From World to World. An Armamentarium for the study of poetic discourse in translation
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Chapter 1

POSITIONS AND PROPOSITIONS

Take these two short poems:

I
Lie down in the garden, my love,
the empty places in the tall grass, that’s
what I’ve always wanted, to be an empty
place to stay, for someone.

II
Go now into the garden, dear, and lie
in an empty spot where the grass grows tall.
That’s what I’ve always wanted to be,
an empty spot for someone, to stay.

Although each of them may be inscribed into a discourse of their
own, the similarities between them are so multitudinous and striking
that the temptation to consider them as a single text is hard to resist.
Both ways of approaching the texts may render fruitful comparative
perspectives that may serve as point of departure for an analysis on
any substantial level.

Considering them as the reports of one single discourse surely
means considering them as two textual variants. But what kind of
variants are they? Is the one a variant of the other, and if so, which
one may be said to occupy the original position, or are both to be
considered versions of one single invariant core? One doesn’t have to
go to great lengths to be able to construct such an invariant core that
can come to inhabit the empty space between the two texts and serve
as a tertium comparationis to measure the differences against.

From the point of view of lexis it is possible to construct a skele-
ton applicable to both texts (if one takes for granted some minor
changes here and there in the order of the words): ‘lie’ - ‘garden’ -
‘empty’ - ‘grass’ - ‘tall’ - ‘always’ - ‘wanted’ - ‘be’ - ‘empty’ -
‘someone’ - ‘stay’. Only a few lexical items are missing, and if one is
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willing to allow synonyms and hyponyms to the list, one can add: ‘love’/‘dear’ (object of one’s affection) and ‘places’/‘spot’, ‘place’/‘spot’ (location).

In terms of prosody, the differences seem to be more striking than the similarities: both poems are non-rhyming fourliners in the lyrical mode, but that’s about all on this level. II is quite regular in length of line, two lines of ten syllables, followed by two lines of nine syllables, and is vaguely iambic, whereas I is almost totally irregular: the lines consist of eight, ten, eleven and six syllables respectively, and it is not even remotely metrical. II seems to be more organized, its rhythm follows its syntax, whereas the rhythm in I goes against the syntax, due partly to the enjambments within syntactic units in lines two and three. Syntactically II is more ‘well-formed’ anyway, it consists of two complex sentences, one imperative, the other declarative, whereas I consists of one sentence, with several asyndetically coordinated clauses, among which an imperative and a declarative.

The invariance on the lexical level is so ‘complete’, that it strongly implies the possibility of establishing an invariant semantic or pragmatic skeleton as well. It is as if both texts more or less describe the same situation: a first person persona uttering a request to his or her loved one to lie down in a garden, and declaring, by means of a metaphor, a certain desire about the state of his or her identity. But the way in which both texts elaborate on this theme, is fundamentally different. In II, for instance, the request is more coherent, but also more complex: to go (presumably from a point inside a house) to a garden to lie in a specific place, ‘an empty spot where the grass grows tall’. In I the request only concerns the element of lying down in a garden and right after it is uttered the speaker’s mind wanders off; the link with ‘the empty places in the tall grass’ (note the difference in number) is associative, more than anything else. As a consequence, in I it is not clear whether the empty place is already there, open for the loved one to lie in, or whether it will be left there by him or her, after s/he has gone. Furthermore, the relationship between the persona and the loved one doesn’t seem to be the same in both poems. In II the register is more formal (there is a large degree of organization and cohesion in the utterance), as a consequence the tone is less intimate,
which may be taken as a sign of distance between the lovers. One might wonder, then, whether \textit{II} is adequate to the situation.

But is it fair to make this judgement on the grounds of this comparison; is it fair to use the construct of a single situation as a yardstick? The situation of a literary discourse is not given, but must be reconstructed from the textual material, and from that point of view, the differences between the poems necessarily indicate that there must be two different situations. One would be justified in saying, I believe, that, because the first and last words in \textit{II} are antonymous, its semantic universe is located between the polarities of ‘going’ and ‘staying’, or, on a more abstract level, of stasis and motion. One might ponder on this for a while, during a short inferential walk, and link stasis and motion with different ways of experiencing love relationships and different ways of being an empty spot for someone, a place open for someone to fill it, and have a go with it, or a place wanting to be filled, lest it not remain empty. But would this tell us anything about the meaning of \textit{I} as a complex sign? We might ask ourselves whether the same inferential walk could be made through \textit{I}, but if we can’t, so what? And if we can, did we need \textit{II} to find that out?

No single inherent item in either text necessarily forces one to compare it with the other. And what’s more, there is nothing in either text that would need the other to be fully understood, or enjoyed, or used or whatever. The one may add a certain surplus to the other, but that would only be because it adds an extra dimension to the context of the other, it doesn’t necessarily make it another text.

Every interpretative route I have taken until now has been limited to a very restricted space: in seeking answers to interpretative questions there was hardly any need for me to go outside the texts themselves, or even beyond the most obvious code-levels. But that is only one way of dealing with these texts, and in order to be able to do that I had to rob them of their own name and the name of their maker. Let’s give them back, and see what happens.

