# Retrieving the Cognitive From the Industrial
## The Translator as Apprentice

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**Abstract**

*In this intervention, face to face with a certain globalized context that tells us what shall and what shall not count as knowledge and as translation of cognitive texts, an attempt is made to tease out the assumptions that underpin this enterprise. In particular, it is taken for granted that the technical is embedded in prose. We propose a semiotic approach to the issues within which such a presupposition is embedded. Without such methodological caution at the very outset, a project of cognitive translation will have trouble getting off the ground at a serious level.*

## 1. Listening as the ocean globalizes

We have had a lot of practice Suspecting. Let us see what happens if we Listen as the ocean invites us to globalize on some apparently archimedean basis. Postulate the Good and not the Bad Mother in this exercise. To be concrete about how to do this, assume that we translators and translatologists are going to help the planet turn all its swords into ploughshares. What the material sciences and weapon technologies did for humankind in the period of inventing the methods of competition will now be done by the cultural studies disciplines and conversation arts for a renascent humankind as we go about inventing the surely equally labour-worthy methods of cooperation.

The important point to hang on to is that such a globalization presumes you will be accountable. Even if we switch to the Suspect mode, and redescribe it as a Public Relations racket emanating from a private and thus situated stash of capital, that picture still subtends at

least Games that wear an accountable form. Either way (for concreteness, assume the utopian and not the instrumental version), accounting will require translation mediating between reckonings, between matheses.

This visualization makes the relevant translator an apprentice sitting at the feet of both the matheses involved.

The present analysis ponders some issues we face as we become (or see that we already are) such translators, among the various other hats we wear.

Here is how the analysis is arranged. Our goal is to tease out the possibility of a real, pre-sellout, local, pre-globalization knowledge as the semantic core of a mathetic that helps seriously (sustainably) mediate between it and other mathetics for the accountability-maximizing purposes of real translators. We first visit some images of rationality—global, regional, interlocal. This leaves us wondering if rational convergence may not have become too much to ask for. We then ask how to reconstruct a basis of convergence in these times. This inquiry leads to some thoughts about locality, the technical, and the utopian. The counterpoint to the utopian, the Apparatus from which emanate the industrial effusions of the technical, engages our thoughts next, leading to some last moves. And we begin to see, if not quite how to disengage, the local from the trans-local, at least some of the factors that real, agonized translators grapple with as they work in today's environments.

## 2. Rationalities: global, regional, interlocal

*Voice A: Dear author, please prove to hard-nosed readers like me that you are not wasting my time. This is a small planet. We are all in the same boat. We have room and time only for one rationality. Let us zero in on the one right way of doing things. We can then save time by switching to that unique method, or rather by letting the market softly compel all participants to do so.*

*Accountability will require translation between reckonings only when you deal with the anachronistic rarities who do their reckoning work in weird systems. Weird is our rational name for whatever deviates from the Universalese that this global rationality chooses for us.*

*Voice B: Dear author, do not heed the pseudo-universal voice of A. Surely this is a fake neutrality—cloaking the special interests of such central lobbies as Christian, White, Male, Anti-X, Anti-Y, Anti-Z—trying to take over the public space. This effort is being contested by regions, which alone are real. Some of us in line B are nativists, some of us are postmodern, but we agree on the specificity of reason as a practice. Only in a region do you ever see a situated rationality practised as a reasoning by a community that is conscious of itself as a bearer of reason. Please relativize whatever you wish to say to one or more regions that can underwrite your postulates.*

*Voice C: Dear author, neither globally nor interregionally is there any public space. Please stay away from the trap of believing in one. Nor does it help to call spaces Private. For that term would subtend Public as its other. There are only Locations. And your labour must be interlocal. Regions are really pre-Nations, and globality is actually an imperialized mega-Nation. Furthermore, the Nation always presents itself as a State, with Formal or Serious systems or apparatuses working for repressive and ideological purposes. It does not matter quite how you formulate this diversity of initiatives. Nor does it matter whether the sectors of the state meet as foes (institutional adversaries, as in a democratic set of checks and balances) or as friends (complicit pieces of a fascist machinery). Cutting across all these classical heterogeneities within a Nation-State, notice the common managerial postulate. This amounts to a belief that some Social Science with its weather forecasts can drive a rational State. But that belief is patently false. No known or imaginable Social Science can predict human behaviour delicately enough to underpin a bureaucratic, non-*

*participatory representation system responsive to real needs and interests. Therefore only local self-government can provide a sustainable politics. And all constructs that cross the boundaries of such communities must be resolutely interlocal. So your translators may indeed want to claim to be apprentices at both the places they serve. But this picture falsely shows the translator as learning Something. There is in fact no specific Thing s/he can ever learn. For that would involve postulating Meanings or Essences. What your translator does is intervene, between two locations, on a given Occasion. No repeat performances please. We are contingent creatures of our events. So even Apprenticeship overstates what your translator humbly does. The only reasonable course of action is to Suspect all rationalities, global or regional, and all public space claims, for they are demonstrably Unintelligible. Please don't try to trap me into glossing this as False in your language. My consistent anti-essentialism does not permit me to make such concessions to you even in this generous game I'm playing, you see.*

