which is realized only by the totality of their intentions supplementing each other: pure language" (ibid: 74).

In this sense, For Benjamin, the task of the translator is to "release in his own language that pure language which is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work" (ibid: 80). In order to accomplish this task, the translator should not try to convert a foreign language into his own, but, on the contrary, should let his own language be powerfully affected, even penetrated, by the foreign one.

Johnston (1992: 45-6) argues that this notion of a "pure language" has two functions. One is to designate a language of pure meaning univocity unobscured by the mediation of any particular language. Thus this notion implies a theological view of language. The other is to grasp the differential and diacrirical nature of all languages, because the essential nature of language only becomes visible in and through differences in particular languages. For Benjamin, a translator should try to keep the difference of language in translation rather than suppress it.

Although Benjamin's argument on translation has an obvious deconstructive tune, his aim is not quite the same with that of deconstruction

theorists. For Benjamin, translation is the way to reveal or approach the "pure language", which has a theological tinge. His dismission of the tradition relation between original and translation does not change the fact that he still holds the strict binary opposition of them. Besides, the concept of "pure language" is in conflict with deconstruction, which demonstrates the necessarily plural nature of language, and insists that the notion of a pure tongue or universal language is ultimately totalitarian (see Davis, 2004: 45). Anyway, the influence of his thought about translation in "The Task of the Translator" is significant. It challenges traditional translation studies and becomes the starting point of Derrida's most famous and most quoted essay on translation, "Des Tours de Babel".

3.2.2 "Des Tours de Babel"

Following Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator", this essay is interwound with Benjamin's and Derrida's voices. It starts from the Babelic curse and the word "task".

The story of the Tower of Babel, which is about the origin of languages, is from the *Bible*:

> Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with it in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. And the Lord said, "Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they

propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

According to this story, there was only one language in the beginning. This reminds us of Benjamin's argument that languages are segments of the "pure language". Yet it is not my place here to discuss whether there is a theological character of this term. Derrida's essay focuses particularly on the proper name that typically represented by "Babel".

"Babel", which origins from Hebrew, originally means confusion, as it is shown in the biblical story; but it cannot recall such a meaning to the readers without Hebraic background. Besides, as a proper name, "Babel" does not refer to a unique referent. Derrida cited the French translation of the *Bible* by Chouraqui, who attempted to be literal. This version renders: "Sur quoi [la ville] il clame son nom: Bavel, Confusion" (Over which [the city] he proclaims his/its name: Bavel, Confusion) (Davis, 2004: 11). According to Derrida, "Babel" is the name of both the city and of God, and thus demonstrates the possibility of language naming an identity that exists before or outside context; God is seen as a deconstructionist, for He interrupts the construction of the Tower of Babel. This is not merely deconstruction of a building; it is also deconstruction of the assumption that words or signs have a one-to-one correspondence with a referent that exists before or outside language. God prevents the Shemites from "making a name" for themselves and brings "confusion" into their language: "At the same time as God gives his name to the sons of Shem, He loses it as a properly proper name" (Davis,

2004: 12).

Literally, "The Task of the Translator" implies that the translator is in debt; he must commit the duty given to him. For Derrida, this "debt", or "duty", happens between the original text and the translation rather than between the author and the translator. The author does not give meaning, or truth, to the translator so that the latter must render it back. Rather, Derrida re-defines translation as a commitment, a duty, a debt, and a responsibility (Derrida, 1985: 174-175). The translation is called for by the original text; it supplements the original. God's interruption makes language doomed to be translated. He forbids and allows translating at the same time. For Derrida, translation is an inescapably dual activity. It is governed by "the law imposed by the name of God who in one stroke commands and forbids you to translate by showing and hiding from you the limit" (ibid: 204). That is to say, translation is both necessary and impossible. Yet this does not mean that translation cannot happen; rather, it means that translation cannot resolve the debt on it.

In Derrida's argument, the original text is equally indebted: "The original is the first debtor, the first petitioner; it begins by lacking and by pleading for translation" (ibid: 184). The original text is indebted because it is not a self-sufficient entity and need to be supplemented, or in Derrida's words, "it is because at the origin it was not there without fault, full, complete, total, identical to itself" (ibid: 188). The "mobility" or "fault" in the original is what Derrida has described as *différance*, the signifying movement in language whereby the signified is an effect of relations and differences along a potentially endless chain of signifiers and therefore is always differential and deffered, never present as a unity (Venuti, 1992: 7). However, no translation can ever exhaust the translation possibility because translation, like the

original or any other text, is not self-sufficient either. In this sense, "the translation will truly be a moment in the growth of the original, which will complete itself in enlarging itself" (ibid.). This might explain why Derrida repeatedly stresses the unfinishness of translation. I shall argue that the original text calls for not a single translation, but a process of translation and re-translation.

In this essay, and every other essay of his on translation, Derrida tries to change the secondary position of translation. A translator does not extract pre-existing and stable meanings from the original text, but produces a new text which is productive writing. Yet productivity does not allow random writing. A translation called for by the source text must have a particular relationship with the latter. This relationship, in my opinion, is best described in Derrida's another essay: "What is a 'relevant' Translation?"

3.2.3 "What is a 'Relevant' Translation?"

In "Qu'est-ce qu'une translation 'relevant'?" (translated by Lawrence Venuti as "What is a 'Relevant' Translation?"), Derrida makes a description of the "relevant" translation through a discussion of "mercy" in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice.*

A relevant translation, Derrida (ibid: 177) observes, is taken to be one that does its job "while inscribing in the receiving language the most *relevant* equivalent for an original, the language that is *the most* right, appropriate, pertinent, adequate, opportune, pointed, univocal, idiomatic, and so on". Such a translation requires an economy which is double and contradictory, namely, the economy of *property* and the economy of *quantity* (see ibid: 178). According to the rule of "property", translation is an "attempt at appropriation which aims to transport home, in its language, in the most appropriate way

possible, in the most relevant way possible, the most proper meaning of the original text" (ibid: 179). Translation in this sense would fully, exhaustively, transfer everything in the source text. Yet it would defy the rule of "quantity", which requires that the translation "be *quantitatively* equivalent to the original, apart from any paraphrase, explication, explicitation, analysis, and the like" (ibid.).

Such a contradictory situation calls for an ethical performance of decision-making. As John Caputo puts it, "Decision-making [...] positively depends upon undecidability, which gives us something to decide" (Davis, 2004: 51). Undecidability should not be confused with indeterminacy, or that nothing can be done. Only when faced with an impossible decision do we decide. In Derrida's words, "a decision that didn't go through the ordeal of the undecidable would not be a free decision, it would only be the programmable application or unfolding of a calculable process" (Derrida, 1990, in Davis, 2004: 94). A decision cannot be justified by appeal to pre-existing norms, rules or laws. In a decision, there needs to be a moment of suspense. The decision may reaffirm a pre-existing rule or law, but not through passive conformity or mechanistic application. For Derrida, norms and conventions and other collectively formulated standards can only offer limited ethical guidelines. However, these guidelines cannot be overlooked. We cannot blindly rely on them or uncritically follow them. Undecidability, or what Derrida calls the experience of *aporia*, makes it impossible to reach perfectly just or moral decisions.