\textit{I} doesn’t have a real name, it only has a number. It is poem \textit{XI} in a cycle of twenty-five poems called ‘An Empty Place to Stay, Places/Passages’, and was published in 1977 in a book entitled \textit{An Empty Place to Stay \& other selected poems}, authored by a poet.
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called Rutger Kopland. It does have a name, it is called ‘An Empty Spot to Stay’, published as part of the section ‘from An Empty Spot to Stay (1975)’ in a 1991 collection entitled *A World Beyond Myself* by a poet called Rutger Kopland.

An intriguing story is developing here, about texts seemingly alike and yet different, attributed to the same author, but each with divergent histories. By giving the poems a name, and a genealogy, I have provided other possible contexts, which may guide us to other interpretative routes (and beyond). Both poems are part of larger units and can be related to other parts in those units, albeit in a profoundly different way. Because it is a number in a series, part of a cycle, I (or perhaps I should call it by its proper number, XI) seems to have less of an identity of its own, whereas II is perfectly able to live under its own name. On the other hand, the relative dependence of XI on the co-text of the cycle makes its relationship with the other parts of that cycle much closer. The phrase ‘empty place to stay’, for instance, may be connected referentially with other passages from the cycle, like

(...) A place then,
in a chilly but idyllic valley, with a view
of mist: with my body I want to be an old
house, with a fire, drink, heavy shutters. (XIII)

or

There is no place to stay (...)
(... A place is a view

of the past, of what's to come, of the distance. (VI)

or

Grass and eternal moss grow on her roofs,
people must come and live here soon.

Slowly the banisters are broken down by ivy,
roses are eating away the window-frames,
and on the walls already ‘cunt’ and ‘I
was here’. When you’re visited

only by strangers, and when, when it rains,
it rains in every room. (XVIII)

As it turns out, almost every single lexical item in XI forms part of a
repetitive string woven into the cycle. The co-text of ‘An Empty Spot
to Stay’ is organized differently: the part called ‘from An Empty Spot
to Stay’ is not presented as a cycle, but as a section consisting of six
separate poems. None of the passages quoted above has any close
correspondence in A World beyond Myself, that may be said to belong
to the co-text of ‘An Empty Spot to Stay’.

Another dimension can still be added to the genealogy of these
poems. One might have guessed (or even inferred from the title of this
book) and truth will out anyway: these texts are translations. Transla-
tion I is by Ria Leigh-Loohuizen (Kopland/Leigh-Loohuizen 1977: 57), the translator of II is James Brockway (Kopland/Brockway 1991: 40)1. The ‘original message on which these two target messages are
mapped’ (cf. Toury 1980: 17) is the fourteenth poem in a cycle of
twenty-seven poems (or twenty-eight, depending on the edition), first
published in 1975 under the title Een lege plek om te blijven, and runs
as follows:

XIV
Ga nu maar liggen liefste in de tuin,
de lege plekken in het hoge gras, ik heb
altijd gewild dat ik dat was, een lege
plek voor iemand, om te blijven. (Kopland 1980: 18)

As it turns out, I and II may be connected to each other by means of
yet another text that may be used as an invitation to compare. But
between each of our two original poems and the original poem an-

1 Another nice chiasm: Leigh-Loohuizen is a native speaker of Dutch, who
lived in the USA for a long period of time, whereas Brockway is a native
speaker of English living in The Netherlands.
tertium may be constructed, and each of these tertia will render its own inventory of differences, this time pertinent to the relationships of the texts as translations.

What I said about the relationship between translations $I$ and $II$, does that also hold for the relationships between the source text and each of the target texts? Do we now have three situations? Is there anything in the target texts that would need the source text to be fully understood? Again, I would say, it might, but is not necessarily the case. The fact that $I$ and $II$ are translations does add an extra dimension to their contexts, but they remain the same texts.

The double status of the translation

A translation, then, so one might begin a sweeping statement, is a strange phenomenon, because it is always two things at the same time: on the one hand the status of a translation is that of an independent text: once produced, a translation, in its own cultural environment, functions in a way similar to that of any other text in that environment; on the other hand its status is that of a derivative text: a translation is a representation, or a reconstruction, or a reproduction, of another text.

This double, hybrid status has long been acknowledged as one of the characteristic features of a translation. Levy was one of the first to note the implications of this ambivalence:


In Holmes' view translation serves a 'double purpose', and a 'metapoem' can be considered
a nexus of a complex bundle of relationships converging from two directions: from the original poem, in its language, and linked in a very specific way to the poetic tradition of that language; and from the poetic tradition of the target language, with its more or less stringent expectations' (1969a [1988]: 24-25).

This point has been taken up particularly in the tradition of descriptive translation studies. Toury considers both aspects of the double status (in his words being a 'worthwhile literary work [text] in TL' and 'being a translation') as two major elements of which the "value" behind the norms of literary translation' consists (cf. Toury 1980: 52-53; 1995: 56).

