
The Virtues of Demobilization in Translation Studies

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Abstract

The paper attempts an articulation of translation as a scientific process. Translation keeps itself far from the syntax of structuralism and also beyond the reach of the 'cultural turn' as it stands. But as in structuralism, the article accepts the need for codes in translation. The technicality in translation helps it in the conscious reading of languages, the article emphasizes the structuralist and post-modern reading of English. The phonological and syntactical description of English and the aspects of civilisation and deep communication in translation are discussed in the article.

The Theme

The by now old and established commentaries on the supplement tell the story of how writing as a supplement to speaking turns the self-sufficient image of speaking on its head. But literature itself is often enough imaged as a necessary supplement to the technical knowledge that are indeed written but do not count as true writing. This imaging oscillates between an art for art's sake aesthetic and a deployment of literature as political or intellectual weapon. In this oscillation, as an old song once put it, "*we are guided by the beauty of our weapons*".

But it is surely not necessary for knowledge to be deployed in the military mode. For art to seek to attract is, likewise, optional.

Whatever the suspicious may say, I find valid the contemporary search for a reasonable exit from the gendered world of beauty products for typecast women and military wares for stereotyped males. Now, it is obvious that a reasonable exit cannot afford to be reason-free. The trouble is that we seem not to have a usable species of reason at our disposal. To rehearse the details of this absence, the dream of a universal reason died in the early twentieth century, and the literary-philosophical episode grounding existentialism in phenomenology had failed to get its act together by the time the Parisian fashions swung from Sartre to Levi-Strauss. From structuralism onwards, the very idea of a generally usable reason has been in a state of free fall. Now that we need one, we see this quite vividly, and are duly sad. Can we do anything about his unavailability?

In the present intervention I shall argue that it is necessary, for the larger enterprise of public space regeneration, to fashion a take on translation studies which at the very least bridges the gap between two characterizations of translation theory itself. I am responding here to the way the characterization of translation that the cultural turn sponsors in the literary wing of the endeavor sharply contrasts with the characterization that computational approaches accept as a default. My point is that once linguistics recasts itself as a translation-focused project, this renewed and respectified enterprise can begin to satisfy the needs of those translation theorists who rightly turned away from the structuralisms of yesterday and even to reintegrate the translation studies domain itself at a level that lies beyond the reach of the cultural turn as it stands.

Fashioning a public space of knowledge that is casual enough about what counts as knowing has to begin by being generous without going all gushy over how to welcome all these guests. We have to find the right tone of voice if we wish to really ask how literature, ordinary speaking, technology, science, art,

politics might all be envisaged fluidly as ways of knowing. It is okay to accept the readily available unifying rhetoric of an intellectual republic if we imagine this republic of knowledge in a federal, democratic mode. This means imagining its provinces as capable of self-interestedly initiating mutual contact at points of maximal need. I now plunge into such adventurous imagining. Please wish me luck.

Human lives are lived in terms of meanings largely provided by the stories we listen to and tell. These stories are language. We are living in a context shaped partly by the institutional fact that every nation X sponsors either a unique national language X or several languages X1, X2, X3 as its cultivated literary arenas. Every nation manages this sponsorship at several levels. The nation's literary committees award prizes for star performers. Schools force all literate children to hear about the stars of the past and some of their canonical writings. These phenomena are familiar.

What have we done with these familiar facts? We have tried, sometimes innovatively, to understand just how this state of affairs has come to seem as normal as it has. In the typical commonwealth country's colonial history, there came a moment at which modern language cultivation achieved a recognizable take-off. This moment launched the modern national management of language and literature in institutional formats recognizable to this day, although what then flourished was a classical style. Literary analysis correspondingly relied on classical models for tropes and sense making.