Yet the decision has to be made. A decision always involves satisfaction; someone's economy is served at the expense of someone else. This is also true with the translating process.

As discussed in "Des Tours de Babel", translation is defined as a debt,

which is just like the one bond between Shylock and Antonio in Shakespeare's story. In this contract, money is equal with a pound of flesh (without blood). This contract is legal yet cannot be paid. While Shylock insists that the bond with the merchant Antonio cannot be changed or undone, Portia argues against strict application of justice as defined through codified law, and declares: "Then must the Jew be merciful" (Derrida, 2001: 186). A "relevant" translation, in Derrida's sense, would perform translation in the way that, like Portia in the story says, "mercy seasons justice". For Derrida, also in Portia's argument, "mercy" acts as the leavening agent, like the seasoning that enhances the taste, lifting it above itself so that "justice is even more just, it transcends itself, it is spiritualized by rising and thus lifting itself above itself" (ibid: 196). "Relève", in Derrida's opinion, carries all these aspects, and he proposes it as a translation of "seasons".

However, Derrida repeatedly emphasizes that his translation is not a real translation, not to say a "relevant" one, and the most relevant translation is the one most impossible to be relevant (see ibid: 194). He cautiously avoids the possibility of making one translation better than or superior to the others. This may be why he does not give a clear answer to the question in the title. Anyway, it can be learnt from this essay that a "relevant" translation, in Derrida's sense, should follow traditional rules, laws and conventions in the first moment, and lift beyond these already established possibilities later. The later moment deconstructs rather than destroys the first one; in other words, what is defied is kept in translation.

3.3 The Ethics of the Other and the Ethics of Differences

The ethics of the Other is rather Levinasian than deconstructive, although it has a deconstructive attitude towards logocentrism and proposes a

new way of thinking. There is, as discussed in chapter 2, disagreement between Derrida and Levinas.

For Levinas, languages can be translated because they refer to a third and all encompassing category, a whole vessel, which is experience itself that is shared by every "human being" (Eaglestone, 2005: 131-132). This argument is very similar to Benjamin's "pure language", which is criticized of being "ultimately totalitarian" (see Davis, 2004: 45). Also, for Derrida, such an experience is an empiricism that is only a "dream" that "must vanish at daybreak, as soon as language awakens" (Eaglestone, 2005: 133). Besides, for Levinas, the Other cannot be totalized or reduced to the Self and is beyond the learning power of the knowing ego. In this sense, Levinas offers an ethics that suggests the impossibility of translation, because to translate the neighbor is to turn him/her/it into a category of one's own language and so to deny his/her/its otherness. It is only by approaching the neighbor, the other, as that one cannot understand or comprehend, or translate, that one acts ethically. So, to translate, or even the attempt to translate, is an immoral behavior.

However, this is not to say that deconstruction rejects an ethics of the Other. Derrida critically inherits Levinas's thinking on the Other and Levinasian ethics. As Simon Critchley (1999: 14) puts it: "Ethics would begin with the recognition that the Other is not an object of cognition or comprehension, but precisely that which exceeds my grasp and powers." This leads to undecidability and makes it impossible to make a "right" decision. The ethical moment in deconstruction, the moment of responsibility, arises out of the restlessness of an experience of *aporia*, that is, the suspension of choice, ambiguity, equivocity, hesitation, undecidability. As Derrida writes in "Afterword" to *Limited Inc.*, "there can be no moral or responsibility without this trial and without this passage by way of the undecidability" (ibid: 261).

So, according to Levinasian ethics, the translation should treat the foreign original text as the Other and get affected by it; while according to Derrida, an ethical translation should be a decision-making process producing multiple meaning rather than that which just follows codified rules.

3.4 Summary

"Babel" deconstructs the assumption that words or signs or even proper names have one-to-one correspondence with a referent that exists before or outside of language. Every signifying element carries *trace* of other signifiers. This makes it impossible to exhaustively translate one language into another. A good illustration is *différance*, a neologism coined by Derrida. The French verb *différer* has two meanings, roughly corresponding to the English "to defer" and "to differ", while the common word *différence* retains the sense of "difference" but lacks a temporal aspect. So *différance* was coined to recall the temporal and active kernel of *différer*. *Différance* is not a concept or a word. It acts as a reminder to show the play of differences. As Derrida writes in *Positions*, "*Différance* is a structure and a movement that cannot be conceived on the basis of the opposition presence/absence. *Différance* is the systematic play of differences, of traces of differences, of the spacing by which elements relate to one another. This spacing is the production, simultaneously active and passive (the *a* of *difference* indicates this indecision as regards activity and passivity, that which cannot yet be governed and organized by that opposition), of intervals without which the 'full' terms could not signify, could not function" (Culler, 2004: 97).

However, the play of differences is not complete free play; rather, it is the requirement for meaning. Here we need to go back to what was said in chapter 2 about *double reading*, which includes two layers: the dominant

interpretation of the text and defy of it. This is because meaning is both stable and unstable. It is stable not because any expression has some essential core of meaning, but because tradition and institutionalization conserve dominant patterns of meaning effects. These conservations, laws, and rules are guardrials in reading. Accordingly, a responsible translation "answers both to the general laws guiding and safeguarding interpretation of the text and to that which is singularly other within it" (Davis, 2004: 93).

My argument is that deconstructive translation ethics is an ethics of differences based on that of the other. Such a translation ethics should have two layers: first, the foreign text must be considered as foreign, whose linguistic and cultural differences should be reserved in translation; second, the translation should be based on deconstructive reading, or *double reading*, so a translation, instead of pursuing the authorial intention or faithfulness, should reflect plural meaning of the translated text.

Chapter 4
Venuti and the Ethics of Difference

Translation is one major aspect of Derrida's thought, yet it is also a fact that he uses the discussion of translation to solve philosophical problem. For him, "the origin of philosophy is translation or the thesis of translatability" (Davis, 2004: 18); while for Lawrence Venuti, the focus is on translating practice. Maybe it is not right to attach the label of deconstructionist to Venuti, but the deconstructive tendency is very obvious in his thinking on translation, which has a great influence on the translation study field. Among the advocates of deconstructive translation theory, Venuti is no doubtfully the most influential one. Through out the 1990s he has been waging a one-man war for raising the status of translation (Koskinen, 2000: 47). His thinking on translation studies is best reflected in his works: *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, *The Scandals of Translation: Toward An Ethics of Difference*, and *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology* (ed.).

4.1 Visibility and Fluent Translation

Visibility is probably the most widely accepted ethical notion in recent translation studies. The most obvious proponent of visibility is Lawrence Venuti, who has built his whole translation theory system around the critique of translator's invisibility. According to him, "the concept of translator's 'invisibility' is already a cultural critique, a diagnosis that opposes the situation it represents" (Venuti, 2004: 17). The term "invisibility" describes the translator's situation and activity in contemporary Anglo-American

culture. It refers to two mutually determining phenomena from the perspectives of the translator and the reader: one is the way translators themselves tend to translate fluently into English, to produce an idiomatic and readable target text, thus creating an illusion of transparency; the other is the way the translated texts are read.