Within the framework of the historical-hermeneutic approach to translation studies, the 'hybrid nature of literary translation' is defined in more axiological terms, but is considered no less fundamental:

like an interpretation, it [literary translation] is subservient to the translated work; but, unlike an interpretation, it is a reformulation of the entire translated work, taking its place in the target literature (Frank & team 1986: 336).

In a more rigid way than is normally the case, I will take the notion of the double status as a point of departure for my reflections on the study of translated literature, and try to avoid interference between a prospective and a retrospective view on translation, between looking at translation from a point of view before and after the product has come into being. In this book I will not try to formulate a theory of the translation process, or a universal translation theory attempting to establish a link with the practice of the 'real-life phenomenon' of translation. I will only be concerned with the link between the theory and practice of translation description, with the way one may set out to study existing translations with a specific purpose in mind, in my case the way in which one can describe a target text in its status as an interpretation of a corresponding source text.
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It is my conviction that a translation is a representation of another text and at the same time a text in its own right. Translation is not primarily a representation, and secondarily also a text of its own. Nor is it in the first place a text of its own and in the second place also a representation. From the point of view of the process of translation one might distinguish between stages such as ‘decomposition’ and ‘recomposition’ (cf. Toury 1986: 1114-15), or between ‘derivation rules’ and ‘projection rules’ (Holmes 1976 [1988]: 84), but in the translation product both elements of the double status have coalesced. And to my mind this is the very reason why the study of translation is problematical: one can’t deal with both perspectives at the same time, one has to choose whether the initial focus is on the status of a translation as an independent text or on the status as a derivative text.

Almost every aspect of translation seems to have an element of duplicity in it, not in the least the study of its products. Traditionally, the communication scheme applied to translation runs from a single (source text) sender to a single (target text) addressee, with only the mediating entity of the translator assigned a double role. From the point of view of the process of producing a target text, that is, from a point of view in which the empirical translator is the origo, this single duplication may be completely justified. But this prospective viewpoint is inadequate when applied to the essentially retrospective situation of translation description, in which the translation describer² is the origo.

Although the dichotomy prospectivity-retrospectivity has a long history in discourse on translation, its usefulness seems not to have been widely acknowledged. Still the dichotomy has found its use on the object level as well as on the meta level of translation studies. On the object level the terms may be used to denote two different global translation strategies, or ‘Übersetzungsperspektive’ (Wilss 1977: 103), one oriented dominantly towards the source text (retrospectivity) and the other towards the target language (prospectivity). Nowadays the two polar alternatives in Toury’s con-

² Whether one sees the describer as a subject or as an institutionalized extension of a specific theoretical framework is presently not relevant.
cept of the initial norm, adequacy and acceptability, have become more prevalent in denoting these global strategies. On the meta level a distinction is made between prospective translation studies, which is concerned with research into the process, and retrospective translation studies, which is exclusively dedicated to the research of translation products (cf. Wilss 1977: 67). A similar distinction, in terms of the viewpoint on the act of translation (‘before’ or ‘after’), is made by Toury (1995: 81; cf. also Bakker et. al. 1997).

To my mind, the distinction on the meta level is absolutely crucial, in the sense that one and the same term can be linked to entirely different concepts, depending on whether one’s theoretical framework is retrospective or prospective. A term like ‘strategy’, for instance, which is conventionally used prospectively, takes on an entirely different meaning in its use as a retrospective concept. There is a world of difference between a realist’s prospective definition (‘Übersetzungsstrategien (...) als potentiell bewußte Pläne eines Übersetzers zur Lösung konkreter Übersetzungsprobleme im Rahmen einer konkreten Übersetzungsauflage’ [Krings 1986: 175]) and the semiotic notion of textual strategy as used in this book (cf. the next chapter). Since this book is concerned with the study of actual, existing translations, its viewpoint necessarily is retrospective.

The duplicity of communicative roles in translation
The duplication, then, of communicative roles which takes place in translation is itself once again duplicated, or at least fundamentally complicated, in the descriptive study of translation. It is interesting to see how every ‘slot’ but one in Jakobson’s scheme of ‘constitutive factors in (...) any act of verbal communication’ (Jakobson 1960: 353) becomes doubly occupied, once applied to translation. It is easy to see

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3 Wilss actually distinguishes between ‘ausgangssprachlich’ (rather than source text oriented) and ‘zielsprachlich gerichtete Übersetzungsansicht’; the comparison with the concept of initial norm is still justified because Wilss has a ‘Grundsatzentscheidung’ in mind.

4 In an earlier publication, Toury also uses the dichotomy in connection with the methodology of source text-target text comparison to denote criteria of relevance in choosing a unit of comparison (1990: 6-7).
that two senders are involved, the target text sender (TTS) and the source text sender (STS), that there are two messages, target text and source text, and two addressees, target text addressee (TTA) and source text addressee (STA). As far as the element of 'code' is concerned, things are a little more complicated, but for the time being it is justified to say that at least two code systems are involved: two primary modelling systems and two, or more, secondary modelling systems, which may (partially) overlap. Context, being the most problematical and controversial aspect in Jakobson's scheme, is also the most complicated aspect as far as translation is concerned. I agree with those critics of Jakobson who say that every entity in the scheme represents an aspect of the communicative context, and in that sense the duplication of context is inherent in the other duplications. Since the focus of this book is on poetic discourse in translation, and its theoretical claims do not go beyond the domain of translated literature, we need not be concerned with possible duplications concerning 'medium': for our purpose we may take the medium of writing as a given and fixed entity.