Once this national language management system had its coordinates under control, for a short while and in a few places the elite felt comfortable, free, and able to spread its wings. Let us call that the moment of national modernism. That brief moment of apparent autonomy allowed many forms of the examined life to flourish. These ranged from various high modernisms, through new criticism, and the existentialisms, rooted in phenomenology or

otherwise, to several left-wing forms of literary practice and analysis. The possibility of the autonomous critic in the independent nation requires national modernism as a crucible, one that corresponds to the notional and practical possibility of independent critics of the state.

The overall format in which national modernism at its inception typecast literary analysis and the critic continues as a sort of default. But it is a troubled default. My project here is to address this sense of trouble. For the early impression of autonomy gives way to the rise of scientism and professional expertise in the great mobilization visible from the sixties. Expertise in the study of literature begins to rest its case on psychoanalytical or materialist or mythographic premises anchored in some social science willing to use literary data for its theorizing. Can we see this transition in terms of visibility shifting from the nation to its fragments? But systematizing cognition's take-over of literary analysis only partly suits the interests of those critics who wish to fracture national modernism's premature unifications of the public space. Being marginal, the fragments cannot ride the mainstream's expertise horse. Their peripheral interests and the centre's focus on expertise pull literary analysis in opposite directions. Literary studies are left in moral disarray and in a state of disregard for the niceties of the social sciences whose tools they borrow.

This mess, often called the postmodern moment, wears the specialist overalls of a redescription of literature. But its knowledge claims are best constructed as an antifoundationalism adopted out of pique. Commentators were reacting against the visible falseness of national modernism's packaged open spaces. Such pique and its over intellectualized expressions were too unstable to last. They gave way to a moment of the media that could do more with images of the woman and of the subaltern. At that insufficiency-troubled moment, literary theory's flirtation with the popular amounted to a half-hearted reopening of the public space, which it saw as contested

between the texts and their farming. I would suggest that the moment of the media and the postcolonial turn are closely related sequels to the postmodern intervention.

The moment of the media reacts against the postmodern apparatus at the level of abandoning the serious appeal to social scientific expertise, but fails to reestablish a public space of possible space of possible intervention. It sponsors a tendency to ethnographize various aggregates by narrating them into communities. This is an understandable temptation, for such activity may appear to work against the hegemonies that keep margins marginal.

As a maneuver, though, the ethnographizing move seeks community but creates ghettos. These get in the way of the public space of rational history-making that might otherwise emerge. Yet we do need communities, which surely only the tools of literary analysis in their current mobilization can seriously empower. This is one of the major dilemmas we face as we try to exit from national modernism.

The form of the dilemma is easy to describe. You have been stuck with an inappropriate arena, the nation. You wish to pledge allegiance to humankind, which is much larger, but inaccessible. You are now doing the next best thing, which is to look within the nation and identify with sub national collectives where the bonding is real, persons find a sense of community, and domineering elite cannot easily emerge. This has the desired effect of undermining the hegemony of the nation's elite. But the boundaries around each subnational allegiance suddenly begin to look stronger than they should. Your dilemma takes the following form now. Do you persist, and run the risk of letting your communities turn into barricaded ghettos? Or do you abandon all bounded units and build transnational channels? The dilemma is too big to address directly, of

course. I identify here a particular traffic jam surrounding the study of languages and literatures. Attaining some clarity about this problem will move us closer to resolving the larger dilemma of identity politics and analytical systems that implement it.

The Traffic Jam

In the present intervention I focus on the intellectual content of the language-literature divide as the current enterprise acts it out and experiences it. I argue that we are caught in a traffic jam that we can begin to sort out if we recognize the perils of half-hearted expertise for what they are. I propose that we in the language-literature analysis enterprise negotiate new equations between domains where we need techno-scientific expertise and domains where we desire a public space emphatically detechnicalized.

Using the metaphor of a helicopter surveying the traffic jam and trying to guide the drivers, I shall pretend we are in the sky. In other words, I offer first some elements of a possible exit, thus introducing the terms on which my formulation of the traffic jam is based.