In order to produce fluent translation, the translator makes great effort to insure the readability of the translation by applying current usage, maintaining continuous syntax and fixing a precise meaning. Under the regime of fluent translation, the translator tries to make his/her work "invisible", producing the illusory effect of transparency that simultaneously makes its status as an illusion. The more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator (ibid: 2).

Venuti (2004: 1) states: "A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance of the foreign text --- the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the 'original'." This can be seen as the starting point of his theorization. After surveying the western translation history, Venuti claims that the dominant translation strategy is fluent translation, namely, domestication. According to him, "a fluent translation is written in English that is current ('modern') instead of archaic, that is widely used instead of specialized ('jargonisation'), and that is standard instead of colloquial ('slangy')" (ibid: 2).

Such a translation will annihilate the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, and bring it to the same. The fluent translation is consistent with western philosophy which is seen by Levinas as "the attempt to

domesticate otherness", or "the activity of assimilating all otherness to the same" (Critchley, 1999: 28-29). Similarly, Venuti (1998: 12) defines fluency as "assimilationist ethic by signifying the linguistic and cultural differences of the text". This can be seen as a deconstructive tendency in his translation study.

Venuti doubts and challenges the dominant translation strategy to elevate the status of translation, the translator, and those cultures under the shadow of Anglo-American culture. This involves a new strategy and a new ethics of translation which bears affinity to deconstruction.

4.2 Resistant and Dissident Translation

According to the *Dictionary of Translation Studies*, the concepts "foreignizing translation" and "domesticating translation" are first promoted by Venuti (Mark Shuttleworth & Moira Cowie, 2004: 59). He uses "domestication" to describe the translation strategy in which transparent, fluent style is adopted in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for target language readers; while "foreignizing" refers to the type of translation which deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original. However, this is basically a reformulation of Schleiermacher's famous differentiation between methods that take the reader to the foreign author and those that bring the foreign author to the reader. In fact, Schleiermacher's argument on translation is part of Venuti's discussion in *The Translator's Invisibility*.

Among the methods of translating, Schleiermacher advocated the one leaving the writer in peace and moving the reader to him, that is, the method we are accustomed to call "foreignizing strategy". This is consistent with the Romantic background which argued for a method that intended to give the

reader an image of the original in its foreignness (Koskinen, 2000: 49). The ultimate goal of this translation method is to enrich the national culture through contacts with the foreign. Schleiermacher claimed this as a moral calling (see ibid.). Berman, a predecessor of Venuti's project, follows this argument. He seeks an ethics of translation to combat ethnocentric translation and defines good translation as that "manifests in its own language the foreignness of the foreign text" (Venuti, 1998: 11). According to him, the language and cultural difference in the original text must be recognized, respected, and accepted as the Other; and the task of translation is to enrich and improve national language and broaden national cultural space. But Venuti sees Schleiermacher's foreignizing method as political rather than ethical and essentially ethnocentric because of his "nationalism and elitism" (Venuti, 2004: 99-118). This, of course, is not to say that Venuti objects foreignizing translation. What he objects is ethnocentrism and translation strategies supporting it.

Foreignizing translation in the Venutian sense is far different from "keeping the foreign" or "stay close to the source text". For him, foreign elements can originate in the source text/language/culture, but they can equally be drawn from the target culture to achieve a distancing effect. In other words, the word "foreign" often refers to those aspects of the domestic culture that are hidden, marginal or stigmatized. Or else, "foreign", in Venuti's vocabulary, is to be understood as foreignness in comparison with the prevalent translation strategy. This is similar to the use of the word "ethics" by Levinas. Venuti is ready to praise any nonfluent, nonconformist strategy, and the term "foreignizing translation" is just a label of his acceptance (see 1995: 135, 200).

In such a translation strategy, the concept of "reminder" is essential. It is

borrowed from Jean-Jacques Lecercle, who defines it as constituted by "the details that any grammatical map necessarily leaves out" (Davis, 2004: 64). Venuti (2004: 216) describes it as the "release of multiple meanings that exceed and sometimes impede the transparent uses of language". The reminder is usually found in regional or group dialects, jargons, clichés and slogans, stylistics innovation, nonce words, and the sheer accumulation of previous uses. According to Lecercle, and accepted by Venuti (1998: 10), "the reminder subverts the major form by revealing it to be socially and historically situated, by staging 'the return within language of the contradictions and struggles that make up the social' and by containing as well 'the anticipation of future ones'". Such a translation strategy has obvious deconstructive tendency. The concept of reminder can be drawn parallels with Derrida's concept of trace. For Derrida, every sign carries with it traces of all the meanings that have been attached to it in different contexts. The meaning of a sign can never be fixed as contexts keep changing, but neither can a sign obtain completely new meanings as the old ones cannot be brushed away (see Koskinen, 2000: 53). Also, the reminder can function as a means to challenge the dominant interpretation of a text.

Of course one may question whether "foreignizing" can be a suitable name for this translation strategy. This may be the reason why it was renamed "minoritizing" in Venuti's *The Scandals of Translation*. The aim of minoritizing translation is "never to acquire the majority, never to erect a new standard or to establish a new canon, but rather to promote cultural innovation as well as the understanding of cultural difference" (Venuti, 1998: 11). The issue of difference forms the essence of Venuti's ethical stand. For him, the aim of translation is to promote cultural innovation and change, and different strategies and choices are to be judged from this perspective (ibid: 188). This

can be seen as a version of Derrida's deconstructive translation extended to a larger context of culture.

4.3 The Ethics of Location

For Venuti, the essence of translator's ethics is not to be found in any redefinition of fidelity. He holds a typical deconstructive understanding of translation by claiming that "a translation is never quite 'faithful', always somewhat 'free', it never establishes an identity, always a lack and a supplement, and it can never be a transparent representation, only an interpretive transformation that exposes multiple and divided meanings in the foreign text and displaces it with another set of meanings, equally multiple and divided" (Venuti, 1992: 8). Venuti defies fidelity as an ethical norm of translation and turns to a completely different direction.

In the beginning of the book *The Scandals of Translation* (1998: 4), Venuti points out that "asymmetries, inequities, relations of domination and dependence exist in every act of translating, of putting the translated in service of the translating culture" are the "greatest scandal of translation". He wants to expose and rectify this scandal by inviting a productive rethinking of translation. Thus he advocates an ethics of difference. As a translator, unlike Derrida, he focuses on finding the method to approach this translation ethics. This leads to the discussion of foreignizing and domesticating translation strategies. Venuti accuses domesticating of this scandal and argues "domesticating strategies of choosing and translating foreign texts are ethically questionable because it is a narcissistic dismissal of foreignness in favor of dominant domestic values" (ibid: 187). While the foreignizing strategies, for him, can best obtain the foreignness of the foreign test and establish an ethical relationship between different subjects.

The elevation of foreignizing translation does not necessarily defy the domesticating translation. Both Venuti and his critics have recognized that translation is by definition an act of domestication. So, foreignizing translation has to be understood more as an accompaniment than an opponent of domesticating translation. Venuti's attitude towards domestication undergoes a shift. For example, in *The Translator's Invisibility*, he abandons his customary extremism and acknowledges the constraining power of the prevalent norms for a moment, by praising Blackburn's fluent translation (204: 267). In *The Scandals of Translation*, this shift is more obvious in his discussion of the English translation of Banana Yoshimoto's *Kitchen*, where he maintains that it is not necessary for the translation to deviate too much from domestic norms, and that one does need to risk unintelligibility to make a difference (see 1998: 87).

