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OTHERNESS IN TRANSLATION:
CONTEMPORARY GERMAN PROSE IN BRITAIN AND FRANCE

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Translation Studies

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my own work. It has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Selected material included in this thesis has appeared in the following publications:

Wiebke Sievers, 'German Identities in Transition? The Translation of Contemporary German Prose in Britain and France', in *German-Language Literature Today: International and Popular?*, ed. by Arthur Williams, Stuart Parkes and Julian Preece (Oxford: Lang, 2000), pp. 31–42.

Wiebke Sievers, 'Im interkulturellen Dialog: Monika Maron in englischer und französischer Übersetzung', in *Monika Maron in Perspective*, ed. by Elke Gilson (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), pp. 225–254.

Wiebke Sievers, 'Grenzen der Übersetzung: Anne Dudens *Übergang* in englischer und französischer Sprache', in *Anne Duden: A Revolution of Words, Approaches to her Fiction, Poetry and Essays*, ed. by Heike Bartel and Elizabeth Boa (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003), pp. 102–122.

ABSTRACT

Drawing on contemporary approaches to otherness, this thesis aims to show that, despite the growing interest in so-called foreignizing translation strategies, the current theory and practice of translation in Western Europe is to a large extent still caught in nationalist self-confirmation.

In the first part of my study I expose the nationalist agenda underlying the influential theories of translation developed by Antoine Berman and Lawrence Venuti by contrasting them with the ideas formulated by Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida. Basing their arguments on Friedrich Schleiermacher's essay on translation, both Berman and Venuti intend to undermine the nationalist stance of current translation practice by replacing it with the belief that translation primarily serves to further the understanding of the foreign other. However, this seemingly noble purpose ultimately veils the fact that the foreign other is a construct which is devised by and thus confirms the national community receiving the translation. Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida, by contrast, whose ideas were anticipated by Friedrich Schlegel, believe that the aim of translation is to reveal the otherness of the translating self.

Based on these theoretical premises, I examine the significance of otherness in the current practice of translation. This case study focuses on the multidimensional reduction of otherness, as it becomes apparent in the translation of contemporary German prose in Britain, in particular, and to some extent also in France in the two decades preceding and following German unification (1980-1999). In a general overview which compares the selection of texts chosen for translation, the strategies used for their publication as well as the reception of these texts in the press, I conclude that three factors are of particular importance for the rejection of and the ensuing delimitation from German otherness in British and French translations during this period: ideological, generic and linguistic otherness. These particular areas are then further explored in the detailed studies on Monika Maron, Edgar Hilsenrath and Anne Duden. My case study proves that the translators and/or publishers of these authors tend to reject or appropriate those elements of their texts which would highlight the otherness underlying the British and French selves. However, these strategies of dealing with otherness are not limited to interlingual translation. They are anticipated in the reception of the respective texts within Germany.

INTRODUCTION

This study developed out of the confusion caused by the variety of concepts subsumed under the heading of otherness in theories and studies of translation.¹ As Horst Turk rightly pointed out, many scholars talk about the significance of otherness in translation without ever explaining what they mean by this term.² Thus Helmut von der Lahr states: ‘Die Literatur im traditionellen, schöngestigen Sinne [...] ist ein Instrument zur Überwindung der kulturellen Fremdheit.’³ Karl Dedecius insists: ‘Das Deutsche ist gut geeignet, Fremdes aufzunehmen, zu assimilieren, ihm auch über seine Grenzen hinaus Gehör zu verschaffen.’⁴ Michel Ballard pronounces: ‘[C]ette découverte de l’autre au travers d’un transfert linguistique est à la fois une marque d’intérêt et de curiosité et le garant de la préservation d’une identité.’⁵ Theo Hermans, by contrast, believes: ‘Translation appropriates the foreign, normalises the abnormal, and brands the illegitimate and the improper in the proper words of our own language.’⁶ While it is obvious that the four authors come to different conclusions with respect to the

¹ The term otherness implies the first problems of translation. The phenomenon which in English is in general discussed under the heading of ‘otherness’ and which in French is called ‘altérité’ is usually termed ‘Fremdheit’ in German. However, the other can be taken to describe the binary opposite to the same, while my study, which draws on Bernhard Waldenfels’s theories, concerns the otherness that is opposed to and undermines the self. English alternative translations for the German term ‘Fremdheit’, such as the ‘alien’, which denotes the unknown, the ‘foreign’, which mainly refers to the external other, and the ‘strange’, which describes the curious, bear their own limitations. As will become clear in the course of this study, Waldenfels considers all of these concepts to be aspects of the same phenomenon and thus undermines the strict borderlines between these assignments. Unveiling their specific interpretations of otherness and dissolving their strict delimitations, this study will therefore use all of these terms. For a discussion of the linguistic differences and the problems occurring in the translation of these terms cp. Bernhard Waldenfels, ‘Response to the Other’, in *Encountering the Other(s): Studies in Literature, History, and Culture*, ed. by Gisela Brinkler-Gabler (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 35–44 (pp. 35–37). For an analysis of Bernhard Waldenfels’s theories cp. section 1.1 ‘So viele Ordnungen, so viele Fremdheiten’: Bernhard Waldenfels, pp. 12ff. in the first chapter of this study.

² See Horst Turk, ‘Alienität und Alterität als Schlüsselbegriffe einer Kultursemantik’, *Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik*, 22 (1990), 8–31 (p. 8).

³ Helmut von der Lahr, ‘Der internationale Buchmarkt’, in *Das Literaturhandbuch 1993/94: Literarisches Leben in der BRD*, ed. by the Deutscher Kulturrat (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1993), pp. 651–654 (p. 653).

⁴ Karl Dedecius, *Vom Übersetzen* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), p. 15.

⁵ Michel Ballard, ‘La traduction comme conscience linguistique et culturelle: quelques repères’, in *Europe et Traduction*, ed. by Michel Ballard (Arras: Artois Presses Université, 1998), pp. 11–24 (p. 22).

⁶ Theo Hermans, ‘Translation and Normativity’, in *Translation and Norms*, ed. by Christina Schäffner (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1999), pp. 50–71 (p. 68).

significance of the foreign in the process of translation, there is no way of deciding whether these differences originate from diverging ideas of otherness because they do not elaborate on this issue. Furthermore, if scholars define their understanding of otherness, the concepts they come up with differ markedly, even within the same research group. Describing the study of otherness in translation as one of their major interests, the special research project on translation in Göttingen, which under the direction of Armin-Paul Frank developed a historically-descriptive approach to the study of translation, devoted two collections of essays to this topic.⁷ The first stresses the importance of literary translation as a medium of experiencing the foreign. Emphasizing the multidimensionality of otherness, Turk in his contribution to this first collection aims to dissolve the strict borderlines between self and other: ‘Mit der Übersetzbarkeit *ins* Fremde ginge ein Stück der Eigentümlichkeit verloren. Mit der Herleitbarkeit *aus* dem Fremden wäre die Eigentümlichkeit gar nicht erst der Fall.’⁸ Fred Lönker, by contrast, argues that phenomena are described as alien or foreign when people confronted with them cannot locate them in their horizons of knowledge and experience. Since he believes translation to be a form of understanding, Lönker concludes that these phenomena will either have to be forced into or eliminated from the translation: ‘Gelingt eine solche Integration und Modifikation nicht, dann bleibt dem Übersetzer nur noch die Alternative, auf das Übersetzen ganz zu verzichten oder eine Übersetzung anzufertigen, mit der er selbst keinen Sinn verbinden kann.’⁹ This approach to otherness might explain

⁷ See Harald Kittel, ‘Inclusions and Exclusions: The “Göttingen Approach” to Translation Studies and Inter-Literary History’, in *Translating Literatures, Translating Cultures: New Vistas and Approaches in Literary Studies*, ed. by Kurt Mueller-Vollmer and Michael Irmscher, Göttinger Beiträge zur internationalen Übersetzungsforschung, 17 (Berlin: Schmidt, 1998), pp. 3–13 (p. 10). Financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), this research project, which came to an end in 1997, was followed by a project on the ‘Internationality of National Literatures’.

⁸ Horst Turk, ‘Übersetzung ohne Kommentar: Kulturelle Schlüsselbegriffe und kontroverser Kulturbegriff am Beispiel von Goytisolos *Reivindicación des Conde don Julián*’, in *Die literarische Übersetzung als Medium der Fremderfahrung*, ed. by Fred Lönker, Göttinger Beiträge zur internationalen Übersetzungsforschung, 6 (Berlin: Schmidt, 1992), pp. 3–40 (p. 33). Italics in the original.

⁹ Fred Lönker, ‘Aspekte des Fremdverstehens in der literarischen Übersetzung’, in *Die literarische Übersetzung als Medium der Fremderfahrung*, ed. by Fred Lönker, pp. 41–62 (p. 60).

why the second collection of essays, which evolved from this research project, regards foreignness as constituting a problem for the process of translation. In order to solve this problem for once and for all, the two editors, Willi Huntemann and Lutz Rühling, in their introduction attempt to identify the possible sources of otherness in translation and assemble them in a comprehensive list. On the other hand the second part of their collection is devoted to otherness as a programme underlying Hölderlin's and Benjamin's ideas on translation.¹⁰ However, if the otherness underlying the self and the foreignness of an external other are considered to be related phenomena, then the reduction of the foreign to a problem which has to be solved certainly does not constitute the right way to approach the other in translation.

My study tries to answer the following questions: What are the roots of these diverse understandings of otherness in translation theory? What are the concepts of otherness underlying them and how far do these still inform current studies of translation? How could the study of otherness contribute to a new understanding of the study of translation? And what is the significance of otherness in the practice of translation? In the first chapter I will consider contemporary approaches to and ideas of otherness in translation from a historical-theoretical perspective with a view to describing the origins of the diverse concepts of otherness in translation. Furthermore, this historical overview will reveal that the strategy of understanding and appropriating otherness is deeply ingrained in European cultures which explains why scholars do not see any necessity to elaborate on this concept in their studies. However, as the analysis will show, the appropriation of otherness has always been accompanied by alternative voices. These will serve as a basis for my methodological approach in the ensuing case studies on the translation of contemporary German prose in Britain and France.

¹⁰ See Willi Huntemann and Lutz Rühling, 'Einleitung: Fremdheit als Problem und Programm', in *Fremdheit als Problem und Programm: die literarische Übersetzung zwischen Tradition und Moderne*, ed. by Willi Huntemann and Lutz Rühling, Göttinger Beiträge zur internationalen Übersetzungsforschung, 14 (Berlin: Schmidt, 1997), pp. 1–25.

When I first started to work on my case study, my idea was to examine the British and French constructions of German identities in the wake of unification, as they become apparent in the selection and translation of German prose in the two countries. However, this initial idea was to some extent undermined by an obvious rejection of otherness expressed in the small number of texts transferred from German into English, in particular, but also into French. This stands in stark contrast to the large percentage of translations from specifically English but also French into German (see Figure 1).

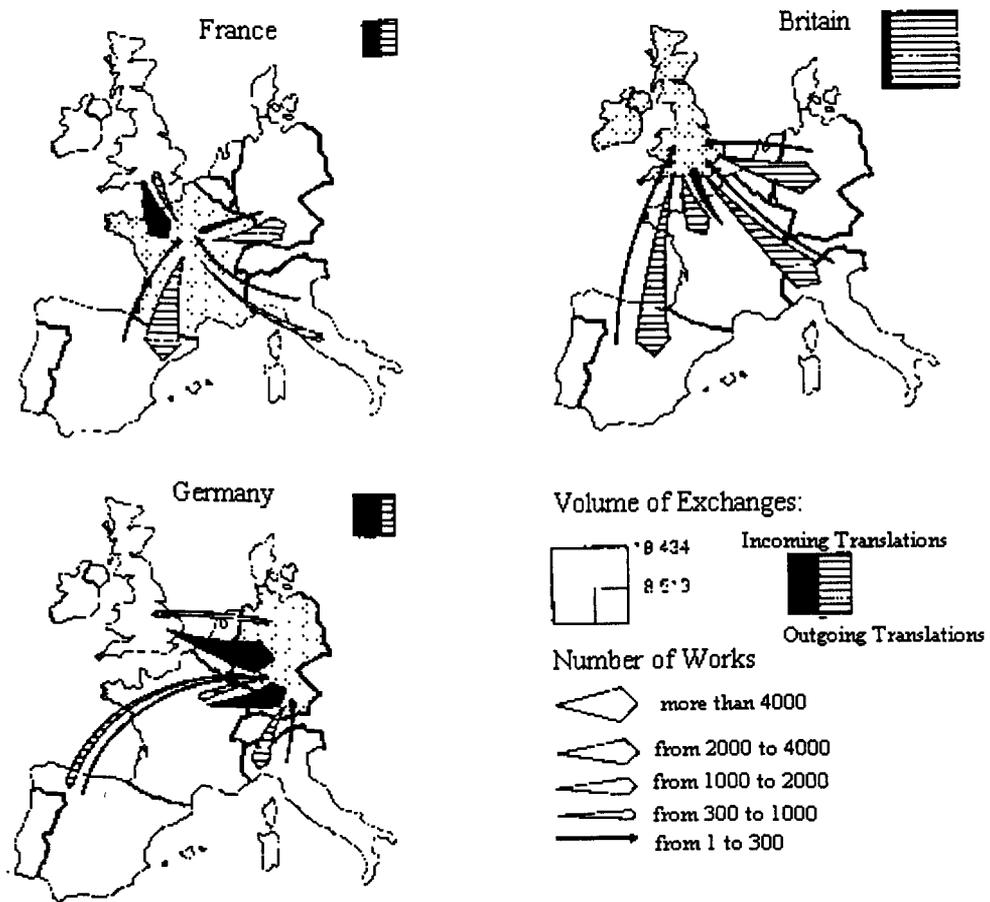


Figure 1: Flux of Translations in France, Britain and Germany¹¹

Apart from one highlight per decade, such as Patrick Süskind's *Perfume* (1986) in the 1980s and Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader* (1997) in the 1990s, contemporary German

¹¹ See Valérie Ganne and Marc Minon, 'Géographies de la traduction', in *Traduire l'Europe*, ed. by Françoise Barret-Ducrocq (Paris: Éditions Payot, 1992), pp. 55–95 (p. 63).

prose seems to have been largely ignored in Britain. Commenting on this absence, the English translator Michael Hulse cites his colleague Martin Chalmers who believes that there is in effect no British reception of German literature.¹² Of course, as Michael Hamburger observes, ‘we know very little about the reception and effectiveness, if any, of literary works, for the simple reason that the majority of their readers keep their responses to themselves.’ However, referring to the lack of reviews of his translations in the 1980s and early 1990s, he concedes: ‘If I were to talk about the reception of my work now, say over the last ten years, I should really have nothing to go on whatsoever.’¹³ Comparatively speaking, the situation for German texts in France is certainly much better. Nevertheless the number of German books translated in France only amounts to one quarter of the French titles translated in Germany.¹⁴ Furthermore, the translator Lionel Richard observes: ‘Es ist [...] schon als Erfolg zu werten, daß das Interesse an deutscher Literatur anhaltend und nicht etwa rückläufig ist’.¹⁵

Being aware of this imbalance, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Association for International Co-operation via institutions such as the Goethe Institut Inter Nationes promulgate the reception of German literature in other countries.¹⁶ Apart from authors’ readings and book exhibitions, this programme also includes grants for literary translations, administered and awarded by Inter Nationes.¹⁷ In Britain, the Goethe Institut London has organized several seminars, where German and English

¹² Michael Hulse, ‘Ach so! Deutschsprachige Literatur in Großbritannien’, in *Ansichten und Auskünfte zur deutschen Literatur nach 1945*, ed. by Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1995), pp. 136–143 (p. 138).

¹³ Michael Hamburger, ‘Modern German Literature in English: A Personal Account’, in *The Art of Literary Translation*, ed. by Hans Schulte and Gerhard Teuscher (Lanham: University Press of America, 1993), pp. 141–155 (pp. 141 and 155).

¹⁴ See Joseph Jurt, ‘Le rôle essentiel de la traduction’, *Documents: revue des questions allemandes*, spécial (1999), 42–44 (p. 43).

¹⁵ Lionel Richard, ‘Deutschsprachige Literatur in Frankreich’, in *Ansichten und Auskünfte*, ed. by Heinz Ludwig Arnold, pp. 150–154 (p. 154).

¹⁶ See Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, ‘Deutsche Kultur International: Deutsche Literatur im Ausland’ <http://www.deutsche-kultur-international.de/dir/index.html?dir_id=169 &lang=de> [accessed 12 March 2003].

¹⁷ See Goethe Institut Inter Nationes, ‘Übersetzungsförderung’ <<http://www.goethe.de/uun/ang/ueb/uea/deindex.htm>> [accessed 12 March 2003]. If we go by this website, the merger between the Goethe Institut and Inter Nationes has not had any effect on this programme.

publishers, literary agents, translators and journalists discussed the reasons for the absence of German texts from the British book market. One of these seminars resulted in the publication of *New Books in German*, 'a twice yearly journal aimed chiefly at busy British and American editors who would like to publish more translations but would also appreciate help in finding the right titles from among the thousands published each year in German language'.¹⁸ Supported by German, Austrian and Swiss governmental institutions and publishing organizations, *New Books in German* includes short English descriptions of books, authors and publishers from German-speaking countries, which in an ensuing seminar was described as 'an excellent instrument for promoting translations of German books'.¹⁹ Furthermore, in collaboration with the Arts Council and the *Times Literary Supplement* the Goethe Institut in the year 2000 tried to raise public awareness of German literature by promoting a special display of a selection of titles in branches of Waterstone's and Blackwell's as well as in independent bookshops such as Grant & Cutler.²⁰ In France, the public interest in German literature was increased by the *Salon du Livre*, a yearly book fair in Paris first held in 1981, which in 1989 focused on contemporary German literatures. As well as a bibliographical study, this event resulted in the appearance of several articles on contemporary German literature in leading French literary magazines, such as the *Magazine Littéraire*, where Lionel Richard responded to the question: 'Quoi de neuf dans les pays de langue allemande?'²¹ However, while such promotions and events might contribute to a growing interest and might lead to a short-term increase in translations of German texts, they do not get to the

¹⁸ See 'New Books in German', in *New Books in German*, ed. by Rosemary Smith, 2 (1997), p. 32.

¹⁹ See the 'Recommendations arising from the Seminar "Networking for the Future of Translation", Goethe Institut London, 27 November 1998', London 1999, which I kindly received from the project-coordinator, Sylviana Ollenu.

²⁰ See Goethe Institut London, 'German Literature Promotion' <<http://www.goethe.de/gr/lon/glit/prom.htm>> [accessed 12 March 2001].

²¹ Lionel Richard, 'Dossier: Littératures allemandes aujourd'hui', in *Magazine Littéraire* 265 (1989), pp. 16–72 (p. 16). The bibliography published on the event of the book fair is *Französische-deutsch-französisch Übersetzungen: Les traductions de livres en langues française et allemande 1986–1989*, ed. by the Syndicat National de l'Édition (Paris: Syndicat National de l'Édition, 1989).

root of the problem. As the second chapter of my study will show, the translational power-differentials, which are even far more striking with reference to the developing countries, originate from an outmoded model of translation based on national representations, which is intricately linked to the dominant concept of otherness in translation.²² A comparative discussion of the selection and reception of contemporary German prose in Britain and France will enable me to reveal the borderlines inherent in this model.

This scarcity of British and French translations of contemporary German texts is not surprisingly accompanied by a lack of studies on this specific field. The reception of contemporary German prose in translation in France has mainly been documented in bibliographical compilations.²³ Only the reception of literature from the GDR has attracted further attention. Gudrun Klatt's GDR publication contains a collection of French reviews as well as a bibliography of GDR literature translated in France.²⁴ Karin R. Gürtler, who strongly criticizes Klatt for her political blindness, provides a detailed analysis of the political and cultural conditions relevant for the reception of GDR literature in France. Furthermore, she describes the different phases of reception and gives an overview over the representation of GDR literature in the relevant French media.²⁵ The last extensive study on contemporary German prose in Britain was Uta Kreuter's analysis of translation and literary criticism which covered the period from 1960 to 1981. From a temporal point of view my study, which looks at the 1980s and 1990s, can be said to follow on from hers. However, like Gürtler and Klatt, Kreuter focuses less on the actual translations than on the journalistic reception of the German

²² For the power differentials with respect to developing countries cp. Douglas Robinson, *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997), pp. 32–33.

²³ The most extensive French bibliography is M. Zangl-Lorriaux's *Littérature contemporaine de langue allemande: Traductions françaises des œuvres parues entre 1945 et 1982: Essai de bibliographie*, Bibliographia Belgica, 138 (Brussels: Commission Belge de Bibliographie, 1983).

²⁴ Gudrun Klatt, ed., *Passagen: DDR-Literatur aus französischer Sicht* (Halle: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1989).

²⁵ Karin R. Gürtler, *Die Rezeption der DDR-Literatur in Frankreich (1945–1990): Autoren und Werke im Spiegel der Kritik*, Kanadische Studien zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur, 45 (Bern: Lang, 2001).

texts. Observing the changes in reviews from the 1960s, when the translation of contemporary German literature, in particular of poetry, reached at an all-time high, to the late 1970s, when it had radically deteriorated, Kreuter uncovers an increasing demand for realistic and readable texts which underlies the media response and provides an explanation for the critical stance to the more experimental German texts.²⁶

In my study, the journalistic reception of German texts only serves to supplement the information gathered from the comparative analyses of the English and French translations which focus on works by Monika Maron, Edgar Hilsenrath and Anne Duden. At first glance the writer from the former GDR, whose texts are usually set within this framework, the Jewish-German writer, who concentrates on anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, and the West-German writer, whose prose reveals the cruelty of language, do not seem to have anything in common. However, all three of them do not only deal with topics which have come to play an important role in the post-war constructions of German identities, such as the GDR and the Holocaust. As the detailed readings will show, they also in diverse ways undermine the fixity of identities in their writing. Uncovering the diversity of interpretations inherent in their original texts, my approach is comparable to Irene Weber-Henking's who in her study of Swiss-German prose in translation mainly analyses French versions of works by authors such as Robert Walser, Max Frisch and Paul Nizon.²⁷ However, while Weber-Henking uses these readings as a tool to uncover the otherness underlying Swiss-German literary language, my detailed studies aim to prove that the dominant theoretical ideas of otherness also mark the practice of translation. The final aim of my thesis is thus to reveal the

²⁶ See Uta Kreuter, *Übersetzung und Literaturkritik: Aspekte der Rezeption zeitgenössischer deutschsprachiger Literatur in Großbritannien 1960–1981* (Frankfurt/Main: Lang, 1985)

²⁷ See Irene Weber-Henking, *Differenzlektüren: Fremdes und Eigenes der deutschsprachigen Schweizer Literatur gelesen im Vergleich von Original und Übersetzung* (Munich: iudicium, 1999).

limitations of the prevalent concept of otherness underlying the theory and practice of translation not only in Britain and France but probably also in the whole of Europe.

1 OTHERNESS IN TRANSLATION THEORIES

In the wake of the collapse of the colonial empires the study of otherness has become of major significance in various disciplines such as philology, philosophy and anthropology. This growing interest in otherness corresponds to a boom in the study of translation as the other of the original. Whether in functional linguistic models, such as the *Skopos* theory, or in Descriptive Translation Studies, the translation as the ignored and subjected shadow of the original in the 1970s and 1980s suddenly stands in the centre of attention.²⁸ Describing the *skopos*, i.e. the text's function in the target culture, as the main goal of translation, Hans Vermeer, the founder of this applied approach to translation, frees the translator from slavish subjection to the source text: 'Translators have come to be viewed as target-text authors and have been released from the limitations and restrictions imposed by a narrowly defined concept of loyalty to the source text alone.'²⁹ Despite the fact that the scholars involved in the establishment of Descriptive Translation Studies distanced themselves from the prescriptive nature of linguistic approaches, the concentration on what as a consequence has come to be called the target text is also one of their basic tenets. Gideon Toury thus states: '[T]ranslations are facts of the target culture; on occasion facts of a special status, sometimes even constituting identifiable (sub)systems of their own, but of the target culture in any event.'³⁰ Similarly Theo Hermans in his introduction to the pioneering work *The Manipulation of Literature*, defines the descriptive study of translation as 'an approach

²⁸ For the comparability of these two approaches in their target-orientation also cp. Theo Hermans's article on 'Descriptive Translation Studies', in *Handbuch Translation*, ed. by Mary Snell-Hornby and others (Tübingen: Stauffenberg, 1998), pp. 96–100 (p. 96). A detailed description of these approaches to translation and their origins can be found in the chapters three to five of Edwin Gentzler's *Contemporary Translation Theories* (London: Routledge, 1993), which does, however, not draw any link between the linguistic and the literary branch of translation studies.

²⁹ Christina Schäffner, 'Skopos theory', in *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies*, ed. by Mona Baker (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 235–238 (p. 238).

³⁰ Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, Benjamins Translation Library, 4 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1995), p. 29.

to literary translation which is descriptive, target-oriented, functional and systemic'.³¹ Finally, this 'emphasis on the target pole' is also stressed by Susan Bassnett in her introduction to translation studies.³² However, the alleged freedom from the original implied in the shift of interest in both the functional linguistic and the descriptive approach to translation is supplanted by a slavish servility to the norms imposed by the target language and culture. Furthermore, titles such as 'the manipulation of literature' show that the original text as an underlying ideal still governs these approaches to translation.

The presuppositions underlying applied and descriptive translation studies are called into question as a result of the decisive change from theories of equivalence to theories of difference in the 1980s and 1990s. Gentzler chiefly relates this shift to the introduction of a deconstructive approach to translation based on Jacques Derrida's thought.³³ Other scholars, such as Marilyn Gaddis Rose or Douglas Robinson, note a return to what has come to be termed foreignizing strategies to the manifestation of otherness in translation. Rose takes Lawrence Venuti's essay 'The Translator's Invisibility', published in 1987, to be a landmark in the change from domesticating to foreignizing approaches in literary translation which, according to her, was initiated as early as 1976 by Gayatri Spivak's translation of Jacques Derrida's *Grammatologie*.³⁴ Venuti also features prominently in Douglas Robinson's analyses of translation theories 'embracing the foreign'. Robinson traces Venuti's ideas back to the French translator and translation theorist Antoine Berman. He then links Berman's and Venuti's approaches to Walter Benjamin.³⁵ This categorization seems to tally with Jean-René

³¹ Theo Hermans, 'Translation Studies and a New Paradigm', in *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*, ed. by Theo Hermans (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 7–15 (p. 10).

³² See Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, rev. edn (London: Routledge, 1996), p. xvi.

³³ See the chapter 'Deconstruction' in Gentzler, pp. 144–180.

³⁴ See Marilyn Gaddis Rose, 'Foreignizing or Domesticating: Debating Norms Goes With the Territory', in *Keystones of Communication: Proceedings of the 34th Annual Conference of the American Translator's Association*, ed. by Edith F. Losa (Medford, NJ: Learned Information, 1993), pp. 265–271.

³⁵ See the third part entitled 'Embracing the Foreign' in Douglas Robinson, *What Is Translation? Centrifugal Theories, Critical Interventions* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997), pp. 79–177.

Ladmiral's. He describes Berman as well as Benjamin as *sourciers*, who according to him stress the signifiers in the source language, and differentiates them from the *ciblistes*, who concentrate on the transfer of the sense into the target language.³⁶

The following analysis will question and reconsider these categorizations of theoretical approaches by examining how a paradigmatic selection of these theories stand in relation to otherness and selfhood. Although, unlike earlier works, these approaches explicitly discuss the problem of otherness in translation, this does not mean that they manage to overcome the unconscious assumption that the other is synonymous with the foreign language and culture. In order to be able to identify the differences between these theories, I will first of all describe Bernhard Waldenfels's phenomenological approach to otherness, which will serve as the basis for my analysis. Subsequently, I will link translation theories developed in recent years with two long-standing traditions. The first section deals with the ethnocentrist ideas underlying the theory elaborated by Friedrich Schleiermacher, whose essay on translation was published when proto-national ideas were in the process of being established, and links these to contemporary theories by Antoine Berman and Lawrence Venuti. In the following section I will contrast this tradition with the theories developed by Walter Benjamin, who draws on Friedrich Schlegel's early Romanticist works on criticism, and with those of Jacques Derrida. Their concepts of foreignness will provide the basis for the elaboration of my own methodological framework.

1.1 'So viele Ordnungen, so viele Fremdheiten': Bernhard Waldenfels

Tatsächlich ist Fremdheit kein Begriff. Die Fremdheit ist eine ganz merkwürdige Sache. Sie ist kontextuell. Sie ist von vornherein Plural, weil sie auf bestimmte

³⁶ See Jean-René Ladmiral, *traduire: théorèmes pour la traduction*, 2nd edn (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), p. XV.

Ordnungen bezogen ist, und wenn die Ordnungen Plural sind, dann ist Fremdes auch nicht einfach 'das' Fremde.³⁷

In his four-volume study on the phenomenology of otherness, Bernhard Waldenfels rereads the founding father of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, in the light of his French interpreters such as Emmanuel Levinas, Michel Foucault, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jacques Derrida. Waldenfels's understanding of otherness originates from his earlier work on the genealogy of systems which mainly draws on Foucault. Whereas in his study on dialogical structures in *Zwischenreich des Dialogs* Waldenfels still ultimately integrates otherness into a universal logocentric system, in *Ordnungen im Zwielficht* he argues against the existence of a universal order and disintegrates it into a multitude of structures.³⁸ It is the extra-ordinary (*das Außer-ordentliche*) which at once evades and underlies any sort of order and thus reveals its contingent nature that in his phenomenological studies comes to be called 'Fremdes':

Die gleichzeitige Selektion und Exklusion führt dazu, daß es bestimmte Ordnungen gibt, nicht aber eine einzige Ordnung. Diese Kontingenz begrenzter Ordnungen bildet die Vorbedingung dafür, daß es Fremdes gibt, und zwar in dem präzisen Sinne, daß etwas sich dem Zugriff der Ordnung entzieht.³⁹

Understood as the underlying and elusive by-product of these contingent systems, otherness cannot be clearly conceptualized, on the contrary, it vanishes in the process of understanding. Grasping otherness then is as much a paradox as reaching the beyond.⁴⁰

It does not constitute a lack of knowledge which at some stage will be identified and then can be overcome. Like the past, otherness remains absent and only becomes

³⁷ Bernhard Waldenfels in Petra Gehring and Matthias Fischer, "... jeder philosophische Satz ist eigentlich in Unordnung, in Bewegung": Gespräch mit Bernhard Waldenfels', in *Vernunft im Zeichen des Fremden: Zur Philosophie von Bernhard Waldenfels*, ed. by Matthias Fischer, Hans-Dieter Gondek and Burkhard Liebsch (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), pp. 408–459 (p. 431).

³⁸ See the chapter 'Vom Anderen zum Fremden: Waldenfels und die Fremdheit der Ordnungen' in Yoshiro Nakamura, *Xenosophie: Bausteine für eine Theorie der Fremdheit* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000), pp. 73–116.

³⁹ Bernhard Waldenfels, *Topographie des Fremden: Studien zur Phänomenologie des Fremden 1*, 2nd edn (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1999), p. 20.

⁴⁰ This metaphor draws on Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 4: 'Beyond' signifies spatial distance, marks progress, promises the future; but our intimations of exceeding the barrier or boundary — the very act of going *beyond* — are unknowable, unrepresentable, without a return to the 'present' which in the process of repetition, becomes disjunct and displaced.'

manifest in the traces it leaves.⁴¹ This means that, even if we cannot describe otherness itself, we can analyse the traces left by the confrontation with the other, or in Husserl's terms, the 'verifiable accessibility of what is originally inaccessible.'⁴²

Departing from his theory of systems, Waldenfels in the first volume of his phenomenological studies describes the experience of otherness in various intricately linked spatial dimensions and thus reveals the plurality as well as the multidimensionality of otherness. The poststructuralist stance of this approach and its significance for the research on translations will become clear if we compare Waldenfels's ideas with Itamar Even-Zohar's theory of polysystems which constitutes the basis of the Israeli branch of Descriptive Translation Studies. Based on Russian Formalism and in opposition to the Geneva School, Even-Zohar coined the term polysystem in order to stress the dynamic heterogeneity and the open structure of systems, which, according to him, in imitation of Saussure's theories have often and falsely been regarded as homogeneous and static. Being aware of the fact that his dynamic understanding of systems will prove to be more difficult to handle in concrete analyses, he insists that the advantages of his model by far outweigh this disadvantage. He believes that the homogeneous approach to systems exclusively focuses on the centre and ignores the peripheries. Polysystem theory, by contrast, works on the assumption that systems contain various centres and peripheries and thus makes visible the tensions and transfers within and between literatures and cultures. While Even-Zohar stresses that neither the 'within' nor the 'inbetween' can be taken for granted and even mentions the possibility of a total collapse of a system, his theory does not focus on the limitations but on the conditions for the continuous development and growth of cultures: 'In short, it is a major goal, and a workable task for the Polysystem Theory, to deal with the particular

⁴¹ See Waldenfels, *Topographie*, p. 26.

⁴² Cited by Waldenfels in 'Response', p. 36. The German original is 'bewährbare Zugänglichkeit des original Unzugänglichen' (cited in Waldenfels, *Topographie*, p. 25).

conditions under which a certain culture may be interfered with by another culture, as a result of which repertoires are transferred from one polysystem to another.' One of his particular interests, which is clearly linked to Even-Zohar's location within the developing Israeli culture, concerns the definition of a minimal repertoire of literary forms in order for a system to function adequately.⁴³ Even-Zohar's approach thus displays a leaning towards ethnocentrism or in Waldenfels's words: 'Ob man ein Makrozentrum oder eine Vielzahl von Makrozentren ansetzt, um *Zentrierung* handelt es sich allemal.'⁴⁴

Waldenfels's interest in polysystems is focused less on their development than on their contingency and limitations, i.e. the otherness underlying and haunting them. He therefore stresses that structures or categorizations not only constitute the necessary precondition for any experience but they also direct our gaze and thus exclude other possible views: 'Das Zugänglichmachen bedeutet gleichzeitig ein Unzugänglichmachen.' Since life is organized in a variety of interlinked systems, otherness has to be thought of as a multidimensional plurality: '*So viele Ordnungen, so viele Fremdheiten.*' Functional systems, such as health and legal systems for example, may be horizontally split into segments and vertically organized in hierarchical structures. Yet these already rather complex systems only form one small part of the organization of life. In addition, the confrontation with otherness can be described in grades of intensity. As a daily and thus normal experience we meet strangers in our usual environment; on a second level otherness might become conceivable in a foreign system, such as a foreign language or culture, and thus question our interpretation of life; and finally the experience of radical otherness confronts us with events which, unlike structural otherness, not only question a certain interpretation of life but subvert

⁴³ Itamar Even-Zohar, "Polysystem Theory", rev. version (1997) <<http://www.tau.ac.il/~itamarez/papers/ps-th-r.htm>> [accessed 12 March 2003], pp. 3, 4, 6, 9–10 and 10.

⁴⁴ Waldenfels, *Topographie*, p. 50.

the possibility of interpretation. These might be liminal phenomena such as eros and death as well as times of crises such as revolutions and wars. In his understanding the constructed other or foreign and radical otherness are thus graded realizations of the same phenomenon, i.e. of the confrontation with the inaccessible.⁴⁵

As Freud's *Unheimliches* originates in our very homes,⁴⁶ the inaccessible that is created by the systems organizing our lives comes back to haunt us: 'Das Fremde zeigt sich, indem es sich uns entzieht. Es sucht uns heim und versetzt uns in Unruhe, noch bevor wir es einlassen oder uns seiner zu erwehren trachten.' This irritation underlying the self results from the inconceivability of a final order which would allow us to decide whether it is the windmill-fighting Don Quixote or Sancho Panza, settled in an imperturbable normality, who is estranged from reality. Waldenfels describes the estrangement ensuing from the confrontation with otherness as a process involving two-directional vectors. While it is difficult to find out how the process of estrangement is initiated, it will doubtless always affect both parties involved: 'In jedem Fall bringt die Erfahrung des Fremden die Grenzen zwischen Eigenem und Fremdem in Bewegung, und dies um so mehr, je näher uns das Fremde rückt.'⁴⁷ The closeness of the allegedly foreign other evokes particularly strong reactions, as will become apparent in my case study which for this reason concentrates on otherness in translation within the European context.

The confrontation with the other is enticing as well as threatening. If it is primarily felt to be a threat, it may result in exclusion and extermination or in appropriation of the other. In the long run appropriation proves to be an even more effective defence against the alien than the first two strategies, since appropriation promises to maintain otherness

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 33. Italics in the original. Also see pp. 33–37.

⁴⁶ See Sigmund Freud, 'Das Unheimliche', in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by Anna Freud, 18 vols (London: Imago, 1940; repr. Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1941–1968), XII (1947), pp. 229–268.

⁴⁷ Waldenfels, *Topographie*, pp. 42 and 44.

by understanding and absorbing it.⁴⁸ It is therefore not surprising that dealing with otherness has come to be dominated by this approach to such an extent that the term appropriation is used as a synonym for understanding and translating, as will also become apparent in the close analysis of the translation theories developed in the German Romantic period as well as those drawing on them.⁴⁹ In the appropriative framework otherness and alienation are at most understood to be the necessary stages of transition on our way to reason, freedom and ourselves. This circular structure results from the Western thinking of self and other in binary oppositions in combination with a growing concentration on the self, as it is expressed in egocentrism and ethnocentrism: 'Eigenes wird nicht bloß von Fremdem unterschieden, es wird ihm schlechterdings vorgezogen. Die Zentrierung auf das Eigene entspringt einem Drang zu kollektiver Selbsterhaltung und Selbsterweiterung.'⁵⁰ In the development of the 'imagined communities', the growing concentration on a constructed self is embodied in exclusions of otherness on the basis of descent, language and common habits.⁵¹ Furthermore, the logocentrist thinking, which is deeply ingrained in European cultures, entails the belief that at some stage this self will turn out to be the universal: 'Aufs ganze gesehen lebt der Eurozentrismus von der Erwartung, daß das Eigene sich selbst durch das Fremde hindurch allmählich *als das Ganze und Allgemeine* herausstellt.'⁵² Even the attempts to counter appropriation with cosmopolitan thinking, which characterize Romantic ideas on translation, are thus still rooted in the expansion of the self:

Die Tendenz zur Aneignung wird auch dann nicht durchbrochen, wenn Aneignung sich in purer Enteignung, Provinzialismus oder Nationalismus sich in bloßen Exotismus oder Kosmopolitismus verkehrt. Selbst der endlose Streit zwischen

⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 49.

⁴⁹ See in particular the section 1.2 'Übersetzung und Aneignung': The Nation in Translation, pp. 19ff. of this thesis.

⁵⁰ Waldenfels, p. 150.

⁵¹ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. and ext. edn (London: Verso, 1991).

⁵² Waldenfels, *Topographie*, p. 135. Italics in the original.

Universalisten und Kulturalisten, zwischen Vertretern einer universalen und denen einer lokalen Vernunft, verläßt nicht die Bahnen der Aneignung.⁵³

But how can we evade the continuing appropriation and thus the destruction of otherness? Waldenfels's answer to this question is that, rather than trying to find a more appropriate definition of the other, we will have to grant otherness a different position in the process of our experiences, which implies that our stance to otherness has to change: 'Statt direkt *auf das Fremde* zuzugehen und zu fragen, *was es ist und wozu es gut ist*, empfiehlt es sich von der Beunruhigung *durch das Fremde* auszugehen.' From this point of view otherness could be described as a claim, which precedes and exceeds our answers and provokes a response, a claim, which demanding its right, claims our attention: 'Das Worauf der Antwort begegnet uns als Aufforderung, Provokation, Stimulus, als Anspruch im doppelten Sinne dessen, was uns anspricht und im Anspruch einen Anspruch erhebt.'⁵⁴ This responsive stance will counter the simplistic constructions of controllable others in binary opposition to a stable self and open up the multidimensional plurality of otherness.

In the following sections I will reconsider a number of translation theories according to their stance towards otherness. I regard them as belonging to two basic traditions. The following section deals with the ethnocentrist orientation towards an expansion of the national culture. This can be observed not only in texts on translation written at a time when the nation was beginning to be established as an idea, but also proves to be popular in translation theories written when the national narratives were crumbling. However, this occidental concentration on the self always has been accompanied by voices which include the challenge of otherness in their theories without appropriating it. These will be in the centre of attention in section 1.3 of this chapter.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 49–50.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 51. Italics in the original. The English 'claim', just like Waldenfels's German term 'Anspruch', derives from the act of calling out to (*clamare*) or appealing to someone ('ansprechen') which describes the first step towards demanding a right.

1.2 ‘Übersetzung und Aneignung’: The Nation in Translation

The link between translation and nation found prolific expression in the first theoretical approaches and the prefaces to and fragmentary remarks on translations written in Romantic Germany. As Antoine Berman rightly pointed out, while the Romantics rarely theoretically discussed translation, all of their ideas were imbued with diverse notions of translation. Novalis’s encyclopedic project, built on the possibility of poeticising sciences, as well as Friedrich Schlegel’s progressive universal poetry, based on the exchangeability of genres, expressed a strong belief in general translatability; Romantic poetry aimed at mediating between the unreachable universal language and the human tongue; and August Wilhelm Schlegel dreamed of a monumental translation project including every writer from antiquity to his contemporaries. However, Berman’s belief that Romantic ideas of translation open up new worlds is countered by the theoretical texts which consider translation in the terms of appropriation of the foreign and expansion of the self.⁵⁵ The importance of these strategies has already been highlighted by Andreas Huyssen in his study on the concept of translation and appropriation in early Romanticism. Huyssen sees Romantic thought as opening up the possibilities of intercultural communication within developing Europe and thus as anticipating ideas about a common European identity which were lost in the nationalist nineteenth century. At the time when Huyssen wrote his study, German Romanticism was a research field still tainted by the work performed in this area during the Third Reich. Huyssen is clearly at pains to distinguish his work from this earlier research with its nationalist focus: ‘Daß die zugrunde liegende Auffassung von Romantik weit entfernt ist von nationalistisch deutschtümelnder Romantikforschung und literarischem Autarkiestreben, geht schon aus der Wahl des Themas hervor, das eindeutig auf gesamteuropäische

⁵⁵ See chapters five, six and nine of Antoine Berman’s *L’épreuve de l’étranger: Culture et traduction dans l’Allemagne romantique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984). For a closer discussion of Berman’s text cp. section 1.2.2 ‘Enrichissement de notre langue’: Antoine Berman, pp. 30ff. of this chapter.

Zusammenhänge zielt.’⁵⁶ Huyssen thus conceives the nationalist and the cosmopolitan strands of German Romanticist thought as binary oppositions — a position recently underlined by Michael Löwy.⁵⁷ However, as the following introduction to the argumentative strategies used in theoretical approaches to translation will show, these strands do not represent opposites but graded realizations of the same ethnocentrist stance.⁵⁸

The understanding of translation as a form of appropriation has been expressed by various Romantic thinkers in manifold ways. Most of these texts were published in the *Athenaeum*, a magazine edited by August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel, who themselves contributed to the debate with several publications. In the postscript to his translation of Ariost’s *Orlando Furioso*, A. W. Schlegel, who at the time was already well known for his translations of Shakespeare’s works, states that his desire to understand the tone of foreign poetry is not satisfied by the ability to read in a foreign language. Moreover, he feels the need to appropriate these texts in translation. This conquest of foreign texts is described as a sexual act — a typical metaphor for translation —, which, in an allusion to the ninth commandment, is categorized as adultery: ‘leider kann ich meines nächsten Poesie nicht ansehen, ohne ihrer zu begehren in meinem Herzen, und bin also in einem beständigen poetischen Ehebruch begriffen.’⁵⁹ His brother Friedrich Schlegel locates the concept of appropriation via translation in the

⁵⁶ See Andreas Huyssen, *Die frühromantische Konzeption von Übersetzung und Aneignung: Studien zur frühromantischen Utopie einer deutschen Weltliteratur*, Zürcher Beiträge zur deutschen Literatur und Geistesgeschichte, 33 (Zürich: Atlantis, 1969), pp. 159 and 22.

⁵⁷ See Michael Löwy, ‘Die Romantik zwischen Nationalismus und Kosmopolitismus’, in *Nationalismus und Romantik*, ed. by Wolfgang Müller-Funk and Franz Schuh (Vienna: Turia und Kant, 1999), pp. 74–87.

⁵⁸ Since this discussion only serves as an introduction to Schleiermacher’s essay, a comparative description of the diversity of translation concepts developed at the time goes beyond the scope of my project. For a more detailed study see Huyssen and Berman, *L’épreuve*.

⁵⁹ August Wilhelm Schlegel, ‘Nachschrift des Übersetzers an Ludwig Tieck’, in *Athenäum*, ed. by August Wilhelm Schlegel and Friedrich Schlegel, 3 vols (I: Berlin: Vieweg, 1798, II+III: Berlin: Frölich, 1799–1800; repr. Munich: Meyer & Jessen, 1924), II, 2, pp. 277–284 (p. 281). Also cited in Huyssen, p. 88. For a similar metaphorization of translation see the comparison of translation to the act of penetration in George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 316 and 319. Significantly the imagery of infidelity came to be fashionable with female translation scholars in the 1980s (cp. Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, p. xiii).

wider framework of the progressive education of languages and cultures which aims at an alleged universality: ‘Man soll übersetzen, um die modernen Sprachen antik zu bilden, sich selbst das Klassische *praktisch* zuzueignen in Saft und Blut, und die größere Verbreitung desselben zu befördern.’⁶⁰ Furthermore, the understanding of translation as appropriation also affected thinkers who strictly speaking did not take part in the Romantic movement but were writing during the same period. Wilhelm von Humboldt, for example, gave a very concise description of the ethnocentrist aims of translation in Romantic Germany in the preface to his translation of the *Agamemnon*, first published in 1816. In this text Humboldt states that translation primarily serves as a tool to introduce new, hitherto unknown genres into the receiving culture and thus to expand the expressive possibilities in the respective language which will lead to the growth of the nation: ‘Wie sich aber der Sinn der Sprache erweitert, so erweitert sich auch der Sinn der Nation.’⁶¹ All of these statements are based on the deep-seated belief in linguistic and thus national determinism, which, first expressed by Herder, represented the foundation of Humboldt’s theoretical and practical development of comparative linguistics: ‘Die Sprache ist gleichsam die äußerliche Erscheinung des Geistes der Völker; ihre Sprache ist ihr Geist und ihr Geist ihre Sprache; man kann sich beide nie identisch genug denken.’⁶² Languages thus come to be thought of as clearly delimited entities with natural leanings towards certain expressions and ideas, which then allows their comparability.⁶³ However, this concept ignores that, as Waldenfels correctly points out,

⁶⁰ Friedrich Schlegel, ‘Philosophie der Philologie’, ed. by Josef Körner, *Logos*, 17 (1928), pp. 50–51. Also cited in Huyssen, p. 114. Italics in the original. These notes, dating from 1797, contain ideas for a philosophy of philology which Schlegel never developed further (cp. Huyssen, pp. 107–108).