*Voice D, as in Dasgupta: Sorry to cut off your very Interesting discussion which we would Love to continue, notice the Consumerism of the Capitalized verbs. (Discussion of obvious tangent omitted.) But we are running out of reading time and writing space. (Off on a tangent planet, some potential reader tightens this aperçu into a book about how writing milks the spatiality of the document more effectively than reading does, since reading identifies more closely with the reader as a receiving and invokes a temporal organization of attention and not a spatial organization of memory. That this or other tightening remains optional goes to show that this paper is on the right track.) We recommend to the interested reader the exercise of steeping herself in each of the knowledges voiced as A, B, C. But we deny the possibility of a Teacherish Enlightenment seriously setting up such universalities as might underwrite a valid mediation between all possible reckonings and therefore provide any generally usable type of*

*Translation Training. Neither public spaces as in A or B, nor an interprivate nonspace as in C, if you construe these voices as Knowledgeable Speaking, will bring back a usable general Enlightenment that can Teach every translator a systematic, and ubiquitous, art of bridge-building. If I say apprenticeship, it is because I'm afraid the translator has to find her own way of doing things relative to the completely specific locale of the texts and faces s/he decides to serve. This way may not come out rational in the sense of demonstrably adding up with the efforts of all other translators and producing an aggregate rationality of types A, B, C, whatever. It may have rhyme rather than reason. Maybe the translator will at best feel that s/he is in tune with others.*

Why can't we visualize even an idealized translator-figure as a counterfactual teacher of the peoples? Why this impossibility of visualizing a teacherly enlightenment that will set up the necessary universalities permitting an engineering that will build bridges across all rivers, to return to the watery metaphor of the ocean sponsoring globalization?

My answer to this has to do with the goal of accountability itself. Let us do this reasoning in the form of a reductio ad absurdum.

Let there be K, then, as in Knowledge. K is a steady stretch of speaking that produces and/or manifests knowledge. You will see K emerge from the mountain of opacity as a stream, if these watery metaphors are compatible with the book-keeping solidities of Accounting. Now, K grows non-accountable when—as must inevitably come to pass—the initiating impulse from that mountain becomes tired of staying grossly the Same River. Why or how does K grow non-accountable? By becoming a defensive and codifying formation. K becomes incapable of further learning, and thus technically un-Intelligent. Unfortunately, by sheer inertia, K remains an efficient formulator, for that skill grows independently of the capacity to learn. These formulations, detached from the contact with novel and thus real material, become merely verbal. Thus, K ceases to say anything,

in the sense in which only true interventions coming from a source that understands what it is about count as saying something.

Hang on to this sense. We will revisit it from various vantage points. To keep it identifiable in this text, we will put it down as a matter of an Erzeugung (a Making by someone) turning into an Erzeugtes (a something that is Made and congeals with other Mades into a system). Feel free to substitute buzzwords from the scriptures you prefer. K grows for a while. In that erzeugend season K still makes real sense. Then K's growth slows down. But even when it has really stopped, K unfortunately continues to talk. By that time this talk is empty, merely verbal, a stretch of Erzeugtes. And this emptiness bothers someone, call that someone L. L tries to take over from K. There are various scenarios. If K lets L take over, K may try to sponsor L, and L may let K do this, whereupon you get an appearance of continuity, which becomes an unfortunate reality if L completely buys into the form of K's sponsorship. If L lets K simply lose a battle, L looks like a victor crowing over the ruins of some predecessor, and other pathologies ensue. And so on. Sorry to cut off yet another promising tangent. The point is that the K/L interface is a precious and hard-to-map site of the Necessary Novelty of significant speaking. And knowledge exists only as a burden carried by some stretch of significant speaking, which makes all this crucial to any serious epistemology.

Perhaps you notice that this reasoning uses tools from a certain pragmatics of conversation. It may be important to bring to your attention its reliance on themes that have been explored only in the context of the generative revolution in linguistics. Generative syntax, unlike most other work, has persistently kept asking—seldom loudly, and never in continuity with Borges or in the theatrical tones of wide-eyed wonder—where to place the fact that practically all the sentences we speak and hear are unprecedented in our lives, coming as they do from a formally infinite pool of sentences, and from the substantively nbounded streams of our experience.

If you are unused to the discipline of generative syntax, you may respond to this thinking by wondering: Is there, then, no good reason to expect the efforts of diverse translators to converge?