So, in spite of the claim of "an ethics of difference" in the title, what is promoted in *The Scandles of Translation* is an ethics of location based on recognition of cultural difference. When the scene of translation changes, and the power relations are different, Venuti's preferences also seem to favor even domesticating methods. For example, within a postcolonial context, where the "domestic" can be seen as hybrid of global local trends, Venuti (1998: 189) maintains that "translation can revise hegemonic values even when it seems to employ the most conservatively domesticating strategies".

It should be noted that the ethics of location does not defy the ethics of difference; rather, it should be seen as the way to achieve the latter. Venuti sees the ethics of location as a universal translation ethics, applied in a complicated context, which can realize the aim of translating, i.e., "to promote cultural innovation and change" (ibid: 188). Just as Derrida does not point out a particular way for translators to complete their responsibility, Venuti does

not stick to a particular translation strategy either. The translator must take into account the contextual situation and respond accordingly.

4.4 Summary

Venuti's thinking on translation is a typical application of deconstruction to translation study and translation practice. It is applauded and criticized ever since it was proclaimed. The critiques are focused on the following aspects.

First, the connection between fluency and imperialism is doubtful. Second, his claim that the western translation history is a history of fluent translation is also questionable. Third, although Venuti has repeatedly stressed that his critique is directed to contemporary Anglo-American culture, he also claims that the features that he discerns are not exclusively Anglo-American, and their applicability can be extended (see Venuti, 1998: 1; 2004: 1). This inevitably causes confusion and paradox to his readers and shows the incompleteness of his theoretical frame. Besides, according to Venuti, literary translation is the center of translation study. For him, "literary translation is emphasized because it has long set the standard applied in technical translation, and, most importantly for present purposes, it has traditionally been the field where innovative theories and practices emerge" (2004: 41). This emphasis of literary translation results elitism which is not wanted in any translation or translation theory.

However, Venuti's translation thinking has its value, especially his translation ethics. Venuti has overcome the obstacle of fidelity. His ethics of difference is not based on any reformulation of the notion of fidelity. For him, the most important considerations lie in the wider framework of cultural exchange. The ethics of location may prove to be the most fruitful aspect of Venuti's ethical project. It is a reminder that in different circumstances a

different strategy may be more suited.

Venuti's attitude towards foreignizing translation and domesticating translation is typically deconstructive. Deconstructionists try to deconstruct hierarchal separations with the following steps (see Li Heqing, Huang Hao, Bo Zhengjie, 2005: 181): firstly, they show how those oppositions are structured; secondly, they overturn those hierarchies temporarily; thirdly, they displace and reassert both terms of the opposition within a nonhierarchical relationship by pointing out that there in not a center or margin but "difference" between these conceptions. So, what is essential is not to reverse the hierarchy but to accept the inseparability of the two poles. In the same way, Venuti sets up the hierarchal opposition between foreignizing and domesticating. Then, in the first moment, he elevates foreignizing over domesticating translation; while in the second moment, he claims that domesticating can perform ethically in some circumstance.

For Derrida, and what is different from Levinas, the other is not outside but found within the self. The two poles of hierarchy only exist in relation to each other. This is also consistent with Venuti's position. He ultimately dismantles the opposition by merging the two poles: for him, domesticating strategies are always foreignizing, and foreignizing strategies always already domesticating (Koskinen, 2000: 96).

Deconstruction calls for different ways of thinking, thus it opposes the argument that one translation strategy can be preordained as universally acceptable or another one in all cases forbidden. So, Venuti's translation study should be seen as a voice breaking the situation that one kind of thinking dominates and excludes others.

Chapter 5
A Critical Viewpoint Upon
Deconstructive Translation Ethics

Deconstruction and its way of interpreting text exert great impact on translation studies and result in the deconstructive school of translation. As any other theory, including deconstructive translation theories of course, deconstruction aroused criticism right from its birth. Surly there are paradoxes and deficiency, but it must be admitted that this theory brings much inspiration and rethinking in translation studies, one important aspect of which is the rethinking on ethics of translation. In this chapter, a critical analysis is made upon the ethical approach.

5.1 Contribution

After the analysis of present translation studies, Koskinen (see 200: 16-19) points out that there is a shift from the ethics of sameness towards the ethics of difference, and concludes that "one can rather safely argue that views related to equivalence, similarity and translators' subservience have lately been in decline in theoretical discussion, while conceptions stressing cultural and functional differences are more dominant" (ibid: 19). Deconstruction gives theoretical support to this shift as well as translation study schools holding this opinion, such as feminist and postcolonial translation theories.

Deconstructive translation ethics has two aspects: first, it regards the foreign text and cultural other as the Other, which is referred to as the ethics of the Other; second, it pursues and tries to keep the plural meanings of the

original text, which is known as the ethics of difference.

With the first aspect, deconstruction plays an important role in the current context of globalization, in which hegemonic countries tend to impose their culture and value system to the Third-world countries. In translation, this tend is realized by, as Venuti calls, "fluency", or "assimilationist" (see Venuti, 1998: 12), which eliminates differences of the foreign text and cultural other. A deconstructive ethical attitude in translation is to value the difference of the Other. For feminist theorists, the Other refers to women; for postcolonial theorists, the Other refers to colonial countries. This is similar to the establishment of an ethical relationship between two subjects. One should not reduce the Other to the knowing ego and annihilates its difference because the latter is beyond the grasp and knowing power of the Self. This uncertainty leads to the hesitation before a decision is made. Only in this situation the Other gets its/her/his independence and released from the control of the Self.

Second, translating process begins with reading, yet it is more complex and calls for much more effort than the latter. Deconstructive reading is *double reading*, consisted of two layers, which is based on plurality of meanings of the text. Translation, after finding out these meanings according to the economy of quality, must keep them in another text, following the economy of quantity (see Derrida, 2001:179). So, translating is not any easier than writing an original work, and it is the creative work same to any kind of writing. Translation is the "afterlife" of and called for by the source text. In fact, there is no original text; every text is translation or retranslation of translation. Deconstruction elevates the status of translation as well as translation studies in the academic fields. And Venuti further promotes the status of translator in cultural exchange.

Yet the most significant contribution of deconstructive translation ethics

lies in the "undecidability" it advocates. It defies that a text has a stable and fixed meaning waiting to be found, and that the authorial intention can be delivered successfully and completely to readers. When something is decided, it means that a discussion is terminated, or ended. Derrida never agrees with such a termination of argument and thinking. In fact, undecidability is reflected in every aspects of Derrida's thinking; it is the ethical moment of deconstruction (see above 3.3). In this sense, that one language dominates the others, or one culture suppresses the rest, or one thinking blocks the sight of other ways of thinking, is a loss for every language, every culture, and every theory. Deconstruction does not seek some translation rules or ethical norm for the translator to obey; rather, this is exactly what deconstruction opposes. The ultimate aim of deconstructive translation ethics is to assure the effect of translation, i.e., to provide energy for the development of languages, or in Derrida's words:

> [E]ach language is as if atrophied in its isolation, meager, arrested in its growth, sickly. Owing to translation, in other words to this linguistic supplementarity by which one language gives to another what it lacks, and gives it harmoniously, this crossing of languages assures the growth of languages, even that "holy growth of language" "unto the messianic end of history." All of that is announced in the translation process. (Derrida, 1985: 202)

Deconstructive translation ethics does not provide some guidance for translators to follow, which is an outcome of the nature of deconstruction. This might be the reason why Venuti changes his attitude toward foreignizing and domesticating translation strategies. According to deconstruction, translation ethics does not correspond with some exclusive translating method.