⁶¹ Wilhelm von Humboldt, ‘Einleitung zu “Agamemnon”’, in *Das Problem des Übersetzens*, ed. by Hans Joachim Störig (Trier: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963), pp. 71–96 (p. 82).

⁶² Wilhelm von Humboldt, ‘Über die Verschiedenheiten des menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluß auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts’, reprinted in *Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century German Linguistics*, 8 vols (London: Routledge, Thoemmes Press, 1995), V, p. 37. The terms ‘Volk’ and ‘Nation’ were used interchangeably at the time, cp. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 17.

⁶³ See Wilhelm von Humboldt, ‘Ueber das vergleichende Sprachstudium’, in *Über die Sprache: Reden vor der Akademie*, ed. by Jürgen Trabant (Tübingen: Francke, 1994), pp. 11–32 (p. 21). This speech was first presented in 1820.

the idea of a mother tongue develops in opposition with an alleged foreign tongue. There would not be what we call our language, literature or culture without the denomination of and the delimitation from a foreign counterpart.⁶⁴

Of course the word nation in the Romantic context does not refer to a German nation state which only came into being in 1871. At the time of the *Athenaeum* and when Humboldt published his translation, the area that was to become Germany was governed by various principals. However, many German intellectuals at this time first expressed 'feelings of collective belonging', or in Hobsbawm's terminology, 'proto-national' bonds.⁶⁵ Whereas in Britain and France the invention of the national community developed within an existing state, the German nation first saw the light of day in an imagined cultural community which, engendered in the eighteenth century, was constructed in opposition to but also built on the model of the French and British nations. Compared to the aggressive nationalism, championed in particular in the wake of the Napoleonic occupation and by writers such as the poet Theodor Körner and the journalist Ernst Moritz Arndt, whose writings were to prove popular in National Socialist Germany, the writers who were interested in translation usually advocate a moderate form of ethnocentrism.⁶⁶ However, their alleged cosmopolitan interest in their constructed foreign ultimately serves as a tool to make the German nation shine more brightly. In this vein August Wilhelm Schlegel claims: 'Ich glaube, man ist auf dem Wege, die wahre poetische Übersetzungskunst zu erfinden; dieser Ruhm war den Deutschen vorbehalten.'⁶⁷ To some extent this ethnocentrist stance also marks Goethe's concept of world literature: 'Ich bin überzeugt, daß eine Weltliteratur sich bilde, daß alle

⁶⁴ See Bernhard Waldenfels, *Vielstimmigkeit der Rede: Studien zur Phänomenologie des Fremden 4* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1999), p. 192.

⁶⁵ Hobsbawm, p. 46.

⁶⁶ For the development of a national culture and a nationalist literature cp. Gerhard Schulz, *Die deutsche Literatur zwischen französischer Revolution und Restauration: Das Zeitalter der Napoleonischen Kriege und der Restauration 1806–1830*, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, established by Helmut de Boor and Richard Newald, VII, 2 (Munich: Beck, 1989), pp. 1–81.

⁶⁷ August Wilhelm Schlegel, 'Nachschrift', p. 281. Also cited in Huyssen, p. 69.

Nationen dazu geneigt sind und deshalb freundliche Schritte tun. Der Deutsche kann und soll hier am meisten wirken, er wird eine schöne Rolle bei diesem großen Zusammentreten zu spielen haben.⁶⁸

As one of the foils on which proto-German bonds were based, France in 1806 also came to be the external enemy from which the Germans wrest their idea of selfhood. Observing the growing opposition to France in his *Dämmerungen für Deutschland*, published in 1809, Jean Paul ironically remarks: ‘Jetzt ist ein französischer Sprachschnitzer fast eine patriotische Handlung’.⁶⁹ However, the negotiations of geographic borderlines was preceded by the delimitations from French thought and practice. In the area of translation this resulted in an apparent lack of French texts available in German language.⁷⁰ In German theoretical approaches, on the other hand, it found expression in explicit delimitations from contemporary French translations, which came to be known as *belles infidèles*. In a fragment on translation, enclosed in his collection of fragments entitled ‘Blüthenstaub’ which was first published in the *Athenäum* in 1798, Novalis thus condemns the French for not possessing the poetic spirit which is necessary for the innovative form of translation they tried to practise. That is why their attempts to be innovative usually come out as travesties of the original text.⁷¹ Unlike Novalis, Humboldt praises the beauty of the French translations. However, he also explicitly contrasts his own ideas on translation with French practice. Attacking their lack of appropriative capabilities, he claims that the beauty of these translations prevents the absorption of the spirit of antiquity into the French culture and therefore does not benefit the French nation.⁷² This criticism clearly discloses the nationalism of

⁶⁸ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, ‘Letter to Adolph Friedrich Carl Streckfuß, 27.1.1827’, in *Goethes Briefe*, ed. by Karl Robert Mandelkow, 4 vols (Hamburg: Christian Wegener, 1962–1967), IV (1967), pp. 215–218 (p. 215).

⁶⁹ Cited in Schulz, p. 23.

⁷⁰ See Huysen, p. 164.

⁷¹ See Novalis, ‘Blüthenstaub: Fragment on Translation’, in *Athenäum*, ed. by August Wilhelm Schlegel and Friedrich Schlegel, I, 1, pp. 88–89 (p. 89).

⁷² Humboldt, ‘Einleitung zu “Agamemnon”’, pp. 83–84. For a third example of an author delimiting his approach to translation from French practice see August Wilhelm Schlegel, ‘Nachschrift’, p. 282.

Humboldt's allegedly cosmopolitan ideas. However, the most elaborate example of this alleged cosmopolitanist understanding of translation can be found in Friedrich Schleiermacher's essay on the diverse methods of translation.

1.2.1 '[Der] Kreis der Übersetzmühen': Friedrich Schleiermacher

Presented in Berlin to the *Königliche Akademie der Wissenschaften* in 1813, Friedrich Schleiermacher's paper 'Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens' was originally composed to serve as an introduction to a detailed study on translation which he never wrote.⁷³ Yet even this fragment, in which the theologian Schleiermacher develops one of the first extensive theoretical approaches to translation, came to have a significant impact on later theories. In his historical overview George Steiner names him among the few theoreticians who have introduced new ideas to the study of translation.⁷⁴

This position was not even revoked by Lawrence Venuti, who, criticizing the nationalist agenda underlying Schleiermacher's text, uses his ideas as a foundation for his own foreignizing approach to translation. While the following interpretation of Schleiermacher's theory draws on Venuti's observations, it does not fully subscribe to his judgement that Schleiermacher views 'translation as an important practise in the Prussian nationalist movement'.⁷⁵ It is true that Schleiermacher held patriotic sermons when Prussia was isolated from the other German principalities in the spring of 1806 and when, subsequently, the growing tensions between Prussia and France became obvious.⁷⁶ However, even the patriotic feelings expressed in these sermons are not

⁷³ Schleiermacher himself calls the paper an introduction. See Friedrich Schleiermacher, 'Methoden des Übersetzens', in *Das Problem des Übersetzens*, ed. by Hans Joachim Störig, pp. 38–70 (p. 49). Also cp. Huyssen, p. 48.

⁷⁴ See Steiner, *After Babel*, p. 283.

⁷⁵ See in the third chapter entitled 'Nation' of Lawrence Venuti's, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 99–118 (p. 99). Venuti's position will be further discussed in section 1.2.3 'A Glimpse of a Cultural Other': Lawrence Venuti, pp. 34ff. of this chapter.

⁷⁶ See Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach, *Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher*, 8th edn (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1999), p. 92.

explicitly directed at Prussia but prove his unbroken Romantic belief in the construct of a linguistic and cultural German community.⁷⁷

At the beginning of his introductory paper on the diverse methods of translation, Schleiermacher shows his awareness of the fact that otherness cannot be limited to a foreign other, which is contrasted with a fixed and stable self, but that it disturbs and estranges this alleged self. In national languages these disturbances become apparent in dialects and sociolects of a constructed standard language which are often mutually incomprehensible. Furthermore, even our own texts might after a certain time seem foreign to us. However, Schleiermacher's awareness of the foreignness underlying our selves is immediately dissolved in the reappropriation of this estrangement: 'Ja, unsere eigene Reden müssen wir bisweilen nach einiger Zeit übersetzen, wenn wir sie uns recht wieder aneignen wollen.'⁷⁸ Hence Schleiermacher ignores the claim of otherness by championing a self-centred stance of appropriation, in which the other serves to confirm and stabilize the self. This attitude is closely linked to his hermeneutic theory in which he argues that, based on the simple fact of understanding, the reader has to develop rules of interpretation from the nature of language as well as from the basic conditions of the relationship between the author and the interpreter.⁷⁹ The rules of interpretation are thus determined by the interpreter's understanding rather than by the claims of otherness. Furthermore, as Waldenfels observed, the art of understanding, which emanates from the self towards a defined and controllable other, in a circular movement confirms this self. The hermeneutic circle thus ignores radical otherness: 'Gilt uns jedes Andere als das Andere unserer Selbst und jedes Fremde als das "Andere des Eigenen", so komme ich

⁷⁷ See e.g. 'Der Theologe Friedrich Schleiermacher über die Bedeutung der Vaterlandsliebe: Predigt in Halle, 24.8.1806', in *Nationalismus: Dokumente zur Geschichte und Gegenwart eines Phänomens*, ed. by Peter Alter (Munich: Piper, 1994), pp. 39–40.

⁷⁸ Schleiermacher, 'Methoden', p. 39.

⁷⁹ See Hendrik Birus, 'Zwischen den Zeiten: Friedrich Schleiermacher als Klassiker der neuzeitlichen Hermeneutik', in *Hermeneutische Positionen: Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer*, ed. by Hendrik Birus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), pp. 15–58 (p. 39).

im Anderen zu mir, und so kommen wir im Fremden zu uns selbst.'⁸⁰ This self-centred art of understanding also represents the necessary precondition for any act of translation in Schleiermacher's theory:

Wer denn freilich diese Kunst des Verstehens sich angeeignet hat, durch die eifrigsten Bemühungen um die Sprache, und durch genaue Kenntniß von dem ganzen geschichtlichen Leben des Volks, und durch die lebendigste Vergegenwärtigung einzelner Werke und ihrer Urheber, den freilich aber auch nur d e n , kann es gelüsten von dem Meisterwerken der Kunst und Wissenschaft das gleiche Verständniß auch seinem Volks- und Zeitgenossen zu eröffnen.⁸¹

Schleiermacher's theory of translation is thus based on a self-centred theory of understanding of the constructed and therefore controllable other, which then will be transferred to the reader of the translator's language.

Within this appropriative framework Schleiermacher differentiates between two methods of translation. According to him, translators have two incompatible options: either they move the text towards the reader or the reader towards the text. While translators choosing the first method turn the foreign author into a native German, those opting for the latter compensate the reader's inability to understand the foreign language by mediating their impression of the foreign work in the original language. These translators create a text the author would have written himself if German had been as much a foreign language to him as his own language was to his translator. For Schleiermacher this second approach represents translation proper, even though he knows that most of the ancient and modern nations, preferring reconstruction and paraphrase, have shrunk from this difficult practice. This observation is combined with the indispensable attack on the French who, as in the other Romantic approaches, serve as the contrastive foil for Schleiermacher's own theory: 'Wer wollte behaupten, es sei jemals etwas weder aus den alten Sprachen, noch aus den germanischen in die französische übersetzt worden!' Yet Schleiermacher not only clearly differentiates

⁸⁰ Waldenfels, *Topographie*, p. 82. Waldenfels refers to Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Methode*.

⁸¹ Schleiermacher, 'Methoden', pp. 44–45. Emphasis in the original.

between the German self and the French other, he also proves the superiority of his own nation. Being handcuffed by the tight ropes of their fully developed expressive capabilities, the French nation is damned to resorting to the first and inferior method of translation. The German-speaking world of Schleiermacher's time, by contrast, fulfils the necessary conditions for the second, more demanding method: on the one hand the German language, unlike the French, possesses the malleability which is essential for this approach to translation; on the other people are used to reading and willing to comprehend foreign works. The second condition finds expression in an inner demand for translation which is specific to the German nation: 'Eine innere Nothwendigkeit, in der sich ein eigenthümlicher Beruf unseres Volkes deutlich genug ausspricht, hat uns auf das Uebersetzen in Masse getrieben'. Entailing the transfer of whole literatures into the German language, this inner need guarantees that Schleiermacher's foreignizing method, as it has come to be termed in the twentieth century, will achieve the intended aim of progressive education in the foreign. For only if the readers are confronted with a number of works from another language, will they be able to differentiate ancient from modern, and subsequently Italian from Spanish origin: 'so muß er nicht nur die ganz unbestimmte Empfindung bekommen, daß was er liest nicht ganz einheimisch klingt; sondern es muß ihm nach etwas bestimmtem anderm klingen; das aber ist nur möglich, wenn er Vergleichen in Masse anstellen kann.'⁸² Like Humboldt, Schleiermacher believes that each language has specific characteristics which should still be recognizable in translation. Hence even this second approach does not answer to the multidimensional challenge of otherness but reduces it to the linguistic and cultural other which can be understood and then appropriated for the self in translation. Furthermore, this foreignizing translation, in good Romantic vein, ultimately serves the full development of the self:

⁸² Ibid., pp. 69 and 57. Also see pp. 47, 56 and 58.

Wie vielleicht erst durch vielfältiges Hineinverpflanzen fremder Gewächse unser Boden selbst reicher und fruchtbarer geworden ist, und unser Klima anmuthiger und milder: so fühlen wir auch, daß unsere Sprache, weil wir sie der nordischen Trägheit wegen weniger selbst bewegen, nur durch die vielseitige Berührung mit dem fremden recht frisch gedeihen und ihre eigene Kraft vollkommen entwickeln kann.⁸³

Schleiermacher thus views otherness in translation as a transitory stage on the way to the self, which has to be clearly delimited from the other. While he admits that the command of several foreign languages contributes to the general education of mankind, Schleiermacher insists that in crucial moments everybody has to decide on one country and language: 'Wie einem Lande, so auch einer Sprache oder der andern, muß der Mensch sich entschließen anzugehören, oder er schwebt haltungslos in unerfreulicher Mitte.' He therefore also draws a fine line between acceptable and unacceptable foreignization which the translator has to observe.⁸⁴ This distinct delimitation leads Susan Bernofsky to argue that the practical realization of Schleiermacher's second method of translation cannot be found in Johann Heinrich Voss's foreignizing but in August Wilhelm Schlegel's acculturating translations of Shakespeare's works.⁸⁵

However, Schleiermacher's theory not only contributes to the development of the German language but also to the establishment of a German nation based on this language and the appropriative capabilities of the German community, which include the outstanding ability to represent the whole world of literature within their own language. In his ethnocentric vision, which is comparable to Goethe's idea of world literature, Schleiermacher states that once their language has developed to its full bloom, the German people, because of their respect for the foreign, their mediating nature as well as their central location, are destined to preserve foreign as well as their own texts in the heart of Europe for people of all languages to enjoy them.⁸⁶ Furthermore, translation is

⁸³ Ibid., p. 69.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 63. And see pp. 57–58.

⁸⁵ See Susan Bernofsky, 'Schleiermacher's Translation and Varieties of Foreignization: August Wilhelm Schlegel vs. Johann Heinrich Voss', *The Translator*, 3, 2 (1997), 175–192.

⁸⁶ See Schleiermacher, 'Methoden', p. 69. Rendering the German word 'Volk' as 'nation' rather than 'people', several English translations of this passage put a particular emphasis on the nationalist context of Schleiermacher's text, cp. Friedrich Schleiermacher, 'On the Different Methods of Translating', trans. by

only a transitory stage in this development towards a utopian ideal of the German nation. The full establishment of this nation will render translation superfluous for in the national context linguistic developments will be inspired by a public life which will guarantee freedom of speech and permit the full development of the self through the confrontation with and the understanding of the personal and national other:

Wenn einst eine Zeit kommt, wo wir ein öffentliches Leben haben, aus welchem sich auf der einen Seite eine gehaltvollere und sprachgerechtere Geselligkeit entwickeln muß, auf der anderen freierer Raum gewonnen wird für das Talent des Redners, dann werden wir vielleicht für die Fortbildung der Sprache weniger des Uebersetzens bedürfen. Und möge nur jene Zeit kommen, ehe wir den ganzen Kreis der Uebersetzer Mühen würdig durchlaufen haben!⁸⁷

This utopian vision of a future Germany is influenced by Schleiermacher's text *Versuch einer Theorie des geselligen Betragens*, published in 1799, which is based on his experience in the Romantic circle and in Henriette Herz's literary salon in Berlin in particular. Criticizing the partialized and limited daily reality, Schleiermacher envisions in this text a concept of communal behaviour and conversation, which, having no specific purpose and taking place in a liberated society, will permit the people to escape from daily life and pressures in order to increase their social capabilities.⁸⁸ It is this striving for a future golden age rather than a concrete nation state which leads Huysen to conclude that the Romantic theories are ultimately not nationalist but were perverted and abused in nationalistic readings of their works: 'Man kann es dieser literarisch geistigen Utopie von einer "deutschen Weltliteratur" trotz aller Verbindungslinien nicht als Schuld anrechnen, daß ihre Grundgedanken im politisch staatlichen Bereich pervertiert wurden.'⁸⁹ However, Schleiermacher's theory of an ideal society, just like his

André Lefevere, in *Translating Literature: The German Tradition from Luther to Rosenzweig* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1977), pp. 67–89 (p. 88) and trans. in excerpts by Waltraud Bartsch, in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, ed. by Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 36–54 (p. 53). For a different version see Douglas Robinson's translation, in Douglas Robinson, *Western Translation Theory from Herodotus to Nietzsche* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997), pp. 225–238 (p. 238).

⁸⁷ Schleiermacher, 'Methoden', p. 70.

⁸⁸ See Detlef Kremer, *Romantik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2001), p. 29.

⁸⁹ See Huysen, p. 173.

hermeneutic and translation theories, serves the purpose of an alleged universal understanding which emanates from the respective self. The confrontation with others in this liberated space will allow any individual to appropriate foreign worlds and ideas so that at some stage everything will be known to them.⁹⁰ Otherness in this theory is thus reduced to a simple lack of knowledge which can be overcome in egocentric and ethnocentric appropriation.

The ethnocentrist ideas developed in Romantic Germany were translated and appropriated by national movements in developing European nations, such as Bohemia, as well as in the United States, and had a significant impact on the development of European as well as American national identities.⁹¹ However, these ideas not only serve as models in the establishment of national identities. They resurface in translation theories trying to overcome this ethnocentrist approach to translation, such as those developed by Antoine Berman and Lawrence Venuti at a time when the nation as a concept was beginning to be seriously questioned and thus, as Hobsbawm observes, was already ‘past its peak’.⁹²

1.2.2 ‘Enrichissement de notre langue’: Antoine Berman

In *L'épreuve de l'étranger*, published in France in 1984, Antoine Berman, who was also a practising translator, uses the theoretical, critical and practical importance of translation in Romantic Germany in order to criticize the oppressed, despised and subservient condition of translation in contemporary France: ‘La visée de notre étude est ici double: il s’agit d’une part de *révéler* le rôle encore méconnu de cette théorie dans

⁹⁰ See the quotation from Schleiermacher’s text in Kremer, pp. 29–30.

⁹¹ See on Bohemia J. P. Stern, ‘Bolzano’s Bohemia’, in *The Heart of Europe: Essays on Literature and Ideology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 29–43; on the United States see Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, ‘Übersetzen — Wohin? Zum Problem der Diskursformierung bei Frau von Staël und im amerikanischen Transzendentalismus’, in *Übersetzung als kultureller Prozeß: Rezeption, Projektion und Konstruktion des Fremden*, ed. by Beata Hammerschmid and Hermann Krapoth, Göttinger Beiträge zur internationalen Übersetzungsforschung, 16 (Berlin: Schmidt, 1998), pp. 11–31 and the same ‘Translating Transcendentalism in New England: The Genesis of a Literary Discourse’, in *Translating Literatures, Translating Cultures*, ed. by Kurt-Mueller Vollmer and Michael Irmscher, pp. 81–106.

⁹² Hobsbawm, p. 183.

l'économie de la pensée romantique. Mais d'autre part, il s'agit d'en *discuter* les postulats, et de contribuer ainsi à une critique de notre modernité.⁹³ These twofold goals are encapsulated in the title of the study which, unlike its English counterpart, not only describes the *Experience of the Foreign* encountered in German Romanticism as well as in the publication of literary translations in contemporary France.⁹⁴ *L'épreuve de l'étranger* also means that the experienced foreign puts the self to the test. As Sherry Simon observes, this particular aim of Berman's text coincides with a lively debate on otherness in contemporary France marked by the publication of Julia Kristeva's *L'étranger à nous mêmes* and Tsvetan Todorov's *Nous, les autres*: 'Berman's book was timely. It nourished the renewal of scholarly interest in translation. But it also fed into an intense concern for the relationship between Self and Other, Native and Stranger, which agitated French culture during the 1980s.'⁹⁵ However, in Berman's case the questioning of the self, implied in the title of his study, only applies to the conditions of translation, it does not affect the French self in general which is still contrasted with a linguistic and cultural other.⁹⁶

In his preface 'La traduction au manifeste' Berman claims that in contemporary France translators are subjected to a double bind. On the one hand they are considered to be servants to the foreign author, text and language, on the other they have to fulfil the projected demands of their audience and to preserve their supposedly sacrosanct mother tongue. Since in order to do justice to one of these demands, translators will have to betray the other, any translation inescapably fulfils the old Italian adage: *traduttore, traditore*. The status of translators and the resistances they are confronted with in the

⁹³ Berman, *L'épreuve*, p. 37.

⁹⁴ See Antoine Berman, *The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany*, trans. by S. Heyvaert (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992). For further comments on the translation see the chapter 'Foreignizing Berman' in Robinson, *What is Translation*, pp. 91–93.

⁹⁵ Sherry Simon, 'Translation as a Mode of Engagement: A Cultural and Ethical Agenda', *The Translator*, 5, 1 (1999), 113–117 (p. 114).

⁹⁶ Alexis Nouss implies that in his later works Berman might have abandoned this reduction in favour of a differential approach to translation, cp. 'In Praise of Betrayal: On Re-reading Berman', trans. by Francesca Worrall, *The Translator*, 7, 2 (2001), 283–295.

process of translation not only reveal the ethnocentricity of French culture. According to Berman, the French longing for purity, i.e. for a distinct and homogeneous identity, is inscribed in cultures per se and defies translation.

La visée même de la traduction — ouvrir au niveau de l'écrit un certain rapport à l'Autre, féconder le Propre par la médiation de l'Étranger — heurte de front la structure ethnocentrique de toute culture, ou cette espèce de narcissisme qui fait que toute société voudrait être un Tout pur et non mélangé.⁹⁷

In his attempt to counter this ethnocentricity Berman ironically draws on the ethnocentrist Romantic ideas of translation as appropriation, and in particular on Schleiermacher's essay, whose nationalist agenda he entirely puts down to concessions made to his addressees — the Royal Academy in Berlin.⁹⁸ Using this text as a model, Berman formulates an ethical demand for an openness towards the other which he determines to be the primary aim of translation. As the above quotation shows, the description of this demand not only mimics Schleiermacher's reduction of multidimensional otherness to a controllable and fixed foreign other. Reproducing Schleiermacher's natural imagery, Berman also stresses otherness to be a transitory stage on the way to an enrichment of the self.⁹⁹ Furthermore, the enriching return to the self via the experience of the foreign is mirrored in the structure of Berman's study. After his elaborate discussion of the Romantic period, Berman comes back to the tasks of translation in his time and culture. He demands that an increase in retranslation be combined with constant resistance to French reductionism and concludes 'que de cette entreprise de traduction "excentrique" nous devons beaucoup attendre, peut-être un enrichissement de notre langue, peut-être même un infléchissement de notre créativité littéraire'.¹⁰⁰ Just like Schleiermacher, Berman thus ultimately aims for the appropriation of the other in order to return to and expand the self.

⁹⁷ Berman, *L'épreuve*, p. 16.

⁹⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 240.

⁹⁹ See the quotation from Schleiermacher on p. 28 of this chapter.

¹⁰⁰ Berman, *L'épreuve*, p. 287.

Berman's concentration on the self also finds expression in a clear delimitation of enriching from destructive translation, which seems to be influenced by Schleiermacher's demand for loyalty towards a mother tongue. Analogous to the fine line Schleiermacher draws between enriching foreignizing and unacceptable translation, Berman makes a distinction between an acceptable and a self-destructive translatory drive.¹⁰¹ Arguing that the desire to translate constitutes the basis for any translation, Berman stresses that an excessive translatory drive might indicate hatred of one's mother tongue. He diagnoses such a hatred in Armand Robin's statement that French, which was his second language after Breton, was full of treachery. That the suppression of Breton in France might serve as a possible explanation for Robin's hatred is not even mentioned. On the contrary, Berman argues that while loyalty towards one's mother tongue constitutes the necessary condition for an ethical overcoming of the translatory drive, the hatred of the self will result in a metaphysical sublimation. 'On pourrait dire que la visée métaphysique de la traduction est la mauvaise sublimation de la pulsion traduisante, alors que la visée éthique est son dépassement.'¹⁰² He thus draws a clear line between acceptable translation which serves the mother tongue and unacceptable sublimation which aims at the destruction of the same. This might explain why Robinson detects a longing for purity in Berman's study: 'In fact, my sneaking suspicion is that for Berman there is no tension between purity and alterity, that for him alterity *is* purity, and purity can only be attained through alterity.'¹⁰³ Robinson traces this longing back to Walter Benjamin's essay 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers', even though Benjamin's pure language in Berman's study serves as an example for metaphysical sublimation and thus represents the unacceptable other of his concept of translation.

¹⁰¹ Berman consciously employs the French translation *pulsion* of the Freudian term *Trieb* (drive) in his description of the desire to translate, 'puisque'il a, comme le soulignait Valéry Larbaud, quelque chose de "sexuel" au sens large du terme' (Berman, *L'épreuve*, p. 21). For the comparability to Schleiermacher see the quotation on p. 28 of this chapter.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 23. Also see p. 22.

¹⁰³ Robinson, *What is Translation*, p. 86. Italics in the original.

Furthermore, as the section on Benjamin's 'Aufgabe des Übersetzers' in this chapter will show, the pure language in Benjamin's essay has to be read in a completely different context.¹⁰⁴

1.2.3 'A Glimpse of a Cultural Other': Lawrence Venuti

Just like Berman, Lawrence Venuti, despite his harsh criticism of Schleiermacher's nationalist agenda, draws on Schleiermacher, arguing that his foreignizing approach to translation resists dominant cultural values in German at the turn of the nineteenth century and thus represents a good model for a revolt against the dominant cultural values in Anglo-American English at the turn of the twentieth century. In the belief that '[f]oreignizing undermines the very concept of nation by invoking the diverse constituencies that any such concept tends to elide', Venuti formulates concrete demands on a foreignizing approach to translation which he realizes in his own projects.¹⁰⁵ Foreignizing or minoritizing translation, as Venuti calls it in his later publication *The Scandals of Translation*, consists in a combination of the choice of text and the strategy of translation. Venuti himself chose to translate an author of minority status, the nineteenth century Italian writer I. U. Tarchetti, who, because of his minoritizing textual choices for his translations into Italian, serves as a model translator in *The Translator's Invisibility*. In his English versions of Tarchetti's fantastic works, Venuti implements a foreignizing translation strategy using calque renderings, archaisms and Britishisms (since he anticipated a primarily American audience). The use of these minor variables, which in the linguistic power relationship are usually controlled by the default case, 'subverts the major form by revealing it to be socially and historically situated'.¹⁰⁶ However, translators can also choose a marginal text and use a canonical

¹⁰⁴ See section 1.3.2 'Die Fremdheit der Sprachen': Walter Benjamin, pp. 41ff. of this chapter.

¹⁰⁵ Venuti, *Invisibility*, p. 147. And see pp. 116–118.

¹⁰⁶ Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 10. On Tarchetti as a dissident translator cp. the chapter 'Dissidence' in Venuti, *Invisibility*, pp. 148–186. On the foreignizing translation strategies which Venuti used for Tarchetti's works see the chapter entitled 'A minoritizing project' in *Scandals*, pp. 13–20.

discourse in their translations or opt for a mainstream author and decide to implement a foreignizing style.¹⁰⁷ In *The Translator's Invisibility* Venuti gives no concrete example for this second strategy which brings him the reproach of elitism by critics such as Douglas Robinson.¹⁰⁸ Countering this criticism, Venuti cites Megan Backus's translation of the Japanese mainstream writer Banana Yoshimoto as an example for this strategy in *The Scandals of Translation*.

Location and audience are of crucial importance. Translations of Yoshimoto's fiction are different or deviant from reigning canons, because these translations were not developed by or designed for the American cultural elite who established those canons. On the contrary, her success in translation is a result of her appeal to a wider, middle-brow readership, youthful and educated, although not necessarily academic.¹⁰⁹

Though Yoshimoto was criticized at home because of her naïve celebrations of an Americanized Japan, Venuti argues that the representation of Japan in her novels enhanced by Backus's foreignizing translation will have a different effect on American readers. The minoritizing English introduces 'a difference into American culture' and thus makes the publication of Yoshimoto's texts in the United States a 'worthwhile move.'¹¹⁰ Whether Backus really employed minoritizing English is certainly debatable, as has become apparent in the article and the book review discussing Backus's translation in the journal *The Translator*. While Jaime Harker basically agreed with Lawrence Venuti's position, Alan Turney in his review argued that the translation forced Yoshimoto's text 'into an American cultural corset'. According to him, Backus has not employed a foreignizing strategy but has acculturated the text by using *The Catcher in the Rye* as a template for her translation.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ See Venuti, *Invisibility*, p. 310.

¹⁰⁸ See Robinson, *What is Translation*, pp. 99–101.

¹⁰⁹ Venuti, *Scandals*, p. 87.

¹¹⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 84–87.

¹¹¹ Alan Turney, 'Kitchen. Banana Yoshimoto. Translated from Japanese (*Kichin*) by Megan Backus. Tokyo: Benesse, 1993', *The Translator*, 6, 2 (2000), 327–333 (p. 330). Also see pp. 331–332. For Jaime Harker's essay cp. 'Contemporary Japanese Fiction & "Middlebrow" Translation Strategies: The Case of Banana Yoshimoto's *Kitchen*', *The Translator*, 5, 1 (1999), 27–44.

Rather than solving this specific issue, I aim to reconsider Venuti's principles of foreignizing translation, which, formulated in *The Translator's Invisibility*, are also maintained in *The Scandals of Translation*. The minoritizing strategy used in the translation of Yoshimoto's work subverts, in Venuti's opinion, the transparent discourse usually implemented in Anglo-American translations. The effect of transparency, which is created by an adherence to current usage, the maintenance of continuous syntax and the fixation of a precise meaning, leads readers to believe that translations represent originals written in English. Transparency thus assumes the identity between author and translator, in Venuti's terms the *sympatico*. 'The voice that the reader hears in any translation made on the basis of *sympatico* is always recognized as the author's, never as a translator's, nor even as some hybrid of the two.' Venuti argues that *sympatico* domesticates the other because it seeks an identity, a sameness in the cultural other. Although he admits that ultimately translation cannot escape domestication to some extent, for even in foreignizing approaches 'the difference of the foreign text can only ever be figured by domestic values that differ from those in dominance', he still believes that resistancy in translation represents a means to oppose domestication.¹¹²

A translated text should be the site where a different culture emerges, where a reader gets a glimpse of a cultural other, and resistancy, a translation strategy based on an esthetic of discontinuity, can best preserve that difference, that otherness by reminding the reader of the gains and losses in the translation process and the unbridgable gaps between cultures.¹¹³

However, Venuti's insistence on difference merely represents the opposite of domestication in the same binary system. Instead of fixing the other in its similarity to the self, his resistant translation strategy pins down the other in its difference from the self. In his translations the foreign is not replaced by the same but by a fixed other opposed to the same which in the one language comes to be expressed in archaisms and

¹¹² Venuti, *Invisibility*, pp. 274 and 98. And see pp. 1 and 5.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

Britishisms. Despite the importance of Venuti's studies with respect to his harsh criticism of the translator's invisibility in Western cultures, his foreignizing or minoritizing approach, which serves to counter this translational norm, has to be criticized for its appropriation of the foreign other. Dealing with the experience of otherness by turning the uncontrollable other into a shadow of the self, his exoticist translation is as much an appropriation of otherness as the continuous production of sameness he aims to undermine.¹¹⁴ As the following chapters on Benjamin and Derrida will show, otherness in translation has a far wider dimension than either Berman or Venuti realize.

1.3 'A kind of permanent exile': Beyond the Nation in Translation

The European tradition of translation theories which aimed to understand and appropriate or exoticize the foreign has always been accompanied by voices who rejected the dominance of reason and responded to the multidimensional claim of otherness. Walter Benjamin has certainly come to be regarded as the most important advocate of these ideas. Since Steiner's rediscovery of Benjamin's 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers', which was first published as a preface to his translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux parisiens* in 1923, this essay has become one of the most discussed texts on translation. It has gained such significance that Paul de Man even concluded that 'in the profession you are nobody unless you have said something about this text.'¹¹⁵ Because of the manifold origins and the intentional incomprehensibility of Benjamin's theory, theoreticians of both traditions have claimed this text as a predecessor. Just like Berman's and Venuti's works, Benjamin's essay owes a lot to German Romanticism, and in *L'épreuve de l'étranger* Berman mentions this strand of Benjamin's essay as well

¹¹⁴ My understanding of exoticism draws on Nakamura's description of this term, p. 72: 'Exotismus ist [...] Ersetzung des erfahrenen Fremden durch inszeniertes Fremdes, Ersetzung der Fremdheit durch Andersheit.'

¹¹⁵ Paul de Man, "Conclusions" Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator", *Yale French Studies*, 69 (1985), 25–46 (p. 26).

as his earlier dissertation on the concept of art criticism in the Romantic era as the main sources for his particular approach to the German Romantics.¹¹⁶ However, as should have become apparent in the discussion on Berman's work above, he explicitly distances himself from what he calls the metaphysical level of Benjamin's essay.¹¹⁷ Alexis Nouss observed that this split interpretation is characteristic for the general reception of 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers'.¹¹⁸ Interpreters such as Jean-René Ladmiral simply read and rejected Benjamin as a literalist and on this basis constructed a lineage of *sourciers* from Schleiermacher via Benjamin to Berman. However, commentators such as George Steiner and Paul de Man demonstrate that Benjamin's essay can certainly not be read as the missing link between Schleiermacher and Berman. While Steiner pointed out that Benjamin's essay departs from a view of history based on Jewish messianism and the Kabbalah,¹¹⁹ Paul de Man described the Benjaminian idea of translation as a decanonization of the original: 'This movement of the original is a wandering, an *errance*, a kind of permanent exile if you wish, but it is not really an exile, for there is no homeland, nothing from which one has been exiled.'¹²⁰ It is this idea of permanent exile without a homeland that will be the focus of my following discussion of Walter Benjamin's and Jacques Derrida's theories on translation, which undermine ethnocentrism by locating translation in a different framework from intercultural communication. This stance to texts and language also marks Benjamin's approach to German Romanticist thought in his dissertation, which mainly concentrates on Friedrich Schlegel's concept of criticism. In order to show the differences between Benjamin's specific interest in Romanticist ideas and the tradition established by Schleiermacher and continued by Berman and Venuti, the discussion will therefore be preceded by a short

¹¹⁶ See Berman, *L'épreuve*, pp. 40–41.

¹¹⁷ See section 1.2.2 'Enrichissement de notre langue': Antoine Berman, pp. 30ff. of this chapter.

¹¹⁸ See Alexis Nouss, 'L'ange traducteur: Théorie de la traduction et théorie de l'histoire chez Walter Benjamin', in *global benjamin: Internationaler Walter-Benjamin-Kongress 1992*, ed. by Klaus Garber and Ludger Rehm (Munich: Fink, 1999), pp. 317–330 (p. 318).

¹¹⁹ See Steiner, *After Babel*, pp. 66–68.

¹²⁰ Man, "Conclusions", p. 44.

introduction to the texts by Friedrich Schlegel, which hint at the otherness underlying universal understanding and anticipate Benjamin's ideas on translation.

1.3.1 'Über die Unverständlichkeit': Friedrich Schlegel

'Über die Unverständlichkeit', Friedrich Schlegel's praise of incomprehensibility, was the last contribution to the *Athenaeum*. In this essay Schlegel polemicizes against several complaints about the incomprehensibility of the journal, which was designed to be a medium of communication.¹²¹ However, as Kremer pointed out, the essay can be read not only as a funeral oration for the literary magazine but also as an ironic comment on Schleiermacher's art of understanding.¹²² Schleiermacher and Schlegel, who met in Henriette Herz's salon, became close friends and for some time even shared a flat in Berlin. It was Schlegel who encouraged Schleiermacher to engage in literary writing and who developed the idea of a joint translation of Plato's works, which was carried out by Schleiermacher alone and brought him critical acclaim.¹²³ Furthermore, the friendship is also reflected in their ideas and their theoretical approaches. As mentioned above, Schlegel described translation as a means of universal progressive education in his notes for a philosophy of philology, which he made in 1797 and intended to develop into a theory of hermeneutics.¹²⁴ This notion bears significant similarities to Schleiermacher's concept of translation as understanding and appropriation. However, when, in 1799, their friendship deteriorated, Schlegel described his rejection of Schleiermacher's exegetic reasoning and universal understanding in a letter included in Benjamin's collection of letters 'Deutsche Menschen': 'Als ob ich fordern könnte, Du solltest die Ideen verstehen [...] oder unzufrieden darüber sein, daß Du sie nicht verstanden. Es ist

¹²¹ See Friedrich Schlegel, 'Über die Unverständlichkeit', in *Athenäum*, ed. by August Wilhelm Schlegel and Friedrich Schlegel, III, 2, pp. 335–352 (p. 340).

¹²² See Kremer, p. 32.

¹²³ See Kantzenbach, pp. 44–47.

¹²⁴ See the quotation from Friedrich Schlegel's works on p. 21 of this chapter. In his introductory essay to Schlegel's notes Körner contends that Schleiermacher's hermeneutic theory draws on the ideas Schlegel gathered in these notes, see Josef Körner, 'Einleitung', *Logos*, 17 (1928), 1–16 (pp. 6–9).

mir ja eben nichts verhaßter als dieses ganzen Verstandes und Mißverständes Wesen und Unwesen.¹²⁵

In his essay 'Über die Unverständlichkeit', Schlegel elaborated on this instinctive rejection of reason and understanding. Commenting on the reproaches of incomprehensibility made against the *Athenaeum*, he ironically proves that these complaints were justified. The magazine represented an attempt to realize the paradox of the need for and the impossibility of communication. While the establishment of the magazine fulfilled the former, the means of Romantic irony, such as the conscious use of fragmentary texts, emphasize the latter. Discussing the diverse forms of irony, Schlegel notes that even if all of these ironies could be subsumed under a generic irony, the incomprehensible would always come back to haunt this alleged universality: '[A]uch das würde nur auf kurze Zeit helfen können. Ich fürchte, wenn ich anders, was das Schicksal im Winken zu sagen scheint, richtig verstehe, es würde bald eine neue Generation von kleinen Ironien entstehen'. Furthermore, irony has a long-term effect: 'Einige der absichtlichsten Künstler der vorigen Zeit habe ich in Verdacht, daß sie noch Jahrhunderte nach ihrem Tod mit ihren gläubigsten Verehrern und Anhängern Ironie treiben.' Schlegel's concept of irony thus expressed the general incompleteness of texts, or in Waldenfels's terminology, the otherness underlying any text, which cannot be dissolved in a universal explanation. However, Schlegel does not only state the inaccessibility of texts, he also extends his praise of the inaccessible to human systems in general: 'Aber ist denn die Unverständlichkeit etwas so durchaus Verwerfliches und Schlechtes? — Mich dünkt das Heil der Familien und der Nationen beruht auf ihr'. Nations are built on the feeling of an imagined community, which dissolves when people try to explain it. Even human satisfaction includes its own borderlines, which,

¹²⁵ Friedrich Schlegel, 'Letter to Schleiermacher', cited in: Walter Benjamin, 'Deutsche Menschen', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1972–1987), IV, I, ed. by Tilman Rexroth (1972), pp. 149–233 (p. 232).

left in darkness, constitute its foundation. Schlegel therefore praises the inaccessible which represents the basis of our understanding of the world and fortunately cannot be reasoned away: ‘Wahrlich, es würde euch bange werden, wenn die ganze Welt, wie ihr es fördert, einmal im Ernst durchaus verständlich würde. Und ist sie selbst diese unendliche Welt nicht durch den Verstand aus der Unverständlichkeit oder dem Chaos gebildet?’ Schlegel thus confronts Schleiermacher’s championing of sense with a call for inaccessible sensibility which bears resemblance to Waldenfels’s concept of otherness. However, while Waldenfels attempts to uncover the delimitations of the self, Schlegel defies the recognition of these borderlines and prefers to leave them in darkness by demanding that ‘kein frevelnder Verstand es wagen darf, sich der heiligen Grenze zu nähern.’¹²⁶

The incompleteness and inaccessibility of texts also marks Schlegel’s fragmentary remarks on translation. Pre-empting Benjamin’s ideas as well as his wordplay, Schlegel described translation in one of his fragments as an eternal task and surrender: ‘Jede Übersetzung ist eine unbestimmte, unendliche Aufgabe.’¹²⁷ Furthermore, he rejected the idea that translation constituted a reconstruction of the original work: ‘Eine Übersetzung ist durchaus keine *Nachbildung*. Über das Wörtchen Nach bei Übersetzungen.’¹²⁸ Schlegel never elaborated on these fragments, which anticipate Benjamin’s discussion on the survival of texts in translation. However, his concept of translation can be intimated from his concept of art criticism, which Benjamin discussed in his dissertation and which also markedly influenced his essay on translation.

1.3.2 ‘Die Fremdheit der Sprachen’: Walter Benjamin

Just like Georg Lukàcs and Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin turned to German Romanticism in order to criticize contemporary capitalist society. As Bernd Witte

¹²⁶ Schlegel, ‘Unverständlichkeit’, pp. 347–349.

¹²⁷ Schlegel, ‘Philosophie’, p. 42.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 46, cited in Huyssen, p. 112.

argued, this widespread interest in Romantic ideas in the wake of World War I can be explained by the similarities between the historical situations. While the Romantics reacted to the dissolution of the feudal society by seeking refuge from Kantianism in their idealist understanding of the world, Benjamin, Lukàcs and Bloch countered the collapse of bourgeois philosophy, characterized by Positivism and Neokantianism, by filling their criticism with Romantic, Jewish and Marxist ideas.¹²⁹ However, the two critical movements also differed markedly. Richard Wolin rightly insists that the reinvocation of Romantic anticapitalism, unlike Romanticism, ‘attempts less to accomplish the impossible, to transcend its age in thought, than it seeks to provide that age with compelling reasons to transcend its own limitations and blindness.’¹³⁰

In his dissertation on the concept of art criticism in German Romanticism, Benjamin contrasts the arrogance of contemporary critics towards art works with Friedrich Schlegel’s understanding of the function of criticism. Based on the general incompleteness of real art, Schlegel developed a concept of criticism which aimed to complement the respective work: ‘Kritik ist also, ganz im Gegensatz zur heutigen Auffassung ihres Wesens, in ihrer zentralen Absicht nicht Beurteilung, sondern einerseits Vollendung, Ergänzung, Systematisierung des Werkes, andererseits seine Auflösung im Absoluten.’¹³¹ This concept bears close resemblance to Benjamin’s idea of translation. Furthermore, Schlegel’s strategy of filling well-known terms, such as criticism, with a new meaning can also be seen in Benjamin’s essay ‘Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers’, in which he, as Carol Jacobs put it, ‘dislocates definitions rather than establishing them’.¹³² Schlegel’s ideas thus not only influenced the content but also the form of Benjamin’s essay: On the one hand Benjamin uses Schlegel’s idea of criticism

¹²⁹ See Bernd Witte, *Walter Benjamin* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1985), p. 35.

¹³⁰ Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 28.

¹³¹ Walter Benjamin, ‘Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik’, in *Gesammelte Schriften I*, 1 (1974), pp. 7–122 (p. 78).

¹³² Carol Jacobs, ‘The Monstrosity of Translation’, *Modern Language Notes*, 90 (1975), 755–766 (p. 756).

as a foil for his concept of translation, on the other he displays a leaning towards terminological mysticism similar to that which he discovered in Schlegel's writing.¹³³ It is this terminological mysticism which explains why Benjamin's text defies and demands reading and translation. As Paul de Man has shown, the English and the French translation of 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers' integrate the text into their own language and its inherent modes of thinking. Benjamin's ideas seem to have been so foreign and strange that in translation they even result in opposite statements.¹³⁴

However, Benjamin's idea of translation is not solely marked by an underlying Romantic messianism, which aims towards the progressive realization of God's realm on earth and which becomes apparent in the intended 'Auflösung im Absoluten' in Schlegel's concept of art criticism.¹³⁵ The Romantic background of his essay is interspersed with Jewish messianism. Developed in the mystic tradition, this concept of history believes the end of time to be the completion of the ideal plan inherent in the creation. However, Jewish messianism does not imply a simple return to the origin but aims for the realization of all the utopian possibilities, encoded in the original plan on the fate of humanity, in the changing phases of human times.¹³⁶ Time is thus not only conceived as a progression towards a messianic future, but each single moment of history contains glimpses of this future. This idea of time, which in Benjamin's last text 'Über den Begriff der Geschichte' came to be called 'Jetztzeit', was already invoked in one of his earliest texts, 'Das Leben der Studenten', published in 1915: 'Die Elemente des Endzustandes liegen nicht als gestaltlose Fortschrittstendenz zutage, sondern sind als gefährdetste, verrufenste und verlachte Schöpfungen und Gedanken tief in jeder Gegenwart eingebettet.'¹³⁷

¹³³ See Benjamin, 'Kunstkritik', pp. 46–47.