One ingredient in the egress I visualize is a state of permanent translation that recognizes and tames the codes. The codes, or the particular languages, that are postulated and cultivated in literary texts, become less dangerous if we label them self-consciously as constructed objects of cultivation. This move begins to revise the equation between the cultural objects of literary analysis and the naturalistic subject matter of linguistics.

Moves related to this prototypical move make possible a principled rather than merely expediency-based taming of expertise as such, not merely of certain experts. In order to get ready to truly demobilize the civil space, one must first mobilize sufficiently,

making expertise as technical as its content calls for. What then makes possible the demobilization the public space requires is the systematic practice of translation? To the extent that cultures are in a state of translation, they are civilized.

Translation operates as a liable means of permanent demobilization if its growth keeps up with the growth of the technical. This does not happen spontaneously. It has to be done. Translators work for specific constituencies. There is no general procedure. Particular users find this or that text hard to tackle for detectable reasons. To translate for them involves understanding what can give just those users access to the text. This understanding of the easy and the difficult must take on board clearer pictures than we now have both of the linguistic material and of the users.

As we rearticulate our pictures of what is easy or difficult for whom, we are helped by the major advances linguistics has made in our understanding of language as a single, indivisibly human object of natural study. But it does not help that we typically package the material on the assumption that “*one language at a time*” can validly stand in for “*language as a whole*”, eliding the act of translation. A code is a singularly ineffectual means of imagining human language, a point that is made in much more detail later in the argument. One remedy is to insist on translation’s active role in the process. Another is to give a constructed transcode (such as Esperanto) a new status in keeping with the new emphasis on the constructed character of all codes in a theoretical space that domesticates our ethnicities in non-naturalizing ways.

As we imagine being above the fray in order to take an aerial view, the flight of fancy that keeps us afloat specifically fantasizes that we can, as true civilians, perform a counter coup. This, if successful, reverses the militarization, the inappropriately medium-degree technicalization, that we have inherited from the structuralist roots of the postmodern moment. As long as we don’t

have a liable army under civilian control, we are all semi-armed, a halfway house that denies us the advantages of the true soldier. I am taking the helicopter down now, and splitting it. Half of me is asking, how we can become true civilians cheerful enough to tame the grim military element we cannot do without. The other half is equipping itself with the tools we need so that the public space can be tool-free. The split helicopter, now on the jammed ground, begins to do a walking survey of the traffic jam I promised to take a closer look at.

I shall first introduce the notion of being in deep communication as part of the definition of civilianhood. If my argument comes full circle, I will eventually be able to show that individuals can work within codes but not get trapped in them if deep communication keeps them connected to all possible codes. We must explore these issues if we wish to demobilize. Only as a democracy of connected citizens can the citizens of a republic reverse a military takeover. People in a world of literary inscriptions can undo the technical mobilizations now in place only by becoming civilians. Civilians are citizens constitutively engaged in deep communication. This phrase invokes the theme of language, which, if duly addressed, takes us to arena of literary discourse where the public expects this work to take place. It is disingenuous to try to correct the public on this matter.

Wherever you look, in and outside the literary arena, there is a deafeningly quiet consensus on the proper approach to the study of languages. You always pick one language at a time. It makes no difference whether you are a technical linguist or not. Whoever wishes to make a point standard chooses a piece of this or that particular language. The specifics of a Hindi or English are made to stand in for all languages, for language in general.

For tactical reasons, I state the following obvious objection to this practice. Call the objection Exhibit A:

“What this practice gives you is a picture without perspective. Surely you should not pretend that the facts about Hindi are what they are, regardless of how much or how little Hindi your addressee knows. For suppose you are coming from an English base. The sentence <Ram will eat fish> is transparent to you. But its Hindi equivalent, <Raam machlii khayegaa>, is at a distance that you are approaching from an English baseline. So situated, your attention contextualizes Hindi for you relative to English. You regard Hindi as a practice, but as the practice of some other. When you take an endocentric view, you conduct your analysis entirely in Hindi, thus considering the use of Hindi as a practice of some ourselves.”