5.2 Limitation

As an ethics of translation, the limitation of deconstructive approach is obvious. Translation is a complex activity involving all kinds of participators like translator, publisher, donator, etc. Thus the situation of "undecidability" that a translator confronts is much more complicated and far beyond linguistic and cultural boundaries. Yet both Derrida and Venuti put the burden of responsibility on the translator alone. The exclusion of other participators is due to the domain of discussion. Among the five approaches made by Chesterman, deconstructive translation ethics occupies only two of them, i.e., the ethics of representation and communication. These two aspects are the central ones, the ones that distinguish translation ethics with other applied ethics. But this is not to say the other relations and participants are not necessary. So, deconstructive translation ethics, no matter how productive, is not a sufficient guidance in translation study as well as translating practice. In fact, ethics can never be resolved once and for all since moral aspects need to be continuously renegotiated as conditions and situations change.

Both Derridean and Venuti's translation thinking should be applied to literary translation. In a world that literary work occupies very limited space in communication, the application of their translation theory is quite narrow. One might have also noted that Derrida's argument of *double reading* and "relevant translation" is restrained to the level of words. For example, he often articulates this double reading around a semantic ambivalence in the usage of a particular word, like *supplément* in Rousseau, or *pharmakon* in Plato; and in the discussion about "relevant translation" he focuses on the translation of the word "season" in "mercy seasons justice". Words are the fundamental unit of translating, but not the only unit. The grammatical and cultural barriers between Chinese and English, for instance, cannot be solved

only by finding a "relevant" translation for some particular word.

Besides, the ethics of difference is actually a paradoxical issue. Deconstructionists insist that the authorial meaning of a text cannot be decoded, and that a reading or translation of a text is always a misreading. Meanwhile, deconstructionists are too obscure to read and comprehended, especially Derrida, which often makes them "misunderstood" and irritated for being misunderstood and distorted. This is a little embarrassing. It sounds like Derrida does not want to be read, or translated, in the way he proposes.

As Pym puts it, "deconstruction can and should raise passing doubts on the way to concrete action. But translation theory has a lot of other things to do, awaiting the philosophers' return from Derridean islands" (Koskinen, 2000: 45). Today, working in translation study field, one cannot avoid the influence of deconstruction. It is the way every translation theorist has to pass by, but it should lead to a new direction.

Conclusion

In the past few decades translation studies underwent some shifts, among which the most eye-catching one is promoted by deconstruction. It redefines translation and calls for a brand new translation ethics.

Deconstructive translation ethics is related to the ethics of deconstruction and deconstructive translation theory. So, in this thesis, the author starts from the discussion of Leviansian ethics, which has a significant influence on Derrida's thinking. Here, the word "ethical" takes a new sense, and is realized by decision-making process based on the undecidability. Deconstruction takes place as reading, or more specifically, *double reading*, which is to repeat the dominant understanding of a text in the first moment and bring up another meaning defying the former in the second moment. Accordingly, deconstructive translation ethics demands to keep these two layers of reading in translation. Thus this translation ethics is called the ethics of the Other, or more accurately, the ethics of difference.

Deconstruction challenges the traditional ways of thinking, including traditional translation studies. It breaks the hierarchical oppositions likes speech/writing, original/translation, author/translator, faithful/unfaithful, etc. The traditional translation ethics of fidelity is overthrown and replaced by the new one. While Derrida does not clearly points out how to achieve an ethical translation, or in his words, "relevant" translation; Venuti attempts to promote a method of translating. After a change of his attitude towards the binary opposition of foreignizing/domesticating, his argument rests on that there rather cannot be two distinct and opposite methods but only the third, the middle one with varying degrees of foreignizing and domesticating.

As deconstructive reading does not throw away the traditional interpretation with the replacement of a new one, deconstructive translation theory does not advocate a new dominant strategy. Preordained rules and laws are obstacles to achieve free decision. Accordingly, deconstructive translation ethics does not set up moral norms for translators to follow. It is rather a reminder for translators to make responsible answer to the call of the original texts.

In the present context of globalization, the ethics of deconstruction is of great importance. The development of history is a process of circulation of construction and deconstruction. The essence of deconstruction lies in undecidability, or doubts of the existing ways, especially dominant way of thinking. In this way, it provides power and chances for the development of languages, cultures, as well as theories.

Although deconstructive translation ethics cannot present all the relations and participants in translating activity, nor can it act as a moral norm to follow, it has its aim of making translators act more ethically and responsibly. Translators should also realize that, surrounded with all kinds of demands from different directions, they must make decisions confronted with the situation of undecidability, which is the way to perform ethical action in deconstructive sense. Also, theorists should be enlightened by deconstruction to realize that there are always other options, other possibilities, other voices rather than a conventional, codified, exclusive way of thinking.

The fact that deconstruction is promoted with a negative relation to the western philosophical tradition causes a major obstacle for non-western theorists to receive, study and apply this theory in their research. This is not to say that deconstruction is invalid in different philosophical background. For Chinese theorists, as well as other non-western theorists, deconstruction also

has its critical value. Hence the author suggests a combination of deconstruction and Chinese translation tradition in future studies.

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Appendix
攻读学位期间主要研究成果目录

1. 郝妙文. 归化、异化翻译策略与翻译伦理，在湖南省大学外语专业委员会2008年度学术征文活动中获"优秀论文"称号，并发表于湛江师范学院学报，2009（1）：120-123

2. 陈可培，郝妙文. 解构主义翻译伦理评析，唐山师范学院学报，2009（4）

解构主义翻译伦理评析

作者：　　　　　　郝妙文
学位授予单位：　　长沙理工大学

相似文献(10条)

1. 期刊论文 陈可培. 郝妙文. CHEN Ke-pei. HAO Miao-wen 解构主义翻译伦理评析 -唐山师范学院学报2009, 31(4)

解构主义的伦理思想是对传统形而上伦理学的批判. 解构主义的翻译伦理颠覆了传统的"忠实"翻译观, 提出了求异的伦理诉求. 解构主义并没有制定翻译的伦理规范, 译者只能体现在具体的语境中做选择. 但是, 由于不同的翻译语境中政治和意识形态的影响, 求异的伦理诉求往往会受到挑战, 甚至难以实现.

2. 学位论文 杨霄 交往行为理论与翻译伦理学 2008

当前的翻译界解构主义与文化转向十分盛行: 解构主义赋予译者无限的主体性, 翻译成为无限衍义, 意义的不确定也使跨文化交际成为幻影: 后殖民研究者则从政治和意识形态的角度研究翻译, 强调翻译长期沦为后殖民主义统治的工具, 渴望通过异化的手法改变长期被塑造的"东方"的"他者"形象. 这种过分强调外部研究而脱离翻译本体研究的趋势, 可能使翻译论为政治和文化批评的附庸.