## 3. Reconstructing a rational basis for convergence

Translation studies can take heart from the experience of generative syntactic research itself. The people who have successively worked in the generative syntax traditions have been fiercely independent and come from a variety of ethnic and intellectual backgrounds. But these distinct subjectivities have consented to keep revisiting zones of overlapping interest, zones which they renegotiate as they work. The experience of this enterprise shows that a series of apprenticeships can converge, can creatively continue an action-series as a Knowledge, without succumbing to the standard temptations. Note, however, that this experience also shows on what basis it has been possible to do this. Generative syntacticians have consistently sought a parsimonious account that builds clear bridges between local detail and local detail. Collective pursuit of the joint goals of understanding and economy provides the shared ethos that allows independent minds to horizontally, non-disciplishly, converge on widely understood and endorsed outcomes.

This type of theorizing shares with the cultural-literary work of the Theoreticals, a useful term for some intellectuals in the humanities today, the hope that learners who horizontally congregate while retaining the independence of their apprenticeships can share serious purposes and results. Stylistic differences do divide these enterprises in practice. But they have a common enemy: the old rationality. Embodied in the modern nation-state's mainstream institutions like the media, the old Enlightenment's rationality represents the tired and possibly spent force of teachers who feel obliged to organize harmony and persuade learners to at least appear to think alike. Now, linguists and the Theoreticals share at least the firm belief that those of us who want to provide a serious account of language and literature phenomena can no longer afford to base our work on what the media and their literary appendages

regard as the common sense notions shaping the public domain. On such grounds, one may then still hope that theorists of these and other kinds can together help reinvent the Enlightenment, this time from the viewpoint of learners representing various communities whose mutual, consciously barrier-crossing and symmetry-maximizing hospitality brings about real convergence.

Such hope is a familiar sentiment. But it fails to exhibit any new basis on which language scientists and Theoreticals can work jointly. Linguists have grown into a commitment to the scientific style. They regard a phenomenon as Understood when a parsimonious formal explanation is constructed for it and an account as Interesting when explorations surrounding it seem likely to increase such Understanding. The Theoreticals find such Interest and Understanding amusing and useless because trapped in the metaphysics of presence. Have I found a way around or through this impasse? If I haven't, why do I steer your readerly attention to these zones between paradigms, zones long known to be embarrassingly acrimony-ridden and ill-defined?

My reasons for optimism are that both linguistics and most of the postmodern approaches to culture seem (A) to be compatible with the parsimony-assuming notions of the pragmatics of conversation and (B) to be trying to develop characterizations of naturalness, economy, and the basis of understanding in their own specific domains of inquiry. This construal of the scene is in keeping with the basic charge that the common sense on each side of the main divide seems to make against the other side. Postmodern work and linguistics hold each other guilty of some sort of extravagance. Let me try to show that this is so, and that this makes it reasonable to hope.

Each side seems to agree that the basic type of move that the other side begins with is legitimate. Yes, says the Theoretical to the linguist, you can ask if an adjective sandwiched between a verb and a noun works with the verb or with the noun. Yes, says the linguist to the Theoretical, you can suspect that the apologetic activity on behalf of a culture protesteth too much, and ask explicitly quite how to cut this

crap. But then each side hears the other side as making that basic move too many times, to the exclusion of other ingredients of story-telling, and thus producing extravagant noise instead of music. Now, notice that this complaint indicates that one would like to hear natural, optimal, economical story-telling on all sides. Notice, too, that the details of the technical work on both sides of the divide show all parties to these disputes agreeing that the study of every location must respect its specificity and use narrowly local or specifiedly interlocal tools. Of course people so committed to localism, so acutely sensitive to inappropriately gross or bureaucratic tools of a centralizing sort, will want specificity-respecting, non-extravagant, natural characterizations of the phenomena. Their impatience with each other's initial approximations to specificity thus understandably reflects their own concentrated effort patterns. Once each side learns how to read work coming from the other as localist/interlocalist inquiry, it may become possible to see that common goals are being pursued in partly parallel ways.

I am not just proposing to read localism as a political leitmotif associating linguistics with postmodernist writings in opposition to the media-anointed Common Sense. My claim has to do with the shared style of thinking that localism gives rise to.

Everyone who for any reason suspects appearances knows that one important reason why things are never as they appear is that those appearances are produced by the centralizers who run Polite Society and write your etiquette books for you. It is Not Done to look or to see in an impolite fashion. Now, inquiry can penetrate such socially constructed façades in at least two ways. One path takes you into the backroom of the cultural process of making these quasi-natural appearances tick—a point that need not be laboured for this audience. Another leads you to the analysis of what, in fact, the patterns of natural and unnatural begin to look like when you take on the real global array of languages; set aside the old myths handed down by the language teaching system that most of us, including radicals in the cultural studies professions, have been brought up on and have never

quite outgrown; keep asking pattern questions; refrain from flinching when you see the initially bewildering and opaque diversity of answers coming from habitual users of very different languages; and keep steadily working when the answers look less and less opaque because enough languages are represented on the map of generative syntactic research to make the macropatterns, for the first time, amenable to sustained inquiry. Both of these paths respond to the problem of socially constructed naturalness. And both responses are obliged to seek constitutively local means, avoiding the currency that is macrosocially 'given', for the analysis of the phenomena at stake.