This does not tell us yet in what way these duplications resulting from the double, hybrid status of translation complicate the study of translation. In order to be able to find this out we have to link the 'factors' in Jakobson's scheme to specific roles involved in the study of translation, and to add specific points of view to these roles. When you look at the translator in terms of the position he occupies, you can see that he either occupies more than one position, or (partly) shares a position with others: the translator may be said to occupy more than one position, in that he takes up the positions of sender as well as addressee, and more importantly, as we have seen, does so at the same time. The original author may be said to occupy both the positions of source text sender and target text sender. From the point of view of the target discourse, the position of sender is doubly occupied: by the original author as well as by the translator. From the point of view of an instance of comparative description, the position of source text addressee is occupied by the describer as well as by the translator. A further complication is that the describer also takes up two positions at the same time: she is also target text addressee. If one wishes to include the empirical reader of the target text into this
scheme as well, one has to add one more duplication: the describer has to share her position of target text addressee with, what I will call for want of a better word, the recipient. Schematically this may be represented as follows:

| translator: | STA   | TTS   |
| author:     | STS   | TTS   |
| describer:  | STA   | TTA   |
| STA:        | translator | describer |
| TTS:        | author | translator |
| TTA:        | describer | recipient |

These duplications of roles and of positions are factors fundamentally complicating the process of translation description, and the problems they pose are to be taken into account on the level of methodology. For the time being the nature of the problems may be illustrated by the double occupation of the position of source text addressee by the translator and the describer.

In any ‘ordinary’ interpretation (and, as we will we see later on, this book will be mainly concerned with the relationship between translation and interpretation), performed within the framework of literary studies, the interpreter, even if she assumes the role of model reader, in taking up the position of addressee, makes herself part of the communicative situation. But in studies on translation that focus on the translation product as a representation of an interpretation, the principle of duplicity rules out the possibility of singular occupation. The object of study may be said to constitute (partly) the representation of an independent, ‘closed’ instance of discourse. In the instance of discourse triggered off by the target text, the translation describer is in the same position as the literary scholar as ‘ordinary’ interpreter.

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5 At this point the vagueness of the term is quite convenient. It is supposed to include both what might be called (after Eco) the ‘model’ and the ‘empirical’ side of the occupants of sender and addressee positions. This distinction will be clarified in Chapter 2. My use of Jakobson’s scheme here does not presuppose a specific conception of the translation process; it merely serves as illustration.
But because the position of source text addressee is doubly occupied, one might argue that during translation description, that is to say, certain stages of target text-source text comparison, two instances of discourse are intermingled. Since one of them, the discourse in which the translator is involved, constitutes the object of study, the possibility of interference has to be reckoned with. In different literary interpretations, despite possible differences in theoretical frameworks, every subject (interpreter) stands in a similar relationship to her object. During translation description, however, the translator as interpreter is included in the object, and inasmuch as the describer practices literary (critical) interpretation as well, he is, to a certain extent, in ‘competition’ with the translator. This problem of interference is mainly felt on the level of methodology. At that level it is decisive in determining the basic viewpoint underlying comparative research. Although the object of research is the discourse which involves the translator in her role as addressee, one has to get access to it by means of the target text, central in the discourse which involves the translator as a sender. Consequently, the way to avoid institutionalizing this interference is to take the target discourse as point of departure of target text-source text comparison. In that sense, the minimization of interference is a valuable argument in favour of a target text-oriented comparative method (Cf. also Chapter 6).

**Foci of research**

Apart from serving as illustration for the problems deriving from the double status of the translation, the factors in Jakobson’s scheme may also be used as a stepping stone for a global description of possible foci of translational research; a description which will enable me to

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6 One might argue that precisely at this point the borderline between translation description and translation criticism is crossed, but on the other hand it is hard to see how any meaningful target text-source text comparison is possible without somehow taking into account the question of interpretation. In that sense descriptive translation studies as such defies any strict division between object level and meta level (Cf. Bakker & Naaijkens 1991, as well as Bakker 1995a), or, on the level of epistemology, between subject and object.
relate my position to other relevant approaches in the field. In what follows I will limit myself to what is commonly known as product-oriented descriptive studies. Evidently, this branch does not exhaust the entire scope of translation studies as a discipline, although I believe it is very much in the centre of it. Since actual, existing translations always constitute the point of departure in a product-oriented study, the various relevant foci will be dealt with here according to the possible relationships between the target message and other 'constitutive factors' which may function as its context.