¹³⁴ See Man, 'Conclusions', in particular p. 33.

¹³⁵ See the quotation from Benjamin's 'Kunstkritik' on p. 42 of this chapter.

¹³⁶ See Stéphane Mosès, *L'ange de l'histoire: Rosenzweig, Benjamin, Scholem* (Paris: Seuil, 1992), p. 96.

¹³⁷ Walter Benjamin, 'Das Leben der Studenten', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 1 (1977), pp. 75–87 (p. 75) and cp. 'Über den Begriff der Geschichte', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, 2 (1974), pp. 691–704 (p. 704).

In analogy to Schlegel's concept of art criticism, as he describes it in his dissertation, Benjamin in 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers' rethinks the concept of translation. Refuting the understanding of translation as an act of intercultural communication, as it is commonly described, Benjamin states that translation does not serve to mediate an inessential content of a text to an audience that otherwise would not understand it. On the contrary: 'Übersetzung ist eine Form. Sie als solche zu erfassen, gilt es zurückzugehen auf das Original. Denn in ihm liegt deren Gesetz als in dessen Übersetzbarkeit beschlossen.'¹³⁸ This quotation confronts us with the first terminological problems: The Benjaminian concepts of form, original and translatability do not correspond with the traditional understanding of these terms. Pondering on the afterlife of texts — or in Schlegel's terms on the meaning of the word *Nach* with reference to translation —, Benjamin states that translations spring from and mark the survival (*Überleben*) of literary works of art.¹³⁹ The ongoing and eternal process of translation incorporates the changes these texts undergo in time: 'In ihnen [den Übersetzungen, WS] erreicht das Leben des Originals seine stets erneute späteste und umfassendste Entfaltung.'¹⁴⁰ The original is thus not conceived as a fixed text, whose meaning will progressively be uncovered, as Schleiermacher described it in his hermeneutic approach. Just like Schlegel in his text 'Über die Unverständlichkeit', Benjamin implies that these original texts are basically inaccessible. In 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers' this inaccessibility constitutes the fundamental condition for the possibility of and the demand for translation which in Benjamin's understanding determines a text's translatability:

Die Frage nach der Übersetzbarkeit eines Werks ist doppelsinnig. Sie kann bedeuten: ob es unter der Gesamtheit seiner Leser je einen zulänglichen Übersetzer

¹³⁸ Walter Benjamin, 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, IV, 1 (1972) ed. by Tilmann Rexroth, pp. 9–21 (p. 9).

¹³⁹ For the reference to Schlegel see p. 41 of section 1.3.1 'Über die Unverständlichkeit': Friedrich Schlegel, pp. 39ff. of this chapter.

¹⁴⁰ Benjamin, 'Aufgabe', p. 11.

finden werde? oder, und eigentlicher, ob es seinem Wesen nach Übersetzung zulasse und demnach [...] auch verlange.¹⁴¹

The general translatability of a work is hence not determined by the linguistic problems the translator encounters and has to overcome in the process of translation. As becomes apparent in his essay on language, Benjamin, unlike Humboldt, does not believe in the limitation of human languages by vocabulary or structure.¹⁴² In his concept of translation, translatability is inherent in the prior value of the original work: 'Je weniger Wert und Würde seine Sprache hat, je mehr es Mitteilung ist, desto weniger ist für die Übersetzung dabei zu gewinnen.'¹⁴³ Benjamin's idea of translation, unlike Derrida's, does not imply the complete dissolution of the hierarchies between original and translation.¹⁴⁴ While translation might highlight the value and worth of a literary work, the survival of the work does not depend on the translation but is inherent in the original text. Conceived in this way, translation is comparable to other secondary forms dependent on a work of art such as art criticism. However, each of these forms carries a specific purpose.

In Benjamin's concept both the communication of a text's ideas to a foreign audience and the participation in the revelation of an original's eternal life less constitute the purpose than the effects of translation. As described above, the purpose of translation is inherent in the prior value which determines an original work of art to be translatable: 'Übersetzung ist eine Form. Sie als solche zu erfassen, gilt es zurückzugehen auf das Original. Denn in ihm liegt deren Gesetz als in dessen Übersetzbarkeit beschlossen.'¹⁴⁵ In his dissertation on the concept of art criticism, Benjamin locates the value of a literary work in its reflection on forms: 'Die immanente Tendenz des Werkes und demgemäß der Maßstab seiner immanenten Kritik ist die ihm zugrunde liegende und in seiner Form

¹⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 9–10.

¹⁴² See Walter Benjamin, 'Über Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache des Menschen', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 1 (1977), pp. 140–157 (p. 143).

¹⁴³ Benjamin, 'Aufgabe', p. 20.

¹⁴⁴ For Derrida's argument with reference to this topic cp. the quotation on p. 50 of this chapter.

¹⁴⁵ Benjamin, 'Aufgabe', p. 9.

ausgeprägte Reflexion.¹⁴⁶ If the form of the work is reflected in the work itself, as is the case in Romantic irony, the work is criticizable, i.e. it is worth thinking about its relations to the *a priori* idea of forms. Determining a work to be translatable would in analogy mean that the language of the work is reflected in the work itself, which makes it worth relating it to the *a priori* idea of languages, incorporated in the ‘pure language’: ‘Jene reine Sprache, die in fremde gebannt ist, in der eigenen zu erlösen, die im Werk gefangene in der Umdichtung zu befreien, ist die Aufgabe des Übersetzers.’¹⁴⁷ This pure language, which is inherent in the foreign work and liberated by the translator in his language, does not tally with the purity identified by Berman in cultures per se.¹⁴⁸ With the mystic term ‘pure language’ Benjamin describes the messianic beginning and end of all languages.¹⁴⁹ In his essay on language Benjamin defines ‘reine Sprache’ to be the state of the language before the fall of man which gave rise to Babel and the plurality of languages. He claims that, while God’s language was creative, God left it to man to designate his creations. Man solved this first task of translation by recognizing and naming the silent language of these things.¹⁵⁰ Yet, this Adamite unity of name and thing inherent in the pure language is destroyed by the fall of man which results in the pluralization of languages. After Babel languages were alienated from the ‘pure language’. They were reduced to arbitrary systems of signs reigning over things. However, as Irving Wohlfahrt observes, the naturalization of the use of language as a means of communication and the prevailing practice of translation made people forget this important event:

Im Lichte dieser sprachtheologischen Deutung der Genesis-Geschichte lassen sich die “bürgerliche” Auffassung der Sprache und die “herkömmliche” Auffassung der

¹⁴⁶ Benjamin, ‘Kunstkritik’, p. 77.

¹⁴⁷ Benjamin, ‘Aufgabe’, p. 19.

¹⁴⁸ See p. 32 in the section 1.2.2 ‘Enrichissement de notre langue’: Antoine Berman of this chapter.

¹⁴⁹ Benjamin, ‘Aufgabe’, p. 14.

¹⁵⁰ See Benjamin, ‘Sprache’, p. 151.

Übersetzung als zwei fatale Folgen des Sündenfalls identifizieren. Sie besiegen ihn, indem sie seine Spuren verwischen.¹⁵¹

This condition constitutes the ‘Fremdheit der Sprachen’, which does not imply that languages are foreign to each other. On the contrary, all languages are related in their messianic origin and their striving for the messianic end of all languages: the ‘pure language’. Initiated by this striving, translation grants glimpses of the growth of languages towards the messianic end. In order to reveal the interspersion with the messianic at his moment of time, the translator, according to Benjamin, should not force the foreign language into the straitjacket of his own, but use the translation to reveal, transgress and undermine the dissolving borderlines of the same: ‘Um ihretwillen [der reinen Sprache, W.S.] bricht er morsche Schranken der eigenen Sprache’.¹⁵² Thus Benjamin’s foreignizing approach to translation, unlike Schleiermacher’s and Berman’s, does not grant the growth of the national languages. On the contrary, it reveals their foreignness, their state of alienation from the pure language and thus the otherness underlying their alleged selves.

1.3.3 ‘Les limites du concept courant de traduction’: Jacques Derrida

Drawing on Benjamin’s essay, Jacques Derrida aims to deconstruct the linguistic as well as the legal and institutional boundaries of translation from its margins. Derrida states in his essay ‘Survivre’ that the term deconstruction has often been misinterpreted by his critics to imply complete destruction of any borderlines resulting in confusion. However, deconstruction describes the practice of re-elaborating the theoretical and practical system underlying these margins.¹⁵³ This method entails Derrida not only theoretically undermining the ideas of original unity and identity but also ingraining his arguments in his writing as well as in his publishing practice. As the following analysis will show, he

¹⁵¹ Irving Wohlfahrt, ‘Das Medium der Übersetzung’, in *Übersetzen: Walter Benjamin*, ed. by Christiaan L. Hart Nibbrig (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), pp. 80–130 (p. 89).

¹⁵² Benjamin, ‘Aufgabe’, p. 19.

¹⁵³ See Jacques Derrida, ‘Survivre’, in *Parages* (Paris: Galilée, 1986), pp. 118–218 (p. 128).

thus emphasizes the importance of translation in textual evolution. Furthermore, his writing, just like Benjamin's, incorporates the inaccessibility of texts and their demand for translation.

In *Monolinguisme de l'autre* Derrida describes the Benjaminian understanding of translation as one of the basic elements of his works, in which he, responding to the claim of otherness, tries to translate unknown possibilities of thinking:

Certes, tout ce qui m'a, disons, intéressé depuis longtemps — au titre de l'écriture, de la trace, de la déconstruction du phallogocentrisme et de 'la' métaphysique occidentale [...], tout cela n'a pas pu ne pas procéder de cette étrange référence à un 'ailleurs' dont le lieu et la langue m'étaient à moi-même inconnus ou interdits, comme si j'essayais de *traduire* dans la seule langue et dans la seule culture franco-occidentale dont je dispose, dans laquelle j'ai été jeté à la naissance, une possibilité à moi-même inaccessible, comme si j'essayais de traduire dans ma 'monolange' une parole que je ne connaissais pas encore, [...].¹⁵⁴

In his reference towards an unknown other, a sort of Benjaminian pure language, Derrida subverts the dominant structures of his own language which, however, from the start he defines not to be his own but to be undermined by otherness: 'Ma langue, la seule que je m'entende parler et m'entende à parler, c'est la langue de l'autre.' Within our systems of thinking this statement might be described as a performative contradiction. According to Derrida, however, this label, which is used to attack people who respond to the claim of otherness and thus tend to question current beliefs, is itself an effect of the system. Derrida, by contrast, employs the force arising from this supposed aporia to come to a different understanding of language, identity and nationality. One of the many devices he uses in this essay to fill this contradiction with meaning is reference to his own biography. This he does not consider to be exceptional but rather to be exemplary for any linguistic situation. Born in Algeria in 1930, Derrida

¹⁵⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Le monolinguisme de l'autre ou la prothèse d'origine* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), pp. 131–132. The German translation is based on an earlier version of this essay presented at a conference in Canada which does not seem to have been published in either French or English. See 'Die Einsprachigkeit des Anderen oder die Prothese des Ursprungs', trans. by Barbara Vinken, in *Die Sprache des Anderen: Übersetzungspolitik zwischen den Kulturen*, ed. by Anselm Haverkamp (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1997), pp. 15–41.

lost his French passport in 1940 when France officially withdrew citizenship from the Jews in Algeria, first granted in 1870. This withdrawal meant for many of them the loss of any identity because they had never integrated into Algerian society but in the course of time had abandoned their Jewish traditions, language and religion for French Christian customs. Derrida's first language was French, which was also the official language at school, whereas Arabic featured after Latin among many others as a possible choice for a third language. Although this situation seems a typically colonial experience, Derrida refrains from using this label because he believes his biography to be representative. Without wanting to eliminate differences, he claims that language is always already imposed.¹⁵⁵ Unlike Schleiermacher and Berman, Derrida believes that no person, culture or nation is in possession of the language they have appropriated and claim to be their own. This belief that the foreignness of languages is a universal phenomenon allows the political analysis of linguistic appropriation in situations of nationalist aggression without imposing a new monolingualism:

Un tel rappel permet à la fois d'analyser les phénomènes historiques d'appropriation et de les traiter *politiquement*, en évitant en particulier la reconstitution de ce que ces phantasmes ont pu motiver: agressions 'nationalistes' (toujours plus ou moins 'naturalistes') ou homo-hégémonie monoculturaliste.¹⁵⁶

Derrida stresses the political dimension of a supposed linguistic identity and liberates Benjamin's foreignness of languages from the idea of a unitary origin and a messianic end of all languages. This becomes particularly obvious in his interpretation of the biblical original myth of translation, the story of Babel, in his essay on Benjamin's 'Aufgabe des Übersetzers'. Unlike Benjamin, Derrida believes that the destruction of the Tower of Babel does not represent the end of a unitary language but the punishment of a people who were trying to establish an empire and thus to impose their language as a universal idiom: 'Avant la déconstruction de Babel, la grande famille sémitique était en

¹⁵⁵ Derrida, *Monolingualism*, p. 47. Also see pp. 17 and 121.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 121–122. Italics in the original.

train d'établir son empire, elle le voulait universel, et sa langue, qu'elle tente aussi d'imposer à l'univers.'¹⁵⁷ In a performative speech act God imposes the untranslatable proper name Babel meaning God as well as confusion. He is thus not only the origin of language but also spreads a confusion already inherent in his name. Derrida's interpretation of Babel then, unlike Benjamin's, does not 'imply a belief in some originary language, a state of grace in which people understood one another because they spoke one language, a pre-Babelian 'Adamic tongue', as Karin Littau claimed in a paper in which she consequently expressed the demand for a new originary myth of translation, such as Pandora's Box.¹⁵⁸ Despite the fact that the nostalgic desire for an origin can never be completely defeated, Derrida undermines, in his interpretation of the Babelian myth, the structure of a unitary origin by translating it to mean and be confusion.

Consistent with this theory, Derrida breaks up the hierarchy between the so-called original and the translation, maintained by Benjamin, by stating that it is the translation rather than the original that guarantees the survival of a text and determines the way it is read.

Si le traducteur ne restitue ni ne copie un original, c'est que celui-ci survit et se transforme. La traduction sera en vérité un moment de sa propre croissance, il s'y complètera *en* s'agrandissant. Or il faut bien que la croissance [...] ne donne pas lieu à n'importe quelle forme dans n'importe quelle direction. La croissance doit accomplir, remplir, compléter [...]. Et si l'original appelle un complément, c'est qu'à l'origine il n'était pas là sans faute, plein, complet, total, identique à soi.¹⁵⁹

The original text does not change independently but in the constant and endless process of being re-read which emphasizes diverse aspects of a text. Hence the original as much evolves from the translation as the translation does from the original. Interpretation does

¹⁵⁷ Jacques Derrida, 'Des Tours de Babel', in *Difference in Translation*, ed. by Joseph F. Graham (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 209–248 (p. 211).

¹⁵⁸ See Luise von Flotow, *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'* (Manchester and Ottawa: St. Jerome and University of Ottawa Press, 1997), pp. 45–47 (p. 45). Unfortunately Littau's paper 'Pandora's tongues', presented at a conference in Prague, has not been published.

¹⁵⁹ Derrida, 'Babel', p. 232. Italics in the original.

not uncover any *a priori* original message but reveals the openness of the text, its incompleteness which can never be completed: 'aucun sens ne se détermine hors contexte mais aucun contexte ne donne lieu à saturation.'¹⁶⁰ Otherness in translation then does not start in the transfer, it is inherent in the original text and uncovered by translation.

This theory also influences Derrida's understanding of Benjamin's pure language. In his approach it does not represent the messianic end of all languages constantly and preliminarily tested in translation. Pure language in Derrida's theory describes an underlying feature of language:

[C]'est la langue même comme événement babelien, une langue qui n'est pas la langue universelle au sens leibnizien, une langue qui n'est pas davantage la langue naturelle que chacune reste de son côté, c'est l'être-langue de la langue, la langue ou le langage *en tant que tels*, cette unité sans aucune identité à soi qui fait qu'il y a des langues, et que ce sont des langues.¹⁶¹

Pure language for Derrida describes the impossibility of linguistic identity exemplified by the fact that there are different languages which are in themselves not identical. Yet the belief in linguistic identity not only constitutes the necessary precondition for the idea of a national language. As has been shown with respect to Schleiermacher's and Berman's approaches and as will become apparent in the analysis of the translations, it also represents an underlying presupposition of many translation theories and thus greatly influences the current understanding and practice of translation.¹⁶² Derrida uncovers this presupposition in Roman Jakobson's distinction between intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic translation. Jakobson's definition of interlingual translation as 'translation proper' is built on the assumption that this term does not need any further explanation since the meanings of the terms translation and language are generally known and accepted: '[T]out le monde est censé savoir ce qu'est une langue, le rapport d'une langue à l'autre et surtout l'identité ou la différence en fait de langue.'

¹⁶⁰ Derrida, 'Survivre', p. 125.

¹⁶¹ Derrida, 'Babel', p. 245.

¹⁶² See the sections 1.2.1 '[Der] Kreis der Übersetzerarbeiten': Friedrich Schleiermacher, pp. 24ff. and 1.2.2 'Enrichissement de notre langue': Antoine Berman, p. 30ff. of this chapter.

Countering this belief in linguistic identity with the presence of two languages in one single word, Derrida uses a quotation from James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, which describes the destruction of the tower of Babel in the words 'he war', in order to illustrate this borderline phenomenon. In this context the word 'war' cannot only be read as an English noun meaning that God declares war but it can also be interpreted to be the past tense of the German verb 'sein' alluding to Yahwe — defined as 'Je suis celui qui suis' — as the one who declares war.¹⁶³ Just like Derrida's own biography in *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre*, this seemingly marginal linguistic phenomenon in translation is not deemed to be exceptional but described as exemplary since every single word is undermined by otherness.

Derrida also explores the method of deconstructing the translational borderlines from the margins in his essay or essays 'Survivre' and 'Journal de bord'. These texts evolved from a project to edit a volume on the methods and presuppositions of the Yale school of criticism, as it came to be known in the 1970s. Consequently, the texts were first published in the English translation by James Hulbert in *Deconstruction and Criticism* which brought together five interpretations of Percy B. Shelley's poem 'The Triumph of Life'.¹⁶⁴ Derrida's contribution to this collection is divided into two essays separated by a borderline. In 'Survivre', the text above the borderline, Derrida reflects on Shelley's poem via an interpretation of Maurice Blanchot's *La folie du jour* and *L'arrêt de mort*. In the text below the borderline, 'Journal de bord', he qualifies this approach to interpretation as a transgression of the borderlines prescribed by the educational institutions: 'Opération illégitime dans l'enseignement: il faut donner ses références et dire de quoi on parle, sous son titre identifiable. On ne fait pas un cours sur

¹⁶³ Derrida, 'Babel', pp. 217–218. And see pp. 214–215. In this context I additionally draw on Derrida's explanation of this passage from *Finnegan's Wake* in a discussion published as 'Table ronde sur la traduction', in *L'oreille de l'autre: otobiographies, transferts, traductions: Textes et débats avec Jacques Derrida*, ed. by Claude Lévesque and Christie McDonald (Montréal: VLB Éditeur, 1982), pp. 125–212 (pp. 132–133).

¹⁶⁴ See Harold Bloom and others, *Deconstruction and Criticism* (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979).

Shelley en ne le nommant jamais, en faisant semblant de viser Blanchot, et d'autres encore.'¹⁶⁵ Both texts then in their way question the epistemological devices of traditional criticism that aim for textual unity and univocality. However, while in 'Survivre' Derrida employs a deconstructionist approach to unveil these delimitations by reading texts which undermine the traditional understanding of textual criticism, in 'Journal de Bord' he uses a structuralist approach by attacking the system in explicit descriptions of its borderlines.

These methodological differences are also mirrored in the language used in the two essays. While the otherness underlying the text 'Survivre' will oblige the translator to transform his own language, Derrida promises to write 'Journal de bord' in a telegraphic and thus translatable style: '[J]e m'efforcerais ici, dans cette courte bande sténo-télégraphique, vers la plus grande traductibilité possible.' However, the reader does not require his confession at the end of the text that he broke this promise to realize that 'Journal de Bord' is just as untranslatable as 'Survivre': 'Bien sûr, je n'ai pas tenu ma promesse. Cette bande télégraphique produit un supplément d'intraduisible, que je le veuille ou non.'¹⁶⁶ The clarity this text supposedly aims for is already undermined in its polysemic title. The literal meaning of 'Journal de bord', a logbook, locates the text within a certain genre which determines and explains its structure and its telegraphic style as well as its transgressions of the borderlines imposed by the genre. On the other hand, this interpretation of the title links it with the collection of essays on Maurice Blanchot in which 'Survivre' and 'Journal de bord' were first published in French and where Derrida uses an abundance of maritime metaphors. The title of the volume *Parages* describes a shore or a coastline and thus refers to a liminal zone between land and sea. In the first German translation of this text, which is also published within this collection, the translators Monika Buchgeister and Hans-Walter Schmidt in their

¹⁶⁵ Jacques Derrida, 'Journal de bord', in *Parages*, pp. 118–218 (p. 128).

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 135 and 218.

rendering 'Bord-Journal' opt for this interpretation of the title.¹⁶⁷ Further meanings are explained in a translator's note as well as in a glossary listing terms constantly used in the book in various meanings.¹⁶⁸ The English translation 'Border lines', by contrast, neglects the maritime metaphors, which in the context of the English publication are not as important, and stresses a different dimension of the French word 'bord' which also means edging. On the one hand, the rendering 'Border lines' thus refers to the location of the text on the edge of and as a comment on 'Survivre'. On the other hand, the English translation of both titles read as a unity, 'Living On' 'Border lines', discloses a central dimension of both texts: the method of working from liminal phenomena to question limitations in general.¹⁶⁹

This experiment highlights that Derrida does not share Benjamin's concept of translatability although, just like Benjamin, he also does not believe that this term is determined by linguistic differences.¹⁷⁰ Translatability in Derrida's understanding is linked to the delimitations imposed by the common understanding of translation. His attempts to uncover these borderlines focus on methodological issues as well as on questions of interpretation and education and mainly concern the university system and the nationalist agendas underlying research and education:

Ce que cette institution ne supporte pas, c'est qu'on touche à la langue, à la fois à la langue *nationale* et, paradoxalement, à un idéal de traductibilité qui neutralise cette langue nationale. Nationalisme et universalisme indissociables. Ce que cette institution ne supporte pas, c'est une transformation qui ne laisse intacts aucun de ces deux pôles complémentaires. Elle supporte mieux les 'contenus' idéologique apparemment le plus révolutionnaires, pourvu qu'ils ne touchent pas aux bords de la langue et de tous les contrats juridico-politiques qu'elle garantit.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Jacques Derrida, 'Bord-Journal', trans. by Monika Buchgeister and Hans-Walter Schmidt, in *Gestade*, ed. by Peter Engelmann (Vienna: Passagen-Verlag, 1994), pp. 121–216.

¹⁶⁸ See Derrida, *Gestade*, pp. 292 and 298–299.

¹⁶⁹ See Jacques Derrida, 'Living On' 'Borderlines', in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, by Harold Bloom and others, pp. 75–176.

¹⁷⁰ See footnote 142 in the section 1.3.2 'Die Fremdheit der Sprachen': Walter Benjamin, p. 45 of this chapter.

¹⁷¹ See Derrida, 'Journal de bord', pp. 140–141.

In an approach quite similar to the method described by Foucault in *L'ordre du discours*, Derrida uncovers the language used at University to be an instrument of power based on a nationalist understanding of language and whose goal it is to universalize this belief.¹⁷² Any kinds of teaching and research transgressing these borderlines are excluded from the institution. For Derrida these mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, of acceptable and unacceptable intralingual as well as interlingual translation reflect their underlying understanding of language. While the belief in language to be a cultural and national possession entails an exclusionary educational as well as translational practice, the acceptance of the universal foreignness of languages facilitates difference and allows newness to enter the world.¹⁷³

1.4 Responding to Otherness in the Study of Translations

The ethnocentrist striving towards an alleged universal understanding, which is deeply ingrained in European thought, cannot be diametrically opposed to a responsive stance to the claim of otherness, which discloses the delimitations of the self. On the contrary, the fact that Benjamin draws on German Romanticism to develop his pioneering ideas on translation shows that the two strands are interlinked and interdependent. Notwithstanding, returning to the initial discussion of the confusion surrounding the variety of concepts of otherness in translation, it should have become obvious that some of the authors mentioned in my introduction clearly draw on ethnocentric Romantic ideas, others vacillate between the two traditions whereas only two attempt to take the idea of otherness beyond ethnocentrist limits. Most of the quotations cited at the beginning of my introduction can, at least to some extent, be traced back to German Romanticism. Dedecius's praise of the German language's exceptional capability of appropriating and promoting the foreign abroad is based on Schleiermacher's

¹⁷² See Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).

¹⁷³ See the chapter 'How newness enters the world' in Bhabha, pp. 212–235.

ethnocentrist idea of a world literature in German translation. Employing this concept from the stance of minoritized national literatures, which, via translation into German, gain in significance, Dedecius nevertheless believes translation constitutes a step towards the growth of the nation. Ballard's statement that the interest in the foreign serves the preservation of the self harks back to Schleiermacher's reduction of otherness to a controlled other which makes the self shine more brightly. Huntemann's and Rühling's list of problems subscribes to the Romantic belief in a progressive education in the foreign which intends to understand, control and ultimately destroy otherness. However, their inclusion of alienation as a programmatic dimension in Hölderlin's or Benjamin's writing on translation shows an awareness of the multidimensionality and the inaccessibility of otherness. Similarly Fred Lönker, who departs from Schleiermacher's position of hermeneutic understanding and intercultural communication, ultimately implies the limitations of this concept of translation. Horst Turk's and Theo Hermans's statements come closest to the tradition which responds to the claim of otherness. While Turk explicitly stresses the otherness of the self, Hermans, drawing on Eric Cheyfitz's *Poetics of Imperialism*, criticizes the appropriation of the foreign from a postcolonial stance. Furthermore, Hermans's approach to norms employed as an analytical tool in descriptive Translation Studies demonstrates his interest in the borderlines of translational practice, particularly when it is compared with Toury's ethnocentrist methodology, which draws on Even-Zohar's polysystem theory. Toury describes norms as the translation of values which are shared by a community and become apparent in regularities of behaviour. Consequently he tries to deduce translational norms from cultural-internal regularities in translation samples in order to move towards the formulation of general laws of translational behaviour.¹⁷⁴ Hermans, by contrast, who draws on Niklas Luhmann and Pierre Bourdieu, suggests comparing the

¹⁷⁴ See the second chapter of Toury's *Descriptive Translation Studies* and 'A Handful of Paragraphs on "Translation" and "Norms"', in *Translation and Norms*, ed. by Christina Schäffner, pp. 9–31.

translator's choices with the alternatives that have been excluded in the process of translation: 'Assessing the exclusions makes us appreciate the significance of the inclusions.' Unlike Toury, Hermans does thus not strive towards a structuralist description of translational norms but shows an awareness of the otherness underlying any sort of order. However, his claim that 'translations appropriate, transform and relocate their source texts' still implies a belief in a fixed and unchangeable rather than an inaccessible and changing original text.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, otherness is not only of importance in the studies which explicitly mention it, any theory of and study on translation is based on and guided by certain presumptions on the meaning of otherness in translation, even if the term is never mentioned. It is therefore of utmost importance to raise the awareness for the significance of otherness in translation.

My case study on contemporary German prose in Britain and France, which attempts to include the claim of otherness in the descriptive analysis of translations, is based on Bernhard Waldenfels's ideas of otherness. If with Waldenfels we assume otherness to be a disconcerting and a disturbing challenge, then there is no way of approaching the other. Whenever we try to reach out for it with a benevolent or a deferent gesture, we might catch a constructed inferior or exotic other but the alien that questions our selves will evade our grasp: 'Der Andere ist nie dort, wo ihn unser Blick und unser Begehren sucht.' Yet, even if we cannot locate it, the alien will haunt us. So rather than trying to make the other speak, we will have to respond to the claim of otherness by letting the other speak through us in a form of indirect speech: 'Es gibt eine indirekte Redeweise, eine *oratio obliqua*, die das, was kein beschreibbares und bestimmbares Etwas ist, nicht geradewegs in Angriff nimmt, sondern in schräger oder schiefer Richtung, gleichsam von der Flanke her.' One of the means of indirect speech is the use of quotations. Exceeding the simple repetition of alien words, quotations also

¹⁷⁵ Hermans, 'Translation and Norms', pp. 57 and 58.

speak for themselves and thus turn any text into a polyphonic polylogue, in which several voices talk at the same time.¹⁷⁶

In this sense translations represent an ideal tool to look at texts, literatures and cultures from an oblique stance which reveals and questions the unconscious presuppositions of our readings and thus discloses the otherness underlying the original text. Of course, one could counter that this thesis also holds for any kind of review or literary criticism. However, while these interpretations will only ever comment on a selection of passages, translations usually present readings of whole texts and thus a higher potential for confrontation. By directing our gazes towards paragraphs and ideas which have evaded our interpretations, they make us see the glasses which, as Wittgenstein has observed, permit us to see but also limit our gazes without us realizing these limitations: 'Die Idee sitzt gleichsam als Brille auf unserer Nase.'¹⁷⁷ Thus blurring our vision, translations force us to adapt or change the glasses through which we perceive a particular work. On the other hand, translations, just like other reading practices, also display tendencies of normalization and appropriation of otherness. In the diverse processes of reception, texts are inscribed with borderlines permitting and delimiting their understanding. In comparative readings, which reveal excluded alternatives and thus display the significance of particular choices, I attempt to identify these borderlines in translations of contemporary German prose in Britain and France. Drawing on Derrida's suggestion that there is no interpretation without context, I will use the first chapter of the case study to provide a general introduction to the significance and conditions of translation in the two receiving countries. In the detailed studies of the individual authors I shall locate the authors and texts in their German contexts. Subsequently I shall compare their reception in Germany to the marketing and

¹⁷⁶ Waldenfels, *Vielstimmigkeit*, pp. 13 and 11. And see pp. 156–162.

¹⁷⁷ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, § 103, cited in Bernhard Waldenfels, *Grenzen der Normalisierung: Studien zur Phänomenologie 2* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1998), p. 60.

translation of their texts in Britain and France. Both of these approaches will serve to uncover the borderlines inscribed into the texts. At the same time I will use these inscriptions as a tool to take the texts beyond these limitations. The following interpretations of contemporary German prose through the lens of their English and French translations are therefore marked by an inalienable tension. They depend on the translations which they criticize for not responding to the challenge of otherness. However, the revelation of the otherness undermining these texts is only a side effect of the primary aim of this whole study. Ultimately the analyses aim to reveal the limits of the traditional concept of translation as a tool for intercultural communication which, as pointed out by Benjamin and Derrida, does not serve to criticize and question the imposed cultural, literary and linguistic normality but aids and abets in the maintenance of the imagined cultures.

2 OTHERNESS IN TRANSLATION PRACTICE: CONTEMPORARY GERMAN PROSE IN BRITAIN AND FRANCE

Drawing on Husserl, Waldenfels describes otherness to be ‘originally inaccessible’ which means that otherness cannot be approached directly but only via the traces left by the confrontation with the other.¹⁷⁸ My project on otherness in translation practice took the traces left by the confrontation with otherness in Germany as a point of departure. In Germany’s recent history the key components of identity construction, such as boundaries, common values and internal as well as external definitions of self, have been subject to radical changes.¹⁷⁹ In less than an average life time Germany has been delimited by several diverging political entities — the Weimar Republic from 1918 to 1933, National Socialist Germany until 1945, the occupation by the allied forces and the division of Germany into four zones till 1949, the establishment of two opposing states, the German Democratic Republic and the old Federal Republic, and, since 1990, the new Federal Republic of Germany. On the one hand these constant breaks in the constructions of German identities have left their mark on contemporary German prose. Contributing to the de- and reconstructions of German identities and histories, German authors after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the ensuing unification not only focused on the GDR but also returned to the discussion of the Nazi legacy.¹⁸⁰ On the other hand the changes within Germany also entailed renegotiations with Germany’s neighbours. The reactions to German unification were particularly strong in Britain and France, where the governments were afraid of the new Germany dominating Europe; such fears found expression in images showing the return of Hitler and National Socialism. Based on the

¹⁷⁸ See section 1.1 ‘So viele Ordnungen, so viele Fremdheiten’: Bernhard Waldenfels, pp. 12ff. of this chapter.

¹⁷⁹ See Mary Fulbrook, *German National Identity after the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).

¹⁸⁰ See the chapter on German prose in the 1990s in Ingo R. Stoehr, *German Literature of the Twentieth Century: From Aestheticism to Postmodernism*, Camden House History of German Literature, 10 (Rochester: Camden House, 2001), pp. 440–451.

hypothesis that the changes within Germany in the wake of unification, which exposed the ruptures within the alleged German cultural nation, would also leave their mark on the British and French constructions of German identities, the initial focus of my case study was on the renegotiations of the internal and external borderlines before and after German unification, as they become apparent in the selection and translation of contemporary German prose in Britain and France.¹⁸¹

However, the corpus of translations first and foremost revealed the British indifference towards German literature, which stands in stark contrast to the growing number of translations from German published in France. The focus of my study will therefore be on the multidimensional rejection of otherness in the translation and publication of German prose in Britain whereas the French corpus will serve as a contrastive foil which reveals the British inclusions and exclusions. By considering market conditions and literary trends, the first chapter of the case study will uncover the multidimensionality of the rejection of otherness inherent in the processes of the selection, marketing and press reception of contemporary German prose in Britain in the 1990s. The ensuing chapters will provide detailed studies of three dimensions, which will crystallize from the overview as the determinant factors in the reception of German prose in Britain: ideological, generic and linguistic otherness.

¹⁸¹ The case study draws on a corpus of translations which I collected in a database. For further explanations on the collection of the data see section 4 Appendix: The Corpus, pp. 286f. of this thesis.

2.1 Selling the Other: Market Conditions and Literary Trends

Several critics have stressed the significance of print capitalism for the invention of the modern European nation.¹⁸² In collaboration with the establishment of modern philologies and the introduction of general education, publishers created, spread and maintained the standardized languages which have come to constitute the basis of the national communities. While this was not their primary goal, they profited from the widening circle of readers. However, Anderson's ensuing claim that the impossibility of humankind's general linguistic unification imposes insurmountable limits on the capitalist expansion of the publishing industry has since been refuted by multinational publishing companies such as Bertelsmann, Havas and Pearson.¹⁸³ The growing globalization of publishing has come to be seen as a reason for the decreasing interest in translation: 'The pursuit of profit [...] can lead to the eclipse of culturally significant imprints, including those specialising in translations.'¹⁸⁴ This claim is based on the assumption that in a publishing world, which solely focuses on sales figures, translations constitute the unsaleable other. However, as the following comparative analysis of the effects of globalization on the translation of German texts in the two receiving countries will show, the lack of interest in translations cannot be explained with the structural otherness of the foreign. Rather, the reasons for this development lie in the rejection of otherness by British publishers and translators. Furthermore, this rejection does not only find expression in the indifference towards German literature, it is also evident in the selection and marketing of the texts as well as their reception in the British press. While the globalization of publishing could lead to the assumption that these processes no

¹⁸² See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 44–46 and Hobsbawm, pp. 61–63.

¹⁸³ See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 43. Anderson's observation that '[w]e still have no giant multinationals in the world of publishing' might be a remainder from the first edition of the book published in 1983.

¹⁸⁴ Terry Hale, 'Publishing Strategies', in *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies*, ed. by Mona Baker, pp. 190–194 (p. 191).

longer address a national but a transnational market — particularly with respect to English and American publishing — the second section, which concentrates on the trends in British publishing in the wake of the changes in the Eastern Bloc, will prove that publishing is still an inter-national trade.

2.1.1 ‘Self-Satisfied Rubbish’? German Literature in the Foreign Market Place

The British publisher Peter Owen’s statement: ‘What am I supposed to do with such boring stuff? Nobody here wants to read this self-satisfied rubbish’ was cited by Desmond Christy in *The Guardian* in 1992 to explain the lack of interest in German literature in Britain.¹⁸⁵ Owen blames what he perceives to be the German writers’ particular style and their inability to tell a story for the worldwide indifference towards German literature in the 1980s and 90s, and he is not the only one to come to this conclusion. At the time several German publishers as well as critics and readers would have agreed with him. In fact, Christy’s article is based on an account in *Der Spiegel* bemoaning the state of German literature. The author of the *Spiegel* article quotes British as well as German publishers’ attitudes towards German writers and their Anglo-American counterparts. Geoffrey Strachan from Methuen is reported to have claimed: ‘Deutsche Autoren liegen wie Blei’. Karl H. Blessing, then head of Droemer, apparently insisted: ‘Deutsche Autoren [...] können einfach nicht das bieten, was das amerikanische, britische und französische Erzählpublikum interessiert’ and Arnulf Conradi, then chief-editor at Fischer, is said to have concluded: ‘Die Angelsachsen [...] können einfach besser erzählen’.¹⁸⁶ Contemporary German authors were thus generally perceived to be difficult and boring.¹⁸⁷ Although the affected authors tried to defend themselves by explaining that this perception had much to do with their publishers’ lack

¹⁸⁵ Desmond Christy, ‘Kulturmag: High Prized Heels, Gazette’, *Guardian*, 20 March 1992, p. 29.

¹⁸⁶ See Anon., ‘Gedankenschwere Nabelschau’, *Der Spiegel*, 12 (1992), 258–263 (pp. 258, 260–61 and 263).

¹⁸⁷ On the prejudices against contemporary German writing cp. Stoehr, pp. 440–451. In this chapter the author counters the prejudice that Germans do not know how to tell stories by describing the German tradition of storytelling.

of imaginative ideas for marketing their works abroad, the assumption still persists. Thus Astrid Kurth in her first editorial for the spring 2002 issue of the publication *New Books in German* claimed: ‘Long gone — happily — are the days, decades ago, when German language literature was not unfairly being looked upon as gloomy, complicated, stiff and introspective.’¹⁸⁸ Arguing that prejudices against German literature uttered by British and German publishers in the 1980s and 1990s had since been dispelled, Kurth still subscribed to Owen’s belief that the disdain for German literature could be traced back to the particular style of German writing.

However, the reason for the British disinterest in German literature lies less with the German other than with the British rejection of the foreign other. An analysis of the British disregard for German literature has to take into account that, as the translator Michael Hulse observed, it was not only German fiction that was largely being ignored but foreign literature in general.¹⁸⁹ From the 1950s to the 1990s translations published in Britain have amounted to a relatively stable 2–4% of the publications in total (with minor surges to up to 7% in the 1960s), whereas the percentage of translations published in France has increased constantly over the same period.¹⁹⁰ Numbers and percentages vary depending on the statistical source: thus Lawrence Venuti states that in France translations constituted between 8 and 12% of the total publishing output and lay at 9.9% in 1985, whereas Valérie Ganne and Marc Minon observe an increase from 13 to 18% between 1982 and 1991.¹⁹¹ However, both accounts agree on the basic fact that there is considerably less demand for translation in Britain than in France. Even the total number of translations in French exceeds the quantity of translations published in Britain

¹⁸⁸ Astrid Kurth, ‘Editorial’, *New Books in German*, 1 (2001), 1.

¹⁸⁹ See Hulse, p. 139.

¹⁹⁰ See Ganne and Minon, p. 79; Uta Kreuter, p. 103; and Venuti, *Invisibility*, pp. 12–13. Although I do not agree with his conclusions (cp. section 1.2.3 ‘A Glimpse of a Cultural Other’: Lawrence Venuti, p. 34ff. of this thesis), Venuti’s observations on the status of translation in the publishing industry provided useful insights for this particular area of my study.

¹⁹¹ Lawrence Venuti draws on D. and M. Frémy, *Quid 1992* (Paris: Laffont, 1992) whereas Valérie Ganne and Marc Minon base their conclusions on a study conducted in collaboration with *BIPE conseil* on behalf of the *Centre national des lettres*.

despite the considerably lower publishing output in France. The number of translations printed in France in 1991 (4,406) was three times higher than the number of translations published in Britain in 1990 (1,625) even though the grand total of publications in France in the same year (24,909) amounted to only one third of the British output (63,867).¹⁹²

These general statistics tally with my own findings (see Figure 2). From 1980 to 1999 only 98 translations of German texts in Britain fulfilled the criteria of my database, roughly a third of the titles translated in France.¹⁹³

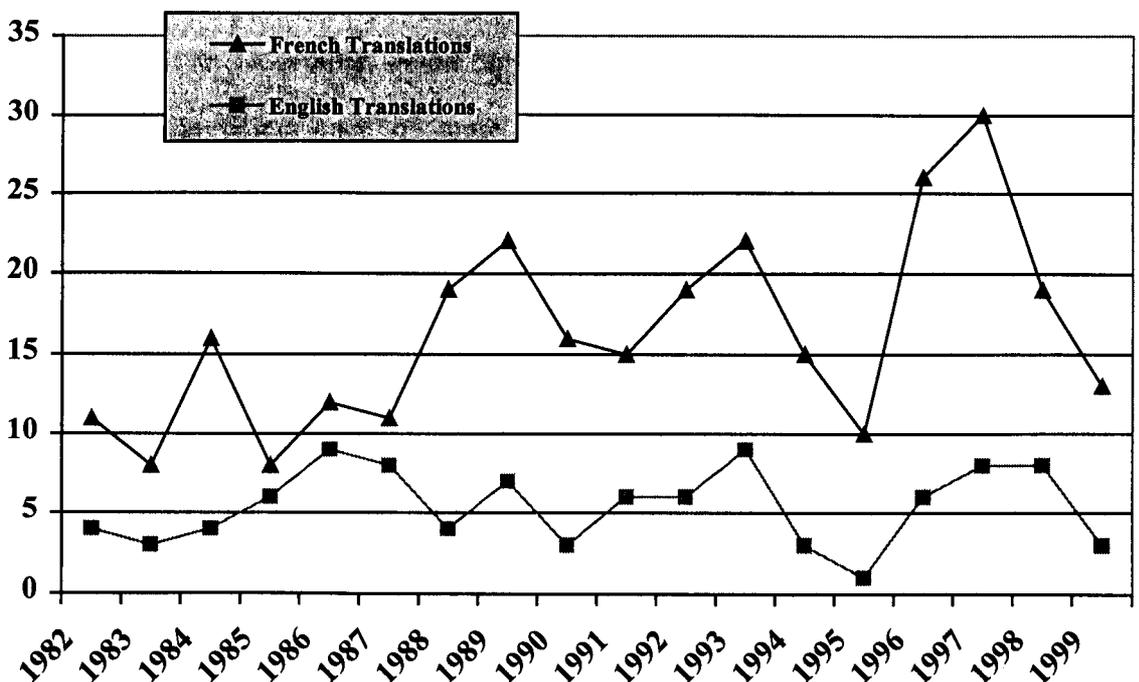


Figure 2: Translations of Contemporary German Prose in Britain and France

While in Britain the number of translations published in the 1990s was about the same as in the 1980s, the publication of contemporary German fiction in translation in France, despite cyclical ups and downs, showed a general upward trend, with 60% of the 298

¹⁹² See Ganne and Minon, p. 64.

¹⁹³ For these numbers cp. the corpora appended to this thesis in section 4, pp. 286ff.

titles being published in the 1990s, which bucks the downward trend in the publication of prose.¹⁹⁴ The general coincidence in peaks and troughs in the two curves can be traced back to transnational economical cycles. Only in the wake of German unification do the two curves show opposing tendencies suggesting national differences in the reaction to this event. The French graph reveals a continuously high interest in German prose between 1988 and 1993. A first peak can be identified in 1989, when the *Salon du Livre* thematically focused on Germany and, in preparation for this event, several French publishers issued translations from German.¹⁹⁵ That the German focus on the *Salon du Livre* in spring 1989 would coincide with the changes in the GDR and the ensuing fall of the Berlin Wall in November, could not have been foreseen in the planning stages. Nevertheless, the coincidence of these events explains the relative continuity of translations published in France in the years following the book fair. The publishers' interest in issuing translations from German, which was stimulated by the *Salon du Livre*, was further fuelled by the surprising fall of the Berlin Wall. This also becomes apparent in the exceptional increase in licences sold to French publishers from 285 in 1989 to 405 in 1990.¹⁹⁶ In Britain the German plans for unification seem to have had the opposite effect with an all-time low in translations published in 1990.

The obviously lower demand for translations in the United Kingdom is generally attributed to the large amount of books written in English worldwide which leads to a high degree of self-sufficiency in publishing.¹⁹⁷ The lack of interest in translations in Britain thus confirms the Anglo-American cultural hegemony in the global publishing industry: 'British and American publishing [...] has reaped the financial benefits of successfully imposing Anglo-American cultural values on a vast foreign readership,

¹⁹⁴ Based on statistical evidence presented in the magazine *L'humanité*, Gürtler claims that, compared to 1979, the publications in belles lettres in the mid-1980s had decreased by 30%, cp. p. 48.

¹⁹⁵ See the bibliography ed. by the Syndicat National de l'Édition.

¹⁹⁶ See *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen 1991*, ed. by the Börsenverein des deutschen Buchhandels (Frankfurt/Main: Buchhändler Vereinigung, 1991), p. 67.

¹⁹⁷ See Kreuter, p. 106, Ganne and Minon, p. 64 and Hale, p. 191.

while producing cultures in the United Kingdom and the United States that are aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign.¹⁹⁸ The publishers profiting from the Anglo-American cultural hegemony might no longer be owned by British or American companies. In 1998 the American media mogul S. I. Newhouse sold the biggest American publishing group Random House — including distinguished British publishing houses such as Jonathan Cape, Chatto & Windus, The Bodley Head, Methuen, Heinemann and Secker & Warburg — to the German media group Bertelsmann; and recently the French conglomerate Hachette bought the British Orion group, which in turn owns Weidenfeld and Gollancz.¹⁹⁹ However, the new owners still profit from the growing influence of Anglo-American literatures and cultures. Furthermore, they also benefit from the translation of the Anglo-American best-sellers into French and German:

By routinely translating large numbers of the most varied English-language books, foreign publishers have exploited the global drift toward American political and economic hegemony in the postwar period, actively supporting the international expansion of Anglo-American culture.²⁰⁰

The Anglo-American cultural hegemony thus not only explains why German literature does not attract very much attention in Britain, it also accounts for the fact that German best-seller lists mainly contain English titles in translation. Hence, while the critical stance towards German literature within Germany might have contributed to the lack of interest in it abroad, the root cause for both developments lies in the cultural Anglo-Americanization, often referred to as globalization. Furthermore, the imposition of Anglo-American cultural values explains to some extent why there is more interest in German literature in France than in Britain. As in Germany the Anglo-American

¹⁹⁸ Venuti, *Invisibility*, p. 15.