Both the generative and the postmodernist responses to the discovery that human intention is so heavily dressed up in manifestly conventional constructs tend to feed a question that one might naively pose as follows. Take a person. Confront her with the fact that her speech-intentions as embodied in her speaking are always thoroughly dressed up in convention posing as nature. Listen to her ask herself what she really intends when one refuses to take that dress seriously. And then let us ask, with her, what kind of question this is. This effort of ours, as a community working with the individual asker, is the really localist moment which self-consciously sets up the location of our joint work. I submit that this localist moment cannot occur without a coalition, as yet unavailable, of the energies of generative, postmodernist, feminist, environmentalist, postcolonial, and other alternative forms of inquiry into the realities of language and culture. In the present analysis, we stress the potential linguistic contribution to this joint effort. Linguists want to know what the natural components are that precede and ground the cultural actions and distortions. For linguists are the keepers of the phenomenon that people, unlike apes and other fellow creatures, do have a species-specific biology that makes all this possible, a natural base whose existence—and whose independence of cultural actions and effects—a fuller account of our humanity cannot wish away. Not only is it impossible to wish it away. We would like, surely, to welcome our awareness of the specificity of this body into the fold of our general inquiries. Surely a thoughtful cultural studies enterprise will be mature

enough to welcome the thoughtful linguistics that has been available for a while.

Why should such a welcome be important for anything outside the narrow technical question of relations between linguists and other colleagues? Because having a real sense of nature will help us all to ask more carefully what is involved when the accountable, responsible speaker—to revisit the beginning of this analysis—wishes to speak as naturally as possible, with recognition and up-to-the-limit elimination of the avoidable surrenders to convention and ideology. For naturalness, in this sense of non-distortion, is a known prerequisite of truthful communication.

At the heart of this naturalness telos of symmetric, truth-maximizing communication lies a sense also of parsimony where the scientific ideal of economic explanation and the narrative ideal of austere story-telling meet. Semiotic minimalism is the only potentially universally basis for sense-making. For only when the message eliminates all the crap does it stand out as a message one can take seriously and interpret. These are formal phenomena, which wait for our inquiry, in various disciplines, as we get tired of our antics that come out of the process of disciplinary growth, as we move towards the austere core of each discipline as it comes to terms with its task and its neighbours, and as we discover that there are  natural barriers to extravagance both in the scientific pursuit of parsimonious explanation and in a cultural narrative that seeks Interesting and thus effective ways to present what one Understands. Recall that we are trying to find a fresh, nonauthoritarian route to these notions. Perhaps our practice, in its ordinary drift, is taking us to desirable goals that our careful road maps know nothing about.

## 4. Locality, the Technical, and Utopia

Considerations such as these might make some of us want to actually work with notions of locality without having a heavy-duty

story about quite what their details should come out as. I will rustle up a rough draft here mainly to enable us to proceed, without any perennial claims for pictures of this kind. A stretch of talking or writing action—that you translate from or into—is connected to other stretches of action in ways that the stretch is seen as referring or alluding to. These connections are visualized in terms of locations. Space and time coordinates are frequently seen as defining locations, but so are ethnicities, personal or place names, and other idiographic identifiers. In linguistics, the advent of minimalism as a style of asking and addressing questions has made it important to look much more tightly than in earlier work at local relations between each item in a structure—for instance, in a particular constituent of a sentence—and items structurally 'close' to it in ways that can be defined in terms of the coordinates that shape structural locations. Once it becomes compulsory to say everything in terms of neighbour to neighbour relations, linguistics ends up accountable to the reality of words as naively produced and understood by speakers, and certain desirable equations between expertise and the public follow, a topic left unexplored here. Let us return to our neighbourliness.

The coordinates that put people's speaking and writing acts in touch with other acts as neighbours in locations are obliged to run a sort of conversational metaflow that manages and negotiates the conversations as they happen, or fail to happen. Here the characterization of the necessary, context-providing localities finds itself forced into the specific shape of a conversation-bound pragmatics, or a text-bound discourse analysis, or an attempt to work out ways in which conversations and discourses are different but overlap in crucial ways. And some managerial imperative leads most efforts of this type towards a technicalization. If we 'know', in therapy or adult-child control scenes or educated-uneducated dyads or other well-defined contexts, or in self-help contexts where we give ourselves a picture of the Natural Me Before or After I Go and Find Meself,—if we 'know' how to run real conversations or make sense of the way some of them become more real than others, then we inevitably try to do this running or this interpreting better and better as we keep doing it self-consciously. And this of course technicalizes what we are doing.

Let us take from this the lesson that Pragmatics is a next-door neighbour to the Technical.