A focus which has become very dominant in the past fifteen years is that on the target message-source message (M₂-M₁) relationship with respect to the position of the translator as target text sender: the study of how norms govern the production of translation. Central in this approach is the position of the target message and target sender in the context of the target system. A typical study performed within this framework is Toury's 'Norms of Literary Translation into Hebrew, 1930-1945' (Toury 1980: 122-139), with a well-specified corpus, a specific target language, and a restricted historical period.

Another possible focus is on the M₂-M₁ relationship with respect to the position of the source text sender within the target literature: the study of translational reception, of the way in which a certain oeuvre (or part of it) of an author has been imported into a target culture. The scope of such studies may differ enormously, they range from the author as centre of attention, 'Shakespeare in the Netherlands' e.g. (Leek 1988), to a specific work, James Joyce's *Ulysses* in vier deutschen Übersetzungen (Versteegen 1988), or to a certain aspect of a

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7 When one takes into consideration that this only concerns the translation in its materiality, it follows that the translation itself (the text) is not necessarily the object of study. In that sense product-orientation is a prerequisite for process- as well as function-oriented studies. It is of course possible to study translational processes and functions without directly taking the (culturally functioning) product into consideration, but then the question arises whether such studies belong to the domain of translation studies, or to ([sub]branches of) psychology or sociology (or psychologically or sociologically oriented branches of linguistics, semiotics or literary studies). Much of the debate about translation studies being an autonomous, or semi-autonomous discipline or an interdisciplinary centres around this problem.
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single text, for instance the motif of landscape in Dickens' *Great Expectations* in German translations (Czennia 1992). Very often a historical dimension is added to this kind of study.

The study of translational reception should be distinguished from the study of the reception of translation. The former is often based on a more phenomenological conception of reception, and falls within the domain covered by a theory of aesthetic response (‘Wirkungsaesthetik’; cf. Iser 1978: x), whereas the latter is far more empirically oriented. In terms of our scheme, such studies are concerned with the target message-target text addressee relationship, with the reception of the translation by the target readership. A good example of this kind of study is Stegeman 1991, which involves a comparison, employing statistical methods, between source reader responses to Multatuli’s *Max Havelaar* and target reader responses to several of its German translations. This field of study has not been well explored yet, but Stegeman’s book shows that it evokes a wealth of methodological problems (cf. Koster 1993).

Yet another focus is that on the $M_2$-$M_1$ relationship with respect to the position of the translator as source text addressee within the target literature: the study of translational interpretation (which, by the way, is very closely related to the study of translational reception). This field of study will be the main topic of this book.

One might relate all these foci to different ways of placing translation in a specific context. This does not necessarily involve the study of $M_2$-$M_1$ relationships, of the translation as a reconstruction of another text, it is also possible to depart from the translation in itself, in its status as a text functioning in its own right. But, which aspect of the double status one takes as one’s point of departure, one cannot but relate a translation to the different (target) code systems it may be said to belong to: linguistic, literary, cultural and social ones.

In one way or another, all these foci, all these contexts may be brought to bear upon the explanation of why a translation has turned

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8 After Naaijken (1989: 22): ‘Not the view as it develops itself during the process of translation, but the specific view on the source text as it emerges from the translation product’.

9 One might even argue that $M_1$ is just one possible (aspect of) context of $M_2$. 

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out the way it has. Inevitably, they cannot all be taken into consideration at the same time, because they presuppose different theoretical frameworks and methodological viewpoints. Any given systematic case study (and now we are contrasting the theory of translation research with the practice of translation research) always takes place within a specific framework, with its own specific heuristic limits and possibilities. A lot of questions can be asked concerning translations. Even if we take our two initial poems and their original and ask ourselves only to what or whom we may ascribe the differences between them, there is a multitude of possible answers, and the range of contexts in which these texts can be studied seems to be infinite. How do ‘spot’ and ‘place’ relate to ‘plaats’? What is the (stylistic or semantic) difference between ‘that’s what I’ve always wanted, to be an empty place’ and ‘that’s what I’ve always wanted to be, an empty spot’ and between ‘an empty place to stay, for someone’ and ‘an empty spot for someone, to stay’? Or we may ask ourselves why one translator decided to translate (almost) the entire cycle, whereas the other selected six poems. And we may ask why those specific translators translated this specific text. The differences may be attributed to, for instance, language, if we would wish to see the texts as messages from specific linguistic code systems. Or to the specific view on the author - there may be a world of difference between the two texts, but they are attributed to one and the same author. And, evidently, to the translators themselves as well, if one wishes to consider the texts as products of the translator rather than the author. Anything is possible, and relevance is determined by the purpose of the comparison. In that sense, the perspective of $A_2$, the context the describer imposes on translation, is decisive for the output of translational research. Since neither of these contexts may claim priority in the study of translation, perspective is a matter of choice.