¹⁹⁹ See André Schiffrin, *The Business of Books: How International Conglomerates Took Over Publishing and Changed the Way We Read* (London: Verso, 2000), pp. 109 and 112–117 as well as the information on Bertelsmann published in *The Bookseller: TheBookseller.com*, 'Who owns whom: Bertelsmann' <<http://www.thebookseller.co.uk/info/wowview.cfm?article=Bertelsmann.sgml>> [accessed 28 January 1999].

²⁰⁰ Venuti, *Invisibility*, p. 15.

influence in France after World War II has established translation as a growing and profitable business. The same influence in Britain entailed the marginalization of non-English-language literature and the ensuing self-perpetuating perception of translation as a non-marketable and loss-making labour of love.²⁰¹ These perceptions seem to be confirmed by lower sales figures. However, poor turnover does not necessarily reflect the quality of the texts and their translations; it can rather be traced back to the infrastructures of the translation business, the marketing and distribution processes and to the way that publishers respond to rather than counter such perceptions. As the following detailed discussion of the two markets in the 1980s and 1990s will prove, the differences in the perception of translations in the two countries combined with the effects of the growing conglomeration and globalization in publishing have left their mark on the involvement of publishers in translation.

2.1.1.1 'Translations are very hard to sell': The Marginalization of Translation in Britain

Consisting of about 2000 publishers, the British publishing landscape in the 1980s and 90s was dominated by a few major groups with strong interests in general trade publishing.²⁰² While in 1981 Peter J. Curwen still argued that publishing was one of the least concentrated industries in the UK and in his rather limited analysis of the changes between 1978 and 1979 even observed a tendency to decentralization, the situation changed considerably in the following two decades. Curwen's study of the publishing market in 1979 cited seven major publishers who produced more than 400 books per year: Hale, Academic Press, Oxford UP, Pergamon Press, Macmillan Press, Wiley and

²⁰¹ See Hulse, p. 137 and Kreuter, p. 95. These observations are also confirmed by the difference in books translated, see sections 2.1.1.1 'Translations are very hard to sell': The Marginalization of Translation in Britain and 2.1.1.2 A Wide Field: The Central Significance of Translation in France, pp. 68ff. of this chapter.

²⁰² Curwen fixes the number of publishers at two thousand while Feather speaks of several thousand. See Peter J. Curwen, *The UK Publishing Industry* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981), p. 16 and John Feather, 'Book Publishing in Britain: an Overview', *Media, Culture and Society*, 15 (1993), 167–181 (p. 168).

Cambridge UP. Most of these are academic publishers, two of which have since been bought by publishing groups. The Academic Press has become an imprint of the American academic publisher Harcourt Brace and Pergamon Press was bought by the Dutch publisher Elsevier. Others, such as Oxford University Press, have extended their international network and instead of 500–600 books, cited by Curwen for 1979, in 1999 published around 3000 titles a year.²⁰³ However, their annual turnover in 1988 was almost five times lower than Pearson's, one of the major British publishing groups cited by John Feather. Based on annual turnover in book publishing, Feather's list does not contain any of the names mentioned by Curwen but is made up of Random Century, HarperCollins, Pearson (owning Longman and Penguin) and Reed International.²⁰⁴ The American publisher Random House only entered the British publishing scene in 1988 when their owner S. I. Newhouse acquired Jonathan Cape, Chatto & Windus and the Bodley Head — who had banded together in order to decrease costs — and created Random House U.K. In 1989 Newhouse also bought Century Hutchinson and entrusted their management with the restructuring of the whole group. Since the publication of Feather's article the concentration and expansion of these groups further increased. In 1993 Reed International merged with the Dutch publisher Elsevier.²⁰⁵ And in 1998 Newhouse sold Random House to the German media group Bertelsmann.²⁰⁶ Accordingly the number of published books and profits per group have increased massively since Curwen's and Feather's market analyses.

The new structures of these publishing conglomerates as well as their primarily commercial aims considerably changed the publishing processes. Analysing these

²⁰³ See *The Writer's Handbook*, ed. by Barry Turner (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 34, 44–45 and 68–69.

²⁰⁴ See Curwen, pp. 20–22 and Feather, p. 169.

²⁰⁵ See TheBookseller.com, 'Who owns whom: Reed Elsevier' <<http://www.thebookseller.co.uk/info/wowview.cfm?article=ReedEls.shtml>> [accessed 28 January 1999].

²⁰⁶ See note 199 as well as Anon., 'Who is Who in English Language Publishing: A Look at the Major Players in Europe and the US', in *Who Owns Whom: Book Publishing and Retailing 1980–1989*, ed. by Louis Baum, Supplement to *The Bookseller*, 2 March 1990, pp. 22–24 (p. 24).

changes, Michael Lane comes to the conclusion that the interwar gentlemen publishers who were driven by cultural responsibilities, after World War II were slowly reduced to, or supplanted by, sales staff and accountants mainly ‘fixing the bottom line’.²⁰⁷ In his critical analysis of *The Business of Books* the American publisher André Schiffrin describes the consequences of these changes: ‘If a book does not look as if it will sell a certain number — and that number increases every year (it’s about 20,000 in many of the larger houses today) — then the publishing board decides that the company cannot afford to take it on.’ Editors are no longer judged by the books they publish but by the sales of their titles which influences their choices: ‘Caught up in this financial machinery, editors are perceptibly — and understandably — less willing to take a gamble on a challenging book or a new author. And the system has become internalized.’²⁰⁸ Since the translation of texts by relatively unknown authors was perceived as more experimental and risky, it fell victim to these changes.

Nevertheless, as shown above, the increasing conglomeration and globalization within the publishing industry did not particularly affect the numbers of translations from German in the 1980s and 1990s. It has, however, entailed changes in the names of publishers involved in the translation of German fiction. The editors of several established publishing houses in Britain, now integrated into conglomerates and reduced to imprints, in the last two decades gave in to commercial pressures and left the 1990s niche market of German fiction in translation to smaller presses, founded in a counter-movement to the increasing globalization in the 1970s and 1980s, such as Serpent’s Tail, Quartet and Oldcastle Books. It therefore comes as no surprise that, except for Secker & Warburg and Carcanet, none of the publishers Kreuter mentions in her study on the

²⁰⁷ See the in-depth discussion of these changes in Michael Lane, *Books and Publishing: Commerce Against Culture in Postwar Britain* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1980) as well as the chapters ‘Fixing the Bottom Line’ and ‘Market Censorship’ in Schiffrin, pp. 73–128.

²⁰⁸ Schiffrin, pp. 105–106 and 107. While Schiffrin mainly focuses on the changes that took place in the United States publishing industry, he insists that these have been replicated in Britain (cp. pp. 109–112).

translation and reception of German literature in Britain and France between 1960 and 1982 are of any importance in the two decades my study comprises.²⁰⁹ Weidenfeld & Nicolson published their last translation of contemporary German fiction in 1982, Lili Palmer's *Night Music*, whereas Gollancz, John Cape and Marion Boyars do not feature in my list of translations at all.²¹⁰ Secker & Warburg, who, with sixteen publications of contemporary German fiction in translation between 1980 and 1999, by far exceeded any of the other publishers' output, saw a decrease in market share from ten translations in the 1980s to six in the 1990s. Furthermore, they only issued one newcomer per decade: Erich Loest's *The Monument* (1987) and Marcel Beyer's *The Karnau Tapes* (1997). All of their other translations were of authors who had already been published in Britain at least once; some of these such as Heinrich Böll and Günter Grass, available in Britain since the 1950s and 1960s, have a long history of translation and an established reputation. Yet the era of big name publishing is passing: Heinrich Böll's last contemporary text, *Frauen vor Flußlandschaft* (1985), was translated in 1988 and although Grass, whose books in Britain had exclusively been launched by Secker & Warburg, is still alive and writing, the licence for the hardcover of *My Century* (1999) was sold to Faber. This may have been a reaction to the fact that in 1998 Secker & Warburg were sold to Bertelsmann. Grass also protested and eventually left his original German publisher, Luchterhand, when they were sold to the Dutch publishing group Kluwer in 1987.²¹¹

Founded in 1969 and based in Manchester, Carcanet, the other publisher on Kreuter's list that still possessed some market share in the 1980s, is one of the smaller

²⁰⁹ Kreuter, pp. 115–118. Kreuter limited her study to authors originally issued by a German publisher (she thus includes Swiss and Austrian writers such as Max Frisch and Peter Handke) and first translated in Britain between 1960 and 1982. Furthermore, her study not only includes fiction but also poetry because of its outstanding significance in the reception of German literature in the 1960s.

²¹⁰ For the list of translations, which comprises the details of publication of all the authors and texts mentioned in this analysis, cp. Appendix 4.1 Translations Published in Britain, pp. 288ff. of this thesis.

²¹¹ See the portrait of Luchterhand Literaturverlag on the internet: Literaturhaus, 'Luchterhand Literaturverlag' <<http://www.literaturhaus.at/buch/verlagsportraits/luchterhand.html>> [accessed 12 March 2003].

and independent British presses.²¹² In the 1980s Carcanet's output of four contemporary German fiction translations was still comparatively high, yet in the 1990s they completely abandoned their publishing activity in this specific area. Their major contribution to the translation of German fiction in the last two decades consists in the introduction of Gert Hofmann to the British public with their publication of *The Spectacle at the Tower* in 1985. Hofmann, who died in 1993, was continuously present within the British niche market of German fiction in translation in the decade from 1985 to 1995. His high achievement on numbers of first editions — within this relatively short timespan six of his novels crossed the channel — was in the last two decades of the twentieth century only equalled by Grass, whose publications are admittedly far more voluminous than Hofmann's. Hofmann's popularity in the British publishing scene — from 1988 onwards his new novels were issued by Secker & Warburg — might be linked to his son Michael Hofmann, a well-known translator and cultural mediator in Britain.

In the 1990s several new and mostly independent presses, founded in the 1970s and 1980s pushed into and, from 1993 to 1996, even dominated and gave new impetus to the British market for translation of contemporary German fiction abandoned by the older publishing houses tied up in conglomerates. Schiffrin, who in reaction to the growing conglomeration founded The New Press in New York in the early 1990s, provided an economic as well as a cultural explanation for the interest of these smaller presses in translations: '[B]ecause a great deal of literary work from overseas was being ignored by large firms, it was not hard for us to find a promising group of young foreign authors.'²¹³ Furthermore, the rising prices for English first novels urged smaller publishing houses to look for other sources of income. The comparatively cheap English-language licences

²¹² See Turner, p. 22.

²¹³ Schiffrin, p. 167.

for foreign books in combination with the financial support for translations offered by the German institution Inter Nationes represented a profitable alternative.²¹⁴

Most prominent among the British publishers who pushed into this market were Quartet and Serpent's Tail. Founded in 1972, the independent publisher Quartet mainly focuses on the publication of new writing. From 1991 to 1994 they published four translations, three of them by the German writer and manager of the German Carl Hanser Verlag Michael Krüger. Founded in 1986 Serpent's Tail intends to 'give a voice to writers who are outside the political, sexual or racial mainstream.'²¹⁵ Between 1989 and 1996 they published five translations of contemporary German fiction comprising first translations of Herta Müller, Helke Sander, Natascha Wodin and Pieke Biermann. Apart from these they issued an anthology called *Nightdrive* which introduced a new generation of previously untranslated writers including Katja Behrens, Adolf Endler and Rainald Goetz, to name just a few. However, in the latter half of the 1990s Serpent's Tail did not issue any further translations from German. In an interview Pete Ayrton, the founder and managing director of Serpent's Tail, confirms that he gave in to commercial pressures: 'We don't do as many translations as we used to do. This isn't a choice so much as a response to the fact that, in the UK, translations are very hard to sell.'²¹⁶

Nevertheless, the increasing importance of the smaller presses in the publication of new German fiction in translation in the 1990s is confirmed by Harvill's new presence in this niche market in the wake of their return to independence. Founded in 1949, Harvill was bought by Collins in 1959 and up to 1995 belonged to HarperCollins, the publishing arm of Rupert Murdoch's News International. From 1980 to 1992, when Harvill published Bodo Kirchhoff's novel *Infanta*, the HarperCollins imprint had not

²¹⁴ See Robert Winder, 'Frankfurt: Books That Don't Exist', *The Independent*, 21 October 1989, p. 32.

²¹⁵ Turner, p. 81. On Quartet see p. 73.

²¹⁶ Pete Ayrton in Noel King, 'Snakes & Ladders: Pete Ayrton, publisher of Serpent's Tail Books, London, interviewed by Noel King', *Jacket*, 4 (1998) <<http://jacketmagazine.com/04/ayrton.html>> [accessed 12 March 2003], p. 5.

issued any contemporary German fiction in translation. After their return to independence, in the short timespan from 1997 to 1999, Harvill launched Thomas Brussig's GDR novel *Heroes like us* (1997) as well as three prose texts by W.G. Sebald. Finally, the discovery of German crime fiction in the 1990s was also largely left to smaller publishing houses. Apart from Serpent's Tail, who published Pieke Biermann's *Violetta* (1996), the independent publishing houses Fourth Estate and Oldcastle Books confirmed this development: Fourth Estate (founded in 1984) launched Akif Pirinçci's best-selling crime novels and Oldcastle Books' No Exit imprint published Jakob Arjouni's works. Characteristically for the new publishing mechanisms, this trend was then picked up by one of the bigger publishers, the HarperCollins imprint Collins Crime, who published Ingrid Noll's crime novels. Yet, compared to the significance of best-selling German prose in France, popular fiction only plays a minor role in the niche market for German prose in Britain where the 1990s see a large amount of literary fiction issued by smaller publishers with specific cultural interests.

2.1.1.2 A Wide Field: The Central Significance of Translation in France

The growing conglomeration in publishing had similar effects on the publishing industry in France as in Britain. However, established traditions and the constantly growing position of translation within publishing led to a relative stability in the numbers and names of publishers involved in the translation of German fiction in the 1980s and 1990s. In the late 1990s the French publishing industry was dominated by only two groups, Havas and Hachette, who together accounted for one third of all translations from German. Their increase in power in the 1980s and 1990s has been resisted and counterbalanced by the extension of five other publishers, some of them still family businesses, into intermediate groups.²¹⁷ Among these Gallimard (24 German books),

²¹⁷ See Fabrice Piault, 'De la "rationalisation" à l'hyperconcentration', in *L'édition française depuis 1945*, ed. by Pascal Fouché (Paris: Electre-Éditions du Cercle de la Librairie, 1998), pp. 629–639 (pp. 630–634).

Albin Michel (24), Le Seuil (18), and Flammarion (14) have consistently been of considerable importance for the translation of contemporary German fiction in France.²¹⁸ In the last two decades of the twentieth century they not only issued new books by authors already published in France but also launched new authors. Thomas Brussig and Michael Krüger, for example, who were first introduced to the British public by the smaller independent publishing houses Harvill and Quartet, were published in France by Albin Michel and Le Seuil. Furthermore, Katja Behrens and Rainald Goetz, who only ever featured on the British market in the collection of short stories *Nightdrive* issued by Serpent's Tail, as well as authors such as Maxim Biller, Dieter Forte, Wolfgang Hilbig and Hans-Joachim Schädlich, who were never even considered for publication in Britain, published books in France with Flammarion, Albin Michel and Gallimard.

The continuous interest of the two major groups and the intermediate publishing houses in German prose inevitably reduces the significance of the smaller publishers, which as in Britain were established in the 1980s in a counter-movement to the growing conglomeration.²¹⁹ Important exceptions were Alinéa and Actes Sud. Founded in the 1980s in Aix-en-Provence, Alinéa between 1985 and 1992 published eleven translations with a specific interest in GDR authors such as Christoph Hein, Christa Wolf and Helga Königsdorf. Unfortunately Alinéa went bankrupt in 1993.²²⁰ Since its foundation in Arles in 1978 the highly esteemed independent publishing house Actes Sud has acquired major importance in the translation of foreign literatures: 'En une vingtaine d'années, Actes Sud a su s'affirmer comme une maison dont l'importance est prépondérante dans le domaine de la littérature étrangère. C'est aussi un bel exemple d'indépendance et de décentralisation.'²²¹ Actes Sud's seventeen publications in the 1980s and 90s comprised

²¹⁸ A list of authors and titles of translations into French can be found in the appendix, cp. section 4.2 Translations Published in France, pp. 298ff. of this thesis.

²¹⁹ See Philippe Schuwer, 'Nouvelles pratiques et stratégies éditoriales', in *L'édition française*, ed. by Pascal Fouché, pp. 425–459 (pp. 442–443).

²²⁰ Fouché, *L'édition française*, p. 845.

²²¹ Marie-Gabrielle Slama, 'Actes Sud', in *L'édition française*, ed. by Pascal Fouché, pp. 739–740 (p. 740).

books by authors also known in Britain such as Gert Hofmann and W.G. Sebald as well as works by Hans-Josef Ortheil and Karin Reschke, who featured in the *Serpent's Tail* short story collection *Nightdrive*.

The bigger choice and diversity of German literary fiction published in France was also increased by the imprints of the group Hachette. Grasset, who became a Hachette imprint in 1954, published Hans-Christoph Buch, Sten Nadolny, Jurek Becker and Thomas Hettche; Fayard, bought by Hachette in 1958, published Hartmut Lange and Monika Maron; belonging to the Hachette group since 1961, Stock successfully launched Birgit Vanderbeke; and Calman-Lévy, bought by Hachette in 1993, launched Marcel Beyer. However, the group's imprints also discovered more popular authors such as the crime writers Jacob Arjouni (Fayard) and Ingrid Noll (Calman-Lévy); moreover, they ventured into more popular fiction for women by Hera Lind and Gabi Hauptmann and into best-selling fiction by Peter Berling (Lattès).

Despite the comparatively high amount of literary fiction, about one quarter of translations from German in France is made up of best-selling fiction. Most of these texts are published by the Presses de la Cité (now owned by Havas) and the imprints they bought — such as Fleuve Noir in 1963 — or created — such as Presses Pocket in 1962, Christian Bourgois in 1965 and the bookclub France Loisirs in 1969. With forty-one translations they held the biggest share in the French market for contemporary German fiction in the 1980s and 1990s. Founded in 1943, the Presses de la Cité started mass production of Anglo-American best-sellers in the immediate aftermath of World War II exploiting the surging interest in Anglo-American literature as well as their more commercial publishing strategies. They expanded considerably before being bought by Générale Occidentale and merging with the media group CEP communication in 1988 to create the Groupe de la Cité which in the late 1990s was absorbed by their primary

shareholder Havas.²²² A subdivision of the French company Générale des Eaux, Havas has become a significant media group with the biggest publishing output in France ranging from best-selling and literary fiction to academic books.

Most of the German authors translated by the Presses de la Cité would be categorized and stigmatized as *Trivalliteratur* in Germany. The press's most prolific German writer is Heinz G. Konsalik. Since his breakthrough in 1956 with the novel *Der Arzt von Stalingrad*, Konsalik has published more than 100 novels, most of which have been translated into several languages and have become best-sellers. They were issued in a total edition of more than 80 million copies. While Konsalik's earlier novels mainly revolved around World War II with a further focus on so-called *Arztromane*, more recent ventures into contemporary issues inspired titles such as *Öl-Connection* (1993), describing the ship-wreck of an oil-tanker, *Mayday...Mayday... Eastern Wings 610* (1995), an account of a flight disaster, and *Die Ecstasy-Affäre* (1996).²²³ The borrowings from the English language in Konsalik's German titles again confirm the significant impact of English best-selling fiction in Germany, which entails the deliberate use of English fragments as a marketing device. In France this influence is countered by aggressively monolingual French policies, which, based on the legal principle that French is the official language of the republic, includes proceedings for betrayal of the French language.²²⁴ This might explain why the French titles of the above novels — *Pétrole Connection* (1994), *SOS Avion en péril* (1997) and *Extase mortelle* (1998) — do not adopt the German marketing strategy. When Konsalik died in October 1999, *Le Monde* remembered him as the most widely read German author in the whole world whose works were still ignored by literary critics.²²⁵ In France, thirty-seven of

²²² See Marc Bauland and Pascal Fouché, 'Havas', in *L'édition française*, ed. by Pascal Fouché, p. 771.

²²³ See *Autorenlexikon deutschsprachiger Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Manfred Brauneck (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1995), pp. 456–457.

²²⁴ See Christian Schmitt, 'Nation und Sprache: das Französische', in *Nation und Sprache: die Diskussion ihres Verhältnisses in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. by Andreas Gardt (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), pp. 673–745 (p. 676).

²²⁵ Anon., 'Carnet: Disparition: Heinz Konsalik', *Le Monde*, 7 October 1999, p. 14.

Konsalik's contemporary novels were launched in the 1980s and 1990s, twenty-six of them by imprints of the Presses de la Cité and a further eleven by Albin Michel, one of the intermediate and independent publishers. In contrast to the Presses de la Cité, Albin Michel invests the capital gained in the 1980s from best-sellers such as Konsalik into the diversification of its publications.²²⁶ These include literary fiction written by contemporary German authors such as Eva Demsky, Monika Maron and Thomas Brussig. In Britain none of Konsalik's many books written in the last two decades found a publisher. This is a fate he shares with other best-selling German authors published in France but ignored in Britain. Neither the family sagas by Marie-Louise Fischer and Utta Danella nor the historical novels by the more recently discovered Tanja Kinkel, Peter Berling and Ashley Carrington (a pseudonym turning the German Rainer M. Schröder into a make-believe American) ever crossed the channel — which again might be attributed to the Anglo-American hegemony in these genres. While twenty four of Konsalik's older novels were published in Britain between 1975 and 1983 — most of them edited by Aidan Ellis Publishing founded in 1971 — and in the 1980s bigger British publishers still made ventures into best-selling German fiction by authors such as Hans Hellmuth Kirst (Collins) and Wolfgang Jeschke (Century), best-selling German titles have increasingly been ignored in Britain.

2.1.1.3 Globalization and Translation: The Confirmation of Long-Term Trends

This has brought me to say a word or two about translation in general: in which no nation might more excel than the English, tho' as matters are now managed, we come so far short of the French. There may, indeed, be a reason assigned, which bears a very great probability; and that is that here the booksellers are the undertakers of works of this nature, and they are persons more devoted to their own gain than the public honour. They are very parsimonious in rewarding the wretched scribblers they employ; and care not how the business is done so that it be but done. They live by selling titles not books, and if that carry off one impression, they have

²²⁶ See Piault, p. 634.

their ends and value not the curses they and their authors meet with from the bubbled chapman.²²⁷

John Dryden's attack on the purely economic goals of French booksellers in the seventeenth century, which he contrasts with the English intellectual interests in translation, bears close similarities to late twentieth-century complaints about the global players in publishing: '[T]hey live by selling titles not books'. These complaints and fears are thus not new and, as the publisher André Deutsch observed, their originators, the publishing groups, will probably not survive the media moguls: 'History has taught us that empires come and go, and I believe this will happen to the publishing "conglomerate empires" now ruling the world and frightening some of us.'²²⁸ Similarly the publisher Marion Boyars believes: 'In twenty-five years' time we will be back to a modified version of the system I encountered when I entered publishing in 1960,' for 'there is just so much boredom that the human spirit can endure'.²²⁹

Both in Britain and in France the industrialization of publishing had an effect on the market for German prose in translation: while in Britain the growing conglomeration entailed the marginalization of German prose, in France the market reacted with an increase in translations. These opposing reactions prove that the changes in the economical situation are not the crucial factor for the ensuing changes on the market for German translations. They only amplify long-standing traditions. The perception of translation as a loss-making business in Britain has given rise to a growing marginalization, whereas the significance of translation in France, mainly based on translations from English, has led to a growing interest in translations from German. This overview will thus not overturn Dryden's argument and close with a complaint about Britain and a song of praise for France, for neither British nor French publishers

²²⁷ John Dryden, 'On Translation', in *Theories of Translation*, ed. by Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet, pp. 17–31 (pp. 29–30).

²²⁸ André Deutsch, 'A Personal View', in *Publishing: the Future*, ed. by Peter Owen (London: Peter Owen, 1988), p. 11.

²²⁹ Marion Boyars, 'Publishing as a Career', in *Publishing: the Future*, ed. by Peter Owen, pp. 118–125 (p. 118).

attempt to counter general trends but instead simply affirm them. Furthermore, the publishing world is not as one-dimensional as Venuti pictured it in his attack on Anglo-American cultural hegemony. While his observations are enlightening for the general trends in the world-wide publication of translations, they ignore the movements countering these trends. On the one hand these are inherent in the otherness within English-language writing. Prize-winning and best-selling authors such as Salman Rushdie at the same time use and undermine Anglo-American cultural hegemony.²³⁰ On the other hand publishing does not solely consist of trade-publishers who in Britain refrain from the publication of translations and in France profit from the growing interest in Anglo-American best-sellers by publishing German texts which adopt the strategies of their Anglo-American counterparts, as in the example of the Presses de la Cité. As proved by the imprints of the Hachette publishing group, which secures the independence of its imprints, the growing conglomeration does not necessarily imply a fall in the diversity of publications. Furthermore, the British market for translations from German was dominated by small and independent publishers who use translation as a medium to counter the general tendencies towards Anglo-Americanization. As the following section will show, these initiatives were supported by a surprising number of reviews in the British press. However, as will also become apparent, these promising conditions did not prevent the exoticist presentation of the foreign other. Furthermore, the German texts still met with a critical demand for sameness.

2.1.2 The Cold War Other: Literary Trends at the End of the Cold War

The clear delimitations of the British niche market for German prose in English translation show distinct phases of interests in particular groups of newcomers which are followed by several publishers. The end of the Cold War coincides with a growing interest in literature from and about the Eastern Bloc written in German; in the mid-

²³⁰ On the disseminating quality of *The Satanic Verses* cp. Bhabha, pp. 166–169 and 223–229.

1990s British publishers translate a large number of German detective novels; finally in the last few years of the 1990s the focus shifts to novels on National Socialist Germany. Of course these trends arise from developments on the German book market. In his summary of the trends in contemporary German prose in the 1990s, Stoehr observes a growing interest in multicultural authors, a resurgence of storytelling, which includes an increase in German detective stories, as well as a growing interest in the Nazi legacy.²³¹ However, both the developments in Germany and the trends in the translation of German prose in France reveal a remarkable absence from the British market: literature from and about the GDR. In British publishing the end of the Cold War has not been reflected in an increased interest in GDR texts.²³² On the contrary, apart from two publications by established authors (Christa Wolf's *What Remains* and Monika Maron's *Silent Close No. 6*, both in 1993), the only German author new to the British market in the early 1990s and who fits into this category was Christoph Hein with *Der fremde Freund* (1982, *The Distant Lover*, 1991). Hein's text had already been published in France in 1985 by Alinéa who in 1990 also issued his novel *Der Tangospieler* (published in German in 1989), and Christa Wolf's *Was bleibt* (1990) and *Sommerstück* (1989) were immediately translated into French. Furthermore, French publishers issued various translations of GDR texts which were never published in Britain. Jurek Becker, whose *Jakob der Lügner* (1971) — one of the rare German international successes — and *Schlaflose Tage* (1978) in the 1970s were also translated into English, celebrated a recovery in France with the republication of *Jacob le menteur* and the first translation of *Les enfants Bronstein* (*Bronsteins Kinder*, 1986) issued by Grasset in 1988. In the 1990s these translations were followed by *L'ami du monde entier* (1993, *Aller Welt Freund*, 1982) and *Amanda sans coeur* (1994, *Amanda herzlos*, 1992). A similar recovery can be

²³¹ See Stoehr, pp. 440–472.

²³² The categorization 'GDR texts' draws on Gürtler, whose study, in contrast to Klatt's, also includes the authors who emigrated to the FRG, such as Jurek Becker, Wolfgang Hilbig and Hans Joachim Schädlich.

observed for Fritz Rudolf Fries and Hans Joachim Schädlich, who, however, like all of the following authors, have not as yet been published in Britain. Fries's picaresque novel *Weg nach Oobliadooh*, published in West Germany in 1966, was translated in 1970. Having fallen into obscurity in the 1970s and 1980s, when the publication of his novels was permitted in the GDR, he aroused interest again after the changes in the GDR which inspired the publication of *Les nouveaux mondes d'Alexandre* (1992, *Alexanders neue Welten*, 1982). Hans Joachim Schädlich's first French publication was the translation of his collection of short prose narratives *Versuchte Nähe* (1977, *Tentative d'approche*, 1979). Although this text was received very well, he only saw his second publication in 1990 with *Berlinestouest* (*Ostwestberlin*, 1987). Helga Königsdorf was first introduced to the French public in 1987 at the cultural event 'Les Belles Etrangères', devoted to GDR literature. This meeting with publishers was followed by her first French publication *Viendra un nouvel automne* (1989, *Respektloser Umgang*, 1986). Finally Wolfgang Hilbig, whose first translation into French, *La Lettre*, was issued in 1988 (*Der Brief*, 1985), in the 1990s saw the publication of *Les Bonnes Femmes* (1992, *Die Weiber*, 1987) and *Moi* (1997, *Ich*, 1993).²³³

As should have become apparent in the enumeration of authors and titles, the obvious difference in the reception of GDR authors in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall can be explained with the longer and constant tradition of the translation of GDR literature in France. As Klatt and Gürtler pointed out, the reception of GDR authors in France first set in with the translation of the authors who after their exile decided to live in the antifascist part of Germany and thus were not published in the West. In this early phase the reception of East German authors was promoted by French Germanists who were members of or sympathized with the French Communist Party. Although the conditions of reception changed in the mid 1970s, when the mediators started to focus

²³³ See the appendix of this thesis, in particular section 4.2 Translations Published in France, pp. 298ff. as well as Gürtler, pp. 167–171, 152–153, 187–190, 235–237 and 238–240.

on cultural, generic and linguistic transgressions rather than pure information, the interest in GDR literature remained relatively stable.²³⁴ As in France, the 1960s and 1970s in Britain saw translations by authors such as Bruno Apitz, Jurek Becker, Johannes Bobrowski, Franz Fühmann, Stefan Hermlin and Uwe Johnson. In the 1980s and 1990s, by contrast, the only GDR newcomers on the British market were Monika Maron and Christoph Hein.²³⁵

However, the continuously low number of translations from the GDR after the fall of the Berlin Wall does not mean that British publishers showed no interest in the changes in Eastern Europe. In Britain the growing interest in the Cold War other found expression in publications of new German authors from the former Eastern Bloc. Most of the new German authors published in Britain in the wake of the changes in the Eastern Bloc, such as Herta Müller, Richard Wagner and Libuše Moníková, bear witness to a curiosity about recent developments in countries such as Romania and Czechoslovakia. This specific interest, which was not initiated by but coincided with, and was enhanced by, the changes in the Eastern Bloc, first became apparent with the 1989 publication of Herta Müller's *The Passport* (*Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt*, 1986), a short novel portraying corruption, isolation and emotional detachment within a village community in Romania shortly before the end of the Ceaușescu regime. The focus on the Eastern Bloc culminated in Herta Müller being bestowed the Dublin IMPAC Award in 1998 for her novel *The Land of Green Plums* (originally published in the United States in 1996 and in Britain in 1998; *Herztier*, 1993), which depicts the crushing omnipresence of the regime in the lives of a group of students who oppose the dictator and are therefore under surveillance by the Romanian secret police, the

²³⁴ See the introduction and the bibliography of translations in Klatt, pp. 5–14 and 199–203 and Gürttler, pp. 11–12 and 28–31.

²³⁵ See the bibliography in *The Babel Guide to German Fiction in English Translation: Austria, Germany, Switzerland*, ed. by Ray Keenoy, Mike Mitchell and Maren Meinhardt (London: Boulevard Books, 1997), pp. 187–249.

Securitate.²³⁶ The following analysis of the differences in the reception, selection and marketing of texts about Eastern Europe in Germany, Britain and France will therefore mainly focus on Herta Müller and compare and contrast the marketing of her works with Richard Wagner's and Libuše Moníková's.

2.1.2.1 *The German or the Communist Other? Herta Müller's Receptions*

The translation of Herta Müller's novel *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt* in France and Britain can be traced back to the exceptional reception of her works in the Federal Republic, where German minority literature from Eastern Europe was only discovered as a field of interest in the mid-1960s.²³⁷ Even in the 1980s the media attention devoted to Müller's works constituted a singular phenomenon, which in one fell swoop both increased the knowledge of Romanian German minorities in the FRG and at the same time raised the awareness of their literature.²³⁸ Almost overnight Müller became famous, largely due to the aggressive debate about her collection of short stories *Niederungen*.²³⁹ First published in Bucharest in 1982, the texts collected in *Niederungen* present a view of life behind the folkloristic scenes of a Romanian German village. This publication met with a very positive reception in the German literary circles in Romania,

²³⁶ *Herztier* was the first of Herta Müller's texts to be published in the United States, see *The Land of the Green Plums*, trans. by Michael Hofmann (New York: Henry Holt, 1996). The success of this novel entailed the translation of *Reisende auf einem Bein* (1989) as *Traveling on one leg*, trans. by Valentina Glajar and André Lefevere (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998) and *Niederungen* (1984) as *Nadirs*, trans. and with an afterword by Sieglinde Lug (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999). Since Müller's German publisher imposed territorial restrictions, these two novels are not available in Britain, while Müller's *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt* has as yet not been published in the United States.

²³⁷ See Norbert Otto Eke, 'Herta Müllers Werke im Spiegel der Kritik (1982–1990)', in *Die erfundene Wahrnehmung: Annäherung an Herta Müller*, ed. by Norbert Otto Eke, Reihe Literatur- und Medienwissenschaft, 7 (Paderborn: Igel, 1991), pp. 107–130 (p. 109). The following discussion of Herta Müller's reception mainly draws on this text.

²³⁸ Also see Patrice Neau, 'Une littérature déracinée: la "littérature roumaine de langue allemande" existe-t-elle?', in *Horizons inattendus: melanges offerts à Jean-Paul Barbe*, ed. by Ernst Dautel (Tübingen: Stauffenberg, 1999), pp. 277–287 (p. 277).

²³⁹ Also cp. Christina Tudoric, *Rumäniendeutsche Literatur (1970–1990): Die letzte Epoche einer Minderheitenliteratur* (Tübingen: Francke, 1997), p. 90 and René Kegelmann, 'Identitätsproblematik und sprachliche Heimatlosigkeit: Zur "rumäniendeutschen Literatur" der 80er und 90er Jahre in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland', in *Studien zu Forschungsproblemen der deutschen Literatur in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, ed. by Carola L. Gottzmann and Petra Hörner, Deutsche Literatur in Mittel- und Osteuropa: Mittelalter und Neuzeit, 1 (Frankfurt/Main: Lang, 1998), pp. 205–218 (pp. 205–207).

where it was praised for transgressing cultural and linguistic borderlines. However, it was exactly these transgressions that incited irritation and aggression in the more conservative papers of the German minorities, who accused Herta Müller of fouling her own nest. These argumentative strategies determined the author's reception in West Germany. When Rowohlt published a revised edition of *Niederungen* in 1984, the papers aimed at the associations of displaced people from Romania described her work as a contribution to the disintegration of the German communities in Romania. The reviewer in *Der Donauschwabe* went as far as denouncing the author as a collaborator with the regime: 'H. Müller ist eine der wertvollsten Mitarbeiterinnen der Bukarester ZK-Propagandaabteilung'.²⁴⁰ This aggressive response to Herta Müller's texts was fuelled by the attacks against the organizations of displaced Germans which marked the general reception of her works in the German media. In his trendsetting review of *Niederungen*, published in the widely-read magazine *Der Spiegel*, the well-known German writer F.C. Delius argues that Müller's anti-idyllic description of the German village in Romania and her severe critique of the inhabitants' Germanness expressed in obedience, order and cleanliness gives the lie to the folkloristic images promoted by the organizations of the displaced people: 'Von nun an wird, wer kein Lügner sein will, auch von dem erheblichen Anteil der Deutschen an ihrer eigenen Unterdrückung sprechen müssen.'²⁴¹ While her second novel *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt* met with a similarly split reception, the critical debate on Herta Müller's texts in the West German media underwent a significant change at the end of the 1980s. Petra Günther argues that with the end of Ceaușescu's dictatorship in 1989 Müller's works in Germany came to be read as testimonies of life under the regime.²⁴² However, as

²⁴⁰ Cited in Eke, 'Herta Müllers Werke im Spiegel der Kritik', p. 115.

²⁴¹ F.C. Delius, 'Jeden Monat einen neuen Besen', *Der Spiegel*, 31 (1984), 119–123 (p. 123). For a similar reading cp. Josef Zierden, 'Deutsche Frösche: Zur "Diktatur des Dorfes" bei Herta Müller', *Herta Müller: Text + Kritik*, 155 (2002), 30–38.

²⁴² See Petra Günther, 'Kein Trost, nirgends: Zum Werk Herta Müllers', in *Baustelle Gegenwartsliteratur: Die neunziger Jahre*, ed. by Andreas Erb (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998), pp. 154–166 (pp. 154–156).

Christina Tudoric explains, the change in the reception of Müller's works had already begun with her emigration to West Germany in 1987, which inspired various interviews focusing on her role as a witness of totalitarianism. Rather than an interest in Müller's literary works, these interviews demonstrate the growing extra-literary demand for first-hand descriptions of the atrocious regime.²⁴³ This growing demand for information about Romania in turn also marks Müller's publications: While in 1990 she published her first book on Germany (*Reisende auf einem Bein*), her following novels, *Der Fuchs war damals schon der Jäger* (1992) and *Herztier* (1994) dealt with the oppressive Romanian regime.²⁴⁴

In France, where the first translation of Herta Müller's texts, *L'homme est un grand faisan sur terre*, was published in 1988, critics adopted the West German praise of Herta Müller's linguistic and cultural transgressions. Most of the reviews focus on Müller's exceptional style, which might be linked to the roots of her writing in French surrealism.²⁴⁵ In her short article in *Le Monde* to announce the creation of a series called 'Petite Bibliothèque Européenne' by the publisher Maren Sell, who first launched Herta Müller, Josyane Savigneau uses a quotation from *Die Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, cited on the book's cover, in order to describe Müller's exceptional style 'comme une couture entre l'Est et l'Ouest'.²⁴⁶ Several French critics describe Müller's writing as poetical. Thus Pierre Kyria believes that Müller combines harsh realism with a poetical and fantastic style.²⁴⁷ Gérard Meudal states that *L'homme est un grand faisan sur terre* 'ressemble autant à un recueil de poèmes en prose qu'à un récit'.²⁴⁸ And, quoting the author, who

²⁴³ See Tudoric, pp. 90–91. For a similar argument see Neau, p. 282.

²⁴⁴ See Günther, p. 156.

²⁴⁵ For Müller's links to surrealism see Tudoric, pp. 92–98. Müller's surrealist style will be discussed in more detail in section 2.1.2.2 The Evil Other vs the Otherness of the Self: The Uses of Otherness as a Selling Device, pp. 93ff. of this chapter.

²⁴⁶ Josyane Savigneau, 'Maren Sell et l'Europe des textes', *Le Monde*, 7 October 1988. Also cp. Herta Müller, *L'Homme est un grand faisan sur terre* (Paris: Maren Sell, 1988).

²⁴⁷ Pierre Kyria, 'La transeuropéenne du livre: *L'homme est un grand faisan sur terre*, Herta Müller', *Magazine Littéraire*, 260 (1988), 69.

²⁴⁸ Gérard Meudal, 'La Mercedes du meunier roumain', *Libération*, 1-December 1988, p. 21.

stresses that she never intended to write a realist novel, Jean Louis de Rambures wonders whether the text should be classified as a novel, a fable, a 'conte fantastique' or a poem. Rambures continues his critique with an explanation of the novel's title metaphor and finally mentions Müller's literary influences, namely Thomas Bernhard.²⁴⁹ Both of these issues are also discussed in Ruth Valentini's critique of Müller's novel in the *Nouvel Observateur*. However, adding Alexander Kluge and Peter Handke to Müller's literary influences, Valentini points out that, like these authors, Müller intends to give a different view of history. In her description of the author's background Valentini stresses the importance of the suppressed history of collaboration with the National Socialists in the German villages for Herta Müller's conflict with her community in Romania: 'Son conflit a commencé dans la confrontation avec son village, archaïque et au fascisme refoulé.'²⁵⁰ Rambures, by contrast, mainly concentrates on the problems the author incurred with the German minorities after the publication of her books: 'Peu après la parution de *L'homme est un grand faisan sur terre*, la minorité allemande a crié au scandale. Lorsque Herta Müller se rendait au village pour voir sa mère, on lui crachait au visage.'

As in Germany, the 1990s in France saw a different reading of Müller's texts. In his review of her second French publication *Le renard était déjà le chasseur* (1997, *Der Fuchs war damals schon der Jäger*, 1992), Gérard Meudal reads the text as a testimony of life under Romanian totalitarianism: '*Le renard était déjà le chasseur* donne de la Roumanie de Ceaușescu un tableau qui renverse les perspectives habituelles.'²⁵¹ Similarly Anthony Krause in his review of *L'homme est un grand faisan sur terre*, published in *Le Monde* in 1997, argues: '[L]es temps là-bas étaient ainsi faits que rien d'autre, rien de mieux ne pouvait y prendre place. Herta Müller est une voix de "là-

²⁴⁹ Jean Louis de Rambures, 'Mon village à l'heure roumaine', *Le Monde*, 25 November 1988.

²⁵⁰ Ruth Valentini, 'Le paradoxe du faisan: L'étrange parcours de Herta Müller', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 15–21 December 1988, p. 73.

²⁵¹ Gérard Meudal, 'Engrenage infernal', *Le Monde*, 3 May 1997.

bas””.²⁵² Rather than stressing the ‘in-between’ of Müller’s texts, as Savigneau did in her review, Krause draws a clear dividing line between East and West. Furthermore, he stresses the realist background of Müller’s fiction: ‘On peut aller voir ces villages déserts, ils savent convoquer notre rêveries des confins et nous rappeler un “usage du monde” qui s’est perdu quelque part entre Orient et Occident.’ However, Müller herself pointed out the fallacy of this belief in her poetical lectures published as *Der Teufel sitzt im Spiegel*. Relating how friends as well as tourists whom she took on a tour of her home village felt deceived because they could not find the village described in her books, Müller concludes: ‘Das Dorf gibt es nur in den *Niederungen*’.²⁵³ In keeping with the testimonial quality of the text, Krause interprets Müller’s language to be marked by her wounded identity: ‘Herta Müller, dont la blessure d’identité s’est muée en langue blessée, elliptique, dense et métaphorique, nous fait mieux écouter les larmes.’ Rather than the critical stance towards the village dictatorships, i.e. the oppressive circumstance in the German villages stressed in the earlier critiques, it is thus the demand for knowledge about a lost world as well as the pity for the suffering that comes to be at the centre of attention in this later review.

In Britain the critical debate about the German minorities in Romania was of no importance in the reception of Herta Müller’s writing. From the first publication her texts were interpreted with reference to her criticism of the communist regime. As becomes apparent in David Pryce-Jones’s critique in the *Independent*, Müller’s writing is read as a testimony: ‘How to escape from a totalitarian country is an agony peculiar to modern times, and it lies at the heart of Herta Müller’s novella.’²⁵⁴ Ignoring the restricting traditionalism within the German villages, the British critics stress the

²⁵² Anthony Krause, ‘Pierre qui roule’, *Le Monde*, 6 December 1997.

²⁵³ See Herta Müller, *Der Teufel sitzt im Spiegel: Wie Wahrnehmung sich erfindet* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1991), pp. 16–17.

²⁵⁴ David Pryce-Jones, ‘A Romanian Miller’s Tale: Herta Müller, *The Passport*’, *The Independent*, 28 January 1989.

persecution of the minorities. In the *Guardian* the photographs of German village life in Romania, which illustrate an extract from *The Passport*, are captioned with the statement that ‘the Romanian regime detests the German settlers’.²⁵⁵ And Pryce-Jones in the *Independent* emphasizes: ‘Like other minorities there [in Romania, WS], the Swabians have been persecuted to the point of dispossession and expulsion.’ As in the French review by Anthony Krause, the Swabians are regarded as victims: ‘[I]t is the simple appeal to pity these sad victims which alone rings true.’ While both of the reviewers thus show an awareness of the different histories of the Swabian and the Saxon minorities, they also prove their ignorance of the minority’s situation under Communism. As Valentina Glajar and Christina Tudoric pointed out, the German minorities did not suffer more than other Romanian citizens. Unlike their compatriots in central and east European communist countries, they were considered as ‘co-inhabiting nationalities’. Not only were they granted Romanian citizenship but they also had their own schools, newspapers and magazines, a publishing house and theatres. Furthermore, while the Germans, in common with the Romanians and the Hungarians, had to endure the restrictions of the Communist regime, they had the option to emigrate to West Germany where they were automatically granted German citizenship.²⁵⁶

In the reviews of Müller’s second publication in Britain, *The Land of Green Plums*, the English translation of *Herztier* (1994), the critics avoid the earlier faux pas by supplanting the German with the Romanian suffering. Rather than describing Müller as a member of the German minority in Romania, most of the critics identify her and her novel as Romanian. First launched in the United States by Metropolitan books in 1996, *The Land of Green Plums* was published in Britain only after the text had been awarded the world’s biggest literary prize for fiction (the IMPAC Dublin Award), which Stephen

²⁵⁵ Herta Müller, ‘A Long Night in Romania: Extract’, *The Guardian*, 4/5 February 1989, p. 10.

²⁵⁶ See Valentina Glajar, ‘Banat-Swabian, Romanian, and German: Conflicting Identities in Herta Müller’s *Herztier*’, *Monatshefte*, 89 (1997), 521–540 (p. 523–524) and Tudoric pp. 25–27.