There is however at least one other enterprise that bears on our speech and writing. Semiotics studies some ways in which explicit or tacit messages, intended or unintended messages, in language or other modes of expression, carry significance. It does not often equate one significance, carried by one message, with another. Outside language and translation, people find it notoriously difficult to establish significance or to set up exact equivalences. But semiotics does have a lot to say about the fact that, under examinable conditions, significance can grow or decay, can seem to be artificially imposed by significance-giving agencies like advertisers or to flow naturally with the cultural practices of the people who see the messages as 'their own'. This business is curiously orthogonal to pragmatics.

Please let us jump from these remarks to the completely unwarranted conclusion that Semiotics is a next-door neighbour to the Utopian. Dear referees, dear editors, dear readers, dear other company present and/or sleeping through this, please hold your various horses through this non sequitur.

Now, I will try and pack these ideas under the rubrics of Poetry and Prose. The way it is organized is quite transparent as of now. Pragmatics treats language as essentially prosaic acts, Semiotics treats it as basically poetic documents. So far, so banal. Now for some 'moves'. Some of them are not mine, but I am the one who is asking you to look at them and see which parts of this sequence you want to re/visit.

## The Sharing and Language Paradox

Suppose X and Y share everything. Then they need no language. For there is nothing they need to communicate. Now suppose X and Y share nothing. Now they cannot have language. Because bridge-building

grinds to a halt. So language lives in the gap between that Everything and that Nothing.

## Prose and Poetry as Oriented Sharing

When you (Y, for You) speak, you send a message to, and thus share some content with, X (the interlocutor, short for Ex-you, think of the interlocutor as "There, but for the grace of God, go I" and you see why X is short for Ex-you). This message must orient itself either to the everything or to the nothing. These orientations yield poetry and prose, respectively.

Let us unpack this move more expansively. Suppose you address X and put the message in the orientation that goes: Boy, Am I glad we share so much that you and I can talk and make so much sense of each other. Manifestly, that's Poetry, you are orienting the message-sharing to the potential for sharing Everything—which is why Poetry sits next door to the speech of young people in love, if you permit a theoretician to make the same corny and faceless, depthless cracks as a comedian, and for the same reasons (abstraction). What about Prose? Prose happens when you go: Wait a minute, you aren't going to get this, there is so much distance between us. Lemme explain this to you. There's this playground, see? And most of it's mine, see? So you'd better listen to what I say if you want to play here, okay? In other words, you stress what you do not share with X, whereby you orient the message-sharing to the possibility that Y could have shared Nothing with X.

This was prose, in case you didn't notice. But the humour was supposed to turn it into something more sharing and caring, in the unlikely event that you managed not to notice that. And the metatextual mockery is supposed to put all this corny humour into scare quotes. This performs three tasks. One, it shields my poor humour production abilities from censure. Two, it also produces a certain critique of the advertising industry which uses good (and well produced) humour for insidious purposes. (I can only yearn for readers who read so intelligently and

sensitively, far surpassing my scores, that for them the second function wipes out the first. End of mock-modest intervention pretending that it matters exactly who the writer and the reader are in an exchange like this). And three, it gives us a starting point from which to approach the stunning, and difficulty-multiplying, Metatextual Fact. Here comes our next move:

The Metatextual Fact is  that many texts today are asking questions precisely about what is being shared and not shared in the messages that proliferate, exactly how these sharings and nonsharings are negotiated, and what, if anything, the orientation to the local Everythings and the local Nothings in such Poetry and Prose has to do with the many mediations between such verbal exchanges and the economic traffic of commodities, weapons, knowledges, drug-lulled ignorances, and other interlocal items of human interest. Consequently, the devices of Pragmatics and Semiotics are actually on the line in much of contemporary creative writing and criticism.

To unpack this one is fatally easy. Most of the interesting writers today are displaced in some sense. They are in exile, or their whole nation has turned into a nightmare making the experience of staying in your homeland look like exile, or there is some lethal gap between where you are and where you think you could make sense of yourself. Displacement produces distances. You then feel that you are not speaking directly to or with a community that does or can come to know who you are and where you are coming from. Consequently you get this Metatextual business. This unpacking has been doing the rounds, in various shapes and forms. I would like to note that, while important, this point leads only to journalism about the interesting writers and turns their lives into sob stories of victimhood. We want to think past Point Sob, well into regions of agency. So let us press the Pragmatics of locations into real service, if this is permitted.

The fundamental issue in the pragmatic putting together of a location has to do with how far You (capital Y to remind You of your Y status) think You are from X. For, as in feeling the need for sharing but

finding that it requires effort to do that sharing. Metonymically, or in some other way, including or making symbolic use of physical distance as a summary of all types of remoteness. And remoteness here does duty for opacity, for the failure of language to signify, okay. Our next move, then, is to underscore that point about Prose:

## The Height of Prose is Technicality

When you overdo the prose bit, you exaggerate the distances that need bridging, you appeal to the normative authority of real or imagined third parties to fix unambiguous technical term systems, and you wax technical.