**Translation and difference**

Before going into the specific purpose of this book, it is necessary to look a little closer at the topic of difference in translation, because it

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10 Unless, of course, one wishes to depart from a metaphysics of translation, where the power of argument is overruled by the power of exclusive insight.
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is an essential concept. In general, my starting point is that difference is constitutive for translation. One has to distinguish, however, between the differences between the texts (messages) and the difference in structure between the source and target linguistic, literary and cultural (code) systems involved in translation. These systemic differences, which pertain to the level of competence, are part of the opening conditions for translation, whereas the differences between the texts (which, to acknowledge the difference between the two levels, from now on will be called 'shifts') are the result of the translational behaviour opted for in order to deal with the systemic differences. In a very general way, translation can be described as involving a transfer of elements across semiotic borders\[1]. The relation between the two systems which are confronted in translating is asymmetric, that is, there is not necessarily a one-to-one relationship between related items; and the value of any item is determined by its position within in its own system, rather than by its relation to items in the other system. The way the transfer is carried out, therefore cannot be determined a priori, there always is an element of choice: the translation operation performed on an initial semiotic entity can lead to different resultant entities.

Lower-level single semiotic entities may correspond statically on a one-to-one basis (although maximum fit seems an exceptional case), but with respect to messages, as multi-layered semiotic entities, such correspondence is irrelevant. On the level of the system, equivalence (or the possibility of some type or degree of equivalence) may exist a priori of translation, but on the level of complex messages it never does, because on that level translation produces equivalence. This mechanism is one of the basic principles, if not the most basic principle, underlying modern translation description. Its basicness is reflected in the notion of the equivalence postulate (Toury 1980: 115; 1995: 61). It is posited that in any descriptive exercise one does not set out to ask the question whether a specific translation is equivalent to its original, but that one takes a specific translation to be equivalent

\[1\] Toury points out that translation should not be reduced to the transfer itself, since that would entail a reduction of translation to its reconstructive aspect only (Toury 1980: 12).
and goes on to seek an answer to the question what kind of equivalence relationship is pertinent between the two texts. Equivalence, then, is primarily considered a descriptive term, rather than a theoretical term (cf. Toury 1980: 39-40). This concept is most suited to function as a demarcation criterion for any target-oriented descriptive effort within Translation Studies.

The study of the differences between systems, traditions, and codes has its place within a variety of comparative disciplines, which may be linguistically as well as culturally oriented, but these disciplines are relevant to the study of translation only to the extent that they allow for the determination of potential translation relationships between source and target semiotic systems. Consequently, as against the static contrastive description of languages and cultures, which takes place within the framework of these disciplines, the description and explanation of shifts in translation as performance is concerned with the dynamics of culture.

Because difference is constitutive for translations, shifts can be considered a ‘categorial quality’ of the ‘class of translation’ (cf. Van den Broeck 1984-5: 117). The concept of shift, however, is by no means absolute. Shifts are always changes with respect to an invariant core, to something that does not change. Dissimilarities are to be related to similarities, there is always an ‘invariant under transformation’ (Toury 1980: 12; cf. also Toury 1986) involved. In the case of messages, of multi-layered semiotic entities, the occurrence of a shift on one level may be caused by the decision to retain a feature on another (sub- or superordinate) level; and the shift in its turn may have effects on the level of the message as a whole.

The concepts of ‘invariant’ and ‘shift’ are interdependent, in the sense that what one considers a shift depends on what one takes as invariant. Any translational relationship, in that sense, has to be regarded as a network of interrelated correspondences and shifts. This means that not every shift potentially detectable in the target message (or to be more precise, detectable between target and source messages) has to be dealt with in every instance of description, irrespective of its underlying point of view. Within descriptive studies of translation the invariant finds its use as a methodological construct, and as such is always linked to the theoretical purpose underlying the
The conceptual framework of any approach may be evaluated in terms of what it takes the shifts to be indicative of: a translator's poetics, translation norms, power relations, translation strategies, or a translational interpretation.

Again, as with the possible foci mentioned earlier, the question as to the commensurability of frameworks arises. Different vocabularies within one discipline are comparable to the extent that they are applied to the 'same' object, but to a large extent vocabularies also create their object. To overcome this paradox, it helps when we divorce the levels of methodology and theory. One might say that the result of a descriptive study, explanation or evaluation (whether or not in terms of what one takes a shift to be indicative of), cannot jump out of the framework serving as its very basis. A variety of frameworks results in a variety of explanations. One may take the same corpus, and study it with the purpose of constructing translational interpretation, or the translational norms, or the ideological conceptions underlying it, and one will come up with different results, one will construct different 'textual translators', different conglomerates of correspondences and shifts. The justification of these explanations amounts to the justification of frameworks, and not to the justification of method. Asking whether a method is justified is simply asking whether it is in accordance with the aims determined by its framework. The translational interpretation, for instance, may be made visible, as will be done in this book, by way of the concept of 'text world'. The applicability of the concept may be justified by the maxim that wherever there is a text a text world can be constructed. Each text, then, may be analysed

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12 The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters of this book will be entirely devoted to the central role of the concept of shift within the methodology of product-oriented descriptive translation studies.

13 The term 'vocabulary' fits in with my earlier account on perspective and point of view; cf. on this point Davidson 1984: 'The dominant metaphor of conceptual relativism, that of differing points of view, seems to betray an underlying paradox. Different points of view make sense, but only if there is a common co-ordinate system on which to plot them; yet the existence of a common system belies the claim of dramatic incomparability' (184).