Does this obvious objection address you? Do you have any use for the idea that the study of language needs to situate itself perspectivally?

My obvious point elicits a postmodern counterpoint, which runs as follows, Exhibit B:

“That simple-minded perspective proposal would equate a study from an English baseline towards a Hindi object with a study from a Hindi baseline towards an English object. Such a proposal mechanically misreads the power/ knowledge geometry of the world and leaves linguistics in the grip of an Anglo-American takeover. The postmodern response encourages us to move beyond the provisional use of English that somehow governs even the discourse of these objections to objections.”

Exhibit B as a postmodern response to Exhibit A’s perspective proposal makes the right kind of sense in the right context, no doubt. But the toy perspective revision I have presented and this somewhat mindlessly generated auto-response I have added to illustrate the usual discourse both miss what I see as the real point.

Namely, even a linguistic description that is couched in English and discusses material from the same language in fact performs bilingual labour. The site of these bilingual operations is where we have the real option of getting a grip on what we are doing and then radicalizing it to a new degree of seriousness. We seem to want a solution that has both practical consequences and theoretical significance. This means we have to identify the monoglossia problem exactly where it is most acute and easiest to address.

That a description of English that seems to employ only English actually operates bilingually becomes obvious in the grossest details of its instrumentation. I am choosing limited examples with toy descriptive devices to make my point.

Consider phonology. A phonological study picks up the expression *<tea leaves>*, transcribes it as something like /ti:#li:vz/, and builds bridges with phonetics. These bridges ensure that people who say [t<] with aspiration and those who don't, speakers who pronounce *<tea>* with a diphthong [ij] and the ones who use a simple long vowel [I:], still meet at the same /ti:#li:vz/, a phonological compromise spanning their phonetic diversity.

Now consider syntax. A syntactic description so analyses the sentence *<The ticket which I clearly remember I bought in June cost 458 rupees>* that the verb *<bought>* ends up with an object in two places. One job of the description is to stretch the verb *<bought>* so that it governs the overt object *<which>*.

The other task is to keep a silent copy of that word

<which> somewhere between *<bought>* and *<in June>*

Exactly as in the parallel sentence *<I bought THE TICKET in June>*. The two object sites come out as

follows in one labeled bracketing representation: S[

NP[NP[Det [the] N [ticket] CP[NP[which]
S[NP[I]VP[Adv[clearly]

V[remember] CP [S[NP[I] VP[V[bought]
NP[WHICH]PP[P[in]NP[June]]]]]]]

VP[V[*cost*] NP[Q[458] N[*rupees*]]]. I have shown the silent
WHICH in capitals.

The first point to notice here is that the levels of description, such as phonology and syntax, are marked by distinctive formal instrumentation anchored in a universal vocabulary. In the case of phonology this vocabulary comprises features of pronunciation. Syntax uses a vocabulary whose elements are categorical features that categories like verb, preposition and noun phrase break down into. Each level of description associates the material of a particular language like English with the thoroughly unprovincial formal vocabulary driving that descriptive level. This work of associating is a translation operation. Phonology translates words into significant sound features. Syntactic description ferries between the phrases of some language and the universal format of categorically labeled bracketing representations. Linguistic description at each level is formally a translation and thus works bilingually. This was my first point.

My second point is that linguistic description works the examples from particular languages not into a pristine universal gold, but into usable currency that hugs closely the diversity it makes sense of. The phonology of *<tea leaves>* notices and interconnects the various ways you can say these words and be understood. These various ways thereby end up counting as equivalent. The syntax of the sentence *<The ticket which I clearly remember that I bought a month ago cost 458 rupees>* emphasizes the two places at once. The syntactic type of diversity and

equivalence is not quite what you just saw in phonology. Each level has its own way of making sense and connecting. This always involves some going to and fro between the things it connects.