This springboard enables you to follow prior lines of academic interest, of course. If you are into hermeneutics-sprinkled philosophical sociology, then you may want to think of technical terms as mobilized words, press this into your regions of thinking about the army and the bureaucracy as intimidating embodiments of rationality, and that gives you one trip. If you prefer to think that the physical and mathematical style treats a word like a sentence while the poetic use of language treats a sentence like a word, then you might do a density of content routine, and the enterprise changes. If you believe in the modalities of language planning for third world societies, you will be angry with me for sidetracking the worthy efforts of terminology committees and their verbal police force by airing the suggestion that committee-made words are technical. You will then argue that of course they are not all technical, and that my remarks fail to makes distinctions like established vs less established languages, committee work vs the authority of the diffuse body of scientists, and other important distinctions which you will say must feed a better story. Then I will, in complete sympathy and dialogue with you—a friendship you are unlikely to desire—note that the plight of third world languages and the surely different scene of technical term proliferation in the industrial economies are rarely discussed in the same context but need to be, for greater mutual understanding, and I will invite you to tell  all your exciting and surely nonbureaucratic tales in a story continuous—or creatively discontinuous, how's that for word—with the one proposed here.

Remembering the complicity between Pragmatics and the Technical, of course, we now add yet another move, as the plot thickens:

The Loudness of Exactitude: The more technical and precise You get, the louder Your talking sounds, for loudness is what happens to a stretch of speaking that presumes You are reaching X across great distances of whatever nature.

When you do even a kneejerk reaction to this, you obtain a very simple theorem:

## Low Volume and Situatedness

When you talk within a location, to yourself or to those with whom you have mutual transparency, your talk becomes soft and quiet, or even ceases, possibly drifting into the articulate silence that certain types of poetry try to provide. This argument makes such poetry, or its close relatives, obligatory to a story-telling that wishes to make Locations tangibly available in discourse. Analysis is thus rigorously, demonstrably Not Enough, for exactitude is antilocal.

Given these considerations, we can return to the jump from semiotics to the utopian, which now looks less like a non sequitur. A Pragmatics is concerned with the participants and the turns in a conversation and tends to pit them against each other, focusing on how each of them, for often transitory reasons, views the transactions. A Semiotics looks instead, more diffusely, at the reality of the transaction, or transaction as such, as an entirety. Therefore the semiotic gaze is focused nowhere and becomes utopian in the etymological sense, liberated from the instrumentality of prose, towards the sharedness-emphasizing orientation that keeps poetry going. Let us pause at this Keeps Going. We take it that, given the infinity of language, every contribution to a conversation carries on its sleeve the fact that it is potentially and probably new in the experience of the speakers and listeners (hence for instance the cleavage between the Topic, which

anchors a sentence in previous discourse, and the Comment, which highlights the novel contribution it offers), but that this fact feeds both the prose of contributors looking at each other's contributions and the poetry of a community of tributaries construing themselves as one dispersed river. In other words, we would like our entire discussion to be read in the context of the Generative linguistic meditation on the constitutive novelty of speaking in the context of a community whose substantive continuity plus formal endorsement of a particular embodiment of the human language faculty makes the construction and sharing of messages possible.

We are suggesting that, when you contribute to a conversation, your message lends itself (sometimes equally and sometimes unequally well) to a prosaic and a poetic reading. The prosaic construal sees you pragmatically as a transactor agonistically related to other transactors. The poetic one semiotically takes in the whole show, thus providing a way to consider the location as a reality. When our prosaic labour requires foregrounding of a location in this vein, for example when our instrumental purposes make us want to stage a nation, we find it necessary to use poetry to run that subshow in our transactions. Even if we are being very rational about our planning, this comes in as a matter of course. It is sobering to have to deal with a theory that tells us a story about this, even if the effect is that we jump up and down to deny this story and present our own self-image, outshouting the other side, thus demonstrating that loudness has such uses as creating distance between disputants.

## 5. The apparatus and its purposes

We can now begin to grapple with the question driving this investigation: how to retrieve the cognitive from its hijack by the industrial.

Our main problem is not the existence of the state or its industriality. Our problem is that forces poorly understood perpetuate these institutions and reinvent them when they are clobbered. Why do

we persistently succumb to the Formal? What is the Apparatus supposed to be for? If the locations require, to remain tangible, that people speak softly, why do people persistently lapse into the erroneous high volumes of the technical register?

One answer, possibly worth exploring in the context of the project of retrieving location-based cognition from the industrial hijack, brings back the motif of accountability that our inquiry started out with. When you find that someone is not accountable, and you absolutely have to hold them to account, you may end up having to go to war with them, has been the old idea. If war is unacceptable, you can try satyagraha, or ostracism, or walking away from them, separating yourselves from them or them from you depending on how you do it and how you and others look at what is done. These equivalents share with war the Political, for the old teachings have shown us some ways in which the Military and the Political are continuous with each other.