Moss consequently termed 'Romanian's Plum Book Prize'.²⁵⁷ Carole Angier calls Müller 'a Romanian writer who lives in Berlin' and Vanessa Thorpe describes the book as a 'Romanian story of totalitarian horrors' which 'takes place during Ceauşescu's reign of terror'.²⁵⁸ In Ian Thomson's review Müller's national categorization entails the relation of her writing to stereotypical images of Romania. He thus ascribes the image of the 'famished slaughterhouse hands who drink fresh cow's blood' to Herta Müller's literary receptiveness 'to the Dracula legends': 'Romania bristles with beliefs in ghouls and vampires.' However, Thomson continues, Müller does not have to invent these stories: 'In the maternity clinics of Romania, children's blood is pumped out of the head of newborns with Japanese vacuum syringes. It was well known that Ceauşescu suffered from leukemia [sic] and wanted fresh red cells.' Reading the novel as a testimony of life under the regime, he interprets the image of the cancerous dictator drinking his subjects' blood as factual rather than metaphorical. Only when Thomson refers to the protagonists' and author's past, does Müller's German origin suddenly take on significance:

The author, Herta Müller, was born in Romania's German-speaking region of Banat. Burdened by their German heredity, the students in the novel reject their parents' Nazi past as well as Ceauşescu's cruel misrule. Müller, aged 45, is the daughter of an SS veteran and she provides a memorably vicious portrait of her Führer-doting father. An alcoholic, he laments a lost idyll of plum brandy, strudel pastry and beer-swilling Herrenvolk.²⁵⁹

The Banat is, of course, not German-speaking but is populated by a mixture of people originating from various backgrounds. Furthermore the review foregrounds stereotypical images of the Germans, which still prevail in Britain, and only mentions in passing that this novel engages with a completely different view of German identities, namely a group of German students trying to resist a totalitarian regime.

²⁵⁷ See Stephen Moss, 'News in Brief: Romanian's Plum Book Prize', *The Guardian*, 19 May 1998, p. 6.

²⁵⁸ Carole Angier, 'Book: Names in Search of a Character', *The Independent*, 28 July 1998, p. 5 and Vanessa Thorpe, 'Books: Long Overdue: The Huge IMPAC Literary Prize is the Only Major Award Where Librarians Get a Vote', *The Independent on Sunday*, 22 March 1998.

²⁵⁹ Ian Thomson, 'Books: Government by Ghouls', *The Guardian*, 25 July 1998, p. 10.

Thomson's realist reading of Müller's metaphorical writing goes hand in hand with Angier's demand for a more realist style. She claims that the judges, who awarded Müller the literary prize, made their decision on the book's content rather than on its literary merit. Her review concludes: 'Herta Müller can write, and hers is a very terrible story. If she had only told it, instead of making fine phrases — now that would have been worth a prize.' Similarly Pryce-Jones in his critique of *The Passport* takes a critical stance to Müller's style. Polemicizing her 'fanciful titles' and her short sentences, he concludes: 'Such literary pretentiousness has an air of apologizing for a story that could not be trusted to speak for itself.' With their demand for a 'horribly believable' story, these critics confirm Venuti's observation that English-language writing and criticism valorizes 'the purely instrumental use of language and other means of representation' and thus emphasizes 'immediate intelligibility and the appearance of factuality' which has made 'realism the most prevalent form of narrative'.²⁶⁰ Yet, as George Steiner stresses in his review of *The Land of Green Plums*: 'Perhaps only some kind of surrealism can capture the tenor of endurance under a Ceaușescu.' Furthermore, Steiner is the only one of the critics who raises the question why there is such a high demand for testimonies, documentaries, memoirs and films from totalitarian countries. To his mind the answer lies in the incomprehensibility of daily life under a regime for people who live in democracies: 'What is difficult to imagine is the ordinariness of abjection, the commonplace of the inhuman which saturates otherwise normal pursuits in a dictatorship.'²⁶¹ However, it is not only the incomprehensibility which determines Müller's style. Her surrealist writing implies the liberation from this oppressive regime, which is ignored in the reviews locating her in a realist framework.²⁶²

²⁶⁰ Venuti, *Invisibility*, pp. 5–6. Kreuter points out that the falling interest in German writing coincides with a growing demand for realism in the reviews published in the *Times Literary Supplement* (see Kreuter, pp. 149–151).

²⁶¹ George Steiner, 'Books: You're Ruled by Hooligans. Your Friends Spy on You. Hellish, Isn't It?', *The Observer*, 30 August 1998, p. 14.

²⁶² See Tudoric□ p. 96 and section 2.1.2.2 The Evil Other vs the Otherness of the Self: The Uses of Otherness as a Selling Device, pp. 93ff. of this thesis.

Initially read with reference to the oppressive life in the Romanian German villages, Herta Müller's texts in the wake of the changes in Romania in the late 1980s are received as testimonies of life under the Communist regime. This focus on the political otherness of her texts entails the ignorance of or the demand for changes in the literary elements of these texts.²⁶³ This might help to explain why Müller herself rejects being read as a witness. Stating that books about horrible times are often interpreted as testimonies, she concedes that her books describe horrible times: the amputated life under a dictatorship, the subservience of the German minorities towards the authorities and their high-handed behaviour at home as well as their disappearance to Germany. Nevertheless, Müller does not think of herself as a witness: 'Für viele sind meine Bücher somit Zeugnisse. Ich aber empfinde mich im Schreiben nicht als Zeugin.' Explaining that her writing resulted from the constant silencing and suppression of her otherness, she concludes that she does not believe in the enlightening quality of language. However, this belief seems to be deeply ingrained in Western thought: 'Den Glauben, das Reden komme den Wirrnissen bei, kenne ich nur aus dem Westen. [...] Auch den Glauben, was keinen Sinn hat, hält man nicht aus, kenne ich nur aus dem Westen.' Müller thus takes a critical stance to the reception of her works in the framework of understanding. This critical perspective results from her experiences with the use of language in a totalitarian regime: 'Wenn am Leben nichts mehr stimmt, stürzen auch die Wörter ab. Und alle Diktaturen, rechte wie linke, atheistische wie religiöse mißbrauchen die Sprache. Sie binden den Wörtern die Augen zu und versuchen den Verstand der Sprache zu löschen.'²⁶⁴ Imposing certain ideas on the words, regimes use language as a blindfold. However, as Derrida pointed out, the appropriation of language in totalitarian

²⁶³ The limitation of the political reading of Müller's texts has also been pointed out by Kegelmann, pp. 208–209.

²⁶⁴ Herta Müller, 'Wenn wir schweigen, werden wir unangenehm — wenn wir reden, werden wir lächerlich: Kann Literatur Zeugnis ablegen?', *Herta Müller: Text + Kritik*, 155 (2002), pp. 6–17 (pp. 6, 9 and 13). Also see Neau, p. 285.

countries is only an extreme example of the general understanding of language as a property, which results in the suppression of internal otherness as well as in a superior stance towards external otherness.²⁶⁵ As the above discussion has shown, this superiority also marks the reception of Herta Müller's texts: she is either read as the German other who makes the German self look agreeable or as a witness of the dark Communist other who makes the Western self shine more brightly. Only rarely do the reviews mention her criticism of this Western self. Proving that this superior stance also marks the selection of texts for translation and their marketing by British publishers, the following analysis will stress the otherness underlying Müller's writing.

2.1.2.2 The Evil Other vs the Otherness of the Self: The Uses of Otherness as a Selling Device

The diverse reactions to Müller's novels in Germany, Britain and France were to some extent anticipated in the strategies used for the publication of her novels in the different countries. On the cover of *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt*, published by Rotbuch, a quotation from the book focuses on the problems of the German minorities in Romania:

Die Traktoristen haben kleine nasse Hüte auf. Auf dem Tisch liegen ihre schwarzen Hände. 'Zeig mir', sagt einer. 'Ich geb dir zehn Lei.' Er legt zehn Lei auf den Tisch. Die Traktoristen lachen. Ihre Augen glitzern, ihre Gesichter sind rot. Ihre Blicke fingern über den langen blumigen Rock. Die Zigeunerin hebt den Rock. [...]

Den ganzen Sommer haben sie die Pelzleibchen an', sagt der Tischler. An seinem Daumen hängt Bierschaum. Er taucht den Zeigefinger ins Glas. 'Die Drecksau daneben bläst mir Asche ins Bier', sagt er. Er schaut den Rumänen an, der hinter ihm steht. Der Rumäne hält die Zigarette im Mundwinkel. Sie ist naß von seinem Speichel. Er lacht. 'Nix mehr deutsch', sagt er. Dann auf rumänisch: 'Hier ist Rumänien.'

Der Tischler hat einen gierigen Blick. Er hebt das Glas und trinkt es aus. 'Bald habt ihr uns los', schreit er.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ See p. 49 of the section 1.3.3 'Les limites du concept courant de traduction': Jacques Derrida, pp. 47ff. in the first chapter of this thesis.

²⁶⁶ Herta Müller, *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1986), cover and pp. 63–64.

This passage not only highlights the thematic relevance of this novel, which presents the German reader with a new perspective on the German minority in Romania, it also conveys Herta Müller's outstanding and highly-praised style, frequently mentioned in the German reviews.²⁶⁷ In her paratactic descriptions Müller excludes logical links created by subclauses of time, cause, purpose or effect and supplants these with a web of rhetorical figures such as metaphor, repetition, alliteration and anaphora.²⁶⁸ Both the suppression of logical links and the extensive use of imagery as well as her writing in the present tense bear close resemblance to surrealist writing developed in France after and in response to World War I. Based on the assumption that the brutality of civilization resulted from the overdeveloped faculty of reason, the surrealists intended to revolutionize society by shutting out this faculty: 'La raison, la toute-puissante raison, fait figure d'accusée, et d'accusée muette: elle ne peut rien dire pour sa défense. Le réel est autre chose que ce que nous voyons, entendons, touchons, sentons, goûtons.'²⁶⁹ While they described their movement as a science, most of their experiments were undertaken in art and poetry. Rather than criticizing reality in realist or naturalist descriptions, surrealist writing intends to open up a world beyond this reality or, as Adorno once put it: 'Die dialektischen Bilder des Surrealismus sind solche einer Dialektik der subjektiven Freiheit im Stande objektiver Unfreiheit.'²⁷⁰ The image of the 'Bodenvase aus Kristall', unfortunately translated by Martin Chalmers in two separate images, the 'crystal vase' and the 'floor vase', and by Nicole Bary as 'la potiche', shall serve to illustrate Herta Müller's specific use of these writing strategies.²⁷¹ The daughter

²⁶⁷ See Eke, 'Herta Müllers Werke im Spiegel der Kritik', p. 118.

²⁶⁸ See Thomas Roberg, 'Bildlichkeit und verschwiegener Sinn in Herta Müller's Erzählung *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan in [sic] der Welt*', in *Der Druck der Erfahrung treibt die Sprache in die Dichtung: Bildlichkeit in Texten Herta Müllers*, ed. by Ralph Köhnen (Frankfurt/Main: Lang, 1997), pp. 27–42 (pp. 27 and 32–33).

²⁶⁹ Maurice Nadeau, *Histoire du surréalisme* (Paris: Seuil, 1964), p. 13.

²⁷⁰ Theodor W. Adorno, 'Rückblickend auf den Surrealismus', in *Noten zur Literatur*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), pp. 101–105 (p. 104).

²⁷¹ Herta Müller, *The Passport*, trans. by Martin Chalmers (London: Serpent's Tail, 1989), pp. 38–39 and *Faisan*, p. 45. Describing an oriental vase, *la potiche* evokes different associations from 'Die Bodenvase'.

of the protagonist Windisch, Amalie, who regularly receives crystal glass as a present from an admirer, dreams of a crystal floor vase, which reaches from the floor to her hips. While her father criticizes her for being materialist, her mother empathizes with her daughter's secret desire: 'Windischs Frau hat große Augen, wenn sie von der Bodenvase hört.' Her hardened expression and gestures become tender when she thinks of the vase: 'Ihr Gesicht lächelt. Ihre Hände werden weich. Sie hebt die Finger in die Luft, als würde sie eine Wange streicheln.' Windisch believes that his wife would prostitute herself for this vase like she used to for bread as a Russian prisoner of war: 'Windisch weiß, sie würde für eine Bodenvase die Beine spreizen.' While Windisch and his wife take the vase to be a material desire, Amalie links it to her sexuality, when she offers to a boyfriend: '[I]ch zeig dir meine Bodenvase'.²⁷² Neither of them realize that in the image of this vase the women express their desire for love. This symbol thus on the one hand uncovers the individuals' growing isolation and emotional detachment, from which even escape to material satisfaction in West Germany cannot save them. It is this hopelessness that is embodied in the cover illustration which shows two people who are in the process of vanishing under long veils.²⁷³ However, unlike the cover illustration, the symbol of the vase also gives the reader a glimpse of fulfilled love, which would change the people's situation. This possibility of a different life, which underlies Müller's surrealist writing, does not feature on any of the three editions of *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt*.

In contrast to the Rotbuch strategy of combining thematic and linguistic features in one single quotation from the text, the Maren Sell and the Serpent's Tail edition use excerpts from German critical acclaim, which of course would not have been available at the time of the first publication, to describe the novel's content and its linguistic features separately. The French edition is strongly influenced by the translator Nicole

²⁷² Müller, *Fasan*, pp. 46 and 66.

²⁷³ See Figure 3, p. 98 of this chapter.

Bary, who also wrote criticism on Herta Müller. An excerpt from a review is cited on the book's cover: 'Herta Müller raconte sans concession, sans pitié. Avec des phrases courtes, elle évoque un univers nourri du tragique de la vie et de la mort.'²⁷⁴ Like the above-mentioned quotation from *Die Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, which compares Müller's style to Ingeborg Bachmann's and Paul Celan's, Bary thus stresses the linguistic qualities of the novel. The blurb on the content describes the text from a feminist perspective: '[C]e visa de sortie a les traits de la prostitution'.²⁷⁵ The fact that the protagonist's daughter has to prostitute herself for the family to obtain the desired passports is also underlined in the cover illustration, Edvard Munch's *Ashes* (1894). This symbolist painting shows a woman, whose unbuttoned white petticoat reveals her red bodice and hints at the completed act of sexual penetration. A man, sitting at a table, turns away from the woman although her hair streams towards him.²⁷⁶ It thus not only illustrates the use of the daughter for materialist aims; uncovering the impenetrable isolation between man and woman, it aptly depicts the relationships between men and women in the whole text, of which the daughter's prostitution is only one example. The second focus of the French blurb is on Müller's criticism of the West. Explaining that the protagonist's family has applied for a visa despite the discouraging news from the West, the text on the cover finishes on their return as tourists: '[I]ls reviendront au village, en touristes avec les vêtements et les gadgets qui sont l'expression de leur réussite sociale'. This criticism also is central to Bary's essay on Herta Müller's novel: 'In die westliche Industriegesellschaft eintreten bedeutet, sich ihr anzupassen und, wie

²⁷⁴ Müller, *Faisan*. See Nicole Bary, 'Herta Müller, *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt*', *Documents: revue des questions allemandes*, 4 (1986), 12.

²⁷⁵ Bary's interest in German feminist writing is also emphasized by Gürtler, who stresses Bary's significance in the reception of GDR women's writing in France, cp. p. 87.

²⁷⁶ See Figure 3, p. 98 as well as the description of the image in the Norwegian web exhibition 'Edvard Munch and Symbolism', Nasjonalgalleriet Oslo, 'Ashes, 1894' <<http://www.museumsnett.no/nasjonalgalleriet/munch/eng/innhold/ngm00809.html>> [accessed 12 March 2003].

Windisch's Frau, die Kleider- und Frisurenmode nachzuahmen, wie Tochter Amalie, ein Deodorant zu benutzen, und, wie Windisch selbst, ein Auto zu fahren'.²⁷⁷

The English edition, by contrast, mainly reads the text as a testimony from a totalitarian country. Unlike the French cover, the quotation from the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* used on the Serpent's tail cover does not focus on the novel's style. This particular excerpt describes the novel as revealing the 'dirty realities of a totalitarian state'. The quotation from the book used inside the cover of the English edition, the words of a teacher in a lesson on Romania for small school children, further engages with this facet of the novel:

Just as the father in the house in which we live is our father, so comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu is the father of our country. And just as the mother in the house in which we live is our mother, so Comrade Elena Ceaușescu is the mother of our country. Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu is the father of all the children. All the children love comrade Nicolae and comrade Elena, because they are their parents.²⁷⁸

Hence, while the German edition mainly foregrounds the treatment of the German minorities in Romania and the French edition emphasizes the criticism of the West, the English edition homes in on the political background and, accordingly, the blurbs concentrate on the events in the novel, the struggle to obtain passports which will enable the German citizens of this small village to escape. That the flight to West Germany ultimately does not bring happiness goes unmentioned. The different focus of the English edition also explains the translation of the book's title. With her title *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt*, Herta Müller uses one of the polyvalent images running through the book which, in David Midgley's words, acquire 'cumulative resonance as the story progresses'.²⁷⁹ As Müller explained in an interview, the image of

²⁷⁷ Nicole Bary, 'Grenze — Entgrenzung in Herta Müllers Prosaband: *Der Mensch ist ein grosser Fasan auf der Welt*', *Germanica*, 7 (1990), 115–121 (p. 116). Also cp. Müller, *Fasan*, p. 109–111 and Roberg, p. 36.

²⁷⁸ Müller, *The Passport*, p. 51.

²⁷⁹ David Midgley, 'Remembered Things: The Representation of Memory and Separation in *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt*', in Herta Müller, ed. by Brigid Haines (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), pp. 25–35 (p. 27).

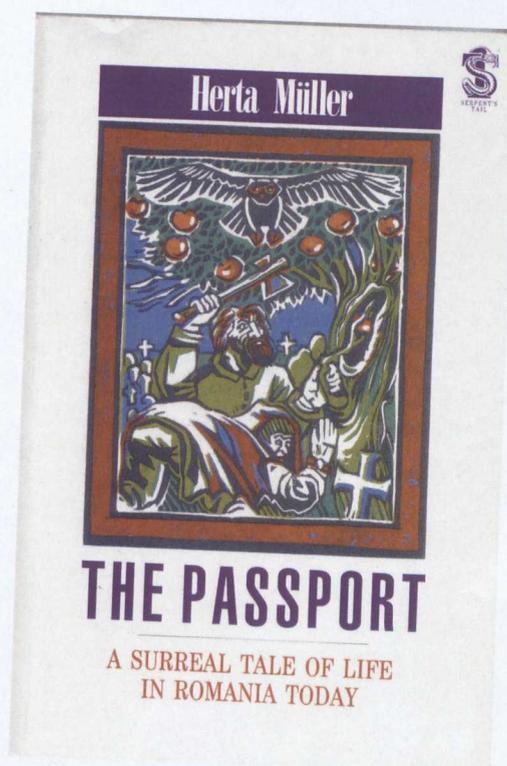
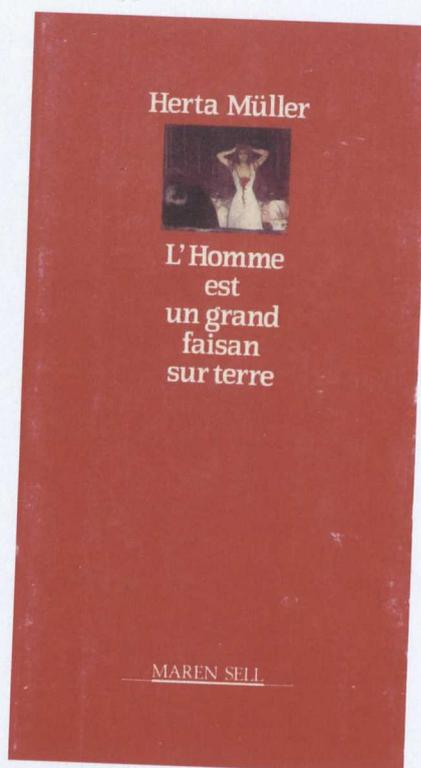
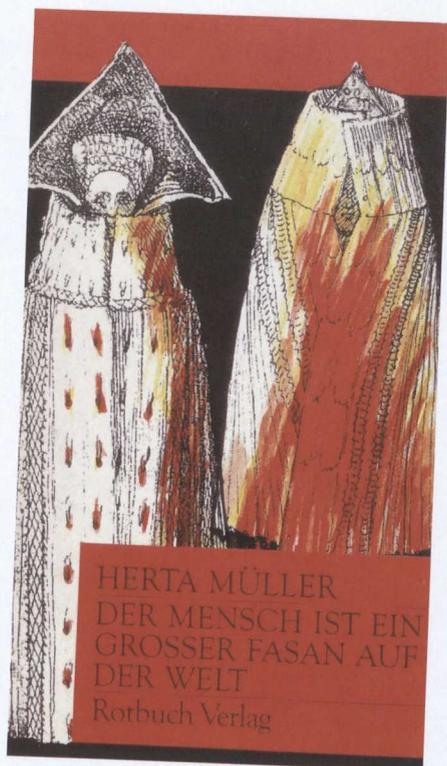


Figure 3: German, French and English Covers of Herta Müller's *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt*

the pheasant combines the contrasting connotations linked to the word in the German and Romanian languages:

Der deutsche Fasan ist der Prahler, der selbstsichere, arrogante Mensch; der rumänische Fasan ist der Verlierer, der seinem Leben nicht gewachsen ist, der Vogel, der nicht fliegen kann, und der, weil er nicht fliegen kann und ziemlich groß und schwer ist, von der Kugel des Jägers getroffen wird.²⁸⁰

The German title thus reflects Müller's very specific use of language, in this case highlighting her polyvalent imagery originating in the two languages she grew up with in Romania. While the French translator transferred this strategy into her own language, the English title, *The Passport*, exemplifies the English edition's general focus on the story. However, the emblematic cover illustration seems to counter this strategy. On the cover of the English translation two men are trying to fell an apple tree devouring its own fruit; an owl circles above this scene (see Figure 3 on the previous page). In the novel the recurring symbol of the owl functions as an avatar of death, while the apple tree, in one particular parabolic tale about the village's past, refers to the biblical tree of knowledge of good and evil. Observed devouring its own fruit, the tree was not felled but on the bishop's advice, burned like a witch at the stake in a 'moment of collective compulsion'.²⁸¹ On the one hand, this cover illustration embodies the narrative structuring of the text by images.²⁸² On the other hand, the particular choice of images foregrounds the totalitarian regime's constant threat of torture and death as well as the involvement of the Church and the way people tolerated human rights abuses.

Granta's edition of Herta Müller's *The Land of Green Plums* relies largely on the same discourses as Serpent Tail's *The Passport*. The testimonial quality of Müller's second English publication is underlined by a quotation from Ian Thomson's review in the *Guardian* referring to *The Land of Green Plums* as an 'autobiographical account',

²⁸⁰ Herta Müller in Brigid Haines and Margaret Littler, 'Gespräch mit Herta Müller', in *Herta Müller*, ed. by Brigid Haines, pp. 14–24 (p. 16).

²⁸¹ See Midgley, p. 32 and Müller, *Fasan*, pp. 32–36.

²⁸² For the importance of these polyvalent images in Herta Müller's writing also cp. Ralph Köhnen, 'Terror und Spiel: Der autofiktionale Impuls', *Herta Müller: Text + Kritik*, 155 (2002), 18–29.

while references to the narrative structuring of the text, which ‘tells the story of a group of young students’, rather elusively describe Herta Müller’s style as eloquent and as developing ‘an almost hypnotic power over the reader’.²⁸³ The blurb as well as the darkish layout and the cover image (an allegedly realist photograph — rather than a symbolist painting — of a woman’s face behind bars),²⁸⁴ foreground the novel’s ‘profound illustration’ of ‘Ceaușescu’s reign of terror’, again ignoring the fact that ‘Müller’s is ultimately not a tragic world but one in which the individual survives against all the odds’.²⁸⁵ The one-dimensional and purely negative interpretation of this edition is also reflected in the choice of the English title. Unlike Serpent’s Tail’s *The Passport*, Granta’s *The Land of Green Plums* keeps to the principle of using a key metaphor as the book’s title and thus anticipates the book’s narrative structure. Yet, the specific image chosen stresses the solely negative interpretation of life under a totalitarian regime. The metaphor of the German title, *Herztier*, evokes a source of energy which feeds the human rights abuses as well as the struggle against the totalitarian regime.²⁸⁶ The metaphor of the green plum is less ambiguous: ‘Grüne Pflaumen werden so mit unbeherrschbaren, destruktiven und selbstdestruktiven Tendenzen assoziiert, die ein diktatorisches Regime im Individuum produziert.’²⁸⁷

The British focus on the political situation in Romania also marks the strategies used by Verso for their publication of Richard Wagner’s *Exit* (1990; *Ausreiseantrag*, 1988), which just like Müller’s *Herztier* has as yet not been translated into French. Like Müller, Wagner, who was one of the initiators of the writing collective ‘Aktionsgruppe Banat’, whose members suffered surveillance and oppression by the Romanian

²⁸³ See Herta Müller, *The Land of Green Plums*, trans. by Michael Hofmann (London: Granta, 1998). For the German edition cp. *Herztier* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1994). Despite its success the novel has not been translated into French.

²⁸⁴ See Figure 4 on the following page.

²⁸⁵ Brigid Haines, “‘Leben wir im Detail’”: Herta Müller’s Micro-Politics of Resistance’, in *Herta Müller*, ed. by Brigid Haines, pp. 109–125 (pp. 109–110).

²⁸⁶ See *ibid.*, pp. 117–118 and Ricarda Schmidt, ‘Metapher, Metonymie und Moral: Herta Müllers *Herztier*’, in *Herta Müller*, ed. by Brigid Haines, pp. 57–74 (p. 71).

²⁸⁷ See Schmidt, ‘Metapher’, p. 69.

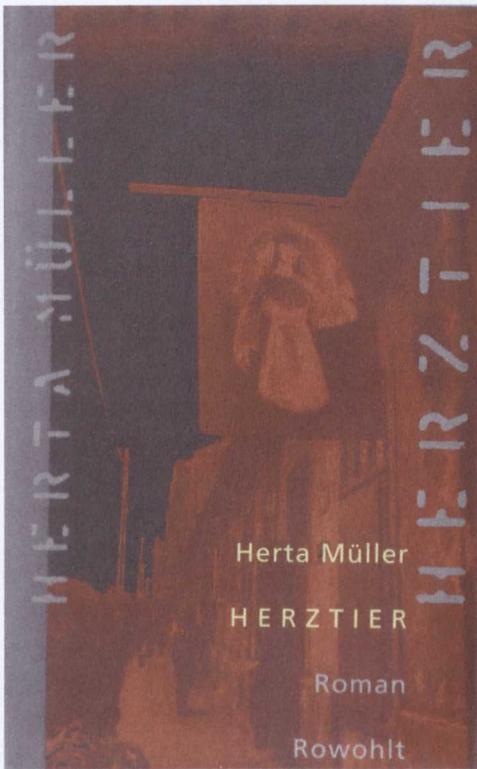


Figure 4: Covers of Herta Müller's *Herztier* and *The Land of Green Plums*

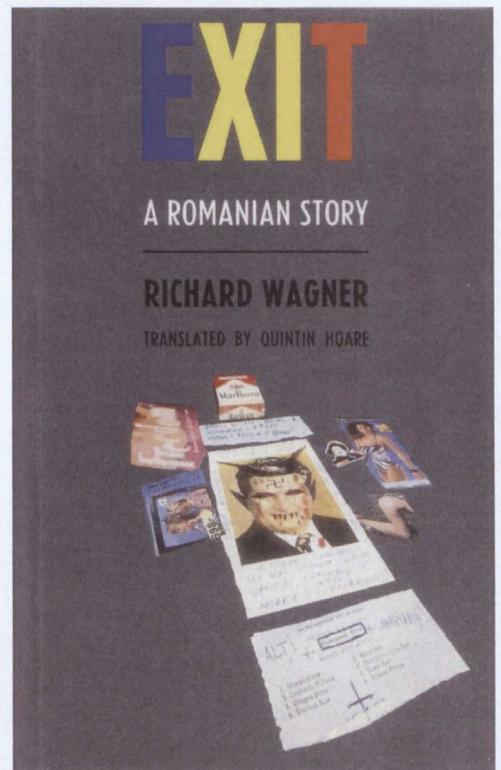
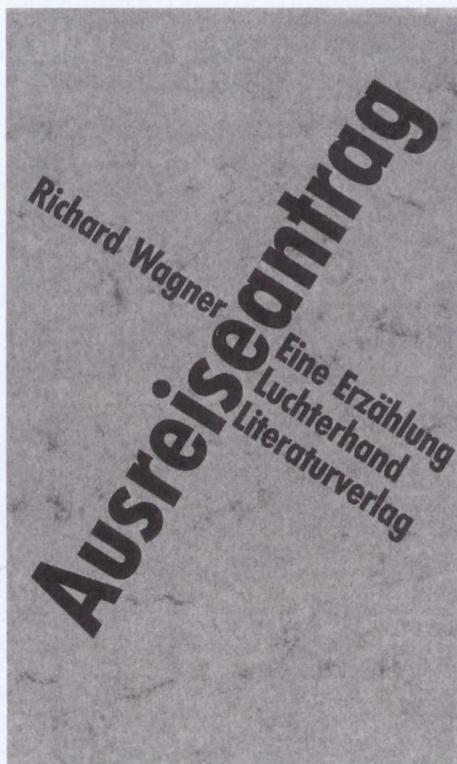


Figure 5: Covers of Richard Wagner's *Ausreiseantrag* and *Exit*

government, left Romania in 1987. Like Müller's, his writing is read as a testimony of life under the Romanian regime. The blurb on the cover, which again mainly focuses on the storyline of the text, includes the following information:

The monstrously repressive world of Ceaușescu's Romania provides the setting and the subject of Richard Wagner's extraordinary narrative, written shortly before the Christmas revolution.
Stirner, the main protagonist, is an ethnic German, and lives in Timisoara, the town which was to be the revolution's birthplace.²⁸⁸

In a preface, commissioned for this edition, Wagner 'reflects on how far life has changed since the revolution'. In order to write this text, Wagner returned to Temesvar, the chief town of the Banat, which, as a footnote explains 'has a mixed population of Hungarians, Romanians, Germans, Serbs, etc. Traditionally known abroad by this, its Hungarian name, it has figured prominently in the world's press recently under its Romanian name, Timisoara.'²⁸⁹ This footnote expressly reveals the editor's strategy of latching on to the worldwide media coverage of the Romanian revolution in order to grab the attention of the intended readership. *Exit*, the title of the book (which is described further as 'a Romanian story') is printed in blue, yellow and red, the colours of the Romanian flag. Instead of an image the cover carries a photograph of an anti-Ceaușescu montage originally mounted on the side of a tank in Romania in December 1989 (see Figure 5 on the previous page).²⁹⁰ Both Ceaușescu's face and the colours of the Romanian flag were presumed to be familiar to people following the news at the time whereas only a year earlier the colours of the German flag in the *The Passport* were not assumed to be immediately recognizable to the intended British audience. As the translation reveals, an explanation was deemed necessary:

²⁸⁸ Richard Wagner, *Exit: A Romanian Story*, trans. by Quintin Hoare (London: Verso, 1990).

²⁸⁹ Wagner, *Exit*, p. v.

²⁹⁰ The German edition has a grey cover with black writing (see Figure 5) which mirrors the dark atmosphere of the story also mentioned in the cover text: 'Die Geschichte, die Richard Wagner erzählt, ist keine düstere Utopie und keine Erinnerung an vergangene Zeiten. Stirner lebt im stillen Chaos einer real existierenden Gesellschaft.' See Richard Wagner, *Ausreiseantrag* (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1988).

Jedes Kind hat von zu Hause ein Abziehbild in den Kindergarten gebracht. Amalie klebte die Bildchen unter die Haken. Jedes Kind sucht jeden Morgen sein Auto, seinen Hund, seine Puppe, seine Blume, seinen Ball. Udo kommt zur Tür herein. Er sucht seine Fahne. Sie ist schwarzrotgold. Udo hängt seinen Mantel an den Haken, über seine Fahne.

Udo comes through the door. He's looking for his flag. It is black, red and gold. A **German flag.**²⁹¹

In contrast to the Serpent's Tail edition of Müller's *The Passport*, where at least the cover illustration and the subtitle stressed the literary elements of the fictional text, Wagner's style is described on the cover of *Exit* as 'fine, stark prose' written 'with the scrupulous detail of the best documentarists'. Again stressing the alleged realism, the text does not make any reference to the fragmented presentation of the so-called story, which is reminiscent of Brecht's *Geschichten vom Herrn Keuner*.²⁹²

In her essay on Libuše Moníková, the Czech writer Alena Wagnerova describes the determinants for the reception of Czech literature in the West as similar to the factors guiding the reception of the German Romanian authors: while Milan Kundera was already an established writer when he emigrated, Ota Filip attracted the attention of the Western media because of his imprisonment in Czechoslovakia and Ivan Klíma, who never left his country, was of interest because of his dissident status. When Moníková emigrated to Germany, she was neither a victim of political persecution nor was she famous.²⁹³ This background might help to explain why the publishing strategies used for her writing differ markedly from those employed for Herta Müller and Richard Wagner. Unlike Müller and Wagner, Moníková is not a member of a German minority. Liberating herself from the linguistic taboos imposed on her own language, Moníková chose to write in German.²⁹⁴ However, she also enjoys taking the foreign language to its

²⁹¹ Müller, *Fasan*, pp. 59–60 and *Passport*, p. 50. My emphasis.

²⁹² The Brechtian influence on Wagner is also stressed by Tudoric□ pp. 50–53.

²⁹³ See Alena Wagnerova, 'Die Teilung Europas als Schicksal und Thema Libuše Moníkovás', *Literaturmagazin*, 44, 9 (1999), 130–142 (p. 133).

²⁹⁴ See Jürgen Engler, 'Gespräch mit Libuše Moníková: "Wer nicht liest, kennt die Welt nicht"', *Neue deutsche Literatur*, 5 (1997), 9–23 (pp. 13–14). The reviews unanimously identify Moníková as a Czech author and link her texts to other Czech writers in exile (cp. Nicole Zand, 'Prisonniers de façades', *Le Monde*, 29 September 1998; Nicole Zand, 'D'autres mondes tchèque au Groenland', *Le Monde*, 13 May

limits, as proved in her novel *Die Fassade* (1987), which uses the unending restoration of the frescoes of a Bohemian castle as a metaphor for the rewriting of Czech and Eastern European histories from an artistic perspective. This novel, for which she was awarded the Alfred Döblin prize, gained her an international reputation which led to translations into French and English. Unlike the texts by the Romanian German authors, *The Façade* (published in the United States in 1991 and in Britain in 1992) was marketed in a distinctly literary fashion. On the British cover a quotation from a review describes the novel with reference to literary terms and movements: ‘A spectacularly classic comedy [...] This is a book that ‘makes “magic realism” read like five-finger exercises.’ Furthermore, the text is characterized as ‘exuberantly imaginative, bursting with steam and intelligence’.²⁹⁵ The imaginative and comic quality of the novel is also stressed in the cover illustration which shows the diversity of images used in the process of the façade’s restoration (see Figure 6 on the following page). At the same time this palimpsest also reveals the text’s intertextual structure, which led Brigid Haines to characterize it as a ‘highly intertextual “Schelmenroman”’.²⁹⁶

The funny, imaginative and intertextual quality of Moníková’s novel also features prominently on the cover of the French version *La Façade*, published in 1989: ‘Dans ce roman picaresque, Libuše Moníková célèbre l’héritage humoristique, satirique et fantastique qui est celui du peuple tchèque.’²⁹⁷ However, the French cover also emphasizes Moníková’s more serious historical project. Both the German and the French cover illustrations focus on the historical dimension of the text. While the publisher Hanser portrays the fights for Czech national self-determination, the French

1994; Gérard Meudal, ‘Disparitions: Libuše Moníková: Une digne héritière de Franz Kafka’, *Le Monde*, 16 January 1998).

²⁹⁵ Libuše Moníková, *The Façade: M.N.O.P.Q.*, trans. by John E. Woods (London: Chatto & Windus, 1992).

²⁹⁶ Brigid Haines, “‘New Places from Which to Write Histories of Peoples’: Power and the Personal in the Novels of Libuše Moníková”, *German Life and Letters*, 49, 4 (1996), 501–512 (p. 502).

²⁹⁷ Libuše Moníková, *La Façade: M.N.O.P.Q.*, trans. by Nicole Casanova (Paris: Belfond, 1989).

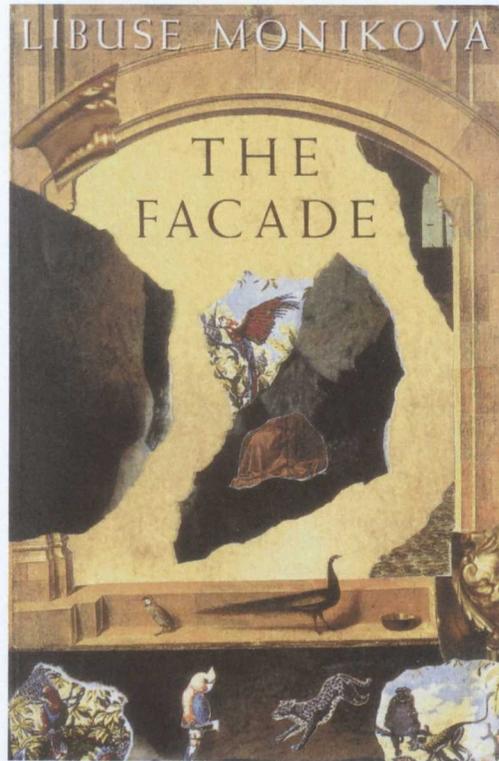


Figure 6: Cover of Libuše Moníková's *The Façade*

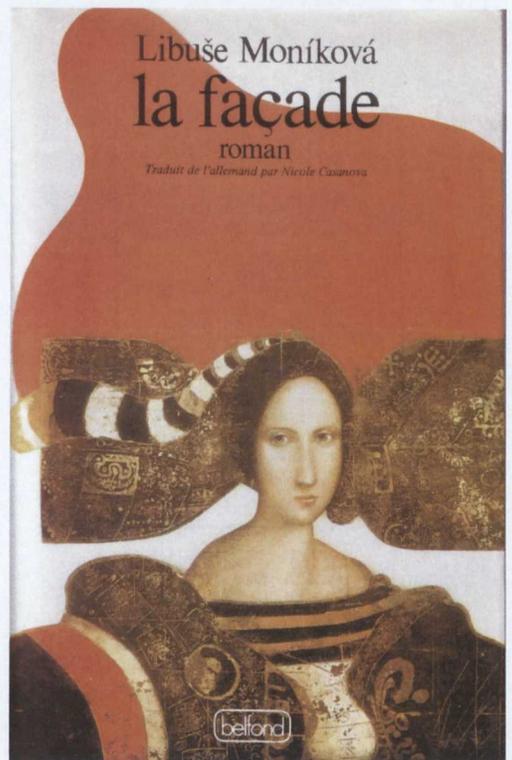
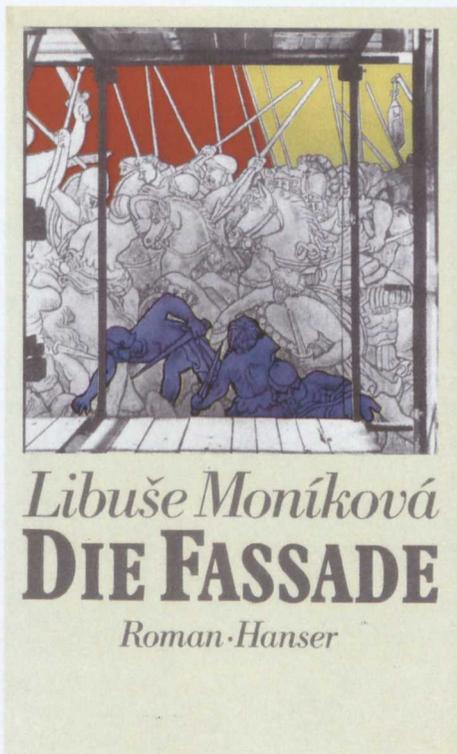


Figure 7: Covers of Libuše Moníková's *Die Fassade* and *La Façade*

cover alludes to Queen Libuše, the legendary ruler of the Czechs (see Figure 7 on the previous page). Furthermore, the French cover text underlines that Moníková's text deconstructs the Western idea of Europe, which does not extend beyond the European Union: 'Menant ses personnages du nord de la Bohême aux confins de l'Asie, elle révèle à ses lecteurs un continent inconnu: l'Europe!'. Her texts on Eastern Europe thus question the alleged European centre: "Europa" wird lesbar als unauffindbarer Ort, dessen mächtiges hypertrophes Selbstbild als historisches, kulturelles und politisches Zentrum sich auf Kosten der "zerquetschten und blutleeren" Peripherie konstituiert.²⁹⁸

As Katie Trumpener pointed out, this project is undermined in the English translation of the titles for the first and the second part of the novel. While Moníková constructs a parallelism between the 'Böhmische Dörfer', which apart from referring to Bohemian villages also is a German idiom describing something incomprehensible, and the 'Potemkische Dörfer' (Potemkin villages), the translator turns the parallelism into a binary opposition by transferring the titles as 'Inner Bohemia' and 'Outer Siberia'.²⁹⁹ The translator thus reproduces the Western binary perception of East and West and thereby confirms Alena Wagnerova's observation that while the emigrating writers never thought of themselves as belonging to the Eastern Bloc, they were usually located and read in this framework in the West:

Wir gingen davon aus, daß die Mauer, die Europa teilte, nur eine Seite hatte, die uns vom Westen abschirmen sollte. Jetzt stellten wir fest, daß sie zwei Seiten hatte, und diese zweite, die westliche Seite, sogar höher und mächtiger war als die östliche und die Akzeptanz ihrer Existenz allgemein. Und dies geschah freiwillig in der freien Welt.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ Ulrike Vedder, "Mit schiefem Mund auch "Heimat"": Heimat und Nation in Libuše Moníkovás Texten', *Monatshefte*, 89, 4 (1997), 477–488 (p. 479).

²⁹⁹ See Katie Trumpener, 'Is Female to Nation as Nature is to Culture? Božena Němcová, Libuše Moníková, and the Female Folkloric', in *Other Germanies: Questioning Identity in Women's Literature and Art*, ed. by Karen Jankowsky and Karla Love (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), pp. 99–118 (p. 118). For a different attitude on this translation problem see the article by Karen Jankowsky, 'Between "Inner Bohemia" and "Outer Siberia": Libuše Moníková Destabilizes Notions of Nation and Gender', in *Other Germanies*, ed. by Karen Jankowsky and Karla Love, pp. 119–146 (pp. 124–125).

³⁰⁰ Wagnerova, p. 134.

The emigrants from Eastern Europe were reduced to writers from the East whose texts did not have anything to say about the West. The adoption of a different strategy for the publication of Moníková's novel *Façade* meant that her writing was rejected in Britain, where none of her other texts were published, whereas the French publisher Belfond also issued her other novels. Herta Müller and Richard Wagner, by contrast, were significantly more successful in Britain than in France.

2.1.3 Ideology, Genre, Language: Determining Dimensions of Otherness

The British disregard for German writing can be traced back to the general rejection of structural otherness, which first and foremost finds expression in a lack of interest in translation. Yet, even the marketing and press reception of the texts which manage to overcome the wide abyss and are published in Britain are marked by various rejections of otherness. While the French marketing strategies of Müller's and Moníková's texts included a hint of their criticism of the Western self, the English editions excluded this specific feature of their works. Used as a selling device, otherness in British marketing practice is thus rarely understood as a challenge to the self but is limited to a foreign and/or strange other serving as a confirmation of the self. Read as the witnesses of the evil other, Müller and Wagner served to make the self shine more brightly. Furthermore, the reviewers take a critical stance to the otherness of Müller's writing demanding a more realist presentation of the story. This demand for sameness also played an important role in the marketing of Moníková, who was mainly sold as a witty writer. The rejection of otherness thus on the one hand entails the projection of the otherness of the self onto the exotic other and on the other hand results in a demand for structural sameness.

These determinants of reception resulting from the multidimensional rejection of otherness will be further explored in the following detailed studies of translations. Each of these studies will focus on one specific dimension which proved to be an important

factor in the marketing and reception of German texts in translation. However, this strategy does not imply that the other dimensions can be completely excluded because the various rejections are intricately linked. In the following section I concentrate on the translation of ideological otherness in the works of Monika Maron; section 2.3 focuses on the translation of generic otherness in Hilsenrath's fairy tale on the Holocaust; finally in section 2.4 I deal with the translation of linguistic otherness in Anne Duden's *Übergang*. While the authors in different ways respond to the claim of otherness, the translations ignore the claim of the other. Integrating their texts into the frameworks of understanding, the translators and publishers reinscribe them with the borderlines they attempt to transgress.

2.2 Caught in the Cold War: Monika Maron

Hailed as a dissident writer in the 1980s and later castigated as a GDR spy in the 1990s, Monika Maron has come to unite in one single person the West's two opposing constructions of the Cold War other: the critical opponent and the criminal proponent of the communist system. Her 'career' is one shared by a number of GDR writers. The allegations against her, first published by the German weekly *Der Spiegel* in 1995, occurred at a time of general reckoning with East German authors — the most prominent example being Christa Wolf — who before the fall of the Berlin Wall had been acclaimed as dissidents, sometimes even by the same critics who later damned them.³⁰¹ This final judgement of the defeated system, in a manner reminiscent of a witch hunt, is characterized by the typical desire for the constant repetition of the evil other. Bhabha argues that this demand reveals the ambiguity underlying stereotypical thinking. While stereotypes are taken to represent eternal truths and thus should not need any proof, they 'can never really, in discourse, be proved' and therefore demand constant repetition.³⁰² Reacting to the allegations against her person, Maron expresses the hope that her own story might have contributed to breaking this vicious circle: 'Wenn meine etwas absurde Geschichte dazu beigetragen haben sollte, dass bei dem Wort Stasi der Öffentlichkeit, wie dem Pawlowschen Hund, nicht gleich der Speichel von den Lefzen tropft, soll sie mir recht gewesen sein.'³⁰³ Rather than elaborating on the sensationalist

³⁰¹ See Kerstin Dietrich, "*DDR-Literatur*" im Spiegel der deutsch-deutschen Literaturdebatte: "*DDR-Autorinnen*" neu bewertet (Frankfurt/Main: Lang, 1998), p. 14 and Egbert Meyer, *DDR-Literatur in Westdeutschland: literaturwissenschaftliche, schulische und feuilletonistische Rezeption literarischer Prosa aus der DDR* (Frankfurt/Main: Lang, 1994), pp. 7–8 and 175–178. Egbert particularly stresses Karl Corino's metamorphosis from an intercultural mediator to a harsh critic of GDR literature (see p. 22 and pp. 177–178).

³⁰² Bhabha, p. 66. In this chapter Bhabha focuses on colonial discourse strategies. However, based on Derrida's argument that his experiences should not be limited to a colonial context but are representative of human being (see p. 49 of the first chapter of this thesis), I think that Bhabha's description of stereotypes can also be applied to the FRG's colonization of the GDR.