14 I will deal with this term in more detail in Chapter 2.
in terms of the way in which particular expressions may be attributed to text world elements (subjects, objects, time, location) and to the processes, actions, states and events relating them to each other. The network of correspondences and shifts that may be constructed during a comparative description of target and source text may also be expressed in these terms; the procedure then becomes an instrument for relating the linguistic and textual shifts to differences in the possibilities of constructing a text world from the texts.

The question of the justification of frameworks, however, is simply undecidable. Questions about the justification of methods are quite distinct from questions about the justification of conceptual frameworks. Whereas asking whether a method is justified, is asking whether it is in accordance with the aims determined by its framework, the question whether a framework is justified has to be answered in terms of the way in which it deals with what it takes to be its object. The first question is primarily methodological, the second one mainly a matter of ideology.\(^{15}\)

One may justify the research into translational norms by positing that translation is a form of social and cultural behaviour that is regulated by norms and conventions. One may justify the research into a translator’s conception of the source text as it emerges from the target text, the translational interpretation, by positing that translation is a manifestation of an interpretation. Neither of these justifications excludes the other one. The choice for either angle is to a large extent arbitrary and can’t be justified by an appeal to the object of study. Preference of one to the other is mainly a matter of value judgement, of what one considers more interesting or relevant. Discussion about the value or usefulness of various approaches in itself is of course interesting and worthwhile. But when it comes to getting work done, when it comes to actually describing translational relationships, one simply has to choose.

Methods, then, need not be evaluated ideologically; once a ‘common co-ordinate system’ has been found, they can be compared

\(^{15}\) ‘For now one is debating what purposes are worth bothering to fulfill, which are more worthwhile than others, rather than which purposes the nature of humanity or of reality obliges us to have’ (Rorty 1991: 110).
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to each other with respect to how they go about doing what they are
designed to do. On the level of separate concepts, one need not bother
about the ‘translatability’ of vocabularies, but on the most global le-
vel it is possible to compare conceptual frameworks. It is possible, I
believe, to relate the concepts of poetics, norm, strategy and interpre-
tation to each other, but only in a global way. For instance, the di-
chotomoy retention - recreation (cf. Holmes 1972a [1988]) may be
compared to the dichotomy adequacy - acceptability (Toury 1980: 54-
55). This is not to say that they can be equalled to each other without
any further qualification, but undoubtedly they can be ‘translated’
into each other. As far as this point is concerned it is decisive that
both dichotomies can be seen as reflecting a ‘basic choice’ made by
the translator of the corpus under investigation - not an absolute ei-
ther/or choice, but a choice that can be described in terms of domi-
nance of one pole over the other. In this respect it is not a problem
that Holmes wishes to express the choice in terms of a strategy, whe-
reas Toury uses the term ‘initial norm’. Nor is it a problem that Toury
arrives at his ultimate descriptive statement (which constitutes the
transition to the explanatory stage of his enterprise) after the analysis
of operational norms, whereas in Holmes’ methodological consider-
ations16 the statements about dominance of retention or recreation are
arrived at after an analysis of translation solutions with respect to
their being historicizations or modernizations, or exoticizations or
naturalizations on the linguistic, intertextual or socio-cultural axes.
Despite this difference in vocabulary in the initial stages of the des-
criptive effort, the (global) dichotomies are roughly equivalent. Un-
surprisingly, this equivalence, the ‘common co-ordinate system’, can
be traced back to the way the dichotomies are related to the double
status of the translation: Holmes relates his dichotomy to the ‘dual
goal’ of translation: ‘producing a text which is a translation of the
original [text] and is at the same time a [text] in its own right’
(Holmes 1972a [1988]; 50); Toury relates his one to the ““value”
behind the norms of literary translation[, which] may be described as

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16 Holmes never actually presented a full-fledged descriptive method, but the
immense conceptual consistency of his essays allows for the construction of a
systematic ‘method’ from his writings.

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consisting of two major elements [...] : (1) being a worthwhile literary work (text) in TL [...] , (2) being a translation' (Toury 1980: 53).

In this book I will deal with the concept of shifts in the assumption that they are indicative of the translational interpretation, that is to say shifts will be looked upon as an instrument for constructing 'the specific view on the source text as it emerges from the translation product'. This means that individual shifts will be of more import than constitutive shifts (shifts due to the systemic differences), and substantial shifts of more import than formal ones (these categories will be dealt with *in extenso* in Chapter 5).

**The study of poetic discourse in translation**

What, then, will be the purpose of this book? This book will be about the study of literary translation, or to be more precise, about the study of poetic discourse in translation. From a retrospective point of view these are two important restrictions. Anything one might say in general about translation will hold for literary translation, but not everything one might say about literary translation will hold for translation in general. The same principle may be applied to the relationship between the translation of literature in general and the translation of poetic discourse. From the point of view of the process it is perhaps not always necessary to explicitly distinguish between different text types or genres, and often the difference is altogether neglected. From a retrospective, methodological point of view, however, one inevitably has to account for text type and genre in the descriptive apparatus. As said before, the theoretical claims of this book do not stretch beyond the domain of literary translation; as a consequence, whenever I use the word 'translation' without qualification it is supposed to apply to translated literature only, and only within a methodological context will I make distinctions according to genre.