It is therefore inaccurate to say the translation like operation of describing just goes back and forth between the particular stuff of a language and the general format of phonological or syntactic description. You cannot afford to typecast your instrumentation and your data by calling the described stuff provincially opaque and the descriptive format universally transparent. The drama of describing stages many little acts of translates connection. These engage with opacity and transparency at each site. Linguistic description not only translates. That had been my first point. It also consists of translations. This is the second point.

This had always been a latent problem with any kind of linguistic description anywhere, within and outside formal discipline of linguistics. Here you are, working with a translating apparatus at every level of your description. Yet, ironically, you consider it normal to apply it to what is visualized as one particular language at a time. If all is translation and diversity, just what are these particular languages? Must we take them seriously?

The rosy response is to hope that this question will release a radicalism enabling linguisticians and literarians to embrace each other and achieve a spectacular peace. But you steel yourself for reality. The UG or Universal Grammar that contemporary formal linguists swear by may well invalidate the notion of particular languages. But the way UG does this gets into a traffic jam with standard forms of the postmodern enterprise. My road map metaphor in response to this traffic jam marks my faith in the redemption still within reach.

Let us get back to the universal formal vocabulary of a linguistic level like phonology or syntax. What work does the

universality of this vocabulary do? Suppose I grant that a describer translates from English (or Hindi, or any) words into a universal language of second feature configurations, from English sentences into a neutral medium of syntactic category geometry. Well, who speaks this language? If it is a piece of scientific notation, what have you achieved by inventing it? Does it, in fact, help you to understand matters of perspective in the sense of the simple-minded question in Exhibit A, and to get around Exhibit B?

Early formal linguisticians were ill-equipped to pose or answer such questions back in the fifties and sixties, which was the last time literarians read them with any care. Human agendas being what they are, literarians got put off, stopped listening, and continued to perform well in their own work. I am using the bantering tribal terms *linguistician* and *literarian* to indicate that it is time the two tribes got back together again for reasons that pertain both to what has been done and to what is now waiting for a joint effort.

Since the eighties, there has been a functioning UG (Universal Grammar) that is more than just a set of symbols. This UG is a demonstration that languages really are, at the formal human level and not merely at a historical cultural level, so closely connected that it technically makes no sense any more to recognize distinct languages as units. There is, formally, only one human language with various words attached that make it look as if we speak different languages.

Paradoxically, this by itself is no basis for an instant alliance between current linguistics and current postmodern discourse. UG does of course make it impossible to sustain a theoretical base for the tired national modernisms that the public still lives by but postmodern theoreticians have long abandoned. But UG also renders pointless the familiar forms of this abandonment. The problem is that if there are no national languages then, a fortiori, there cannot be

any sublanguages either that might require rescue from their hegemony. The rescuable victim categories and their theoretico spokespeople find themselves in the position of that French high school student. She went home after listening to her teacher Simon de Beauvoir's eloquence about how there is no such thing as a Jew or a Gentile, there are only people. This Jewish student then said to her Jewish mother, "*Mummy, Mummy, my philosophy professor says we don't exist.*"

I see the problem as follows. The main issue in the literarians' enterprise at the promo moment has been how to make theoretical sense of various distortions in the flow of textual expression. If you make sense of the distortions, you can find ways to remove them. This enterprise, if successful, encourages all addressers to express, and all addressees to receive with sympathy, the distinctive viewpoints reflecting the situations and experiences that flesh is heir to. From such a viewpoint, it looks as if the task of removing barriers must include pushing technical formal studies of language off the agenda. For literarians tend to be relativists, uniformly suspicious of all universalisms. To such a gaze, the very premises of any of any linguistics look like obvious effects of hegemonic forces. Formal linguisticians have found the cultural studies approach exactly like earlier literary scholarship, strongly but unreflectively committed by default to older forms of linguistics. Someone who has not reflectively adopted a new theory obviously tends to keep the old ones that pass for common sense. One problem in the present case is that attachment to old defaults locks literary theories into national modernism as the ultimate horizon of the imaginable. All the talk of crises leaves the cultural studies enterprise in a self-defeating posture as long as it does not move into a linguistic that has truly abandoned the national imaginary. Conversely, logisticians stay attached to old defaults about literature, along the lines of national modernism, and lock them into self-defeat. This is the shape of our traffic jam.