Even if you turn swords into ploughshares, your mobilization remains in place if you assume that the army must deal with emergencies in a systematic fashion, ensuring that the population is safe and secure. This theme verges on the economic through the cognate-pair Safe, Savings. Remember that accountability requires accountants. Industry is the warlike mobilization whose way of totalizing peace to the point of a Japanese sublimation of warfare into peacefare seems to have a total hold on the imaginations of the contemporary global population.

(This is going to be a period when globalization makes translation easy, because as you see everybody thinks alike, and what's a few lexical differences between the likeminded. This weather will last until even the Japanese demobilize and begin to spread the word to their competitors, whereupon populations will start falling over each other to compete with the new Japanese mañana practices, giving us back a plural planet and some worthwhile translation difficulties!)

Mobilization amounts to the assumption that a state or other system can get total accountability by ensuring that actions are properly coordinated in the aggregates, if necessary by working around the often slow and unreliable understanding available to individuals. This assumption is in an important sense Conceptual. It does not route its activities through the Perceptions of its participants. The Conceptual ties in with the Political through the classical architecture of an Aristotle or a Confucius.

Today, when the LELs (Less Equipped Languages) prepare to cannibalize the MELs (More Equipped Languages) and to take an express route to lexical riches and join the fraternity of intertranslatable modern languages, we see this ancient régime of the Conceptual completing its conquest of all the populations. This conquest turns every group into a total or partial ethnicity organized as or under some fully mobilized nation-state, whose industriality or 'rational' mobilization its linguistic equipment is merely supposed to embody, without necessary subjective or local participation from the subject populations involved. The presuppositions of this project make it necessary to marginalize such participation and the locations where subjects transact with each other. For this totalizing project makes discourse the carrier of an Apparatus of technical correctness at a macro-social level which is seen as preceding the micro-social. This, in a nutshell, is the normal answer to the question of what the Apparatus is for. The default-nationalist answer, in a world where the names of languages indicate that we still think Swedish and Japanese belong to Sweden and Japan, and that French and English would have belonged to France and England respectively if they had not gone imperializing and spreading themselves all over the place.

In such a world, evidently, absolute locations are taken for granted; ethnic identities are given the first choice of real estate; they are invited to organize into nation-states with military and industrial muscle, primary if possible, borrowed if necessary; and linguistics is ordered to go and write up Codes for the national or subnational

languages that provide common local currency in such Locations whose official givenness is not questioned. Technicality and other kinds of microphonic loudness are taken for granted in a world where the presuppositions masquerade as common sense.

Fortunately, inquiry creates its own spaces, if only to a limited extent. The considerations we have been taking seriously here allow us to visualize a broad-based cultural inquiry which, forging an alliance of a generative linguistics with cultural studies, can recognize the moribund routineness of the Code and interrogate its sponsor, the industrial State, which proposes to be generous with the material and cultural resources of a national We.

In this interrogation, cultural inquirers ask the State: Dear State, Thank you for playing host to us all, thank you for providing a coded space for us all to live. May we ask where all this is supposed to be happening? Who is whose guest?

Contemporary linguistics in coalition with cultural studies provides background material and tools for a characterization which, perhaps along the lines of the rough draft we have been sketching here for concreteness, identifies locations relative to the self and otherness perceptions of participants in the conversations—whose lines of quietness semiotically congregate in order to make sense pragmatically of the dissociations within that community. Given such a background, cultural inquiry can support a new politics of Percepts. And then a resistance to the domination of Concepts can begin.

Working from below, on the basis of free, voluntary, and self-consciously loudness-resisting associations of subjectivities for whom understanding and perception are valuable in themselves and as bridges to personal growth, this new politics can work its way out of the continuation of warfare by other means, and also begin to challenge the industriality which writes the imperatives of the old military into the

economy and perpetuates the hold of macro constructs on the imagination of individuals.

The epistemology corresponding to this politics might wish to work with the notion that an action series, creatively continuable, embodies a local knowledge line. A Location is then also a congregation of knowledge lines. Centralizing or industrializing manoeuvres, which put knowledge lines together in Codes, are always possible, but will henceforth require justification vis-à-vis the default case, which is localistic and takes the quiet, poetic grasp of the locale as the basis of human understanding, leaving the drawing up of explicit contracts as an option for situations where it may be necessary to declare that a breach did open up and did require repair.

Such an epistemology makes new norms possible for equations of teaching and learning, as well as for the kind of accountability where translators learn how to build seriously sustainable bridges across different modes of reckoning. Translators start out as apprentices at different locations, different not only in skin colour or ethnic naming style, but in disciplinary affiliation, in industrial or anti-industrial work/ leisure ethic, or along other dimensions which begin to count once we abandon the ancient primacy of the national and other Conceptual categories that once fed Codes. As apprentices for two or more patterns of traffic, translators get used to the circulation itself providing cues for creative continuation, and stop wanting helpful Codes to tell them how to formulate equivalences.