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17 This is not as rigid a statement as it may seem. One always has to bear in mind that such labels may be put to flexible use. In this case one might include for instance certain books from the Bible, like *The Song of Songs* or the *Psalms*, or other sacred texts, and possibly even certain advertisement texts. I will not explore this avenue myself, but I think it would be worth a try.
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The specific focus of this book will be mainly on the first aspect of the double status: on the translation as a reconstruction, a representation of another text. More specifically it will be concerned with the translation in its capacity as an interpretation of another text. Consequently, it will mainly concentrate on those aspects of translation which relate to the transfer and production of meaning (in its broadest possible sense). Since translation is to be considered an event taking place in culture, the relevant concept of meaning is pragmatic, rather than semantic. The framework developed in this study, therefore, is situated on the interface between semiotics and hermeneutics.

Translation is an event, that is, it occurs not on language in isolation, but on language in a context of use - an event in which subjects are related to context by way of a message. This view runs parallel with Toury's maxim that translation research has to focus on performance, not on competence. Translation is a (cross- or inter)cultural event: it always entails a confrontation between cultures, in the sense that it may be said to reflect the position taken within a target culture towards a source culture, and by extension to other cultures in general. The relevant focus of study in this respect is the target culture, the culture in which the confrontation takes place - again a parallel with the Touryan framework.

These parallels may serve to indicate my kinship to the target-oriented approach to translation studies, which is commonly associated with the study of norms. With this book, I claim to be part of the target-oriented paradigm, but not unproblematically so. Another maxim of this paradigm holds that translation is a teleological activity, but I will deal mainly with the relation between the *telos* of the

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18 The label itself may have become problematical, since by now it has lost much of its original polemic connotation. Hermans (1989: 194) uses the more suitable term 'context-oriented' as a general heading for target-oriented and transfer-oriented approaches. As sub-branches one might then distinguish between a systemic-functional approach (for target-orientation) and historical-hermeneutic (for transfer-orientation). My own approach may then be labelled structural-hermeneutic. The label 'context-oriented' may also be considered to include historically oriented poststructuralist approaches to translation studies.
translation and its archi. To my mind interpretation is as fundamental to literary translation as is the basic choice between adequacy and acceptability accounted for within the concept of the initial norm, and I believe that within the target-oriented approach the problem of the transfer and production of meaning does not get the attention it deserves.19 An important aim of this book is to find a place for the concept of interpretation within this approach. This plea for more attention for interpretation as a cultural phenomenon will go hand in hand with an attempt to theoretically justify the position of the concept within this paradigm. On the other hand it will be interesting, from an interpretation-theoretical point of view, to look at the specific position of translation within the spectrum of different forms of interpretation.

The ultimate aim of this book is to arrive at a coherent proposal for an armamentarium, a set of instruments, for the description of poetic discourse in translation, that is: to try to develop a comparative procedure, and to try to define and make operable a set of concepts that may be instrumental in describing the results of that comparison. I do not use the word method, although its use is justified, that is, to the extent that the procedure is formalized. But, in my proposal, the procedure will only be formalized to a certain extent. Following the spirit of the metaphor underlying Holmes' mapping theory, I might say that my armamentarium is to provide the means enabling the describer to mark out his itinerary through the text pairs. When the route can be followed step by step it need not be an objection that one may encounter untried paths or breathtaking panoramas, shied away from for sheer vertigo. Minimum condition for intersubjectivity is that one should agree on having entered a translational landscape (which, admittedly, sometimes may prove to be a problem in itself) and that one must be able to justify the route one has taken - not that everyone necessarily has to take the same route. Uniformity in the marking means ensures the possibility of comparing alternative routes.

It will be a long way before we arrive at the proposal. First, we have to work our way through the theoretical justification of the relationship between translation and interpretation as well as of the ways

19 A notable exception is Delabastita 1993.
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in which the presence of interpretation within translation may be made visible and explicit (Chapters 2 and 3). In the next stage the centre of attention will be the methodology of translation description, more specifically the position of the concept of ‘shift’ within some of the contemporary theoretical frameworks within the field of descriptive translation studies (Chapter 4). In Chapter 5 I will deal with the several typological distinctions that can be made with respect to the concept of shift. Chapter 6 will be concerned with some of the specific methodological problems of and requirements for the descriptive study of translations and originals. Chapter 7 will contain the actual proposal and Chapter 8 will consist of a self-contained case study. In the final evaluative chapter I hope to be able to show that the *armamentarium* is there neither to cure nor to conquer the translated discourse to which it is applied, that dissection does not necessarily lead to dismemberment, but that it may be employed to lay bare certain hopefully interesting aspects of translation – nothing less, nothing more.