Let me make the failure more concrete in a way that picks on linguisticians. Consider the following sentence: “*The ticket which I distinctly remember that I purchased it a number of weeks ago cost 458 rupees.*” A linguisticians is likely to hold this up for inspection and to claim that it exemplifies Indian English. She will go on to say something serious and syntactic about how the word <*it*>teams up with the word <*which*>. The point she will make is of genuine theoretical interest and even betokens a radically non-national linguistics that our literarians can learn from. But the moment she calls this an Indian English sentence, she invites the inference that there should be an Indian English community. Her subtext is not a room of one’s own, but a literature of one’s own for which the community’s real members count as the primarily responsible cultivators. The implication is that there are real and unreal members.

Our linguisticians has fully grown wings ready to fly in an unpossessed sky. But she walks on territory whose ownership documents she unreflectively fails to contest. She sometimes even endorses these ownership claims to avoid hassles that might impede what she considers her work. This assumption of a literary community defeat that backs such possession boundaries is where her self-defeat mirrors that of the literarians. For the libertarians are trying to address dispossession, and the form of their efforts conjures up old images of possession that they attribute to a default linguistics. Neither linguisticians nor literarians have fashioned an enterprise that avoids the lazy assignment of defaults. But the means for doing this already exist. The point is to use them.

The point is to consciously create defaults instead of vaguely attributing them to somebody else’s expertise. Such defaults can only reflect a normative public enterprise of fashioning tentative and revisable canons and of sponsoring the verbal cultivation that

linguistic and literary education leads all citizens into. Both linguists and literarians know that the old public enterprises wrongly pretended that the forces underwriting the standard modern canons and cultivations could implicitly speak for entire communities. Heterogeneity is now recognized as such and invites negotiation. The codes to be cultivated on such a negotiated social basis are spaces we build. But such constructing presumes that the citizens who wish to work this out understand not only the culture of literature but also the nature of language. Unless expert advisors arrange for this presumption to come true, the public stays in a state of ill-informed anxiety, and the negotiations fail to get off the ground. Therefore the old normativities continue, although we all know that the justifications for them are obsolete.

To summarize, I propose postulating the code as a space of cultivation. But the soil is a natural given, whose parameters yield only to scientific inquiry, which we have just seen happens to involve translation of one sort. It pays to notice that literary cultivation has always been translative in a closely related sense.

Of course the translation that go into literary analysis look very different from what I pointed to when I was talking about linguistic description. But the two kinds of translation share a vitally important strand of work. Both linguistic and literary analysis try to image clearly certain formal objects at which very different personal actions and experiences meet. In the literary case, these formal objects are texts; in the linguistic case, they are words and sentences. What the formal object does in both domains is bridge the gaps between experiences that differ from each other at the detailed level but get connected at and through the formal object expressing their connectability. A speaker who pronounces [tʃ ɪjvz] and one who says [ti livz] both know that the phonology of /ti:li:vz/ puts them in touch. This knowledge is attached, as a meaning, to their action of pronouncing and of hearing others. A reader who identifies with a baffled English recipient of advaita philosophy in *A Passage to India*

rejoices at a passage such as “*In other words anything is everything, and nothing is something*”. In contrast, a reader who finds *advaita* normal and English bafflement a malady to be cured reads the passage calmly as a symptom. These two readers are connected at Forster’s passage and know that they are. Literary analysis must image this knowledge of theirs and associate it with Forster, which is a step more complex than the task of linguistic analysis. But I have taken up these simple examples with some rigorous gestures to point out that both literary and linguistic analysis involve translative connection as well as explicit or tacit knowledge of the fact of substance-to-substance connectability through language and literature as form.