同时, 在生活世界, 一方面, 随着经济全球化的强势推进, 异质文化间的交流渐趋增强, 德国神学家孔汉思(Hans Kong)提出建设普世伦理(the Global ethic), 解决当期人类共同面对的问题. 另一方面, 翻译活动中仍存在着大量不合理、不平等的交流, 某些后殖民语境下产生的翻译, 占据中心地位的强势文化把弱势文化排挤到边缘. 译者对原文文本的态度问题, 及翻译交往中应当遵循的基本准则和规范, 都可以而且应该纳入翻译伦理研究的范畴中. 因此, 本文拟在建构主义翻译学指导下, 根据哈贝马斯的交往行为理论建立翻译伦理学框架.

在伦理学框架下, 使各方翻译主体能够受到交往理性的引导, 通过平等对话协商, 规范翻译活动. 面对文化多元化, 以及由文化障碍造成的交往困难, 在翻译过程中, 本着文化交流主义的文化立场, 以平等公平的原则, 承认不同文化和价值观念上的差异, 认同其不同的文化归属, 将之还原本色并翻译出来, 以差别共存和相互尊重为指导. 由此, 将当前翻译中存在的文化转向看作翻译研究多元视角中的一个视角, 纳入翻译伦理学的研究框架下, 继而深化、辅助翻译本体的研究. 促使翻译学朝着健康的方向发展.

3. 学位论文 姜东 通向翻译的后现代伦理 2007

翻译的后现代伦理关注的是翻译领域的新近发展, 如: 解构主义, 女性主义翻译和后殖民主义理论. 本文围绕后现代这一概念, 试图分析和检验当代翻译理论中翻译伦理的最新进展. 借助当代理论的基础框架, 对书务蒂及其他不同学派的立场进行解构性的分析.

这一分析指出, 他们的理论观点给我们提出了一些在当今探讨翻译研究中的关键问题, 促使我们去反思现有的理论. 如果要提出有意义的翻译伦理的后现代理论, 我们必须理清这些问题所的方方面面. 这些基本问题包括: 翻译理论的二分现象, 译者的显身与信任及忠实的死结. 韦努蒂的伦理基础是建立在这样一种认识: 责任及道德兑现不能仅注重当下的翻译任务. 除了作者, 委托人, 译者和读者的直接关系外, 每一个单一的翻译活动都是一个更大系统的组成部分, 这样的系统在决策时需要予于考虑.

本文以批判的态度概括描述翻译理论中的后现代趋势, 尤其关注解构主义及相关理论. 在翻译研究领域, 这些新方法已经指出以往观点的缺陷和疏漏, 并揭示了很多问题: 如许多翻译理论中的男性偏见和西方视角的局限性. 将后现代策略一并解读, 我们会发现一些共同之处: 如克服非此即彼逻辑的必要性, 对翻译语境性的认识, 考虑道德和伦理的个性和共性及重新审视和思考如何界定译者语境责任的问题. 这些特点对于未来的探讨有指导性意义.

4. 期刊论文 周宣丰. 李茂莉 从翻译伦理的角度重释诺德的"忠诚"原则 -湘潭师范学院学报(社会科学版)

2009, 31(5)

解构主义翻译观通过消解原文和源语作者的中心地位, 认为"作者已死""作品之死"来提高译者的主体性地位, 赋予译者中心地位. 在缺乏协同性的狭隘和专断, 以作者死亡为代价无限扩大译者能动性的解构派翻译观的指导下, 译者必定会为违背译业职业道德伦理寻找借口. 深受解构派翻译观影响下的德国功能翻译理论前期代表"泛功能"的倾向, 为了纠正和弥补其极端化, 诺德在功能原则的基石上建立了忠诚原则. 本文从翻译伦理的角度重新阐释其"忠诚"原则, 这对正确界定译者主观能动性, 维护1翻译伦理, 规范翻译市场, 具有一定的建设性意义.

5. 学位论文 周伟 翻译伦理与译者职责—基于中外译者伦理规范的对比研究 2009

随着科技的发展和社会的进步, 伦理问题也吸引着各行各业的人们越来越多的关注. 在我国翻译领域, 不论是在翻译理论方面, 还是在翻译实践方面, 伦理问题都逐渐人们关注的热门话题, 这主要有两方面原因: 一方面, 解构主义背景下的翻译理论摒弃规约性、体现出更多的描述性和宽容性, 却给各种不正当的翻译行为提供了保护伞; 另一方面, 我国当前翻译市场出现了繁荣兴旺与杂乱无序共存的尴尬局面, 翻译行业亟待规范. 在这一背景下, 本研究主要从以下两个方面逐步展开:

首先, 伦理是人类核心价值基础上衍生发展而成的一系列行为规范和标准. 它的主要功能在于规范人们的行为, 引导个体在处理本体和他者的关系时做出恰当的抉择. 翻译是一种带有明确目的性、复杂的人类行为, 它更需要翻译伦理的规范和引导. 在翻译过程中, 翻译的主体(译者)需要处理好各种本体与他者之间的关系, 因而会面对一系列的伦理困境. 文章探讨了翻译过程中译者面临的各种伦理困境, 并在实例分析的基础上提出应对这些伦理困境的措施, 并总结翻译过程中(包括译前、译中、译后和重译过程)译者应该遵守的各种伦理职责.

其次, 翻译已经发展成为一种正式的职业和独立的行业类别, 因此非常有必要建立一套专门针对这一职业的伦理规范, 以确保该行业的健康、有序发展. 鉴于此, 国际译联和各国(及地区)译协都颁布过了针对翻译服务的职业(道德)规范, 对译者伦理规范做出了明确、详细的规定, 中国译协翻译服务委员会也于2005年10月制定出《翻译服务行业职业道德规范》(以下简称《规范》). 论文以前文总结出的译者伦理职责为参照系, 将《规范》与国际译联《翻译工作者宪章》、美国、英国、澳大利亚等国译者规范进行对比研究. 研究发现: 1)国外相关伦理规范相比, 《规范》中的条款过于笼统、含糊, 其中的表述有必要更加具体化, 以利于贯彻执行; 2)《规范》的涵盖面过于狭窄, 只提到了"顾客要求"、"严守顾客秘密"、"尊重同行互惠互利"、和"促进行业健康发展"等四条译者职责. 所以, 在《规范》的修订过程中, 必须将其他的伦理职责囊括其中; 3)鉴于中国当前重译中的问题层出不穷, 文章认为非常有必要在《规范》中强调重译过程中的译者伦理.

在对比分析中外译者伦理规范的基础上, 本研究还发现, 和翻译伦理相关的各种议题在我国当前的译员培养、翻译资格认证过程中也未得到应有的重视. 因此, 在借鉴国外译员培养和资格认证的成熟经验的基础上, 文章建议: 1)以大学外语、翻译院系为主体的译员培养机构应该如何处理伦理问题纳入到课程体系当中; 2)全国翻译专业资格(水平)认证(CATTI)在译员资格认证过程中, 也应将译者对翻译伦理问题的认知和解决能力作为一项必需的考核标准.

