

GLOBAL TRANSLATION

In Chapter 3 nonstandard translation was studied in the local sense. When scientific theories and literary works are translated, possible situations and languages must be explored more globally. In the present chapter, I generalize the earlier ideas about local translation by studying a global version (concerning literary works) of what was in Chapter 2 called explanatory translation. The notion will cover, as earlier, both translations between two languages and paraphrases. The generalization will be rather immediate, and it will gradually lead us to the definition of correspondence relation, which is considered in Chapter 5, below. Recall, however, that what is here taken as the notion of translation is not strict enough to satisfy Kuhn (1983).

When we in previous chapters investigated satisfaction in various situations, we only needed the notion of satisfaction that is *internal* for speakers and hearers. Such a notion will also play an important role in global translations, as, for instance, in cases of fictional narratives, and – perhaps somewhat unexpectedly – sometimes with respect to theories. When a scientific theory is reconstructed in model theory, the model-theoretic notion of truth is employed, which in fact means internal truth. On the other hand, the sequential character of narratives, whether fictional or not, presents specific problems for the notions of satisfaction and truth. These problems will be explored here in some detail after a more general discussion about textual interpretation and translation.

4.1. TRANSLATION AND LITERARY WORKS

We proposed in Section 2.1 to understand the notion of speech act in a generalized sense, so that speakers and hearers can even be, besides individuals, (scientific or cultural) communities, and utterances can even be written texts. This generalization will be assumed in what follows, but I try to justify it only in the next section. Furthermore, it

has been suggested by several students of literary theory that a natural way of analyzing a literary work is to think of it as referring to possible worlds, some or all of which can be fictional.¹ How the appropriate possible worlds are chosen by a speaker, on one hand, and a hearer, on the other, is in accordance with the general principles of interpretation, similar to those briefly considered in Chapter 2, above. There are additional difficulties in the present case; they will be discussed later in this chapter.

The possible worlds in question are those at which the work or its translation is satisfied, by the speaker's or hearer's lights, respectively. Hence we can here consider the *speaker's worlds* and the *hearer's worlds* as in the local case their situations; and *actual worlds* will be analogous to what were called actual situations in the local case. At this juncture, I speak of possible worlds rather than of situations, but otherwise the notions in question, and the problems and reservations thereupon, are similar to those discussed in the local case.² However, since situations are here considered as 'small' worlds, the concept of world covers both in what follows. Since literary texts are often complex and their contexts vague, the three collections of possible worlds are generally large (larger than in local cases), that is, a text cannot be thought of as describing a single world or a tiny collection of them even though its meaning were assumed to be unique. This will not jeopardize the applicability of our earlier theory, but below we take into account the fact that we are here investigating expressions, languages, and worlds in a more global sense.³

If the collections of a speaker's and hearer's worlds are disjoint, then, for reasons discussed in the local case, there has to be a *correlation* between them that harmonizes with a *translation*. The correlation is a mapping from a subcollection of the hearer's worlds into worlds of the speaker, and the translation maps into the hearer's language at least the expressions of which it is meaningful to say that they and their translations are or are not satisfied at the speaker's and hearer's worlds, respectively. Let these mappings be denoted by '*F*' (correlation) and '*I*' (translation). Then, on the ground of what we have discovered so far, we have to require at least that for all expressions φ in the domain of *I*, and all worlds w in the domain of *F*,

(4.1.1) φ is satisfied at $F(w)$ if and only if $I(\varphi)$ is satisfied at w .

What we are up to here when talking of meaningfulness should be intuitively obvious though the notion cannot be made precise in the present informal context. The expressions of the text are meaningful in the intended sense, since, by definition, they and their translations are satisfied at the speaker's and hearer's worlds, respectively. One could argue against the supposition adopted here that *all* expressions of the text should have a translation, even in our nonstandard sense. The supposition could of course be dispensed with, but this would cause more complications in the definition. Likewise, the domain of the translation is deliberately characterized in vague terms; it may depend on the case, but it is obvious that it is not always sufficient to consider just the expressions contained in the text. Furthermore, what it means for an expression to be satisfied (or, rather, for a sentence to be true) relative to a text and a world is unclear, and there is no common agreement upon the matter. In the next section I shall briefly discuss this question.⁴

The two mappings have to satisfy logical and pragmatic conditions of adequacy, the nature of which is dependent on the text that is to be translated and on linguistic, aesthetic, and contextual specialties. The mappings must be transformations in some formal or, as here, intuitive sense of the word, and they display how the respective changes are obtained. This means that they must establish a sufficiently informative conceptual relationship between the two texts. The most obvious condition (4.1.1) is logical, and it is explicitly included in the definition. The notion of semantic transformation will also be analogous to its namesake in the local case; as before, it is composed of a minimizing transformation – which transforms (some of the) actual worlds into a hearer's worlds, more precisely, into the worlds belonging to the domain of F – and of a correlation. The minimizing transformation is not explicitly mentioned in (4.1.1) for reasons that will become more evident in later chapters where global translation is studied in an exact framework. As we shall see, its role is more prominent on the pragmatic side than on the logical side of explanation.