We need to get a grip on this identity of knowledge and connectability. It will yet find us a way for humans to sneak past the cultural tariff barriers and reestablish civilization. Cultures thrive on writing that is loud in principle. The reality of civilization lies in the quiet informality of speaking across writings. If the writing constitutive of culture is a secondary supplement to supposedly primary or natural speaking and if deconstruction gives the lie to this binary, then in such a picture civilization comes out as the much quieter tertiary speaking beyond that supplement.

Achieving this conversational quietness is tantamount to becoming true civilians, who are constitutively in a state of deep communication.

Civilization

Actual communicating is confined to what you end up being able to do. Deep communication has to do with the potentials that make sense of what you do as well as of what you end up not finding for. To be in deep communication is not necessarily to perform a new action called deeply communicating. For the cognitively interpretable connectability between actions embedded in the formal

objects of cultural cultivation to count as the civilizational dimension need not imply that beyond cultures we are trying to postulate a new type of entity called a civilization.

What I am trying to point to, as I press the terms Civilization and Deep Communication into a type of service that stresses what translation contributes to the labour of understanding that goes into every bit of language, is the inappropriateness of our current arrangements. We act as if the words we give and take are the property of this or that provincial language. We apologize for transgressing boundaries we speak of loanwords and other borrowings.

One way to exit from this bizarre and by our own lights obsolete style is for us to emphasize the conventional, constructed, postulated, cultivated nature of each linguistic-literary arena. As we stress the need to revise the old cultivations by way of expropriating their elite sponsors and so forth, we can use the convenient promo machinery to affirm the cultivatedness of the literary arenas that the public wishes to call languages. If we are able to pull this off, the relevant public systems (national or subnational, as the case may be for a particular language) openly recognize that they construct their hold on the imagination through specific means such as films, fiction, entertainment, prizes. That this is a political, commercial, sentimental fashioning of human cultural space will stop bothering people if serious commentators in the domain help us all to take this in our stride. I visualize literary analysts at the heart of such an endeavour, in dialogue with expertise partners in the social sciences, both generalists and experts recognizing each other's crucial contribution. On this take, literary analysis can validly exist only as a metapolitics clear about its general role as a public philosophizing.

But recall that I regard such work as fit for quiet, composed civilians rather than passionate mobilizers driven to such passion by their secret manipulators. I associate this composure with knowledge as connectability. Recall that the connections work through

translation. In that part of my depiction, what I visualize includes lower and higher operations of translation that put this self-consciously fashioned analysis of cultural-textual fashioning in touch with language as a natural reality and with language as civilization.

To put it differently, I persist in imagining a natural initial spoken language on which the supplement of writing supervenes. Despite the illusory character of this image, I find it a convenient format for the postulations that the social processes envisaged here encourage people to share. The secondary supplement mocks the initial self-image of speech as a self-sufficient primacy. As I redraw the picture, this mocking is gentle, for both terms of the binary are constituted differently at the tertiary trans-supplement, the point at which civilization subverts culture.

Civilians are citizens of nation like cultural spaces who see themselves as capable of this gentleness and who nonetheless are willing, perforce, to live with the loudness of modern cultural fashioning as long as the public finds it necessary to keep the volume at these impossible levels. Civilianization works by initiating conversations in the speech that does not precede writing, but plurally follows and therefore subverts it in a translative mode.

In my book, civilianizing translation cannot avoid maintaining an ironic relation with the basic translations into universal phonetic and syntactic notation familiar from linguistic description. As the civilianization process strives towards a new transparency that does not flinch from dealing with all the opacities of our world, it touches base with the universality available in the human alphabet itself that language rests on. It thereby pays homage to the duly mobilized linguisticians who guard that base and to the emphatically demobilized literarians who surround it with music.

May these and other tribes continue to flourish, and to serve what lies beyond our national worship systems?