³⁰³ Monika Maron, 'Heuchelei und Niedertracht', in *quer über die gleise: artikel, essays, zwischenrufe* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 2000), pp. 34–43 (p. 43). First published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in October 1995.

revelation of Maron's collaboration with the secret police, which, as the two Stasi reports show, did not supply her clients with useful information but with criticism of the GDR, the following chapter will focus on the construction of the author as a dissident writer, which preceded, and to my mind prepared the ground for, her alleged downfall.³⁰⁴

Born in 1941, Maron grew up in a communist family: 'Ich war das Kind von Kommunisten. [...] Ich wuchs auf in einer Welt der Ideologien, nicht der Nationen, Deutschland ist mir erst allmählich als Problem angetragen worden.'³⁰⁵ Furthermore, despite her harsh criticism of the conditions in the GDR, she never gave up on these communist ideals which still feed her utopian visions.³⁰⁶ Having abandoned her University career, she worked as a journalist for the weekly *Wochenpost* before, in the late 1970s, she started writing fiction about the social and political conditions in the GDR where her works were never published. Her first novel *Flugasche* focuses on the journalist Josefa Nadler who, in the course of a fight for the publication of a critical article in the weekly *Illustrierte Woche*, crosses the thin borderline between acceptable criticism and punishable subversion which entails her eventual exclusion from the publishing house. The banning of this novel in the GDR helped Maron to achieve instant success in the Federal Republic. First serialized in the conservative newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Flugasche* unleashed an open debate in the West German press. Starting with these revealing antagonisms, which pre-empt Maron's later reception abroad, the following analysis of the translations of her works will uncover the discursive strategies underlying the construction of Maron as a dissident writer in Britain and the United States, which, as Elizabeth Ruth Mittmann observed in her dissertation,

³⁰⁴ Maron only wrote two reports which she published in *quer über die gleise*, pp. 24–33.

³⁰⁵ Monika Maron, 'Ich war ein antifaschistisches Kind', in *Nach Maßgabe meiner Begreifungskraft* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1993), pp. 9–28 (p. 9).

³⁰⁶ See the article by Volker Hage, 'Alles zu wenig, alles zu spät', *Die Zeit*, 17 June 1988, p. 38, which is based on an interview with the author on the event of her leaving the GDR on a three-year visa for the Federal Republic.

reduces the otherness underlying her works to a criticism of the GDR other: ‘What the dissident label can obscure when we move to a reading of her texts is the complexity of Maron’s social and political criticism.’³⁰⁷ Furthermore, these readings ignore the literary quality of her writing, which is a determining factor in the French reception of Maron’s works discussed from section 2.2.3.onwards. Uncovering the otherness underlying her texts, which transgress the East-West divide imposed on them by criticism and translations, the following analyses ultimately aim to describe the wide spectrum of translational reactions to this otherness which ranges from the simplistic reduction of otherness to the dark other in the English translation of her first two novels, *Flight of Ashes* and *The Defector*, via the exoticist projection of utopian ideas onto the communist other in the French translation of her second novel to the discovery of the otherness of the self in the French translation of her third novel, *Rue du Silence*, N° 6.

2.2.1 Revealing Antagonisms: *Flugasche* in the West German Press

The rare comments on the reception of Maron’s first novel *Flugasche* in the West German press mainly focus on the frameworks in which her texts were read. While several commentators point out that, at the height of the Green movement in West Germany, the book was often described as the first ecological novel from the GDR, others stress the feminist reception of Maron’s first work.³⁰⁸ These two foci coincide with the design of the first German edition of *Flugasche* which illustrates the ecological content of the novel with a darkish drawing of an industrial town and incorporates the feminist angle of Maron’s text in an excerpt from one of Josefa’s dreams (see Figure 8 on the following page).³⁰⁹ However, rather than concentrating on specific topics, the

³⁰⁷ Elizabeth Ruth Mittmann, ‘Encounters with the Institution: Woman and *Wissenschaft* in GDR Literature’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1992), p. 104.

³⁰⁸ See Elke Gilson, ‘Wie die Literatur hilft, “Übers Leben nachzudenken”: Das Oeuvre von Monika Maron’, *Studia Germanica Gandensia*, 47 (1999), p. 31.

³⁰⁹ Monika Maron, *Flugasche*, Collection S. Fischer, 17 (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1981).



Figure 8: Cover of Monika Maron's *Flugasche*

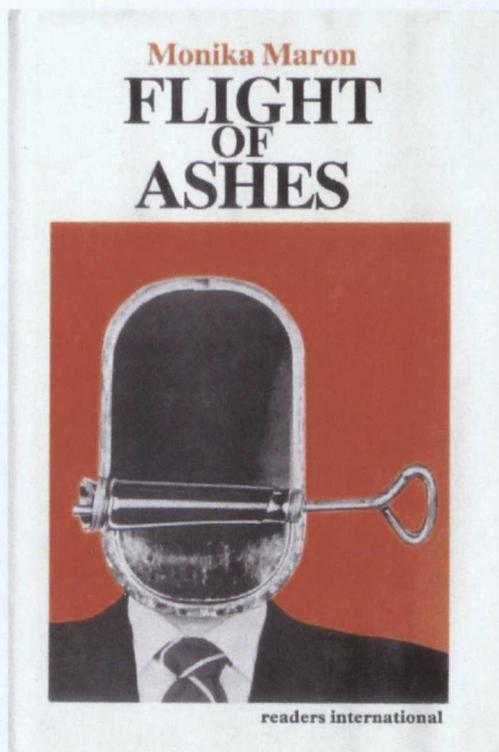


Figure 9: Cover of Monika Maron's *Flight of Ashes*

following analysis of Maron's reception intends to uncover the political stance of the critics. This reading is not imposed on the texts but was inspired by the critics themselves who partly use the novel to openly attack each other. As Maron observed herself in an interview: 'Im Westen wurden meine Texte oft für öffentliche Diskussionen eingespannt.'³¹⁰ Since the debate was aroused by the serialization and interpretation of the novel in the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the first review from this newspaper will serve as a starting point for the analysis which does not, however, proceed chronologically but divides the articles into anti- and pro-communist reactions.

Using strategies which resemble the reception of Herta Müller's texts as testimonies from a communist regime, anti-communist critics generally categorize Maron's *Flugasche* as a realist text. This is an approach which neglects her use of dreams and the changes in the narrative perspective.³¹¹ For them the novel represents an objective source of information about the totalitarian system in the GDR, which can be used as an instrument of power in the Cold War debate. On the event of its serialization in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* Franz Josef Görtz praises *Flugasche* for capturing contemporary reality in a socialist country. To his mind Maron uses the description of ordinary life in the GDR to reveal the gap between political theory and social reality. Furthermore, Görtz stresses that the socialist system does not permit change. According to Görtz, GDR citizens faced only two options: either they accepted the unchangeable paradoxes or they left the country. Since the problems are inherent in the political system, the protagonist's attempt to rock its foundations in order to change her society from within is damned to failure: 'Josefa Nadler rüttelt kräftig. Und spricht doch nur

³¹⁰ Gerhard Richter, 'Verschüttete Kultur: Ein Gespräch mit Monika Maron', *GDR Bulletin*, 18 (1992), 2–7 (p. 6).

³¹¹ The changes in the narrative perspective will be discussed in section 2.2.2.1.2 First- or Third-Person Narrator? Changes in the Narrative Focus, pp. 124ff. For a discussion of Maron's use of dreams see 2.2.3 *Realism vs Surrealism: The Defector vs La Transfuge*, pp. 143ff. of this chapter.

aus, was auch andere denken, denen, wie ihr selbst, dieses Land so sehr am Herzen liegt, daß sie es am liebsten auf der Stelle verändern würden — wenn sie nur wüßten, wie das zu machen wäre, ohne zugleich seine politische Verfassung zu verändern.’³¹²

The label ‘realist’ is also employed by Karl Corino, one of the most important mediators of literature from the GDR in West Germany. He sets Maron’s novel apart from the official socialist realist guidelines which according to him, despite their misleading label, are not intended to describe but to transfigure reality: ‘Nicht Realismus war gefragt, sondern Verklärung, nicht Beschreibung des Gegebenen, sondern Agitation.’³¹³ Corino argues that in her novel Maron reveals that the journalists in the GDR at the time were on the whole still sworn to this motto. Unveiling the mechanisms of self-censorship and official censorship, Maron’s realist insight into the journalistic profession exposes the defects of journalistic writing in the GDR in order to induce change. Implying that Maron consciously transgresses the official doctrine for writers in the GDR, Corino ascribes to her the typical features of a dissident writer. Furthermore, he describes Maron’s fiction as the continuation of her journalistic writing and locates it within the tradition of Western investigative journalism which comes to be equated with realism in his article:

Operatives Schreiben heißt für Monika Maron offenbar, Mißstände so anzuprangern, daß sie erkennbar und veränderbar werden. Ihr Ziel hat sie nicht aufgegeben, als sie vor fünf Jahren die Wochenpost verließ. Ihre Literatur ist die Fortsetzung des Journalismus mit anderen Mitteln, ohne daß dessen Vorzüge, Einfachheit, Deutlichkeit, Faßlichkeit, geopfert wären.

Her dissidence from the other system is thus interpreted to imply her agreement with the Western order. The same tendency seems to be operating here as Bhabha observed in

³¹² Franz Josef Görtz, ‘Das bißchen Sozialismus: Unser neuer Fortsetzungsroman: Monika Marons *Flugasche*’, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25 November 1980. For a similar reading cp. the two reviews by Jörg Bernhard Bilke, ‘Wo die Bronchien schmerzen: Der erste Umwelt-Roman aus Ost-Berlin: Monika Marons *Flugasche*’, *Die Welt*, 24 March 1981 and ‘Monika Maron: *Flugasche*’, *Die Welt der Bücher: Aus Literatur und Wissenschaft*, 6 (1981), pp. 285–286.

³¹³ Karl Corino, ‘Dann wird eben nicht zu Ende gedacht: Monika Marons Roman *Flugasche* und der Journalismus in der DDR’, *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 15 August 1981.

colonial discourse strategies: '[T]o be different from those who are different makes you the same'.³¹⁴

In a similar vein Uwe Wittstock describes Josefa as an individualist who not only resists patriarchal norms by living on her own but also fights the ideological subordination of her profession by describing the defects of the system. This latter characteristic is transferred onto the writer: 'Monika Maron ist mit ihrem Roman der Ausbruch aus dem verordneten Schweigen gelungen.' Wittstock thus implicitly characterizes Maron as a dissident. Yet, unlike Görtz and Corino, Wittstock criticizes Maron's allegedly realist style. Describing her prose not only as elegant but also as precise, Wittstock argues that the novel lacks a sort of Benjaminian foreignness which disturbs the reading process: 'Vielleicht ist die Sprache aber auch zu bequem. Gelegentlich fehlen die Widerhaken, an denen man hängen bleibt.'³¹⁵ Yet, while he praises her loving description of Josefa's colourful and imaginative dreams, which he interprets as flights from the depressing reality, he dismisses Maron's attempt to alienate the reader from the protagonist by the sudden change of the narrative perspective as clumsy.

While anti-communist critics thus mainly use the novel in their reviews as a foil to display the freedom of the receiving country, those from the other side of the political spectrum can be divided into two categories. Tilman Jens directly attacks the anti-communist interpretations of Maron's novel and tries to save her from being used for the corroboration of Cold War discourses. To his mind *Flugasche* is abused by the journalists of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, who take pride in first serializing this alleged dissident novel about environmental problems and oppression in the GDR. According to Jens, Maron could never have written a single line in the political or the

³¹⁴ Bhabha, p. 44.

³¹⁵ Uwe Wittstock, 'Verordnetes Schweigen: Monika Marons Roman *Flugasche*', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 April 1981. On the Benjaminian foreignness cp. 1.3.2 'Die Fremdheit der Sprachen': Walter Benjamin, pp. 41ff. in the first chapter of this thesis.

business pages of this paper — which supported the right-wing regimes in South America — without betraying her principles. The portrayal of Maron as a dissident writer is thus entirely constructed by the critics who use her for their own goals: ‘Wer etwa meint, in Monika Maron eine Weggefährtin für den kalten Krieg zu finden, hat sich getäuscht. Von einer Sehnsucht nach dem Westen ist bei aller Kritik am Osten in ihrem Roman nichts zu spüren.’³¹⁶ Jens argues that by limiting Maron’s criticism to the GDR the critics ignore the relevance of the novel to the Federal Republic:

Sowohl der hämische Fingerzeig nach drüben, als auch die Reduktion dieses Buches auf privates Seelenleid, verstellen den Blick auf diesen wichtigen Roman. Man muß ihn in seiner privaten und politischen Radikalität begreifen, um zu erkennen, wie viel in diesem Buch aus Ostberlin auch über uns zu lesen ist.

Unlike Jens, who attempts to overcome the East-West divide, the critics Christa Rotzoll and Ria Endres basically agree with the anti-communist readings of Maron’s novel, albeit without singing her praises. In order to refute Jens’s thesis, Christa Rotzoll uses a similar argument to Corino. Rejecting the surreal passages as kitschy, Rotzoll commends the book for its documentary character: ‘Das Buch gibt eine Menge her — aber als Dokument und weniger als Poesie-Versuch.’ Like Corino, Rotzoll stresses Maron’s journalistic background and locates the novel within the tradition of Western investigative journalism. However, Rotzoll, unlike Corino, takes a critical stance towards this tradition. She accuses Maron and her Western colleagues of sensationalism: ‘Unsere Journalistik hungert geradezu nach Mißständen. Etwas zu geißeln, kostet beinahe nichts. Was die Berichte ausrichten, ist eine andere Sache.’³¹⁷ Equating narrator and author, Rotzoll claims that Maron’s one-dimensional depiction of the protagonist’s opponents, which comes across to her as a personal vendetta against former colleagues, makes these characters seem even more real to the Western reader. In a direct attack on Tilman Jens, Rotzoll therefore comes to the conclusion that Maron would without doubt

³¹⁶ Tilman Jens, ‘Sand im Getriebe zweier Kulturen’, *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt*, 22 May 1981.

³¹⁷ Christa Rotzoll, ‘Gebremster Zorn: Der Ostberliner Journalistinnen-Roman *Flugasche*’, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 25/26 April 1981.

have written an article for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Yet, despite her criticism of Jens, Rotzoll's critical approach to the book fulfils his major demand: Rather than limiting *Flugasche* to a dissident document from the GDR, she reveals the relevance of this novel to the FRG. Her disagreement with Jens thus essentially arises from their contrasting attitudes towards Maron's novel: while Jens praises it as complex, Rotzoll dismisses it as shallow.

Ria Endres, by contrast, judges *Flugasche* by the socialist realist standards described by Georg Lukács. In her initial characterization of the novel Endres agrees with Görtz and Corino. Like Corino, she argues that Maron in her novel transcends socialist literary theory for she no longer follows Georg Lukács's demand for a positive resolution of alienation processes. On the contrary, like Görtz, Endres claims that the inner conflict of Maron's protagonist Josefa Nadler, who is torn between her official function as a journalist and her own subjective experience, exposes the tension arising from the gulf between social determination and subjective reality. Instead of coming to a resolution, the conflict leads to the eventual isolation and finally the exclusion of the protagonist from socialist society. Endres believes that this detailed description of the stifling East German socialist order induced shock and embarrassment among GDR functionaries, which explains why the novel was banned. However, in Endres' critique Maron's break with socialist realism does not meet with unreserved praise. Drawing on Lukács's Marxist understanding of literature and his outright disregard for the irrationality of avantgarde writing, Endres contends that contemporary writers in the Federal Republic suppress their *angst* in solipsistic celebrations of general destruction.³¹⁸ She therefore commends Maron for her clear social analysis and her attempt to reveal and attack the dehumanizing effects of society. Nevertheless, Endres concludes that the novel lacks imaginative force: 'Flugasche legt sich auf eine entzauberte Welt, und doch

³¹⁸ For Lukács's socialist realist approach I draw on Georg Lukács, 'Preface', in *Studies in European Realism* (London: The Merlin Press, 1972), pp. 1–19.

könnte sie auch wegfliegen. Dieser Traum ist aber nicht Thema des Romans. Es wird immer schwerer, Imagination hervorzubringen.³¹⁹ The novel thus does not fulfil Lukacs's demand for a utopian vision or, in his own words, for 'an unshakeable faith in the march of mankind and their own people towards a better future.'³²⁰ However, *Flugasche* clearly contains dreams of a better society which have usually been ignored by the critics. After a conversation with one of her moralistic neighbours who asks her to take part in the communal building of the new fence, Josefa dreams of living in a house where all the occupants are friends and support each other. Her dream of communal life, which can easily be transferred to a bigger entity such as a state, does not consist of drawing borderlines by building fences together but it implies personal security as well as financial support for writers: 'Und wenn einer ein Buch schreiben will, kann er aufhören zu arbeiten und die anderen bezahlen ihm einen einjährigen Arbeitsurlaub.'³²¹

Whether communist or anti-communist, the critics, apart from Tilman Jens, reduce Maron's social criticism to the GDR and consequently uphold the East-West divide which Maron tries to transgress in her protagonist's utopian dream of an ideal community. Their differences result from their opinions about her criticism. Whereas the anti-communist critics mainly describe Maron's novel as a realist insight into the dire conditions in the GDR and use it as a tool for their own goals, the pro-communist reception either extends her criticism to the West or criticizes Maron for her Western approach towards the East. This antagonism also shapes Maron's reception abroad. In France *Flugasche* was never published — her French mediator Michel-François Demet once called it Maron's worst book.³²² However, the novel aroused interest in Britain and the United States, where, as the following discussion of the English translation, *Flight of*

³¹⁹ Ria Endres, 'Schwierig: Umgang mit Wirklichkeit: Monika Marons Roman *Flugasche*', *Die Zeit*, 10 April 1981.

³²⁰ Lukács, p. 19.

³²¹ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 31.

³²² See Michel-François Demet, 'Die Themen der Flucht und Grenze als wiederkehrende Motive in den Prosawerken von Monika Maron und Hartmut Lange', *Germanica*, 7.(1990), 123–133 (p. 132).

Ashes, will show, the text was located within anti-communist discourses and thus read as a criticism of the GDR other.

2.2.2 The Construction of a Dissident: *Flight of Ashes*

The publication of Maron's novel *Flugasche* in Britain and the United States was initiated by the translator, David Newton Marinelli, who offered his English translation to a number of different publishing houses. The novel was eventually accepted by Amnesty International's publishing arm Readers International, which specializes in issuing novels banned in their countries of origin. This particular interest also shapes the marketing strategies employed for Maron's first English publication. Unlike Fischer's first German edition of *Flugasche*, which, as mentioned above, concentrates on the ecological content and the feminist angle of the novel, Readers International's version focuses on Maron's position in the GDR. Using her family background as a starting point — Maron is the stepdaughter of one of the founding fathers and later interior minister of the GDR, Karl Maron —, the blurb on the cover of *Flight of Ashes* draws on Wittstock's review in order to stress Maron's dissidence: '[H]er novel breaks decisively with the prescribed silences of her milieu'.³²³ This interpretation is further emphasized in the cover illustration. On the one hand, as Peter Lewis pointed out, Klaus Staeck's picture *Die Gedanken sind frei*, which draws on surrealist strategies, 'points to the importance for Maron of non-realistic artistic modes'.³²⁴ However, on the other hand, the description of the graphic artist as 'a leading defender of freedom of expression in Europe' reintroduces the discourse of dissidence. Furthermore, the text explicitly reduces the intention of Maron's novel to a critique of the GDR: '[S]he gives us a thoughtful, passionate and surprising view of one person's struggle to live and work

³²³ See the quotation from Wittstock's review on p. 115 of this thesis.

³²⁴ Peter Lewis, 'Monika Maron', *Stand Magazine*, 30 February 1989, pp. 32–33 (p. 33). For the cover see Figure 9, p. 112 of this chapter.

honestly behind the wall.’³²⁵ In the following comparative analysis of the differences between the English translation and the German text I aim to show that the interpretation of *Flugasche* in the English translation mirrors these publication strategies, which bear significant similarities to the anti-communist readings described above. I will first of all focus on the changes in the construction of the protagonist Josefa Nadler. Subsequently I will concentrate on the reduction of oppositional voices among Josefa’s colleagues. Since these anti-communist translation strategies clash with the gender discourses, the translation of the latter shall be discussed in the third subsection of the analysis. Finally, the last section will demonstrate that the focus on the political and the social content of the novel means that the literary elements of Maron’s novel are ignored.

2.2.2.1 *Fighting the Battle of the Righteous: Josefa Nadler*

Flugasche focuses on a journalist in the GDR, Josefa Nadler, who is asked to report on the industrial town B. (identifiable as Bitterfeld). Instead of the bromide report on *Helden der Arbeit* (Heroes of Labour), Josefa writes an article about the detrimental effects of the power station on the local population. These are captured in the image used for the title of the novel *flight of ashes*. However, this article does not represent a conscious decision in favour of dissidence. Only in the course of fighting for its publication does Josefa become aware of the article’s wider implications and withdraws from her colleagues and her friends. The changes in the first chapter, which foreshadow the interpretation of the whole novel, and the ensuing modifications in the narrative perspective will serve to explain how the English translation turned Josefa into a conscious dissident who fights the battle of the righteous.

³²⁵ Monika Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, trans. by David Newton Marinelli (London, New York: Readers International, 1986).

2.2.2.1.1 Enticing Madness: Josefa Nadler's Incipiently Anarchic Character

The first chapter of the novel *Flugasche* serves as a kind of prologue in which the protagonist Josefa Nadler revisits her childhood in order to provide the reader with a portrait of her character. Adopting a double perspective, which vacillates between the child who acts and the adult who comments, Josefa relates her childhood decision to trace her character back to her maternal grandfather who, being Jewish, was killed by the Nazis two years before Josefa was born. His death allows her to construct herself a role-model which incorporates all the character traits she finds desirable in a person. Yet, the image of her grandfather does not entirely represent a construct but is inspired by other people's memories and photos. One of his reported character traits, which determines Josefa's decision to trace herself back to him, is his alleged madness: 'Die Verrücktheit des Großvaters war verlockend. Verrückte Menschen erschienen mir freier als normale. Sie entzogen sich der lästigen Bewertung durch die Mitmenschen, die es bald aufgaben, die Verrückten verstehen zu wollen. Die sind verrückt, sagten sie und ließen sie in Ruhe.'³²⁶ If we read this passage in the light of Foucault's *Histoire de la folie*, the grandfather's madness reveals less about his state of health than about the limiting social norms.³²⁷ His categorization as abnormal was absurdly based on the observations that he would not get up when a cat was sitting on his lap, or that every morning he would prepare for each of his children the drink it desired for breakfast.³²⁸ Since the small Josefa regarded these character traits as admirable rather than strange, the word 'verrückt', which she adopted from the adults surrounding her, assumed

³²⁶ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 9. My italics. Also see p. 11.

³²⁷ See Michel Foucault, *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Union Générale d'Édition, 1974), p. 10: 'Vers quelle région irions-nous, qui n'est ni l'histoire de la connaissance, ni l'histoire tout court, qui n'est commandée ni par la téléologie de la vérité, ni par l'enchaînement rationnel des causes, lesquels n'ont valeur et sens qu'au delà du partage? Une région, sans doute, où il serait question plutôt des limites que de l'identité d'une culture.'

³²⁸ See Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 9.

positive connotations in her usage. In the protagonist's retrospective considerations the childish repetition of this word thus implies linguistic as well as social criticism.

The English translator, however, decides to give up the child's simplistic and at the same time critical use of language for a rhetorically prescribed *variatio*: 'My grandfather's *madness* was enticing. *Crazy* people seemed freer to me than normal ones. They escaped the irritating value judgements of other people, who quickly gave up trying to understand *madmen*. They're *crazy*, they said, and left them in peace.'³²⁹ Abandoning the double perspective of the narrative, the translator ignores that it was the girl's specific understanding of her grandfather's madness which determined her decision to trace her character back to his genealogical roots. In her world madness represented the opposite pole of Prussian conformism embodied in the paternal branch of her family. Josefa explicitly set herself apart from her paternal grandparents describing both of them as 'bieder': 'Er war ein *biederer* Pedell, sie eine *biedere* Zuehfrau.' Again the English translator opts for *variatio* and ignores the ironic repetitive use: 'He was an *upright* school-custodian; she was an *honest* cleaning woman.'³³⁰ Furthermore, the ambiguous term 'bieder', which describes honest as well as naïvely conformist behaviour, in the English translation is reduced to its positive denotation although the context leaves no doubt about Josefa's dismissive judgement. Via her mother, who linked the conformism of her parents-in-law to their Prussian background, Josefa came to detest everything Prussian without properly understanding what the word actually meant. Contrasting the Prussian values of her paternal family background with her maternal grandfather, the child concluded: 'Preußen waren nicht verrückt, das stand fest.' With hindsight Josefa explains her aversion against all things Prussian with her fear of growing up and finally having to comply with all the norms

³²⁹ Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, p. 3. My italics.

³³⁰ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 8 and *Flight of Ashes*, p. 2. My italics.

and conventions.³³¹ That is why the label insanity in her understanding assumed a liberating rather than a limiting effect. It allows her to break social conventions without having to fear repressions. In an ingenious circular argument Josefa thus constructed herself a grandfather who, built on her own ‘incipiently anarchic and restless disposition’,³³² would serve as a genealogical excuse for any kind of criticism directed at Josefa’s character. ‘Im Wesen des Großvaters eröffneten sich mir eine Fülle charakterlicher Möglichkeiten, *mit denen sich eine eigene Zukunft denken ließ* und die zugleich geeignet waren, *die Kritik an meinem Wesen auf das großväterliche Erbteil zu verweisen.*’³³³

In the English translation, by contrast, the grandfather does not represent an excuse for but a corrective to Josefa’s character traits: ‘But grandfather Pawel had the sort of character that opened up for me a wealth of possible traits *useful for my future. As his heir I felt I could come to terms with my own nature.*’³³⁴ The German mirror image is thus turned into a counter image used to correct Josefa, who is not presented as ‘incipiently anarchic’ which results in the construction of a grandfather as an excuse, but as adaptable and conformist. At least the English Josefa is in need of a non-conformist role-model in order to be able to cope with her projected future. This interpretation of Josefa’s character corresponds to Sylvia Kloetzer’s understanding. Kloetzer argues that in the first chapter Josefa is introduced as a woman without qualities who has to invent herself in order to be able to assert herself as a subject. Being objectified by the GDR system, Josefa, according to Kloetzer, is permitted to play the role of a subject.³³⁵ Both

³³¹ Maron, *Flugasche*, pp. 10 and 11.

³³² Martin Kane, ‘Culpabilities of the Imagination: The Novels of Monika Maron’, in *Literature on the Threshold: The German Novel in the 1980s*, ed. by Arthur Williams, Stuart Parkes und Roland Smith (New York: Berg, 1990), pp. 221–234 (p. 223).

³³³ Maron, *Flugasche*, pp. 8–9. My italics.

³³⁴ Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, p. 2. My italics.

³³⁵ See Sylvia Kloetzer, ‘Mitläufer und Überläufer: Erzählte Ich-Krise in der DDR-Literatur der achtziger Jahre: Christoph Hein und Monika Maron’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1992), pp. 177–178 and ‘Perspektivenwechsel: Ich-Verlust bei Monika Maron’, in *Zwischen gestern und morgen: Schriftstellerinnen der DDR aus amerikanischer Sicht*, ed. by Ute Brandes (Berlin: Lang, 1992), pp. 249–262 (pp. 251–252).

Marinelli and Kloetzer thus trace Josefa's dissidence back to the GDR society rather than to her personality. Having been formed by socialist norms, Josefa distances herself from an earlier obedient self and models her new self on her anarchic grandfather in order to be able to fight the system which turned her into an object. The female protagonist is thus read as a conscious dissident, who needs a male role-model to oppose the system, rather than as an anarchic character who defies limiting social norms.³³⁶ These diverse interpretations also leave their mark on the interpretation of the narrative situation in the novel.

2.2.2.1.2 First- or Third-Person Narrator? Changes in the Narrative Focus

Many critics have observed the abrupt change from the first to the third person narrator in the first part of Maron's *Flugasche*. While they usually agree that the loss of the narrative voice translates the loss of the self, the critics slightly disagree on the reasons for the change in the narrative perspective. Tracing it back to the repressive socialist society, Kloetzer describes the loss of the first person as a renewed objectification of the constructed subject, a development which to her mind epitomizes a general crisis of the subject in the GDR.³³⁷ Elizabeth Boa and Nancy Lukens additionally link the change of perspective to the protagonist's gender. Lukens describes the change as a stylistic equivalent to 'the woman's scripted passivity', whereas Boa, who compares Maron's novel to Ingeborg Bachmann's *Malina*, states: 'In beiden Romanen wird die für unmündig gehaltene Frau zum Schweigen gebracht: Wer unmündig ist, ist nach Volksetymologie auch mund-tot.'³³⁸ Only Sigrid Bostock's interpretation provides a

³³⁶ This observation that in the English translation Josefa needs a male role-model in order to construct herself tallies with my findings on the English omission of Maron's severe criticism of the imposed female role models, cp. section. 2.2.2.3 The Influence of Gender Discourses: Josefa's Partner, pp. 135ff. of this chapter.

³³⁷ See Kloetzer, 'Mitläufer und Überläufer', p. 181.

³³⁸ See Nancy Lukens, 'Gender and the Work Ethic in the Environmental Novels of Monika Maron and Lia Pirkawetz', *Studies in GDR Culture and Society*, 8 (1988), 65–81 (p. 71) and Elizabeth Boa, 'Schwierigkeiten mit der ersten Person: Ingeborg Bachmanns *Malina* und Monika Marons *Flugasche*, *Die Überläuferin* und *Stille Zeile 6*,' in *Kritische Wege der Landnahme: Ingeborg Bachmann im Blickfeld der*

more detailed description of the narrative situation in Maron's novel. Apart from the change from the first to the third person, she analyses the narrativization of Josefa's isolation in interior monologue and indirect speech.³³⁹ Departing from Bostock's structuralist approach, which unveils minute narrative differences in four episodes, albeit without linking these to a general interpretation of the novel, the following analysis contends that the changes in the narrative focus describe the slow process of Josefa's alienation from her self. In the English translation, which from the start constructs Josefa as a conscious dissident, these changes therefore pose problems.

Josefa first distances herself from her own person when she relates her dialogue with Christian after she has returned from her journey to the industrial town B. Devastated by the inhuman living conditions in this town, Josefa, who is a divorced single mother, feels the desperate need for some comforting company. So she goes to see her friend and later partner Christian Grellmann, who in the course of their conversation proposes that she should write two versions of her article, one which would tell the truth and another one which could be printed. Josefa's answer in the German text is reported in indirect speech: '*Das sei verrückt, sage ich, Schizophrenie als Lebenshilfe — als wäre kultivierte Doppelzüngigkeit weniger abscheulich als ordinäre. Ein zynischer Verzicht auf Wahrheit. Intellektuelle Perversion.*'³⁴⁰ The use of indirect speech in the German text is in this specific narrative situation doubly surprising. On the one hand, the presentation of the dialogue in the present tense creates the impression that the events are recorded instantaneously. Yet, the use of indirect speech implies a distance between the dialogue and its narrativization and thus reveals the temporal distance between the acting and the reflecting Josefa. On the other hand, the use of

Neunziger Jahre, ed. by Robert Pichl and Alexander Stillmark (Vienna: Horag, 1994), pp. 125–145 (p. 137).

³³⁹ Sigrid Bostock, 'Ich- und Sie-Erzählung: Rede und Handlung in Monika Marons Roman *Flugasche*', *Carleton Germanic Papers*, 18 (1990), 9–21.

³⁴⁰ Maron, *Flugasche*, pp. 24–25. My italics.

indirect speech in German generally implies the narrator's distance to the reported statement of another person. Yet, in this case the narrator coincides with the person speaking in the text, which means that the reflecting Josefa distances herself from her own former statement. On the level of the communication between the author and her readers this device might be read as a way of circumventing censorship. Just like the dream passages, as described by Antonia Grunenberg, the indirect speech serves as a means to express forbidden thoughts and ideas.³⁴¹ On the level of the plot, however, the use of indirect speech implies a first step in the alienation process of the reflecting Josefa from her own statements and actions. With hindsight she questions the sense of her own remark. She thus becomes aware of the otherness underlying her self. By rendering the first sentence of the above quotation in direct speech, the English translation suppresses this process of alienation which clashes with the construction of Josefa as a conscious dissident: “*That’s crazy,*” I say.³⁴² This modification becomes even more obvious in the translation of Josefa’s later report on her interview with the worker Hodriwitzka in B. In this conversation she does not conform to her role as a journalist but tries to incite agitation for a protest against the outmoded power plant — to her own surprise, as she reports to Luise, her friend and alter ego in her interior dialogues: ‘Du mußt nicht erschrecken, Luise, ich wollte ihn nicht zum Streik aufrufen.’³⁴³ In German these ideas, unlike the rest of the dialogue with Hodriwitzka, are presented in indirect speech while the English translator again chooses to render them in direct speech:

Sie müßten eine Erklärung verlangen, sagte ich, warum sie weiter in einem unsicheren, dreckspuckenden Kraftwerk arbeiten sollten, wenn ein neues gebaut wird. Und wenn der Betriebsleiter nicht antworten kann, müßten sie den Generaldirektor fragen. Und wenn der auch nichts weiß, sollten sie den Minister einladen, hierher, nach B.

³⁴¹ See Antonia Grunenberg, ‘Träumen und Fliegen: Neue Identitätsbilder in der Frauenliteratur der DDR’, *Probleme deutscher Identität: Zeitgenössische Autobiographien, Identitätssuche und Zivilisationskritik, Jahrbuch zur Literatur in der DDR*, 3 (1983), 157–184 (p. 175).

³⁴² Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, p. 15. My italics.

³⁴³ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 51.

“You have to demand an explanation,” I said, “why they have to continue using an unsafe, filth spewing power plant when a new one is being built. And if the works manager can’t give you an answer, you’ll have to ask the general director. And if he doesn’t know anything either, you should invite the Minister here to B.”³⁴⁴

However, the English translator does not only ignore the first steps in Josefa’s slow alienation process, he also postpones the abrupt change of perspective from the first to the third person narrator to a later, less disturbing moment. In the last passage before the change Josefa thinks about her first conversation with the director Strutzer after he read her critical article. Strutzer accused her of political stupidity and threatened to inform the party of her opinion. Josefa’s loneliness and her longing to see Christian are reported in an interior monologue ending with the words: ‘[U]nd ich brauche dich jetzt.’³⁴⁵ Significantly, the perspective does not change when Josefa reveals her problems at work but in the following paragraph, which describes an argument with Christian about the article and her incapability to defend herself in the conversation with her boss. Rather than the confrontation with Strutzer, it is her partner’s criticism that further enhances the process of Josefa’s self-alienation:

„Du bist ein Idiot“, sagte Christian.

„Warum ich? Du hast gesagt, schreib zwei Varianten.“

„Na und? Hast du zwei geschrieben?“

Josefa schwieg.

„Erwartest du nun einen klugen Rat?“

„**Nein**“, sagte Josefa.

Was hätte er *ih*r auch raten können. Sprich mit Luise, fahre nach B., krakeel nicht rum. Das wußte sie selbst.

“You’re an idiot”, Christian said.

“Why me? You said: write two versions.”

“Well did you write two?”

Silence.

“Am I supposed to give you some good advice now?”

What advice could he have given anyway? Talk to Luise, go to B., don’t bitch. She knew that already.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁴ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 51 and *Flight of Ashes*, p. 35. Also cp. Bostock, p. 12.

³⁴⁵ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 93.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 93 and Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, p. 68. My emphases.

In the dialogue the English translation omits Josefa's name which clearly signifies the new narrative situation. Only when the focus of the narration shifts to Josefa's thoughts, does the English translator imitate the change from the earlier interior monologue to reported thought. While the change of perspective in the German text juxtaposes the 'I' in the preceding paragraph with Josefa's name, the English text not only introduces an undefined paragraph before the change from the first to the third person, it also indicates this change by using personal pronouns rather than Josefa's name which is a far more striking indicator of the new narrative situation. The change of perspective in the English text is thus far less abrupt than in the German original which might be explained with the fact that the split of the narrative voice from the acting Josefa displays the incomprehensibility of her actions to herself. She does not plan her dissidence, which is the underlying assumption of the English translation, but stumbles into it, which, according to Christian's condescending description, is typical of Josefa: 'Seit fünfzehn Jahren rannte sie blindlings in Katastrophen.'³⁴⁷

At the beginning of the second part of the novel the narrative focus changes again. Rather than being recorded as they happen, the events are now focused from the end of the novel. The starting point of the second part is the day of Josefa's exclusion from the publishing house. Only then does Josefa begin to grasp the logical structure of the allegedly incomprehensible events:

Erst in den letzten Tagen, für die sie Urlaub beantragt hatte, begann sie die Folgerichtigkeit der Ereignisse langsam zu begreifen, denen sie sich wochenlang *ausgeliefert gefühlt hatte, gegen die sie wie eine Besessene angerannt war*, ohne zu verstehen, daß sie mit der Gesetzmäßigkeit physikalischer Prozesse abliefen.

It was only in the last few days, during which she had been on leave, that she slowly began to grasp the logical consistency of events that for weeks she felt *had been at*

³⁴⁷ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 94. This is also the first time in the narrative that the focus changes from Josefa to a different person, namely Christian, who, as Boa observes, assumes a growing importance in the constitution of her identity, see Boa, p. 138.

*random, which she had been fighting like a madwoman without understanding that they were unfolding with the regularity of physical processes.*³⁴⁸

While the English translation turns Josefa into an active fighter, the German text, using a similar image to Christian, describes how the incomprehensibility of the events and her ensuing helplessness had made her feel as if, just like Josef K. in *Das Schloss*, she was running into invisible walls.³⁴⁹ However, this realization does not influence her ensuing descriptions of the earlier events. Continuing to repeat her sense of helplessness, which results from the incomprehensibility of the occurrences, Josefa expresses her confusion in various dialogues, thus proving that her reflective self has not yet grasped the impact of her actions. In the discussion of her article and her ensuing behaviour with a party functionary, which is mostly related in indirect speech in order to show the distance between the two conversants, the nameless functionary explains to her in elusive formulations that her article would provide the capitalist enemy with a considerable amount of ammunition against the socialist system. Josefa, who finds it difficult to grasp his point, answers: 'Ich kann so nicht denken [...], ich verstehe nicht.'³⁵⁰ Furthermore, the functionary repeatedly asks for her understanding which she denies him.

Similarly, being reproached by Christian of having acted irrationally when she wrote a critical letter to the government, Josefa again utters her confusion: '[I]ch begreif's doch nicht. Ich habe einen Brief geschrieben. Na und. Einen Brief kann man wegschmeißen, wenn man ihn nicht will. Es ist nichts passiert. Aber sogar du regst dich auf. Ich habe, glaube ich, nur Angst, weil ich so richtig nichts begreife.' In the German text Josefa says twice that she does not understand why a letter should cause her so many problems which proves that she has unconsciously crossed the borderlines of a system of which she still feels a part. While in German she can no longer think in the discourses inherent in the system, in the English translation she is aware of the fact that

³⁴⁸ Maron, *Flugasche*, pp. 152–153 and *Flight of Ashes*, pp. 116–117. My italics.

³⁴⁹ For allusions to Kafka in *Flugasche* see Boa, pp. 135–140 who concludes: 'In der DDR grassieren Verhaltensweisen, die mit den Mitteln Kafkas am besten zu beschreiben sind.' (Ibid., p. 140)

³⁵⁰ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 170. Also cp. Bostock, p. 15.

she has made a mistake: ‘I just don’t understand it. I wrote a letter. So what. You can throw a letter away if you don’t like it. Nothing happened. But even you get worked up about it. I think that I’m afraid simply *because I can’t get anything right.*’³⁵¹ Only when she reads out her own letter at the meeting of the party members at work, i.e. when she assumes both the position of the sender and of the addressee, Josefa understands that to more conformist people her letter must signify a dangerous and arrogant attack on the political system. Reading out the letter and observing her colleagues’ reactions, she describes her obvious distance from the system as a problem of language: ‘Und obwohl sie die Sprache als ihre eigene tägliche erkannte, fiel sie, reflektiert von den kalkigen Wänden und von den betroffenen Gesichtern, als *fremde Sprache* auf sie zurück.’³⁵² She becomes aware of the foreignness of languages, of the impossibility of identity even within one single language and of her own alienation from the language of the system.³⁵³ In the English translation, however, her own language is ‘reflected back as a foreign tongue’ which projects the foreignness within the same linguistic system onto a different system.³⁵⁴ Rather than on the difference within, the English translation thus again focuses on structural otherness between two systems. While in the German text Josefa slowly alienates herself from the system and its inherent discourses, the English text constructs her as a conscious dissident and omits the slow process of alienation. As the following section will show, the construction of a conscious dissident is combined with a reduction in the number of oppositional voices.

2.2.2.2 *The Reduction of Diversity: Josefa’s Colleagues*

Describing Josefa’s fight for publication, the novel reveals the diverse reactions of her colleagues and friends and their different ways of dealing with and either circumventing

³⁵¹ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 192 and *Flight of Ashes*, p. 148. My italics.

³⁵² Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 197. My italics.

³⁵³ See my discussion of Benjamin and Derrida in 1.3.2 ‘Die Fremdheit der Sprachen’: Walter Benjamin and 1.3.3 ‘Les limites du concept courant de traduction’: Jacques Derrida, pp. 41ff. of this thesis.

³⁵⁴ Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, p. 151.

or conforming with the system of censorship. While the German text is characterized by a fluid transition from proponents to opponents, the English translation draws a clear dividing line between Josefa and her colleagues. In contrast to the German version, her colleagues distance themselves from her right at the beginning of her fight for publication. Her best friend and model Luise, who serves as an *alter ego* in Josefa's interior dialogues and stands by her until the end of the novel, is turned into her opponent in the English translation. The following examples taken from their first joint meeting with Strutzer will serve to illustrate this change: 'Josefa sat between Luise and Strutzer. He hoped that *she had had* a nice weekend, Strutzer said. She hoped that *she had had* a nice weekend, Luise said. Josefa remained silent.' The excerpt from the English translation renders the impression that Josefa is boxed in between her two opponents and feels so intimidated that she has fallen silent. In the original text, however, the situation is completely different: 'Josefa saß zwischen Luise und Strutzer. Er hoffe, *sie hätten* ein schönes Wochenende gehabt, sagte Strutzer. Sie hoffe, auch *er hätte* ein schönes Wochenende gehabt, sagte Luise. Josefa schwieg.'³⁵⁵ Josefa and Luise arrive at the meeting together and Strutzer asks the two of them whether they had a nice weekend. Luise answers for the two of them by asking Strutzer whether he had a nice weekend. Josefa's silence does not result from her intimidation but can be traced back to Luise's instruction that Josefa should leave the defense of her article to Luise. Because of Josefa's irrational reactions to Strutzer in the first discussion of her article, Luise had decided that she would act as a lawyer arguing Josefa's case in this meeting. In the English translation, however, this explanation is omitted and Luise, who is leading the hearing rather than the negotiations, is turned into a counsel for the prosecution:

"Josefa", Luise said, "do you agree?" Luise was leading *the hearing*; Luise nodded to Josefa. "Yes", Josefa said.

³⁵⁵ Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, p. 84 and *Flugasche*, p. 114. My italics.

„Josefa“, sagte Luise, „bist du einverstanden?“ Luise *führte die Verhandlung*, **Luise war die Geschäftsfrau. Josefa hatte versprochen, nichts zu verderben.** Luise nickte Josefa zu. „Ja“, sagte Josefa.³⁵⁶

While the English text does not provide any reason for Luise nodding to Josefa in this situation, the sentences omitted in the translation (in bold print in the German quotation) via Josefa's thoughts reveal the prior agreement between the two women: 'Luise was the business woman. Josefa had promised not to ruin anything.'

Luise is not the only member of staff who is turned into Josefa's opponent in the English translation. Another colleague, who suffers a similar fate, is Günther Rassow. Rassow has himself experienced censorship in his own career but, after a heated argument with Luise, he let the situation rest and more or less adjusted his writing to the system. In the German text Rassow's opinion towards Josefa's article and her fight for publication is more ambivalent than Luise's. Although Josefa considers him to be one of a number of possible candidates who informed Strutzer about her article, Rassow also tells Josefa about the impending meeting which will discuss her exclusion from the publishing house and she hopes that he will support her in the meeting discussing her letter.³⁵⁷ In the English translation the elusive Rassow, just like Luise, becomes one of Josefa's opponents. When on an evening out he entertains his colleagues with his well-known story about 17 June 1953, the day of the uprising against the strict economic policies in the GDR, the English translation implies that Rassow agrees with the official interpretation of this event which in the GDR was read as 'a counter-revolution instigated by Western agents':³⁵⁸

Günter Rassow erzählt gerade *gestenreich* die Geschichte eines Chefredakteurs, der sich am 17. Juni, als *die brüllende Menge* vor dem Gebäude der Redaktion randalierte, in einem Kleiderschrank einschloß. **Immer wenn er getrunken hat, erzählt Günter diese Geschichte.**

³⁵⁶ Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, p. 87 and *Flugasche*, p. 117. My emphases.

³⁵⁷ See Maron, *Flugasche*, pp. 75–77, 91, 229 and 194.

³⁵⁸ Lothar Kettenacker, *Germany since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 50.

Just now Günter Rassow is telling the *witty* story of an Editor-in-Chief who shut himself up in a clothes closet on the 17th of June while *the screaming mob of construction workers was in revolt*, raising hell in front of the publishing house.³⁵⁹

Misreading the German adverb *gestenreich*, which refers to Rassow's way of telling the story using many gestures, as *geistreich*, the English translator qualifies Rassow's story as witty. However, the last German sentence, omitted in the English translation, implies that Rassow regularly entertains his colleagues with this tale. So it will hardly draw a smile from his listeners. Furthermore, only an outsider, such as the translator, would describe it as funny. For the listening journalists the tale mirrors their own situation. The chief editor's escape into a wardrobe, which saves him from the dangerous duty of having to report on the uprising, could be read as a concrete illustration of the restrictions they impose on their thinking.³⁶⁰ The resulting frustration is deadened with alcohol, more so in the case of Fred Müller, less so in the case of Günter Rassow. Yet the English translation suppresses Rassow's regular abuse of alcohol and thus draws a parallel between him and Strutzer who also keeps his alcohol consumption under perfect control.³⁶¹ Agreeing with the system, they do not have to drown their frustration in alcohol. This interpretation also tallies with Rassow's dismissive evaluation of the demonstrators in the English translation — limited to construction workers in the English explanation for the apparently unknown event — as a 'screaming mob' which implies a critical stance towards the uprising masses.