6. 学位论文 葛林 论跨文化伦理对翻译的规约 2008

跨文化伦理作为协调并衡量平等、公正、和平、友好的文化群体间交往的尺度, 是保证合理译介原语文化和丰富译语文化, 从而推进人类文化整体进程的重要因素, 对于译者的翻译动机、翻译策略、翻译行为和翻译效果具有重要影响. 然而, 迄今为止, 相关的翻译研究还没有形成一个较为深厚的体系. 肇始于20世纪70年代的翻译研究的"文化转向", 将翻译放置于更为广阔的文化语境中考察, 成为翻译研究历史上具有划时代意义的重要变革. 然而, 已有的研究较多停留于寻求翻译过程及结果的目的文化动因, 其前提在于假定翻译行为相关的双文化或多文化在历史、国际地位、态度、价值观念等方面彼此平等, 理所当然地将翻译理论与实践置于公正、民主、互利的文化交流背景. 较深入的探讨表现为后殖民主义翻译和女性主义翻译, 两类研究着眼于如何翻译为中介, 促成、揭示或抵制殖民、新殖民、性别歧视等行为, 强调若干翻译策略及文本选择的文化功能, 为维护跨文化伦理这一终极目标发挥了不可或缺的作用, 然而, 在经历了一段时间的热潮后, 进展平缓, 人云亦云的讨论较多, 仍然留有许多有待解决的问题. 翻译学者有必要继续深入地思考, 翻译行为如何成为维系跨文化伦理的工具?挑战跨文化伦理的行为如何受到批判?如何保证跨文化伦理更有效地规约?翻译还涉及宗教群体、阶级群体等文化群体, 翻译促成或阻碍文化群体间合理交往的方式存在多样性, 许多违背跨文化伦理的行为不能简单地划定为殖民、新殖民或性别歧视, 许多求求跨文化伦理的行为目的并非限于抵抗, 同一服从或违背跨文化伦理译文对于不同价值观取向的读者群、评论人、赞助人理解和

反响方式多样，而相关的翻译策略、赞助行为、读者反应、翻译批评等许多方面的研究尚未全面展开。因此，本文尝试通过较为细致、严谨地研究跨文化伦理于翻译理论和实践的规约的必要性、方式及效果，促使更多学者更为深入地关注"文化转向"后的翻译理论及实践，推动文化中介功能相关的翻译研究的进一步发展。

全文共分六章，重点章节为二、三、四章。

第一章为引言，主要阐述本研究的理论背景、意图、角度及方法，通过对于文化取向的翻译研究、翻译伦理研究、翻译规约研究等方面的理论综述，尝试较清晰地论证跨文化伦理的定义以及本研究的重要意义。

第二章从译者地位、语言层次、忠实程度、异质忠实等侧面回顾国内外忠实策略的研究，质疑André Lefevere对于中西方忠实传统的误读及其它相关观点，进而提出，以往的忠实策略研究往往局限于对"直译"与"意译"或是"归化"与"异化"之间的争论，忽视译者文化动机的适度。如果人们能够从跨文化伦理角度审视这些忠实策略，突破二元对立的窠臼，将有可能在一定程度上对以往的研究进行有益的补充。从跨文化伦理角度考察，准确的译文不一定合理。同时，Warren(1989: 20)，Chesterman(1997: 80)等学者认为，翻译主体有必要履行合作、服从等责任。然而，本章对于赞助行为、翻译评论等方面的论证表明，翻译主体的行为可能不合乎跨文化伦理，从而共同生成有损于某文化群体的译文，或共同导致某些译文受到不应有的排斥。跨文化伦理是保证翻译合理性的必要规约。

以往的译者主体研究往往忽视译者主体性的公正、适度的跨文化关联。本文第三章指出，跨文化伦理从翻译策略、文本取向以及语言杂糅等侧面，为译者主体性提供了新的诠释视角，是食人主义、杂合、异化、归化、劫持等挑战传统翻译规则的论ется引发广泛关注的深层次动因。本章分析了相关理论和研究的独特性及缺憾。例如，在分析foreignization成为热点的原因以及纠正对于Lawrence Venuti的误解的同时，通过对于国内1998年到2006年间采用异化策略作为关键词的670余篇论文进行分析，本次调查发现，Venuti对于国内研究的广泛影响至少在1999年开始出现，之前的讨论更多涉及我国本土的异化或欧化策略；受到Venuti的影响，截至2006年，国内学者更倾向于异化策略，归化策略、语言归化/文化异化等并非主流；国内大部分学者并非盲目因循西方理论，而是更多地与中国实际结合，主张恰当地根据译者动机、文本类型等组合两种策略；同时，我国的异化策略研究明显侧重于翻译的文化传播功能，虽然跨文化伦理倾向逐年递增，但是比重偏低。本章也讨论了跨文化伦理在其它方面对于译者主体性的规约，如交互式翻译、自翻译、作者翻译等。通过论述Sydney Shapiro以及Pearl Buck对于《水浒》译文的不同处理，以及The Gadfly中译文的读者效应等，本章论证了由于不同译者接受跨文化伦理规约方式的差异，译者主体性相对独立于跨文化伦理规约。本文作者赞同René Descartes的主体观，主张译者与作为客体的文化语境之间存在互动，译者会发挥主体性，通过有意识的翻译行为促使跨文化伦理被接受。同时，她强调跨文化伦理对于译者主体性的规约受到其它参数的影响，如官方政策、社会评价、读者取向等。

第四章论述了跨文化伦理规约翻译的途径，指出至少存在五种规约方式，即简单或繁复的规约、多渠道的规约、单方或互动的规约、半独立的规约以及接纳或拒斥的规约。存在简单或者繁复的跨文化伦理规约模式。由于文化群体的多样性，后殖民女性主义译者以及其它意识形态取向的译者会采用相同或不同的策略，处理其支持或反对的不同跨文化伦理变体；由于文化的流动性，同一跨文化伦理会在不同时期产生不同的效果，某跨文化伦理变体会由于另一跨文化伦理变体的存在而被重新阐释；存在多渠道的跨文化伦理规约模式。通过大量的译文分析，本文作者发现，维护跨文化伦理的文本、违背跨文化伦理的文本或者无明显跨文化伦理关联的文本，都会通过多样的翻译策略，转化为支持跨文化伦理的译文；存在单方或者互动的跨文化伦理规约模式。作者会改变观点，与译者共同修改原文，促成跨文化伦理动机的实现，可见Roland Barthes(1977: 148)以及Paul deMan(1986: 84)提出的原作或作者死亡的观点具有局限性；跨文化伦理半独立观点，后殖民主翻译研究以及女性主义翻译研究等之所以接受和深入分析跨文化伦理，导源于特定的历史背景并得益于心理分析、解构主义、马克思主义等理论，已有的分析失之零散，本章尝试进行较系统的回顾；跨文化伦理规约是否被接受，取决于其对于目的文化主流意识形态和赞助人的迎合，这种迎合并非整齐划一。目的文化中的意识形态会倾向于排斥跨文化伦理，此时跨文化伦理成为特例性的规约，可见意识形态的操控会有损于翻译的文化中介效果；跨文化伦理有必要迎合赞助人，由于多层次的赞助人之间会存在分歧，某些赞助人可能创造条件，促成一些被官方赞助人压制并合乎跨文化伦理的译文的面世与流传，某些违背跨文化伦理的作品可能受到某些国家赞助人的支持，却引起其它国家赞助人的反感，可见操控学派的赞助理论有待细化。