At the theoretical level, such translators will also be able to drop the postulate of a semantical mapping between expressions and states-of-affairs. Their work of building a bridge between a linguistic LF (syntactic) and a philosophical pragmatics/semiotics will be done by the traffic itself, once perception succeeds. Until perception succeeds, there will be a hovering notion of a semantics embodying the hope that perception is going to work some day. This semantics reflects the accepted opacities that keep the boundary sentries active

in a world whose ethnic and absolutist common currency remains unexamined.

To help along the process whereby absolute locations face the circulation of percepts theoretically, a Code-dismantling linguistics needs to raise the joint question of a Discourse/Praxis. This 'needs to' is only partly an exhortation to people who are being encouraged to do something that is not being done. It also amounts to an attempt to bring into words the felt Need that shapes, even when it does not drive, current agendas. A Discourse in the sense invoked here is a talking that speaks its own conventions as it goes along. A Praxis is a social cumulus of individual action norms that writes its own rules as it goes along. Between these, the Semantics, a utopian registration of the gaps in the actual, must at all times hold the equations between the messy face to face Speaking and the cleaner but not always quieter Writing that settles and resettles after nightfall, when the faces are distant for nonhostile reasons.

I close with a provisional and frankly personal response to that joint question of a Discourse/Praxis.

On the seven days of my weekly cycle, a conventional metonymy for all my cycles, I break down into several local circuits with those I live closely with. I have no Sunday to summate and retrieve myself. The local knowledges I drink from, on the local fronts, are equally unsummated, as are the little social groupings that the knowledges produce as they work. The knowledges flow as action ———>action———>lines which write the creative dis/continuities of action type as knowledges without claiming to contribute to any global megawriting.

I may or may not capitulate, depending on my courage levels. But the knowledges, in their trade-friendly moments, do lend themselves to aggregation. Centralization, industrialization, pools their world-facing moments into the big time traffic of action/action, of action exerting

effects on other action, that has been called Power/Knowledge. By this process, which has managed to look natural, industriality has hijacked cognition, and made its locality, where apparent, seem an aberration to be superseded by appropriately modern and mobilized rewritings of every Practice relative to some Meta-Practice that coaches it into a teamwork that can win, remote from a dreamwork that remembers how to rhyme. Under the long dark hijack by industriality, knowledge has turned the thoughts of us Knowers to a certain National detour. This detour hooked us on a mode of collecting our week days into, please celebrate the pun, a Strong Day of mobilized Strength. The macho ideal of this Strength casts the Nation in the role of the Place that we are supposed to take seriously as the basic principle of action meeting action. Some of us are through with that detour. We go through the motions our colleagues force us into. But we have quietly started looking for alternative spaces the way secularism once began looking for non-church anchors for thought. And in our pursuit we seem to find that I can get my Week Days to meet without the strength of Reason, in the cyclicity of Rhyme. This works, specifically, in terms of the mutual hospitality of Reperception, seen as follows:

## The Last Move

You see me and I see you as our gazes make room for each other. You expect my moves to make sense first to me, in terms of the temperature of my normal pool and what I feel to be perceptibly hotter or colder, and then to you, in terms of your reperception. And I reciprocally expect you to first make sense of your moves, in terms of your pool and your accustomed levels relative to which you act and experience, and only then to allow me to reperceive. But both you and I know that we are not there as singular creatures. For we know that we both refer our pieced-out individuations to the Week Days we play around on, and to our playmate circles locally on each Week Day, as well as to the counterfactual Industrial Summations that our Week Day Local Cognitions routinely sell out to, compromising our actions by subjecting the traffic of our activities to those centralized idealizations

with our routine nonconsent. We know that the systems are naughty, and we are routinely trying to pull them up and give them a Piece of our Mind. Since each of us does this and knows each other to be doing this. So there is a hide-and-seek within each me and you as we appear to face other unitary yous and mes. This leads us to require each other to make massive and unspecified allowances. You are supposed—in my intentions beamed to you by the most outrageously modern communication technologies—to interpret my moves as coming from where I am and how hot my pool is, to the extent that you can figure out these parameters and what I intend you, from my situatedness, to reperceive based on my own perceptions of my intentions. And vice versa. In this arduous task of reperceiving according to the message sender's intentions, we routinely fail, and our reperceptions are contested as routinely as the sellouts of local knowledges to the industrial rationalizations are. This contesting makes up further verses for the poetry, and the attempt to find rhyme—a metonym for the many pattern postulates of modern verse-making—continues.

The job of the translator as apprentice, in the context of this Last Move of the construction we are offering here, is to gauge the most generous potentially intended reperceptibles of each atelier and to help the designated Other Party to Reperceive as hospitably as they—to the best of their Knowledge, half Local, half Sold-out—possibly can. In these times, of contested Sellouts, it is hard to be an apprentice at two places at once. But that is the only cross-barrier Rationality we've got, it seems to me.