The implications of these changes in Rassow's characterization become obvious in the meeting discussing Josefa's letter to the Supreme Council. The two people who support Josefa by contradicting Strutzer in the English translation are cut down to one:

Günter Rassow stand leise auf und schaltete das Licht ein, das bläulichweiß in den Neonröhren zuckte, ehe es grell und erbarmungslos die letzte Milde zerriß, die über der Runde gelegen hatte. **Hans Schütz blinzelte, als sei er aus einem Traum erwacht, und putzte seine Brille, durch die er jetzt in der Helligkeit nicht sehen**

³⁵⁹ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 62 and *Flight of Ashes*, p. 44. My emphases.

³⁶⁰ The widespread purges which followed the uprising prove that a wrong word could have had serious consequences (cp. Kettenacker, p. 52).

³⁶¹ See Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 163.

konnte. „Wäre es nicht ratsam“, sagte er, „doch über den Punkt zu sprechen, der zur Diskussion gestellt wurde? Josefa wurde ja wohl nicht wegen ihrer mangelnden Arbeitsdisziplin vor die Leitung geladen, sondern wegen des Briefes, der, wie ich zugeben muß, reichlich naiv ist.“³⁶²

The omission of the German sentence in bold print means that the objection raised by Hans Schütz in the German text is uttered by Günter Rassow in the English translation.³⁶³ Elli Meseke's sentence, which refers to Schütz's statement — 'Also ich glaube nicht, daß der Hans recht hat.' —, was also omitted.³⁶⁴ Schütz thus only comments on the definition of the word naïve. As a consequence Rassow, who had already spoken up for Josefa prior to Schütz, is the only participant of the meeting who supports Josefa. Furthermore, the English translation shows that Rassow, who claims that Josefa's colleagues are also responsible for her subversive actions, is easily convinced by Strutzer's counter-argument: 'Strutzer had now brought a wavering Günter over to his position.'³⁶⁵ Rassow is thus not merely the only person objecting to Strutzer, his alleged objection also seems to be part of the plan for the meeting. Just like the other participants Rassow acts as Strutzer's mouthpiece.³⁶⁶ In the German text, by contrast, Strutzer is surprised by the turn of the discussion: 'Jetzt hatte Strutzer Günters Schwenk vollzogen.'³⁶⁷ It takes him some time and effort to refute Rassow's objection in order to regain control of the situation.

The English construction of Josefa as a dissident hence goes hand in hand with a simplistic polarization. In the English translation of *Flugasche* the diverse voices are reduced to one dissident confronted with several proponents. This simplified version

³⁶² Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 204. My emphasis.

³⁶³ See: 'Günter Rassow stood up quietly and turned on a light, which twisted blue-white in the neon tube before it shattered the last gentleness left in the meeting with its garish and merciless brilliance. "Wouldn't it be advisable after all," he said, "to talk about the point under discussion? Surely Josefa wasn't summoned here for lack of work discipline, but on account of a letter that I have to admit is rather naïve ..."' (Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, p. 157).

³⁶⁴ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 205 and *Flight of Ashes*, p. 157.

³⁶⁵ Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, p. 154.

³⁶⁶ For a similar interpretation of this passage see Karsten Dümmel, *Identitätsprobleme in der DDR-Literatur der siebziger und achtziger Jahre* (Frankfurt/Main: Lang, 1997), pp. 151 and 154. He believes the discussion of Josefa's letter to be a scripted role-play.

³⁶⁷ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 200.

turns the GDR system into a clearly identifiable other, which is in no way related to the Western self. The English translation of Maron's novel does thus not give any new insights but serves to repeat anti-communist discourses. However, this does not mean that the critics whose readings were based on the English translation were unable to uncover the wider impact of Maron's novel. Werner Kastor-Volkmer states that Maron does not attack socialism but 'the impersonal machinery of life in a modern industrial state'.³⁶⁸ And while Jane Lucraft interprets Josefa to be a 'lonely campaigner', she still believes that 'Josefa's struggle touches on the dark side of all non-conformity'.³⁶⁹ Furthermore, as the following section will show, the translation itself is also not solely marked by an underlying anti-communism. When this discourse clashes with the dominant ideas on gender, anti-communism is abandoned in favour of the construction of a strong male.

2.2.2.3 *The Influence of Gender Discourses: Josefa's Partner*

While Josefa's colleagues are turned into verifiable proponents of the communist system, her partner's obvious conformism is omitted from the text. Christian Grellmann writes a doctoral dissertation in history which he intends to finish in the near future. When Josefa works herself up into anxiety, starts to suffer from depression and finally resorts to tranquilizers and alcohol to deaden her fear, the dissertation often serves Christian as an excuse for his slow withdrawal: 'Er könne nicht kommen, sagte er. Er müsse am Montag die Thesen zu seiner Dissertation liefern, müsse nicht nur, wolle das auch.'³⁷⁰ On the day of the last party meeting that will determine Josefa's exclusion from the publishing house, he rings her to excuse himself for not having called earlier: 'Ich konnte in den letzten Tagen nicht anrufen. Ich hatte viel zu tun, außerdem mußte ich die

³⁶⁸ Werner Kastor-Volkmer, 'Monika Maron's *Flight of Ashes*', *Index on Censorship*, 16, 4 (1987), 9–10 (p. 9).

³⁶⁹ Jane Lucraft, 'Lonely campaigner: Monika Maron, *Flight of Ashes*', *Times Literary Supplement*, 28 August 1987, p. 932.

³⁷⁰ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 218.

Thesen ändern.’ While the translator usually jumps at the opportunity to discredit Josefa’s colleagues in order to turn them into identifiable others, the statement that Christian has to adapt his theses for his dissertation is omitted from the English translation.³⁷¹ This decision can be explained by the crossover between political and gender discourses. Christian’s political conformism clashes with his traditional role as the strong and resistant male in his relationship with Josefa. This interpretation is not only confirmed by the fact that in the English translation Josefa’s dissidence is traced back to male roots.³⁷² It is further enhanced by the English changes to the gender discourses in the whole book and in particular within Christian’s and Josefa’s relationship. While the German text reveals the cruel imposition of stereotypical gender roles in heterosexual relationships, the English translation reconstructs these traditional images.

Josefa is on the whole very critical of stereotypical gender roles. She objects to marriage because the loss of independence makes her feel like a Siamese twin. On the other hand, she also refuses to conform to the typical role of an emancipated woman: ‘[E]manzipierte Frauen frieren nicht, heulen schon gar nicht, und das Wort Sehnsucht haben sie aus ihrem Vokabular gestrichen. Ich friere, ich heule, ich habe Sehnsucht.’³⁷³ In need of comfort after her journey to B., Josefa turns to Christian who at that point of the story is her best male friend. Drawing on the typical German description of the husband to a third party – *mein Mann* —, which implies a claim to ownership, Josefa calls Christian ‘Meinmann’. While in this particular passage the English translation ‘man of mine’ only ignores the irony, in a conversation with Ulrike Kuwiak the ‘Meinmann’, who serves to conjure up the traditional understanding of married life in which the man takes over the responsibility for his wife’s education and happiness,

³⁷¹ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 189 and see *Flight of Ashes*, p. 145.

³⁷² See 2.2.2.1.1 Enticing Madness: Josefa Nadler’s Incipiently Anarchic Character, pp. 121ff. of this chapter.

³⁷³ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 22.

ironically becomes 'the man of my dreams'.³⁷⁴ The English translation thus supplants Josefa's ironizing description of the traditional ideas on marriage with the discourse of Romantic love. Josefa's thoughts on this topic result from a discussion with Ulrike Kuwiak who asks her why she does not get married again. Outraged by this traditional demand for a woman to be married, Josefa describes Ulrike's dependence on married life. In the wake of her divorce Ulrike desperately tries to cover up her apparent loss of identity by overemphasizing her alleged happiness with her emancipated new self:

Ulrike kämpfte um eine neue Persönlichkeit. Ihre angestregten Emanzipationsversuche erschöpften sich in grellen Äußerlichkeiten und demonstrativen Kneipenbesuchen. Ihre Tochter überließ sie dann ihrer Mutter. Bei jeder Gelegenheit erging sie sich, zu oft, um es tatsächlich so zu empfinden, über das unbekannte Glück der Freiheit, das sie nun kennenlernen und genießen wolle.

*Ulrike was frightening as a new personality. She wore out her forced attempts at emancipation in glaring superficiality and demonstrative bar-hopping. Then she entrusted her daughter to her husband. She indulged herself at every opportunity, really too often, beyond the drive for freedom which anyone naturally wants to know and enjoy.*³⁷⁵

The German text describes Ulrike's fight for a new personality after the divorce, which because of her deep-seated belief in marriage, is damned to failure. As Josefa observes, it is not love but marriage that provides her with happiness.³⁷⁶ The emancipation of women, as Ulrike understands it, does not aim to bring about changes in gender discourse but serves to fill the void left by the break-up of her marriage. Ulrike's fight for her alleged emancipation is thus limited to superficial demonstrations of her new freedom. Yet her repeated emphasis on the joys of independence reveals her dissatisfaction with her new life. The English translation, however, does not present Ulrike as a character who with her husband has lost her sense of self. She has assumed a new and apparently frightening personality. In contrast to the German text, her colleagues are not shocked by the superficial changes in her outward appearance but by

³⁷⁴ Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, pp. 13 and 44 and *Flugasche*, pp. 22 and 62.

³⁷⁵ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 61 and *Flight of Ashes*, p. 43. My italics.

³⁷⁶ See Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 62.

the negligence of her female duties: she entrusts the child to her husband rather than to her mother — though husbands also in Josefa's case are in general remarkably absent from the text — and indulges herself beyond reason. Despite the fact that the American translator stresses the natural drive for freedom, which is not mentioned in the German text at all, he implicitly criticizes Ulrike for her irresponsible behaviour towards her child. The satirical critique of Ulrike's traditional conception of gender roles, which she tries to cover up in a desperate fight for alleged emancipation, is thus turned into a critique of her deviation from her traditional role as a chaste woman and a loving mother.

In Josefa's and Christian's relationship the imposition of gender stereotypes also plays a vital role. When Christian for the first time lies down next to her, Josefa suddenly perceives him as a stranger, just like any other man, and she is frightened that her body will not satisfy his male demands: 'Gleich werden seine Hände prüfend über Haut und Fleisch fahren, ob sie *den allgemeinen Ansprüchen* auch standhalten, wird er auf *Höhepunkte* warten und wird, bleiben sie aus, das Prädikat frigide oder anorgastisch registrieren.' While the German text stresses the impersonality of the bodies in this situation, which reveals the role expectations on women in sexual intercourse, the English text, apart from omitting any allusion to orgasm, links the bodies to the people by inserting personal pronouns: 'His hands will soon be probing *my* flesh, if it meets with *his general standards* he'll wait for *the best*; *if it doesn't* I'll be classified as frigid.'³⁷⁷ Josefa here does not feel that she has to meet general standards but Christian's standard's and it is not her body that will be classified as frigid and unorgastic but her person. The English translation thus limits Josefa's experience to this specific situation. The German text, by contrast, uncovers the gender discourses underlying her personal feelings. Only by referring to a different cultural system can the German Josefa free

³⁷⁷ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 26 and *Flight of Ashes*, p. 16. My italics.

herself from the impositions of her culture: 'Bei Robert Merle habe ich gelesen, daß die Haitier spielen nennen, wozu wir miteinander schlafen sagen. Spielen ist schöner.'³⁷⁸

Culturally imposed role expectations also determine Christian's behaviour in the relationship. When Josefa tells Christian that she dreamed about a woman who was raped and killed by a man, Christian to her surprise recognizes the cruel rage Josefa describes to him:

„Woher kennst du diese Wut?“ fragte er.
 „Weiß nicht“, sagte Josefa. Nur langsam senkte sich Christians Frage mit ihrem ganzen Gewicht in ihr Bewußtsein.
 Diese Wut. Diese. Nicht irgendeine, sondern eine bestimmte, die er kannte, von der er glaubte, *sie sei sein Geheimnis*.³⁷⁹

In the English translation, by contrast, Christian does not reveal his surprise about her knowledge of his suppressed rage but he links the anger to Josefa: “‘Where do you get all this anger?’ he asked.” Accordingly, Christian's words do not betray a well hidden secret to Josefa, of which she already had a vague premonition when she realized that during sexual intercourse he was fighting and trying to defeat her body. In the English translation Christian is spared this criticism. He is not prone to this bestial rage but he is the scientist who has shed light on the mysterious origin of this anger: ‘Christian's question took a while to sink into her brain with its full weight. This anger. This. Not any one but a definite one that he knew and *whose secret he thought he had found*.’³⁸⁰ When Christian tries to explain this rage to Josefa, the English translation again omits two vital sentences, which create a link between his anger, the feelings of most men and sex offenders:

³⁷⁸ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 27. Robert Merle was one of the most published contemporary French authors in the GDR, cp. Danielle Risterucci-Roudnický, *France-RDA: anatomie d'un transfert littéraire: 1949–1990*, Gallo-germanica, 25 (Bern : Lang, 1999), p. 141.

³⁷⁹ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 213. My italics.

³⁸⁰ Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, p. 164. My italics. On the interpretation of this passage also cp. Henk Harbers, ‘Gefährliche Freiheit: Zu einem Motivkomplex im Werk von Monika Maron’, in *Monika Maron in Perspective: ‘Dialogische’ Einblicke in zeitgeschichtliche, intertextuelle und rezeptionsbezogene Aspekte ihres Werkes*, ed. by Elke Gilson, German Monitor, 55 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), pp. 123–137 (p. 124).

Es ist eigentlich keine Wut auf dich, vielmehr auf mich, eine ganz grobe und gemeine Wut auf mich, und ich weiß nicht einmal, woher sie kommt. Und solange man sich gegen sie wehrt, wird man sie nicht los. Man muß sie annehmen und weitergeben. Hinterher fühl ich mich schlecht. **Ich glaube, den meisten Männern geht es so, mehr oder weniger, mir sicher sogar weniger.** Solche Gefühle müssen Lustmörder haben, anders natürlich, schlimmer, eben mit dem Unterschied: die einen morden, und die anderen morden nicht. **Aber daher muß es auch bei denen kommen.**³⁸¹

Christian in Maron's original text states a belief that most men experience similar feelings of anger, which are the source of sexually motivated murders, albeit to a different extent. So while the German text reveals the transition from normal men to sex offenders, the English translation delimits Christian's animalistic behaviour from normal men and solely links it to sex murderers.³⁸² Rather than stressing the otherness underlying the self, the English translation thus clearly delimits the human self from the animalistic other. Just as in the case of Josefa, who is constructed as a conscious dissident, and in the case of her colleagues, who are read as convinced proponents of the system, the translation of the gender discourses fends off any kind of criticism which could also pertain to English and U.S. American societies. Pre-empted in the reception of the novel in the German press, this multidimensional reduction of otherness to a structural other, which is in no way related to the receiving culture, might have resulted in the French disinterest in Maron's *Flugasche*. Furthermore, the focus on the political and social content of the novel means that the text's intertextual dimension is ignored. The treatment of allusions to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and to the *Song of Songs* shall serve as examples of the translator's negligence in this area.

³⁸¹ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 214. My emphases.

³⁸² 'It isn't really anger at you, it's more against me, a very gross and vulgar anger against me and I don't even know where it comes from. And as long as you fight it, you won't get rid of it. You have to accept it and pass it on. I feel bad about it after the fact. Sex murderers must have feelings like this, worse of course, with the simple difference: they kill and others don't.' (Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, p. 165)

2.2.2.4 *Newspeak and the Song of Songs: The Omission of Intertextual Allusions*

Considering the processes of self-censorship which guide journalistic writing in the GDR, Josefa expresses her fears that, like some of her colleagues, she might unconsciously adapt to the communal demands on her profession in an allusion to Newspeak: 'Vielleicht trennen mich nur einige Jahre von ihnen, die Jahre, in denen der *Un-Mechanismus* endgültig einrastet und mir das *Undruckbare*, das *Unaussprechliche*, das *Undenkbare* zur *Unwahrheit* werden wird'.³⁸³ Newspeak is the official language of Oceania, the imaginary massive occidental realm, in which *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is set. This artificial language, based on standard English or Oldspeak, was devised to exclude any modes of thinking which do not comply with the world-view of Ingsoc, i.e. English Socialism: 'It was intended that when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought — that is, a thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc — should be literally unthinkable, at least as far as thought is dependent on words'. The '*Un-Mechanismus*', which aims at the reduction of vocabulary, is one of the basic features of Newspeak: 'Given, for instance, the word *good*, there was no need for such a word as *bad*, since the required meaning was equally well — indeed, better — expressed by *ungood*'.³⁸⁴ However, while as the opposite of good the Newspeak word *ungood* might have the same denotation as the word bad, the latter includes various connotations, which are excluded in the new creation. The deletion of this word from the vocabulary thus implies a loss of possible modes of thinking. Unfortunately, the English translator does not seem to be aware of this intertext. At least he uses a different prefix for the word '*Unaussprechliches*' and thus undermines the allusion to the text underlying Josefa's statement: 'Perhaps only a few years separate me from them, years during which the mechanism of '*un*' finally meshes and the

³⁸³ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 33. Italics in the original.

³⁸⁴ George Orwell, 'Appendix: The Principles of Newspeak', in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 35th edn (London: Penguin, 1979), pp. 241–251 (pp. 241 and 243). *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was first published in 1949.

unprintable, ineffable, unthinkable become untruths'. However, Josefa alludes to this intertext in order to reveal the imposed reduction of her possibilities of thinking.

Marinelli also omits Maron's allusion to the *Song of Songs*. When Josefa has handed in her finished article to Luise, the uplifting feeling of freedom and happiness makes her feel like she is flying. On her imaginary flight through the centre of East Berlin she meets an ideal lover, who uses Luther's translation of one of the oldest love songs to talk to her: 'Du bist schön. Schön bist du, deine Augen sind wie Taubenaugen.' The English translator, however, does not resort to a similarly widely known English version of the same original, such as the King James Bible. While in this version the same passage reads 'Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thine eyes are as doves', Marinelli translates 'You are beautiful. You are beautiful; your eyes are like a dove's'.³⁸⁵ He does thus not explicitly mark the passage as an allusion to the Bible but simply translates the denotative meaning of the words as they were rendered into German by Luther, who unlike many of the English translators familiarizes the estranging comparison of Shulamite's eyes to doves with his normalizing version 'your eyes are like a dove's'. Marinelli's strategy of adopting the German Bible translation becomes even more obvious in the second passage cited from the *Song of Songs*: 'Die Blumen sind hervorgekommen im Lande, der Lenz ist herbeigekommen, und die Turteltaube läßt sich hören in unserem Lande.'³⁸⁶ The translator of the King James Version, and most of the later translations, have opted for a more literal version than Luther: 'The flowers appear on the earth; The time of the singing of birds is come, And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.'³⁸⁷ The words which in the King James version are rendered as '[t]he time of the singing of birds' by Luther are simply

³⁸⁵ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 71. See Das Hohelied Salomos 1.15. Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, p. 51. See Song of Songs 1.15. Marinelli's English translation does not coincide with any of the eleven versions available on the internet, see Gospel Communications International, 'Bible Gateway.com' <<http://www.Biblegateway.com>> [accessed 12 March 2003].

³⁸⁶ Maron, *Flugasche*, p. 72. See Das Hohelied 2.12.

³⁸⁷ Song of Solomon 2.12.

translated with the term 'spring', which is also Marinelli's translation: 'The flowers are sprouting, spring has come, and the turtledoves let their voice sound throughout the land.'³⁸⁸ Aiming to provide information on the GDR rather than to deliver the literary style of the novel, Marinelli's factual approach to Maron's *Flugasche* thus ignores the intertextual dimensions of the text, which, as described in the first chapter of this thesis, constitute one of the possible ways of responding to the claims of otherness.³⁸⁹ As the following section on the translation of Maron's second novel in Britain and France will show, it is this dimension of Maron's writing which aroused interest in Maron's works in France.

2.2.3 *Realism vs Surrealism: The Defector vs La Transfuge*

Despite its success in Germany, Britain and the United States, *Flugasche* was never published in French translation.³⁹⁰ However, inspired by Michel-François Demet, the publisher Fayard in 1989 — that is in the year of the *Salon du Livre* which focused on Germany — used Georges Pauline's French translation of Maron's third German publication *Die Überläuferin*, rendered as *La transfuge*, to introduce Maron to the French public. Marinelli's English translation of the same novel, *The Defector*, had appeared one year before, i.e. two years after the successful launch of *Flugasche*. In *Die Überläuferin*, which was first published in 1986, the protagonist Rosalind Polkowski one day wakes up to realize that her body, after years of suffering from the subordination to daily life and several failed operations, will not take her to work anymore. However, just like Gregor Samsa after his metamorphosis, Rosalind does not

³⁸⁸ Maron, *Flight of Ashes*, p. 51.

³⁸⁹ See section 1.4 Responding to Otherness in the Study of Translations, pp. 55ff. of this thesis.

³⁹⁰ In 1990 R. Mönch stated the number of sold books of the novel *Flugasche* in Germany alone to be at 98.000, cp. 'Es gibt weit größere Themen als die DDR: Die Schriftstellerin und Publizistin Monika Maron im Gespräch mit jungen Journalisten der Henri-Nannen-Schule', *Morgen-Magazin*, 29./30. December 1990.

panic.³⁹¹ On the contrary, she welcomes the liberation from her daily obligations, in particular from her work for a historical research institute, and uses her free time to reflect on the concepts underlying her life, such as the teleological idea of time, which also determines the order of events and thus the narrative structure of the novel, unconscious gender stereotypes as well as the diverse definitions of identity and fantasy. Furthermore, the liberation from these concepts underlying her thinking enables her to revisit the history of the GDR in her imaginary wanderings through Berlin. While her encounter with a former Nazi deconstructs the antifascist founding myth of the GDR and the warlike atmosphere that characterizes her image of the construction of the Berlin Wall is directly opposed to its official description as an antifascist protection wall, her unexpected meeting with a clone reveals her fears of a future reminiscent of dystopias, such as George Orwell's *1984*.³⁹² Even this short introduction to *Die Überläuferin* reveals that the dreams and nightmares, which already played an important role in *Flugasche*, have come to dominate Maron's second novel.³⁹³ Set in a dream-like atmosphere, the whole text represents a thought-experiment which, based on the protagonist's imaginative powers, aims for the discovery of a different, less limiting reality, a kind of *surréalité*. As Breton pointed out in his first *Manifeste du Surréalisme* (1924), these are the basic tenets of surrealist writing: 'Le surréalisme repose sur la croyance à la réalité supérieure de certaines formes d'associations négligées jusqu'à lui, à la toute-puissance du rêve, au jeu désintéressé de la pensée.'³⁹⁴

³⁹¹ On the intertextual allusions to Franz Kafka's 'Die Verwandlung' in Maron's *Die Überläuferin* cp. Andrea Reiter, 'Reunification and Literature: Monika Maron from *Die Überläuferin* to *Stille Zeile sechs*', *GDR Bulletin*, 24 (1997), 67–72 (p. 67).

³⁹² See Maron, *Überläuferin*, pp. 130–137, 145–151 and 191–210.

³⁹³ For the dreams in *Flugasche* cp. Grunenberg, pp. 167–176 as well as the description of Josefa's dream of flying in the previous section of this chapter, 2.2.2.4 Newspeak and the Song of Songs: The Omission of Intertextual Allusions, pp. 141ff.

³⁹⁴ Cited in Nadeau, p. 53. A short introduction to surreal writing can be found in section 2.1.2.2 The Evil Other vs the Otherness of the Self: The Uses of Otherness as a Selling Device, pp. 93ff. of the previous chapter.

The surreal elements of the novel also feature prominently in the West German reviews of *Die Überläuferin*, which, just like *Flugasche*, met with a split reception. As Uwe Wittstock pointed out, some critics hailed Maron's exploration of surreal worlds, while others bemoaned the loss of her clear, almost journalistic style for which they praised Maron's first novel. Wittstock does not explicitly state his own evaluation of *Flugasche* and *Die Überläuferin*. However, just like the interviews published on the event of Herta Müller's emigration, Wittstock's biographical sketch of the author, which appeared in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* when in 1988 Maron left the GDR with a three-year visa for the Federal Republic, betrays his demand for realist and critical first-hand information from the Eastern Bloc regime. He thus devotes two paragraphs of his five-paragraph text to the evolution, the critical content and the reception of *Flugasche*, which, simplistic as he may believe it to be, is ultimately judged to be a solid work. On the other hand, the sole aspect which seems to be of interest to him with respect to *Die Überläuferin* is that this text, just like Maron's first novel, was not published in the GDR.³⁹⁵ However, the most disparaging reaction to the novel from the anti-communist camp is Franz Josef Görtz's silence. The initial promoter of Maron's writing had already uttered his disappointment about Maron's explorations of the surreal, when in 1982 Fischer launched her second publication, *Das Mißverständnis*:

Die Präzision ist penetranter Umständlichkeit gewichen, die Anschaulichkeit hat sich ins Gegenteil verkehrt, und an die Stelle der Beobachtung, der Recherche ist nun die Spekulation getreten — die nicht mehr die Wirklichkeit in den Blick nimmt, sondern ins Reich der Träume ausweicht, sich im numinosen Nirgendwo verliert.³⁹⁶

To his mind, Maron's ventures into the surreal damaged the good reputation she had established with her first novel. Despite the fact that both Görtz and Wittstock explicitly

³⁹⁵ See Uwe Wittstock, 'Nicht übergelaufen', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 11 June 1988, p. 10. Also cp. Wittstock's first review of *Flugasche* discussed on p. 115 of this chapter. For the West German reception of Herta Müller's texts see section 2.1.2.1 The German or the Communist Other? Herta Müller's Receptions, pp. 84ff. of this thesis.

³⁹⁶ Franz Josef Görtz, 'Ich bin zwei: Vier Erzählungen und ein Stück von Monika Maron', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10 August 1982, p. 20.

stress their literary approach to her texts, the negative assessment of Maron's *Das Mißverständnis* and *Die Überläuferin*, as the positive evaluation of her first novel, thus seems to be politically motivated. For, as Widmar Puhl pointed out, Maron's second novel cannot that easily be reduced to an instrument of power in the Cold War debate: "Die Überläuferin" als Wahlhelferin im goldenen Westen zu begrüßen, das wird es sicher nicht geben.³⁹⁷ Like Puhl, Sabine Brandt and Peter-Joachim Holz praise Maron's exploration of the surreal. Thus Brandt, who focuses on the increasing number of feminist fantastic novels from the GDR, states: 'Sie ist eine bemerkenswerte Künstlerin des Imaginären, diese Monika Maron'.³⁹⁸ And, equating Maron with the protagonists in her novel, Peter-Joachim Holz concludes: "Die Überläuferin" Rosalind-Martha-Monika Maron genügt mit ihrer phantastisch verdichteten Wirklichkeit der Träume höchsten Ansprüchen. Lawrence Sterne, Poe oder Musil hätten ihre Freude an ihr.³⁹⁹ As the following discussion will show, the focus on the surrealist qualities of her second novel also guides Maron's reception in France, which coincides with the translation of other innovative GDR authors, such as Irmtraud Morgner or Wolfgang Hilbig.⁴⁰⁰

2.2.3.1 *Social Criticism vs Surreal Imagination: The Marketing Strategies*

In the marketing of her second publication in English, Maron's dissidence and the interpretation and success of her first novel play a vital role. Only two sentences on the cover of *The Defector* are devoted to this very complex novel: 'Her new novel, *The Defector*, concerns Rosalind, a historian who discovers that her body will not take her to work. Rosalind's "defection" from society is physical, emotional, political and spiritual.' The rest of the text and the illustration focus on the author and her position in the GDR:

³⁹⁷ Widmar Puhl, 'Eine läuft über: Monika Marons Roman', *Die Zeit*, 7 November 1986.

³⁹⁸ Sabine Brandt, 'Die Flucht in den Traum: Zwei Romane aus der DDR', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 30 September 1986, literary supplement, p. 7.

³⁹⁹ Peter-Joachim Holz, 'Alt-Pankower Ausbrüche: *Die Überläuferin* — Neue Prosa von Monika Maron', *Die Welt*, 11 October 1986.

⁴⁰⁰ See the tenth chapter 'Zwischen Phantastik, Traum, Trauma und Autismus: Gesellschafts- und Zivilisationskritik der DDR-Literatur' in Gürtler, pp. 213–240.

Monika Maron — journalist, novelist and social critic — is one of Germany's most widely read young writers. Despite being unpublished at home in East Germany, she writes a regular fortnightly column on literature and culture for *Die Zeit*, the prestigious West German weekly. Maron epitomizes the best of new German writing, both its harsh realism and its force of imagination.

Just like the German anti-communist critics described at the beginning of this chapter, her English publishers categorize Maron as a journalist before mentioning that she also writes novels. Accordingly, they stress her harsh realism and the documentary character of her first novel, which is described as 'the only book in English about journalism East of the Wall'. Furthermore, Maron is termed a 'social critic', a description which is underlined in the cover illustration. A retouched photograph shows the author without a mouth to illustrate the fact that in the GDR she was deprived of her voice (see Figure 10 on the following page).⁴⁰¹ On the one hand these marketing strategies are clearly influenced by the publisher's focus on authors who have been silenced in their country of origin. On the other hand they correlate with the reception of GDR authors in US American Universities, as it has been described by Ute Brandes: 'Die Texte von DDR-Schriftstellerinnen werden [...] analysiert als Dokumente politischer Haltungen, die in der Kultur des Herkunftslandes verankert sind und von denen sich eine Autorin jeweils abgrenzt oder nicht.'⁴⁰² Since the reception of translations in the United States, except for the popular successes of Patrick Süskind and Bernhard Schlink, is limited to Universities, the decision to market the author in this particular way might also have been influenced by these addressees.⁴⁰³

The French cover, by contrast, concentrates on the text rather than on the author, who is only introduced in the final paragraph. Mentioning that her novels were published in the FRG, the note about the author only implicitly states her ban in the

⁴⁰¹ Monika Maron, *The Defector*, trans. by David Newton Marinelli (London, Columbia: Readers International, 1988). On the cover illustration also cp. Peter Lewis, p. 32.

⁴⁰² Ute Brandes, 'Einleitung', in *Zwischen gestern und morgen*, ed. by Ute Brandes, pp. 7–16 (p. 13).

⁴⁰³ See Ruth Klüger, 'Zur Rezeption der deutschen Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert in den USA', in *Ansichten und Auskünfte*, ed. by Heinz Ludwig Arnold, pp. 132–135 (pp. 132 and 135).

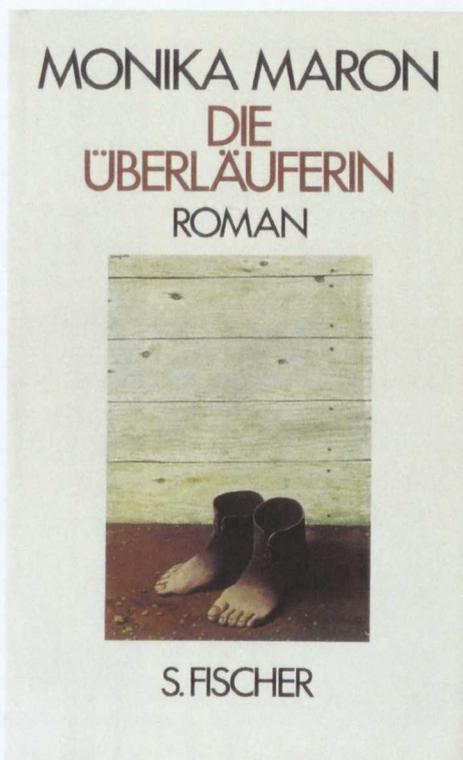


Figure 10: Covers of Monika Maron's *Die Überläuferin* and *The Defector*

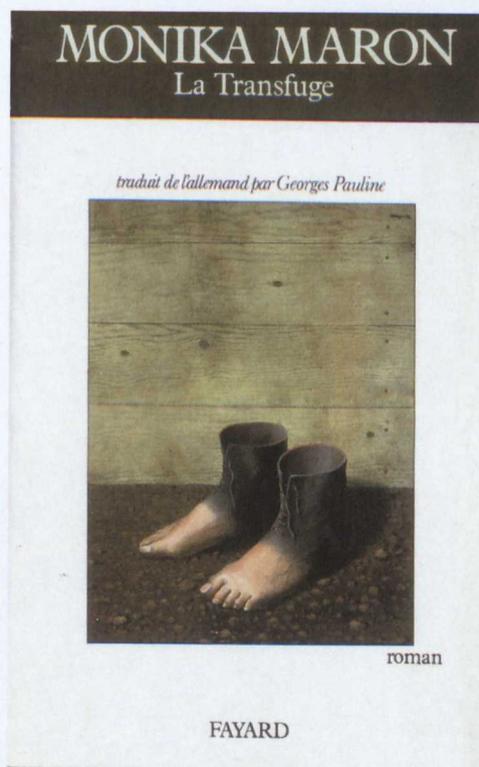


Figure 11: Cover of Monika Maron's *La Transfuge*

GDR. In the detailed description of the content, *Die Überläuferin* is associated with Marcel Aymé's *Le passe muraille*, which, written and published during World War II, draws on surrealism in order to criticize society.⁴⁰⁴ Just like the civil servant Dutilleul, the protagonist of the first short story in Aymé's collection, Rosalind is able to walk through walls, albeit only in her thoughts. Moreover, the surrealist roots of *Die Überläuferin* are stressed in the cover illustration. Chosen by the author for the first German edition of this novel, 'Le modèle rouge' by René Magritte shows a pair of naked feet in the process of being transformed into dark leather shoes (see Figure 11 on the previous page).⁴⁰⁵ On a concrete level this painting captures the starting point of the text. Nicole Zand in her review in *Le Monde*, which like the French edition of the text focuses on the surreal dimension of the novel, cites a similar description of the link between the text and the image provided by the author herself: 'C'est exactement comme Magritte, dit-elle. Les pieds sont là, mais ce n'est plus que des chaussures. Le corps est parti et il est devant un mur vide.'⁴⁰⁶ On a metaphorical level, Magritte's work supplies a possible reason for the refusal of Rosalind's body to take her to work. In a lecture Magritte once stated that the shoes serve to illustrate how the most barbarous things become normal by force of habit.⁴⁰⁷ Only when her body refuses to work, Rosalind becomes aware of the monstrosity of her daily life, which she attempts to overcome by opening up new perspectives in her surreal thought experiments and excursions. The interest in the surreal elements that characterize the reception of Maron's works in France is further confirmed by the publication of her collection of short stories and plays *Das Mißverständnis*, which, as Alice Bolterauer pointed out, like *Die Überläuferin* draw on surreal writing strategies in order to make the reader perceive

⁴⁰⁴ See Marcel Aymé, *Le passe-muraille* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943).

⁴⁰⁵ See Monika Maron, *La transfuge*, trans. by Georges Pauline (Paris: Fayard, 1989).

⁴⁰⁶ Nicole Zand, 'La vie comme école de mort et comme transgression', *Le Monde*, 24 February 1989, p. 19.

⁴⁰⁷ See René Magritte: *Catalogue Raisonné II: Oil Paintings and Objects 1931–1948*, ed. by David Sylvester (Basle: Wiese, Fonds Mercator, 1993), p. 205.

the otherness underlying the self.⁴⁰⁸ This publication suffered the reverse fate of *Flugasche*. Published in German in 1982, one year after *Flugasche* and four years before *Die Überläuferin, Das Mißverständnis* did not arouse any interest in Britain, while it was Maron's second text to appear in France.⁴⁰⁹ However, this literary rather than socio-political motivation for the publication of her texts in France does not prevent political antagonisms. Maron was not only ignored by French communist literary critics but, as the following comparative discussion of *La transfuge* and *The Defector* will show, the French translator also displays political tendencies in his interpretation of Maron's text, which neglects the polyphonic quality of the novel, as it has been described by Elke Gilson, and thus its response to the claim of otherness.⁴¹⁰

2.2.3.2 The Defector and La Transfuge: Die Überläuferin in English and French

As mentioned above, the life of the protagonist Rosalind Polkowski in Monika Maron's *Die Überläuferin* is brought to a complete standstill when her body goes on strike. This abrupt break with her daily duties allows her to question and reconsider the discourses underlying her existence. Responding to the claim of otherness, Rosalind opens up new ways of perceiving her reality and her surroundings in surreal thought experiments and parodies.⁴¹¹ However, the two translations do not always follow Rosalind on her fantastic flights of fancy. In order to uncover the diverse interpretations of Maron's literary otherness, I will therefore first of all concentrate on the particularly revealing

⁴⁰⁸ See Alice Bolterauer's analysis of the first short story in "Brombeergeruch" und "Vogelfedern": Die Erfahrung von Gegenwart in Monika Marons Prosatext *Das Mißverständnis*', in *Monika Maron in Perspective*, ed. by Elke Gilson, pp. 21–33 (p. 29).

⁴⁰⁹ See Monika Maron, *Das Mißverständnis* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1982) and *Le malentendu*, trans. by Georges Pauline (Paris: Fayard, 1991).

⁴¹⁰ On the lack of interest displayed by communist critics, see Gürtler, p. 238. The polyphonic quality of the text is described in Elke Gilson, "Dialogische" Einblicke in das Werk von Monika Maron: Eine Einführung', in *Monika Maron in Perspective*, ed. by Elke Gilson, pp. 1–20 (p. 5). For the link between Bakhtinian polyphony and otherness, cp. the section 1.4 Responding to Otherness in the Study of Translations, pp. 55ff. of this thesis.

⁴¹¹ Apart from automatic writing and dream protocols, humour constitutes an important means of reaching the surreal: 'il [l'humour, WS] atteint sans effort la surréalité, il en est même la manifestation tangible et reconnue' (Nadeau, p. 58).

differences in the temporal structure of the novel and its underlying discourses on the construction of identities. Subsequently I will highlight the differences in the French and English readings of the interludes, which parody the discursive laws underlying Rosalind's society.

2.2.3.2.1 Benjaminian 'Jetztzeit': Temporal and Narrative Otherness in Translation

The loss of her mobility enables Rosalind to stop the inexorable march of time. She no longer thinks of time as a homogeneous and empty continuum marching towards a better future but as a sort of Benjaminian 'Jetztzeit' which contains glimpses of the Messianic time. Opposing historicism, which poses the present as a transitional phase between the past and the future, Benjamin argues for materialist historical writing which, emerging from a standstill of the events, breaks up the teleological understanding of time and reveals how one life contains the whole of history.⁴¹² Only when the continuum of her time is broken up, can Rosalind free herself from the unconscious concepts underlying the ideas of a whole epoch and open up new ways of understanding her surroundings in surrealist experiments. Her first thoughts in *Die Überläuferin* are therefore devoted to her understanding of time:

Die erste Überlegung galt dem Begriff, den sie der Zeit zuordnen wollte, von dem auch abhing, wie die Tätigkeit zu benennen sei, in der sie mit der Zeit verfahren sollte; ob es sich tatsächlich um eine Menge Zeit handelte, die sie so oder so verteilen könnte, bis sie aufgebraucht war; oder ob sie die Zeit als einen Raum ansehen wollte, der angefüllt wurde mit Ereignissen und Gedanken.⁴¹³

While in the German text Rosalind feels that she needs to conceptualize time before she can decide how she will use it, in the French translation time is still described as a concept: 'Elle se demanda, pour commencer, dans quelle catégorie classer ce concept de "temps"'. Rosalind vacillates between the understanding of time as a mass, which

⁴¹² See Benjamin, "Geschichte", pp. 702–703 and section 1.3.2 'Die Fremdheit der Sprachen': Walter Benjamin, pp. 41ff. of this thesis.

⁴¹³ Monika Maron, *Die Überläuferin* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1986), p. 13. My italics.

will be used up at some stage, and the conceptualization of time as a space, which she can fill with events. Yet in the English translation it is not her conceptualization of time which determines her use of it but vice versa: 'Her first thoughts were directed toward *classifying the time, but that depended on what she wanted to do with it; was it to be apportioned this way or that until she had used it up, or was it a space to be filled with occurrences and thoughts?*'⁴¹⁴ Marinelli thus finds it even more difficult to break with the traditional understanding of time than Pauline.

Rosalind decides on the definition of time as a space, which encompasses past, present and future: 'Auch vergangene Zeiten könnte sie in diesem Raum denken und mit beliebiger Zukunft zu dauernder Gegenwart verschmelzen. Eine nicht endende Orgie phantastischer Ereignisse stand ihr bevor, ein wunderbares Chaos ohne Ziel und Zweck, sofern die gewohnte Ordnung ihres Gehirns das zuließ.' The French like the German Rosalind enjoys the thought of being able to fuse past and future into a lasting present, the Benjaminian 'Jetztzeit': 'Dans cet espace, elle pourrait aussi convoquer par la pensée des temps révolus et les amalgamer avec tel futur de son choix pour en faire un présent permanent.' Her idea of time thus incorporates the reciprocal dependence of these three levels of time, i.e. the construction of the contemporary view of the past depends on the vision of the future. The English translation, by contrast, delimits the past from the present and the desired future: 'She could also recall times past in this room and *fuse desired future time to a lasting present*. An unending orgy of fantastical events was at hand, a marvelous chaos with no fixed purpose, in so far as the familiar order of her brain permitted.'⁴¹⁵ Projecting the ideal vision of the future into a lasting present, the English Rosalind does not manage to overcome the socialist structures of thought but aims to realize the vision of her society in the here and now. She is thus still trapped in the structures of thought underlying her society which explains why later on in the

⁴¹⁴ Maron, *Transfuge*, p. 13 and *Defector*, p. 4. My italics.

⁴¹⁵ Maron, *Überläuferin*, p. 13, *Transfuge*, p. 14 and *Defector*, p. 4. My italics.

translation the order of society is qualified as ‘compelling’ rather than as ‘sich widersetzend’, i.e. as defying people’s beliefs, or as ‘given’ rather than ‘eingebleut’, i.e. as being hammered into her head.⁴¹⁶

In French and German Rosalind attempts to break up the idea of time imposed on her by society in order to shut out her usual reasoning and discover new surreal modes of perceiving the world. However, the French text does not oppose this new world, which Rosalind is about to discover, to a familiar order of thinking but to the healthy state of her brain: ‘La perspective d’une orgie jamais achevée d’événements fantastiques s’ouvrait devant elle, d’un merveilleux chaos sans rime ni raison, pour peu que *le bon état de son cerveau* le lui permît.’⁴¹⁷ Rather than being described as an alternative of equal status to realism, the surreal mode is instead denigrated as strange and pathological. Yet, based on Rosemary Jackson’s study of *Fantasy*, the surreal can also be described as subverting and criticizing the realist mode.⁴¹⁸ This understanding of the fantastical coincides with Susan C. Anderson’s reading of *Die Überläuferin*: ‘Maron’s novel presents an example of how fantasy can transform the silenced citizen by allowing her to create herself in opposition to her cultural role.’⁴¹⁹ However, the subversive power of Rosalind’s idea of time is not limited to the communist structures of thinking, it undermines the occidental understanding of time as a teleological continuum.

Initially Rosalind has difficulties in incorporating her new idea of time into her narrative practice. Trying to escape her usual paths of thought, she inadvertently returns to teleological narrative structures. In contrast to Josefa’s case, the narrative shifts in *Die Überläuferin* do not describe the alienation of Rosalind’s reflecting from her acting self. On the contrary, the novel depicts Rosalind’s attempt to find a new way of existing for

⁴¹⁶ Maron, *Überläuferin*, pp. 48 and 116 and *The Defector*, pp. 31 and 84.

⁴¹⁷ Maron, *Transfuge*, p. 14. My italics.

⁴¹⁸ See Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London: Methuen, 1981).

⁴¹⁹ Susan C. Anderson, ‘Creativity and Nonconformity in Monika Maron’s *Die Überläuferin*’, *Women in German Yearbook*, 10 (1994), 143–160 (p. 147).

her defected body. The meta-narrative deliberations in the third person thus translate Rosalind's reduction to her reflecting self. However, the ensuing narration of past events adheres to a more conventional pattern. Her first attempt to fill her space of time with events follows the same chronological order she defied in her earlier reflections. Starting with her birth, the internal narrative inadvertently leads to her death where it lingers for a while before Rosalind breaks off the narration and returns to the meta-narrative reflection in the third person:

Hier unterbrach Rosalind *ihren Gedanken*, zum einen, weil eine trunkene Fliege in ziellosen Sturzflügen durch das Zimmer schoß und sie mit ihrem aufdringlich monotonen Dröhnen störte, *zum anderen, weil der Gedanke, obgleich sie seinen Ausgangspunkt soweit wie möglich vom Augenblick fortgelegt hatte, immer engere Kreise zog* und Rosalind, würde sie ihn so fortdenken, wie sie begonnen hatte, bald vor die Frage stellen würde, warum sie überhaupt noch lebte.

Rosalind interrupted *herself*, first because a drowsy fly was buzzing around her room in aimless dives, distracting her with its insistent, monotonous humming, *and second, because her thoughts — though she had put as much distance between them and her point of departure as possible — kept narrowing on fewer and fewer people*, and if she were to continue pursuing them as before, she would soon find herself faced with the question of why she was alive in the first place.

Ici Rosalind interrompait *ses réflexions*, d'une part parce qu'une mouche qui semblait ivre effectuait des vols en piqué sans but apparent à travers toute la pièce et la dérangeait par son vrombissement monotone et agaçant, *d'autre part parce que sa pensée, bien qu'elle en eût fixé le point de départ aussi loin que possible du moment présent, décrivait des cercles de plus en plus étroits* et placerait bientôt Rosalind, si celle-ci poursuivait dans le sens initial, devant la question de savoir pourquoi, au fond, elle vivait encore.⁴²⁰

The interruption of her narrative allows Rosalind to become aware of the teleological structure of her thought. As soon as she had decided on the starting point for her narration, the thought — which is significantly no longer *her* thought but, unlike in French, becomes *the* thought — followed the marked pathway. For, as she explains herself in the same passage, routes of thought are comparable to tarred roads, which are followed unawares. Having been useful in the past, in the present situation her branched

⁴²⁰ Maron, *Überläuferin*, p. 25, *Defector*, p. 13 and *Transfuge*, p. 26. My italics.

system of roads and alleys proves to be a trap in which each of her thoughts gets caught.⁴²¹ The interruption of the course of her first thought thus allows Rosalind to become aware of the limiting system underlying the development of her ideas. These reflections on the structures of her thinking and narration depart from the analysis of this one thought rather than from 'ses réflexions', as rendered in the French translation. Unlike the German singular, the French use of the plural form already implies a multidimensional way of thinking, which responds to the claim of otherness. However, in this passage Rosalind has not yet liberated herself from her teleological way of thinking. Only when she recalls the fantastic stories told by her alter ego Martha, can Rosalind set out to discover new worlds. In the English translation Rosalind does also not interrupt her thought but 'herself'. However, this self has already been questioned in the split focalization of the frame and the internal narrative. The definition of Rosalind's identity is thus as dependent on the structures underlying her thinking as any of her thoughts. Nevertheless, the English translation accredits Rosalind with a clearly delimited and stable self and a fixed point of departure. As becomes apparent in the German and the French version, this 'Ausgangspunkt', i.e. starting point, even though it is Rosalind's birth, in this passage does not describe '*her* point of departure' but the peg on which she hangs her first thought. Choosing the most distant point from the time of the narration in order to liberate herself from her present modes of thinking, she comes to realize in the course of her narrative that, rather than opening up new pathways for the development of her thoughts, temporal distance can easily be bridged by the repetition of the usual course of thinking. The discourses underlying the thought thus determine its final destination.