This is only a first step, so to speak, and needs qualifications. Since a text is a sequence (sometimes even a sequence of sequences) of expressions, these are not satisfied at possible worlds individually but in relation to other expressions of the text. More generally, how a reader receives and interprets an expression is constrained by other

expressions of the text. The meaning of the whole text is not a function of the meanings of its constituent parts, considered individually. At least in this sense the text is intensional; the principle of compositionality does not hold. This feature also implies, as a special case, that how the beginning of the text is to be interpreted is (or may be) dependent on its end and *vice versa*. Narratives describe histories rather than mutually independent situations. A semantic analysis of this feature and a discussion of logical difficulties caused by the sequential character of narratives, and an analysis of hermeneutic features involved, can be found in Section 4.4, below.⁵

Furthermore, when a speaker or a hearer is fabricating possible worlds to which he assumes the text referring, he – in the case of narratives, at least – is doing that by considering appropriate courses of events, that is, sequences of situations (sequences of ‘small’ possible worlds) which are dependent on each other. Hence it seems logical to enlarge our previous terminology and talk about the *speaker’s* and *hearer’s*, and *actual courses of events*, and assume that the text is satisfied at the speaker’s course of events and its translation at the hearer’s course of events.

Now the more comprehensive worlds in question – i.e., worlds that we mean when we talk about the world or worlds created by a story – are constructed not only by employing courses of events but also by means of connotations the text suggests and by means of other conditions pertaining to the background involved. I shall not here discuss the ontological difficulties philosophers have often found in the notion of possible world – though their queries are often misleading. Small worlds, situations, of which the speaker’s and hearer’s worlds are constructed, can be thought of as imaginary events that follow one another when the consecutive expressions of the text are received. This is a heuristic device that is relatively free from ontological problems (at this level of analysis), and it is in accordance with our disposition to visualize the events the story is describing. The speaker’s and hearer’s worlds are something more extensive, which can be visualized by means of the small worlds.⁶

The two dimensions or kinds of possible worlds mentioned above – small worlds, i.e., situations, and more comprehensive worlds – have been given different names in the literature, of which *denotative* and *connotative* dimensions, in the sense in which Barthes (1967)

speaks of denotation and connotation, are the most suggestive. What an interpreted narrative text refers to in the first place, what it denotes, is courses of events.⁷ What it connotes is more vague, in its construction the denotation plays a crucial role.

Evidently the principles of interpretation, as defined in Chapter 2, and the notion of semantic transformation apply in cases of global interpretation and translation in the same fashion as we saw them as functioning in the local case and they can be used for explanatory purposes in the same way. The principles can be associated with possible worlds in a similar way as earlier, so as to function in the connotative dimension. Their intuitive meanings in the global case are similar to what they mean locally, but what they exactly mean for narratives is less clear. As suggested by Ricoeur, something like what I have called the Davidsonian principle of interpretation is emphasized when fictional narratives are interpreted.⁸ We shall see in Chapter 5 that for the study of intertheoretic relations the minimization principle becomes emphasized as well, particularly in cases of scientific change where theories are superseded by new ones. The meaning of the refinement principle is reflected in the above definition of correlation as a mapping from a hearer's worlds to a speaker's. Since new explanatory aspects come up with the correspondence relation, in particular with its formal version, I shall defer, until Chapter 6, the study of global versions of explanation connected with translation.

In the denotative dimension, on the other hand, a hearer usually attempts to keep the consecutive situations belonging to the course of events (suggested by the text) as close to each other as possible. This is done for the sake of coherence – in so far as consecutive situations described by the narrative are not separate but dependent on each other – and not so much for the sake of closing the gap between the two agents. So we can there talk about principles that are analogous to, but yet different from, our earlier principles of interpretation. This feature of receiving and interpreting narratives is discussed below, in Section 4.4.

Since the denotative dimension (that of sequences of situations) is logically prior to the connotative one (that of more comprehensive possible worlds), one may argue that instead of, or perhaps in addition to, considering single expressions and possible worlds as is done in (4.1.1), an analogous condition should be stated for whole texts