翻译主体遵循跨文化伦理规约并不能保证翻译行为合理。本文第五章通过分析包含TNIV在内的近十本《圣经》译文的语料库，总结了对于TNIV译文评论的不完备性，并通过大量其它例证，指出得体的策略、有责任感的赞助以及恰如其分的翻译批评是保证翻译适度维护跨文化伦理的必要前提。其中，评论人介入的质量如何把握，罕见有学者深入分析，本章从跨文化伦理规约的角度提出翻译策略评论的合理性、翻译目的评论的合理性以及关于其他评论人评论的合理性等三个标准。

为了保证翻译作为维系文化间真诚、友好交往的桥梁，跨文化伦理具有存在和深入研究的理据。

7. 期刊论文 杨镇源 论"忠实"之后的文学翻译伦理重构 -当代文坛2010,""(4)

解构主义消解了传统文学翻译的"忠实"伦理，释放了译者被压抑的主体性。然而，这一思潮在将译者主体性推至极端的同时也导致了文学翻译在本体论上的沦落。本文立足实践，从主体间性的视角来考察文学翻译活动，指出应在"忠实"消解之后依托主体间性重构文学翻译伦理。

8. 学位论文 蒋童 从异化翻译的确立到存异伦理的解构：劳伦斯·韦努蒂翻译理论研究 2008

本文研究翻译学派的集大成者、美籍意大利学者劳伦斯·韦努蒂(Lawrence Venuti, 1953-)的翻译思想。本文认为韦努蒂从德国重异质的思想传统以及德里达的解构哲学(延异策略)中汲取养分，并在此基础上构筑了自己独特的翻译研究及翻译体系。本文认为韦努蒂翻译研究系统分为内部系统与外部系统。由于韦努蒂使用的是解构主义的"延异"策略，因而其内部系统的翻译理论话语互相关联，并在内部产生出强大的张力。这种张力向外蔓延，从而生成韦努蒂翻译理论的外部系统。这就是韦努蒂用来考察翻译所产生社会效果的理论话语。本文从韦努蒂的理论论著中提取最具代表性的理论话语作为脉络，力图揭示其话语系统的生成过程及其翻译理论对翻译研究从学术边缘走向中心的重大推动意义。

本文从以下几个方面展开对韦努蒂翻译思想的研究：

引言部分概要论述韦努蒂其人其学，以及梳理韦努蒂中国研究的现状及本文的研究目的。

第一章论述韦努蒂翻译理论产生的背景，论及翻译语言学派的翻译研究以及翻译研究派的翻译研究。

第二章解释韦努蒂翻译思想的资源及其翻译思想之根。在考察韦努蒂翻译思想资源之后，本文提出"归化中心主义"的概念。认为韦努蒂的"一以贯之"之"道"，就是对归化中心主义的解构，并将它运用在翻译所产生的语言、文化以及社会的变革上，以翻译伦理来进行衡量，成就了其翻译研究派集大成者的地位。

第三章研究韦努蒂翻译理论话语的内部系统，以揭示其对"归化中心主义"的解构。基于对"译者的隐身"、"症候式阅读"的认识，韦努蒂从施莱尔马赫那里借来"异化归化"，并将二者放在二元对立的两极。其后韦努蒂通过梳理英美翻译史上典型的例子展开对"归化"翻译的批评，从而提倡异化翻译，并提出实施异化翻译的具体策略，即妄用式忠实与对抗式翻译。

第四章研究韦努蒂翻译理论话语的外部系统，也即韦努蒂以更大的视角考察翻译所起到的社会作用时构筑的一系列话语。韦努蒂在认识到翻译遭受到种种来自社会的耻辱之后，推出抵抗译入语文化的"小民族语言的翻译"，主张在译文中释放"语言剩余"。实行这种策略的翻译产生塑形"文化身份"的作用。翻译起到巨大的社会效应。应该怎样衡量这种社会效果呢?韦努蒂继而构筑新的二元对立：存异伦理与化同伦理。并通过解构法将这一对二元对立解构，推出定于一尊的"因地制宜"伦理，即一种促进文化变化与更新的因地制宜的伦理。本文认为，韦努蒂不仅以"异化"翻译这种独特的视角为翻译鸣不平，而且也以独特的方式促进学术界正视对翻译理论研究与翻译实践所具有的重大理论价值，并加速了翻译研究由学术的边缘向中心移动的步伐。这就是异化翻译以及翻译伦理转向所烛照的神韵。

9. 学位论文 杜玉生 翻译研究中的伦理性问题——西方当代伦理学的发展与译学研究 2008

所谓"伦理性"是指人类社会中人与人之间关系与行为的秩序规范。它不仅涉及同一民族、同一文化中人类关系问题，同时指涉不同文化之间的关系。翻译是一项历史悠久的文化交流活动，只要不同民族、不同国家之间发生跨文化的交往行为，就不可避免地会产生伦理问题。翻译的本质属性决定了翻译活动和翻译研究需要伦理的指导。考察中西方翻译思想史，我们发现，从翻译研究的语义文学范式、结构主义范式到解构主义范式，翻译理论研究深受伦理学理论的滋养。本文首先简单介绍了一下国内外伦理理论的研究现状，然后从两种基本的道德思维模式入手重点阐释伦理学的本体内涵：并从历史的角度梳理及分析西方当代伦理思想的发展和演变。接着在前人研究翻译中的伦理性问题的基础上，从翻译的本质属性入手阐明进行翻译伦理研究的必要性。本着以史为鉴的原则，文章分析了西方当代伦理思想发展对翻译研究的影响，对以前的译学研究范式尤其是其不足进行了阐释：语文学研究范式受非理性伦理思想的影响，片面夸大自我的主体灵性，具有自我中心主义倾向；结构主义语言学研究范式受结构主义简化伦理思想的影响，没有表现出对他者的尊重，具有文化霸权主义及狭隘民族中心主义倾向；解构主义研究范式受后结构主义他者伦理思想的影响，过度夸大了他者的权威。指出三种译学研究范式都是独白式道德思维模式的必然产物。最后，文章就如何合理的借鉴伦理学理论进行了尝试性的探索，指出应该以哈贝马斯的对话

式的商谈伦理思想为基础，建立翻译伦理学这一新概念，从内部研究以及外部研究出发，阐释翻译伦理学的基本内涵，以促进译学研究全面而深入的展开。

10. 期刊论文 李淑杰 后现代语境下的译者主体性 -科技信息（学术版）2008,""(32)

译者是翻译活动中最活跃的因素,但在不同的翻译研究阶段人们对译者主体性的认识不尽相同.本文论述了在后现代主义语境下.解构主义.后殖民主义和女性主义关照下的译者主体性的发展和局限性,以及如何解决译者主体性问题的困境,并指出后现代主义范式下的译者主体性的理论研究必然走向翻译伦理学.