⁴²¹ See Maron, *Überläuferin*, p. 26.

When Rosalind returns to her room at the end of the novel after her surreal excursions into a fantastic version of her surroundings, she has liberated herself from the teleological concept of time:

Es war, es ist, es wird sein; wie Schlangen verknäulten sich die Zeiten zu diesem Augenblick, in dem Rosalind sich unversehens wiederfand. Da bin ich also wieder, dachte sie, eher belustigt als verwundert über die Einsicht, daß ihre aufwendigen Bemühungen, sich vom Ausgangspunkt ihres Denkens zu entfernen, sie sicher an ihn zurückgeführt hatten.⁴²²

While the second sentence seems to imply that Rosalind at the end of the novel returns to the same point as its beginning and thus has moved in a circle, the first sentence, which describes her new understanding of time, to some extent disproves this assumption. Certainly, from a spatial point of view Rosalind is right. She has returned to her room, the point of departure for her fantastic excursions. However, from a conceptual point of view her position has changed. In the course of the novel, at least in its German and French versions, Rosalind has liberated herself from the teleological understanding of time and has adopted a new concept which describes past, present and future as intricately linked.⁴²³ Furthermore, the conceptual liberation from the discourses underlying her thinking, as well as from the historical myths and the utopian visions of her society imply a new understanding of her present situation which gives rise to the recovery of her bodily perceptions and actions. Becoming aware of her reawakening sensations and needs, Rosalind feels the air burning on her skin at the end of the novel, while the noise of the rain falling onto the roof makes her feel thirsty.⁴²⁴ However, in the English translation the new concept of time is separated by a full stop from Rosalind's person and the particular moment in time to which she returns: 'It was, it is, it will be; time coiled up like snakes. And Rosalind found herself again, unawares.' Unlike in the

⁴²² Maron, *Überläuferin*, pp. 220–221.

⁴²³ The French version reads: 'Ce fut, c'est, ce sera; comme des serpents les époques s'enroulaient en un noeud pour donner cet instant où Rosalind se retrouva inopinément. Me voilà donc revenue, se dit-elle, plutôt amusée qu'étonnée de constater que tous les efforts déployés pour s'éloigner du point où ses réflexions prenaient leur source l'y avaient ramenée immanquablement.' (Maron, *Transfuge*, pp. 213–214)

⁴²⁴ See Maron, *Überläuferin*, p. 221.

German and the French text, time is thus not exposed as a human construct but the new English understanding of time still contains a transcendental dimension. As mentioned above, this concept of time goes hand in hand with a fixity of the concept of identity. While the first sentence in the German text and the French translation emphasizes the dependence of the concepts of identity on the temporal and spatial structures of thought, Rosalind in the English translation ‘found herself again, unawares’. Furthermore, she is brought back to ‘her own thoughts’: ‘Well, here I am again, she thought, more bemused than surprised that her complicated efforts to leave her point of departure had brought her safely back to her own thoughts.’⁴²⁵ Marinelli thus reads the novel as a description of the loss and the recovery of Rosalind’s self. However, as Ricarda Schmidt observed, the novel’s response to the claim of otherness, expressed in the open structure of the text, refutes this fixed understanding of identities.⁴²⁶ Rosalind’s reconsideration of the discourses of identity underlying her thinking and being thus proves to be as difficult for the English translator as her replacement of the teleological concept with a Benjaminian understanding of time. The French translator, by contrast, displays no problems in following Rosalind’s surreal ventures into new dimensions of time and identity even though he qualifies them as abnormal. However, as the following discussion of the parodic interludes will show, Maron’s political otherness provokes two very different responses.

2.2.3.2.2 *Taking the Humorous Seriously: The Political Reduction of Irony and Parody*

The interludes, which usually surprise Rosalind in the middle of her thoughts, feature overdrawn character types, such as the critical intellectual and the party functionary, who represent a variety of voices from Rosalind’s daily life. Entering her room and her

⁴²⁵ Maron, *The Defector*, p. 162.

⁴²⁶ See Ricarda Schmidt, ‘The Concept of Identity in Recent East and West German Women’s Writing’, in *German Literature at a Time of Change: 1989–1990; German Unity and German Identity in Literary Perspective*, ed. by Arthur Williams, Stuart Parkes and Roland Smith (Bern: Lang, 1991), pp. 429–447 (p. 435).

thoughts of their own accord at regular intervals, these characters start discussing, in an exaggeratedly serious manner, the topics about which Rosalind has just been thinking. One of these interludes focuses on marriage which in Maron's first novel *Flugasche* was criticized as a limiting institution and which the surrealists also attacked as suppressing human drives.⁴²⁷ In this interlude the man in the red uniform, who represents the party functionary incarnate, demands the introduction of the following measures after having described the risks emanating from singles and single parents: '[G]esetzliche Ehepflicht, Reintegration Haftentlassener durch Zwangzuweisung von Ehepartnern, keine Wohnungsvergabe an Unverheiratete.'⁴²⁸ These parodic discussions thus serve to uncover the social discourses delimiting Rosalind's thinking and life. In the interlude on identity, which will be in the centre of attention in the following analysis, the man in the red uniform, who in this debate acts as a representative of the governmental institution for psychological control, states that crises of identity result in discontent and thus instigate rebellious thought and action. This statement entails the following discussion, in which the characters use the same polysemic term 'identisch' to express the most diverse ideas of this concept:

Die Frau mit der hohen Stimme [...]:

[...] *Ich möchte ja so gern wieder identisch sein.*

Die Frau mit der eigenen Meinung:

Haben Sie denn keine Ohren an Ihrem Kopf. Sie sollen zufrieden sein, *dann sind Sie auch wieder identisch.*

[...]

Der Mann mit der blutigen Nase:

[...] *Eine Überzeugung hilft.* Treten Sie einer Partei bei, einem Verband oder einem Komitee. Dann sind Sie *ein Mitglied*, und wenn Sie sich Mühe geben, werden Sie schnell ein wertvolles Mitglied oder sogar ein unentbehrliches Mitglied, und Sie werden erleben, *wie identisch Sie sich bald fühlen.*⁴²⁹

⁴²⁷ See the discussion in section 2.2.2.3 The Influence of Gender Discourses: Josefa's Partner, pp. 135ff. of this chapter and Nadeau, p. 61.

⁴²⁸ Maron, *Überläuferin*, p. 93.

⁴²⁹ Maron, *Überläuferin*, pp. 125–126. My italics.

The sentences ‘I want to be identical again’, uttered by the woman with the high voice, ‘then you will be identical again’, stated by the woman with an opinion of her own, and ‘you will see how identical you will feel’, expressed by the man with the bleeding nose, are based on three different concepts of identity. While the woman with the high voice, reminiscent of Ulrike Kuwiak in *Flugasche*, built her identity on her husband, who unfortunately left her and thus withdrew the foundation for the construction of her self, the woman with an opinion of her own bases her concept of identity on a communal definition of the term which, as described by the man with the red uniform, demands the adaptation of the individual to the rules of the society.⁴³⁰ This communal concept of identity is then ironized in the statement made by the man with the bleeding nose, the embodiment of the critical intellectual, whose nose starts to bleed when he suppresses his opinion.⁴³¹ His suggestion that the lack of identity can be remedied with the adoption of a party line reveals the concept of communal identity, which allegedly results from an agreement reached within the community, to be an arbitrary system imposed by some individuals upon others. The man with the bleeding nose thus detects the advantages of the ironic mode which allows him to utter his critical opinion without being silenced, as he was in the first interlude, by the man with the red uniform. On the other hand, this mode of speech also stops the telltale flow of blood from his nose which explains why he spends several moments in this scene palpating this organ in disbelief.

While the French translator adopts the polysemic openness of the German expression, the English translation of this discussion reduces the polyvalent term ‘identisch’ to the concept of individual identity. Thus the woman with the high voice says ‘I want so much to have my identity back’ and the woman with an opinion of her own answers ‘Be content — then and only then will you regain your identity’. The

⁴³⁰ On Ulrike Kuwiak cp. pp. 136f. in the section 2.2.2.3 The Influence of Gender Discourses: Josefa’s Partner, pp. 135ff. of this chapter.

⁴³¹ See Maron, *Überläuferin*, p. 38.

English translation of the term ‘identisch’ thus ignores the concept of communal identity, which, however, constitutes the basis for the ironic comment made by the man with the bleeding nose: ‘Convictions help. Join a party, an association or a committee. Then you’ll belong, and should you make the effort, you will quickly become a valuable member or even an indispensable one, and you’ll see that you’ll soon regain your identity.’⁴³² By rendering the ironic exaggeration expressed in the German singular ‘eine Überzeugung’ with a plurality of possible convictions, the English translator consistently turns the ironic deconstruction into a serious statement, which aims to maintain rather than to undermine the system. Unlike in the German and the French versions, the man with the bleeding nose in the English translation is thus not read as an immanent critic but as one of the many proponents of the system.

However, it is not only the English translator who does not perceive the ironic undertone of this comment. Misunderstanding the words uttered by the man with the bleeding nose as a constructive contribution, the man with the red uniform bases his conclusion on his ideas: ‘Ich schlussfolgere: jeder muß *eine Überzeugung* haben, da er sie sonst meiner Behörde nicht mitteilen kann, und er muß *eine richtige Überzeugung* haben, damit er nicht durch Verschweigen derselben oder durch *wissentlich falsche Überzeugungsangabe* straffällig wird.’⁴³³ Furthermore, the ensuing reactions of the other characters show that they accept the absurd conclusion of the party functionary, which draws on an ironic comment, as a serious legal regulation without questioning its evolution. Hence the man with the sad childhood demands to know what people are

⁴³² Maron, *Defector*, pp. 90–91. The French translation reads:

‘La femme à la voix haut perchée [...]: *J’aimerais tant redevenir identique.*

La femme à l’opinion bien arrêtée: Mais vous n’avez donc pas d’oreilles. On vous dit d’être satisfaite, et du même coup *vous redeviendrez identique.* [...]

L’homme aux saignements de nez: [...] *Une conviction* est une aide. Adhérez à un parti, à une association ou à un comité. Vous serez alors *un membre* et si vous vous donnez de la peine, vous deviendrez bientôt un membre précieux voire un membre irremplaçable, et vous verrez *comme vous vous sentirez vite identique.*’ (Maron, *Transfuge*, p. 123, my italics).

⁴³³ Maron, *Überläuferin*, p. 126. My italics.

supposed to do when their conviction changes in the course of their lives.⁴³⁴ Attempting to criticize the system, the man with the bleeding nose has thus inadvertently created a law. However, the parodic exaggeration of the regulation's creation and acceptance only features in the German version of the novel. As described above, the English text minimizes the parodic effect of the interlude by departing from a fixed concept of identity which undermines the irony in the comment of the man with the bleeding nose. He thus does not inadvertently but in fact consciously pave the way for the creation of a new regulation. Accordingly the regulation, just like the English comment of the man with the bleeding nose, replaces the absurd German singular in 'jeder muß *eine Überzeugung* haben' and 'er muß *eine richtige Überzeugung* haben' with a more agreeable plurality of convictions: 'I conclude: everyone has to have *convictions*; if not, he cannot communicate them to my office; and he has to have *the right convictions* so that he is not liable to punishment for not listing them or *for knowingly making false statements about them.*' The French translator, by contrast, who maintained the ironical mode in the comment of the man with the bleeding nose uses this particular sentence to switch to a plurality of convictions: 'J'en tire la conclusion: chacun doit avoir *des convictions*, sinon il ne peut pas en faire part à mon administration et *ses convictions doivent être authentiques*, afin qu'il ne tombe pas sous le coup de la loi pour dissimulation de celles-ci ou pour fausse déclaration.'⁴³⁵ Moreover, the French translator chooses to render the polysemic German term 'richtig' as authentic rather than as 'in accordance with the official doctrine'. Both of these decisions diminish the absurdity of the statement and turn the man in the red uniform from a parody of a party functionary into a serious threat.

Just as in his translation of the novel *Flugasche*, the English translator thus preserves the criticism of the GDR system, while he ignores the otherness within uttered

⁴³⁴ See Maron, *Überläuferin*, p. 127.

⁴³⁵ Maron, *Defector*, p. 91 and *Transfuge*, p. 124. My italics.

by the critical intellectual. In his version the polyphony of the interlude, which also contains critical voices, even if they are ignored by the functionary, is reduced to a monotonous agreement between the rulers and their subjects. The sole dissenting voice is that of Rosalind, the defector. The French translator, by contrast, maintains the irony inherent in the comment uttered by the man with the bleeding nose. However, Pauline minimizes the absurdity of the statement made by the man with the red uniform. Rather than uncovering the discursive strategies underlying the whole system, the French translation thus limits the criticism of Maron's text to the GDR ruling classes. This reading tallies with Demet's interpretation of the interludes as a more or less open attack on the regime which neglects Maron's satirical exposure of the obedient fellow-travellers.⁴³⁶ Pauline's restriction of Maron's criticism to the GDR ruling classes is further supported by the fact that the diminution of parodic effects in the French translation of the first interlude also affects 'die Frau mit der eigenen Meinung', a female representative of the regime. Her ironic German characterization, which in English is translated as 'the woman with a mind of her own', is juxtaposed with her obvious lack of any opinion, for, as shown in the discussion on identity, the woman with a mind of her own tends to adopt other people's opinions: 'Da muß man aber eine eigene Meinung haben, nicht ein bißchen hier, ein bißchen da, eine eindeutige eigene Meinung muß man haben. *Ich habe die eigene Meinung des Postbeamten, weil ich gegen alles Kriminelle bin.*' As in the German version, the woman with a mind of her own in the English translation belies her own characterization: 'You have to have a mind of your own, not a little here and a little there, you have to have an unequivocal mind of your own. *I have the opinion of the postal employee because I am opposed to everything criminal.*' In the French translation, by contrast, the rendering of the characterization as 'une femme à l'opinion bien arrêtée', i.e. an opinionated woman omits the ironic

⁴³⁶ See Demet, p. 126.

undertones of this description. Moreover, unlike the German and the English women, their French counterpart does not have but only shares the opinion of the postal employee: 'Il faut tout de même avoir sa propre opinion, pas un peu de ceci, un peu de cela, il faut avoir une opinion personnelle sans équivoque. *Je partage la propre opinion du postier*, car je suis contre tout ce qui est criminel.'⁴³⁷ The French translator thus reduces the parodic effects in the statements of the characters representing the regime, such as the man with the red uniform and the woman with an opinion of her own. Rather than revealing their stupidity, he turns them into a serious threat. However, unlike in the English translation, this obvious criticism of the regime does not result in a strict delimitation from the GDR as the evil other, which makes the French self shine more brightly. Unlike Marinelli, Pauline combines his criticism of the regime and the institutionalization of socialism with a very positive interpretation of the beginnings of the communist German state, onto which he projects exoticist ideals. This exoticism becomes apparent in his interpretation of the GDR-term 'Neulehrer'. In a West German dictionary of GDR language 'Neulehrer' were described as unqualified teachers who owed their post-war employment in the school system of the Eastern zone solely to the fact that they had not been teaching in the Third Reich.⁴³⁸ While the English translation 'teachers in a crash programme' is based on a similarly anti-communist assumption, the French 'instituteurs nouvelle vague' invokes the sense of a radical new beginning in the wake of World War II.⁴³⁹ The subtext of the French translation thus implies that it was this atmosphere which got lost as a result of the subsequent institutionalization of socialism, as embodied in the man with the red uniform and the woman with an opinion of her own. As the following analysis will show, in the French translation of Maron's third novel Michel-François Demet calls into question the idea that guilt lies with the

⁴³⁷ Maron, *Überläuferin*, p. 40, *Defector*, p. 25 and *Transfuge*, p. 40. My italics.

⁴³⁸ See *Trabbi, Telespargel und Tränenpavillon: Das Wörterbuch der DDR-Sprache*, ed. by Martin Ahrends (Munich: Heyne, 1986), p. 136.

⁴³⁹ Maron, *Überläuferin*, p. 80, *Defector*, p. 56 and *Transfuge*, p. 79.

regime alone by highlighting the collaboration of the subjects. Furthermore, this strategy also involves the discovery of the otherness of the French self.

2.2.4 Emphasizing the Otherness of the French Self: *Rue du Silence, No. 6*

First issued in Germany in 1991, Maron's third novel *Stille Zeile sechs* in the German press was again read as a realist text and received as one in which the author settled up not only with her stepfather Karl Maron but also with the founding fathers of the GDR in general.⁴⁴⁰ Both in Britain and in France, the novel was published in 1993. Describing it as a 'subtle reassessment of Communist rule across Eastern Europe', the English publisher Readers International sticks to the publishing strategies used for the first two novels.⁴⁴¹ The French cover, by contrast, seems to reveal a slight change in the marketing of Maron's writing. Not only does the blurb mention the hitherto ignored success of Maron's first novel *Flugasche* in Germany but it raises her to the spokeswoman of the oppressed in the former GDR. It describes Maron as one of the most important writers in unified Germany, apart from Christa Wolf.⁴⁴² However, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, by the time of the novel's publication in France Wolf had already fallen into disrepute in the new Federal Republic.⁴⁴³ Both of these translations show in their strategies significant similarities to the English and French versions of Maron's earlier novels. Thus the English translator displays problems in translating the fantastic discussion between the protagonist Rosalind and her plant, while the French translator omits a critical remark on the communist regime in

⁴⁴⁰ See Iris Radisch, 'Der Lurch muß sterben: *Stille Zeile sechs* — Monika Marons Abrechnung mit den Vätern der DDR', *Die Zeit*, 11 November 1991 and Franz Josef Görtz, 'Muß der Handelnde immer schuldig werden? *Stille Zeile Sechs*: Monika Marons Roman nicht nur über einen Vater', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3 December 1991.

⁴⁴¹ See Monika Maron, *Silent Close No. 6*, trans. by David Newton Marinelli (London, Columbia: Readers International, 1993).

⁴⁴² See Monika Maron, *Rue du Silence, n° 6*, trans. by Michel-François Demet (Paris: Fayard, 1993).

⁴⁴³ See p. 109 of this chapter.

Russia.⁴⁴⁴ However, rather than elaborating on these similarities, the following analysis will highlight an important feature of the French translation which can be read as an example of a translation that uncovers the foreignness of languages.

Maron's third novel *Stille Zeile sechs* again deals with the young historian Rosalind Polkowski who has quit her job at the historical institute because she detests being paid for thinking. When she tells the former party functionary Beerenbaum, whom she meets in a café, about her resolution, he offers her a job as a 'Schreibkraft', i.e. 'someone to do secretarial work', as it was rendered in the English translation.⁴⁴⁵ Beerenbaum needs a right hand woman, in the true sense of the word, because he has a crippled hand and cannot type the manuscript of his memoirs himself, which is only one of the many grotesque features leading Georg Leisten to conclude that the old man's power is already dwindling.⁴⁴⁶ In the belief that the secretarial work will not require any thought, Rosalind accepts the job only to realize that she cannot switch off her thoughts. As she notes down Beerenbaum's official view of the history of her country, she starts feeling as if she was collaborating in a crime. The novel's analysis of the relationship between perpetrators and victims is thus far more complex than implied in the reception in the German press. The French translation, by contrast, stresses Rosalind's collaboration in the crime from the start of the novel. Rather than a secretarial help, Beerenbaum in the French version is looking for 'une collaboratrice'.⁴⁴⁷ And the 'Dienstverhältnis', i.e. the 'work relationship' between the two people in French is turned into work on a joint project: 'notre travail en commun'.⁴⁴⁸ However, Demet's changes do not only entail a significant change in the relationship between the two people in the novel. As pointed

⁴⁴⁴ On the discussion with the plant cp. Monika Maron, *Stille Zeile sechs* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1991), p. 85 and *Silent Close*, p. 69. On the omitted critical remark cp. *Stille Zeile*, p. 27 and *Rue du Silence*, p. 23.

⁴⁴⁵ Maron, *Stille Zeile*, p. 29 and *Silent Close*, p. 22.

⁴⁴⁶ Georg Leisten, "'Leib wart ihr euch selbst genug...': Schrift und Körper in Monika Marons Roman *Stille Zeile 6*", in *Monika Maron in Perspective*, ed. by Elke Gilson, pp. 139–156.

⁴⁴⁷ Maron, *Rue du Silence*, p. 24.

⁴⁴⁸ Maron, *Stille Zeile*, p. 145, *Silent Close*, p. 120 and *Rue du Silence*, p. 107.

out by Eli Tzur, the term ‘collaboration’ is closely linked to the French collaboration with the Nazis after their conquest of France in 1940. Spread through a speech by the French leader Pétain, the term soon acquired negative connotations: ‘it was adopted throughout German-occupied Europe to denote active cooperation with the enemy.’⁴⁴⁹ By using this term, Demet thus creates a link between Rosalind’s story and French history. This interpretation becomes most obvious in the French translation of Rosalind’s first doubts about her role:

Je länger ich für Beerenbaum arbeitete, um so stärker wurde mein Gefühl etwas Verbotenes zu tun. Während ich widerspruchslos hinschrieb, was Beerenbaum diktierte, fragte ich mich immer öfter, ob ich mich nicht *zum Mittäter machte*, ob ich nicht sein Komplize wurde, indem ich ihm half das eigene Denkmal in Lettern zu gießen.⁴⁵⁰

While Marinelli rendered the German words ‘Komplize’ and ‘Mittäter’ in one single term ‘an accomplice’, the French translator Demet again decided to use the word ‘collaborer’: ‘Tout en écrivant sans protester ce que Beerenbaum dictait, je me demandais de plus en plus souvent si je ne *collaborais* pas avec lui, si je ne devenais pas sa complice en l’aidant à mettre noir sur blanc son propre monument.’⁴⁵¹ Moreover, this self-critical stance is not limited to the past but also directed at the present French government. Walking through the exclusive residential area where the GDR functionaries used to live in the early 1950s, Rosalind comments: ‘An manchen Häusern verwiesen Tafeln auf ihre früheren, inzwischen verstorbenen Bewohner: den ersten Präsidenten des Staates, den ersten Ministerpräsidenten, den ersten Kulturminister.’⁴⁵² The context of this passage leaves no doubt about the fact that Rosalind refers to specific GDR politicians. However, she does not mention their names but only their functions. These also exist in other states and thus do not present any difficulty in the translation of

⁴⁴⁹ Eli Tzur, ‘Collaboration’, in *The Holocaust Encyclopedia*, ed. by Walter Laqueur (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 127–133 (p. 127).

⁴⁵⁰ Maron, *Stille Zeile*, p. 77. My italics.

⁴⁵¹ Maron, *Silent Close*, pp. 62–63 and *Rue du Silence*, p. 58. My italics.

⁴⁵² Maron, *Stille Zeile*, p. 8.

this particular passage. The French translation just like the German original permits the identification of different systems via these political functions, such as *ministre de la Culture*: ‘Sur certains maisons, des plaques rappelaient le souvenir des habitants antérieurs, morts entre-temps, le premier président du Conseil des ministres, le premier ministre de la Culture.’⁴⁵³ The English translator, by contrast, inserts a clarification by explicitly mentioning the GDR: ‘Some of the houses still had nameplates indicating their earlier, since deceased inhabitants: the first President of the German Democratic Republic, the first Prime Minister, and the first Minister of Culture.’⁴⁵⁴ Marinelli thus, as in *Flight of Ashes*, draws a clear dividing line between East and West, while Demet’s translation maintains the possibility to recognize the otherness underlying the French self.

2.2.5 From the Clearly Delimited Other to the Otherness of the Self

[B]ei Lesungen hatte ich den Eindruck, daß die Schweizer meinen Texten weniger mit der voyeuristischen Neugier von Leuten zuhören, die es, Gott sei Dank, im Leben besser getroffen haben, als eher mit dem staunenden Erkennen, daß Geschichten aus dieser komischen kleinen DDR auch ihr eigenes Land betreffen.⁴⁵⁵

Comparing the reactions towards her works at public readings, Maron, in her correspondence with the West-German journalist and writer Joseph von Westphalen, which was initiated by the weekly *Die Zeit*, differentiates between the West German voyeuristic curiosity for information from the other Germany and the Swiss surprised recognition of the otherness of the self. Falling into the first category, the translational reception of Maron’s works in Britain and the United States, just like the anti-communist reception of her works in the West German press, serves the corroboration of Cold War discourses. The British publisher’s primary interest in critical information from the other country, which becomes apparent in the selection of texts translated and

⁴⁵³ Maron, *Rue de Silence*, p. 10.

⁴⁵⁴ Maron, *Silent Close*, p. 6. My emphasis.

⁴⁵⁵ Monika Maron und Joseph von Westphalen, *Trotzdem herzliche Grüße: Ein deutsch-deutscher Briefwechsel*, mit einem Nachwort von Antonia Grunenberg (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1988), p. 17.

the strategies adopted for their publication, is further confirmed in the English translations of the three novels. They imply the translator's and/ or publisher's superiority, not least in taking the liberty to cut whole paragraphs in order allegedly to improve the text. Furthermore, Marinelli reduces the polyphony of the German texts to rulers and proponents of the system, which finds its only opponent in the respective protagonists of the novels. Thus drawing clear borderlines between the novels' country of origin and the target cultures of the translation, Marinelli fends off the application of Maron's criticism to the receiving cultures.

The choice of Maron's texts available in France and the strategies used for their marketing demonstrate, on the surface, more of an interest in their literary quality. Dealing with the fantastical elements also consistently poses fewer problems for the French translator than for the English. However, the particular focus on surrealism betrays the desire to confirm the significance of the French literary self for the other culture's literature. Furthermore, the general emphasis on elements of style does not imply that the texts are received in a political vacuum. The borderlines inscribed into the translation of Maron's novel *Die Überläuferin* show an idealist interpretation of the early days of socialism, while the loss of this sense of a new beginning as a result of the institutionalization of the system comes under strong criticism. Only the French translation of Maron's third novel *Stille Zeile sechs* makes a step towards the recognition of the otherness of the self that Maron observed in her Swiss audience. Linking the totalitarian system in the GDR to the conditions under the French collaboration, Demet's interpretation of Maron's text even retains the possibility to read the text with regard to a contemporary government in a different system. By unveiling the otherness underlying the self — in words such as *ministre de la culture* —, the French translation comes close to revealing what Benjamin called 'the foreignness of languages' in a linguistic as well as in a cultural sense.

2.3 Genocide and the Fantastic: Edgar Hilsenrath

At the start of his career as a writer the Jewish-German author Edgar Hilsenrath, unlike many of his colleagues in Germany, experienced greater difficulties in finding a German publisher than in establishing an international reputation.⁴⁵⁶ While his first novel, *Nacht*, which describes the dehumanization of Jewish prisoners in a ghetto, was withdrawn immediately after publication in Germany in 1964 because the German publisher was afraid of damaging his image, the novel was a success in the United States. Before republication in Germany, *Nacht* was available in translation in Britain, France, Italy and the Netherlands. Hilsenrath's second and best-selling novel, *Der Nazi und der Friseur*, which deals with a Nazi who takes on the identity of his former Jewish friend after the war, was first launched in English translation in the United States in 1971, after Hilsenrath had spent several years trying to find a publisher in Germany.⁴⁵⁷ Despite its international success, several established German publishing houses turned down this satire on the German Nazi past.⁴⁵⁸ It was not published until 1977 when the young publisher Helmut Braun took on the project. The fact that the German 'original' was published later than the English version explains why the latter is two pages longer. Peter Alvin Stenberg contends that Hilsenrath omitted the ending of this novel from the

⁴⁵⁶ On the lack of interest in German literature abroad, see pp. 4ff. in the introduction and section 2.1.1 'Self-Satisfied Rubbish'? German Literature in the Foreign Market Place, pp. 63ff. of this thesis. For the publishing history of Hilsenrath's novels in Germany and abroad I draw on Susann Möller, 'Zur Rezeption: Philosemiten und Andere: die Verlagsstationen Edgar Hilsenraths', in *Edgar Hilsenrath: Das Unerzählbare erzählen*, ed. by Thomas Kraft (Munich: Piper, 1996), pp. 103–116 and Ursula Hien, 'Schreiben gegen den Philosemitismus: Edgar Hilsenrath und die Rezeption von *Nacht* in Westdeutschland', in *Deutsche Nachkriegsliteratur und der Holocaust*, ed. by Stephan Braese and others, Wissenschaftliche Reihe des Fritz-Bauer-Instituts, 6 (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1998), pp. 229–244.

⁴⁵⁷ See Edgar Hilsenrath's statement in 'Holocaust und Unterhaltung: Eine Diskussion mit Edgar Hilsenrath, Michael Komar, Ursula Link-Heer, Egon Monk und Marcel Ophüls', chairman: Rüdiger Steinlein, ed. by Manuel Köppen, in *Kunst und Literatur nach Auschwitz*, ed. by Manuel Köppen (Berlin: Schmidt, 1993), pp. 107–112 (p. 108).

⁴⁵⁸ Stephan Braese argues that there is a link between the late publication of Hilsenrath's novel in Germany and the fact that the tradition of satires on National Socialism in German literature written in exile by authors such as Irmgard Keun, Heinrich Mann and Bertold Brecht has fallen into oblivion, see Stephan Braese, *Das teure Experiment: Satire und NS-Faschismus* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996).

German edition because his beliefs had changed since its first publication. Taken to task by the protagonist, God in the English text admits his complicity in the Holocaust, which implies the partial absolution of the murderers. In the later German version, however, the whole discussion between God and the protagonist was cut out so that the murderers have only themselves to blame.⁴⁵⁹ On the other hand, this significant change could have been motivated by Hilsenrath's refusal to absolve the German audience from responsibility after he had returned to Germany.⁴⁶⁰ Despite omitting the subtitle of the English text — 'A Tale of Vengeance' —, which, according to Hans Otto Horch, would have decreased the marketability of *Der Nazi und der Friseur* in Germany, Hilsenrath still took his revenge by changing the last chapter of the novel.⁴⁶¹

The extraordinary publishing history of Hilsenrath's works can certainly be put down to the fact that Hilsenrath at the time lived in the United States. Born in Leipzig in 1926, Hilsenrath fled to Romania to escape the Nazis in 1938 but was deported to a ghetto in the Ukraine in 1941. When the ghetto was liberated in 1944, he first of all went to Palestine, then moved to France to join his family before emigrating to New York in 1951. In the 1970s it began to dawn on him that he had been living in linguistic exile for years: 'Ich schuf mir ein Gefängnis aus Büchern, da ich immer ein Liebesverhältnis zur deutschen Sprache gehabt habe.'⁴⁶² After his return to Germany in 1975 Hilsenrath's

⁴⁵⁹ See Peter Alvin Stenberg, 'Famous Lost Words oder deutsche Romane im englischen Dreiviertelakt', in *Übersetzen, verstehen, Brücken bauen: Geisteswissenschaftliches und literarisches Übersetzen im Internationalen Kulturaustausch*, ed. by Armin Paul Frank and others, Göttinger Beiträge zur internationalen Übersetzungsforschung, 8, 2 vols (Berlin: Schmidt, 1992), II, pp. 615–623 (pp. 621–623) and "'Ich habe dich einen kleinen Augenblick verlassen": Edgar Hilsenrath und der abwesende Gott', in *Edgar Hilsenrath*, ed. by Thomas Kraft, pp. 178–190 (pp. 185–187).

⁴⁶⁰ In the fictional text 'Dichterlesung 1978' Hilsenrath draws on several confrontations with Neo Nazis at public presentations of his book *Der Nazi und der Friseur*, see Edgar Hilsenrath, 'Dichterlesung 1978', in *Edgar Hilsenrath*, ed. by Thomas Kraft, pp. 101–102.

⁴⁶¹ Hans Otto Horch, 'Grauen und Groteske: Zu Edgar Hilsenraths Romanen', in *"Wir tragen den Zettelkasten mit den Steckbriefen unserer Freunde": Acta Band zum Symposium "Beiträge jüdischer Autoren zur deutschen Literatur seit 1945"*, Universität Osnabrück 2.–5.6.1991, ed. by Jens Stüben and Winfried Woesler (Darmstadt: Häusser, 1994), pp. 213–226 (p. 221).

⁴⁶² Edgar Hilsenrath, 'Zuhause nur in der deutschen Sprache: eine biographische Selbstauskunft', in *Edgar Hilsenrath*, ed. by Thomas Kraft, pp. 13–19 (p. 18). Also cp. Braese, *Das teure Experiment*, pp. 247–48. For an overview over Hilsenrath's life and works see the very informative homepage by Peter Klingbiel and Stephanie Speil, 'Edgar Hilsenrath' <<http://www.fh-fulda.de/hilsenrath/index.htm>> [accessed 12 March 2003].

publishing situation reversed with him publishing for a while in Germany but not abroad. He immediately signed a contract with the German publisher Langen-Müller, where his three following books were launched. However, as Hilsenrath realized afterwards, this decision was taken overhastily. Unlike his first two novels, the books published by Langen-Müller have not (yet) been translated into either English or French which Hilsenrath attributed to his German publisher's weak marketing campaign.⁴⁶³ Only with his move to the esteemed publishing house Piper and the publication of his sixth and highly praised novel, *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*, for which he was awarded the renowned Alfred Döblin prize, did Hilsenrath return to the international book market. While generally speaking contemporary German prose is translated into French before it is even considered for publication in Britain, the first translation of this novel was published in Britain in 1990 under the title of *The Story of the Last Thought*. After the publication of an Italian and a Dutch version in 1991, the French translation *Le conte de la pensée dernière* followed in 1992. In addition, the text was translated into Greek, Armenian, Polish and Lithuanian. Surprisingly, it has not (yet) attracted the attention of an American publisher.⁴⁶⁴

However, Hilsenrath's initial publishing problems in Germany cannot solely be explained with the fact that the author lived in America. As both Susann Möller and Ursula Hien point out, the lack of interest in Hilsenrath's works can also be traced back to socio-political factors: Hilsenrath's writing clashed with philosemitic publishing practices which aimed to counter anti-Semitism after World War II in Germany.⁴⁶⁵ As Hilsenrath stated himself in an interview: 'Ich habe die Philosemiten erschreckt, ich bin

⁴⁶³ See Möller, p. 113. This complaint coincides with similar statements of other German authors described in section 2.1.1 'Self-Satisfied Rubbish?' German Literature in the Foreign Market Place, pp. 63ff. of this thesis.

⁴⁶⁴ See the bibliography in *Edgar Hilsenrath*, ed. by Thomas Kraft, pp. 239–246 (p. 241).

⁴⁶⁵ Hien notes that in his autobiography Helmut Kindler, the first German publisher of *Nacht*, critically reviewed this publishing practice. See Hien, p. 241.

Außenseiter.⁴⁶⁶ While in the early 1960s the blurred boundaries between victims and perpetrators in *Nacht* and the satirical representation of German philosemitism in *Der Nazi und der Friseur* prevented the (successful) publication of these novels, the changes in the wake of the students' revolution and the renewed interest in Germany's recent past promoted their sensational republication in the late 1970s.

However, Hilsenrath's writing has not stopped breaking taboos and alienating his critics. Like Franz Werfel's *Die vierzig Tage des Musa Dagh* (1933), Hilsenrath's *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* (1989) deals with the first genocide of the twentieth century committed by the Turks, who in 'the period between the Great War and the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923 [killed] well over a million Armenians [...] by mass shootings, massacres, deportations and induced starvation'.⁴⁶⁷ Unlike Werfel, who opts for mythicized realism, Hilsenrath decides to describe these brutal events in a polyphonic oriental fairy tale.⁴⁶⁸ In tales within tales, or rather dialogues within dialogues, a Turkish storyteller, the Meddah, provides the dying Thovma Khatisian, born in 1915 — the year when the majority of his family as well as their culture were annihilated — with a family and a history, before, following mythical belief, his last thought leaves his body to return to the country of his reinvented ancestors. Within this foreignizing framework Hilsenrath uncovers the mechanisms of othering underlying genocides by linking the extermination of the Armenian people to the Shoa.

⁴⁶⁶ Thomas Feibel, 'Ich habe die Philosemiten erschreckt, ich bin Außenseiter: Aus einem Gespräch mit dem Schriftsteller Edgar Hilsenrath', *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 15 September 1990, supplement 'Zeit und Bild', p. 2.

⁴⁶⁷ Robert Melson, *Revolution and Genocide: On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 142. Although I do not agree with Melson's basic thesis that genocides are brought about by revolutions, I will draw on his otherwise very informative study.

⁴⁶⁸ For detailed comparisons of the two novels see Norbert Otto Eke, 'Planziel Vernichtung: Zwei Versuche über das Unfaßbare des Völkermords: Franz Werfels *Die vierzig Tage des Musa Dagh* (1933) und Edgar Hilsenraths *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* (1989)', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geisteswissenschaft*, 71 (1997), 701–723 and Ulrich Dittmann, 'Den Völkermord erzählen? Franz Werfels *Die vierzig Tage des Musa Dagh* und Edgar Hilsenraths *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*', in *Edgar Hilsenrath*, ed. by Thomas Kraft, pp. 163–177.

In the following chapter, I will argue that, drawing on a variety of traditions ranging from Jewish thought via fairy tales to orientalism, Hilsenrath consciously employs multifarious defamiliarization devices in order to induce shock and thus to provoke thought. Focusing on Hilsenrath, Jakov Lind and Jurek Becker, Claudia Brecheisen points out that this technique of defamiliarization, which stems from an age-old Jewish tradition, is regularly employed in literature on the Holocaust and can also be found in the works of contemporary German-Jewish authors, such as Maxim Biller and Rafael Seligman.⁴⁶⁹ As the following analyses of the reception of his novel in the German press and in translation in Britain and France will demonstrate, Hilsenrath's conscious transgressions of the conceptual borderlines inscribed into the three receiving cultures certainly provoked strong reactions. These particularly concerned his juxtaposition of the historical topic with a fictional genre and the link he draws between the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide. However, while in the German press Hilsenrath's response to otherness was mainly deemed to be thought provoking, the translations display strong tendencies of refamiliarization which reinscribe the text with the borderlines it tries to transgress.

2.3.1 A (Fairy)-Tale about Genocide: Hilsenrath's *Märchen* in the German Press

'Kann man im Legendenton, mit biblischer Rhetorik, wie ein Märchenonkel über den ersten Genozid dieses Jahrhunderts berichten? Über viehische Massaker, Vernichtungs-Deportationen, Folterqualen, über eine staatlich gelenkte, systematische Schlächtere?'⁴⁷⁰ This is the basic question that haunts most of Hilsenrath's critics. All of them comment on the genre Hilsenrath chose for his novel on the Armenian genocide, apart from the Jewish-German author Maxim Biller, who uses a similar technique of

⁴⁶⁹ See Claudia Brecheisen, 'Literatur des Holocaust: Identität und Judentum bei Jakov Lind, Edgar Hilsenrath und Jurek Becker' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Augsburg, 1993).

⁴⁷⁰ Anon., 'Pierrot des Schreckens: Edgar Hilsenrath, *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*', *Der Spiegel*, 36 (1989), 233–236 (p. 233).

defamiliarization to Hilsenrath.⁴⁷¹ Like the unnamed writer of the article in *Der Spiegel*, they generally praise the novel. However, while some redraw the dividing line between fact and fiction, which Hilsenrath tries to transcend, others become entangled in the complex discourse on otherness. Focusing on these two topics, the following discussion will retrace the vacillation of the novel's critical evaluation between orientalist kitsch and modernist ingenuity.

Despite the fact that he highly praises the beginning of *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*, Hermann Kurzke is the most negative in his response: 'Verletzend, unvergeßlich, ungeheuerlich ist der Erzählton des Anfangs: eine von Schocks zerrissene Gemütlichkeit.'⁴⁷² Kurzke claims that, after this unforgettable beginning, the style and content of the novel rapidly deteriorate. The first book, which describes how Thovma's father Wartan Khatisian is tortured and questioned by the Turkish authorities, who want to present him as their witness in a show trial intended to prove the existence of an Armenian world conspiracy, still meets with Kurzke's approval. He takes a more critical stance to the second book of the novel, which traces Wartan's life back to his birth and childhood in the small Armenian village Yedi Su. According to Kurzke, Hilsenrath's representation of the Armenian community shows distinct traits of primitivist depictions of rural life: 'Das Leben ist schön, im Brauchtum geborgen.' However, this evaluation not only ignores the cruelty of the patriarchal system of the village society but also neglects the descriptions of the massacres under Sultan Abdul Hamid II at the end of the nineteenth century.⁴⁷³ Yet, Kurzke primarily attacks the third book of the novel, which describes the genocide and the death marches of 1915. He claims that in this book the form of the novel falls apart which, to his mind, nevertheless comes as a relief because

⁴⁷¹ Cp. Maxim Biller, 'Das Lachen des Schreckens', *Tempo*, 8 (1989), p. 116.

⁴⁷² Hermann Kurzke, 'Mord im Märchentum: Edgar Hilsenraths Roman über Armenien', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 November 1989, literary supplement, p. 4.

⁴⁷³ The massacres are described in the twelfth chapter of the second book, cp. Edgar Hilsenrath, *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* (Munich: Piper, 1989), pp. 344–354. On the patriarchal system cp. the discussion in the section 2.3.2.1.3 The Male Bone: The Translational Elision of the Grotesque, pp. 205ff. of this chapter.

the narrator had started to annoy him: 'Auf die Länge geht einem der Meddah nämlich auf die Nerven, zumal er das Niveau des Anfangs nicht halten kann.' Kurzke therefore concludes that the attempt to write a fairy tale about genocide was damned to failure because the genre is not an appropriate form for this topic: 'Die mythisierende Erzählform ist zu schwach und zu gekünstelt für den gewaltigen Gegenstand.' None of Hilsenrath's other critics share Kurzke's deprecating view of the novel's form. However, Ralf Hoppe and Peter Jokostra neglect its significance by limiting their reading to the factual dimension of the text. Hoppe, whose article focuses on the novel's historical background and Hilsenrath's research in the United States and Turkey, reduces Hilsenrath's multifarious use of the fairy tale to a simple frame narrative: 'Es ist ein politischer Roman mit einer märchenhaften Rahmenhandlung'.⁴⁷⁴ Jokostra, who commends Hilsenrath's *Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* as one of the two literary events on the German book market in the autumn of 1989, also has reservations about the form of the fairy tale which, according to him, initially disturbs the reading process. To his mind, it is the violent reality of the events, engulfing and drowning the genre, that determines the novel's high literary quality: 'Die Realität ist so blutig und grauenhaft, das Massaker der Türken an den wehrlosen Armeniern so nachweisbar historisch belegt, daß die Wirklichkeit das Märchen überholt.'⁴⁷⁵

However, as Cornelia Staudacher rightly points out in her article entitled 'The Truth of the Fairy Tale' and as my discussion of the translations in the following sections will further elucidate, form and content of Hilsenrath's novel are intricately linked and cannot be regarded as separate entities. Staudacher praises Hilsenrath's combination of reality and fairy tale as the most truthful form of talking about reality and thus as a possible means of overcoming the crisis of the modern novel:

⁴⁷⁴ Ralf Hoppe, 'Das Märchen vom Morden', *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt*, 4 August 1989, p. 21.

⁴⁷⁵ Peter Jokostra, 'Keine Rettung am heiligen Berg Ararat', *Rheinische Post*, 6 January 1990, weekend supplement, p. 4.

Vielleicht erfährt auch der moderne Roman, von Georg Lukàcs als 'Ausdruck der transzendentalen Obdachlosigkeit' gekennzeichnet und seither wiederholt als in der Krise befindlich diagnostiziert, hier eine mögliche Rettung im Märchen mit seiner Synthese von Wahrheit und Lüge als der wahrhaftigsten Form von der Wirklichkeit zu erzählen, Geschichte in den Griff zu bekommen und die Humanität zu retten.⁴⁷⁶

Although Staudacher's claim is certainly exaggerated, there are other critics who praise Hilsenrath's use of the fairy tale and emphasize the modernity of his novel. In contrast to Jokostra, Bettina Mannack stresses that the powerful effect of Hilsenrath's novel results from the juxtaposition of topic and genre: 'Gerade dadurch, daß Hilsenrath die Gattung des Märchens wählt und damit eine Form der Literatur, die oft dem Guten zum Sieg verhilft, wird sein Roman um so eindringlicher; [...]'.⁴⁷⁷ The illuminating power of shock is also underlined by Götze. According to him, Hilsenrath's use of the fairy tale counters the argument that the description of the Holocaust demands traditional forms: 'Hilsenrath setzt auf Schock, statt auf Einfühlung, auf Wahrnehmung statt auf Sentimentalität. [...] Sein Märchen ist eine moderne Form.'⁴⁷⁸ The modernity of Hilsenrath's novel is further elucidated by Hielscher who praises Hilsenrath's combination of oriental tale with modern montage techniques.⁴⁷⁹

However, just like Kurzke, Hielscher criticizes Hilsenrath's lapses into sugary folklore in the idyllic genre scenes in which, to his mind, the intricate links between satire and fairy tale, between virtue and violence fall apart. He thus disparages these passages of Hilsenrath's tale as tending towards kitsch and simplistic black and white images. The reproach of exoticism implicit in Hielscher's criticism is explicitly stated by Michael Bauer. Praising the end of the novel, he concedes: 'Vergessen sind der ganze

⁴⁷⁶ Cornelia Staudacher, 'Von der Wahrheit des Märchens: Edgar Hilsenraths Epos *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 11 October 1989, literary supplement, p. 7.

⁴⁷⁷ Bettina Mannack, 'Edgar Hilsenrath: Märchen aus einer unheilen Welt', *Kieler Nachrichten*, 23 November 1989, p. 21.

⁴⁷⁸ Karl-Heinz Götze, '1001 Nacht der langen Messer: Edgar Hilsenraths Roman *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*', *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 19 August 1989, supplement 'Zeit und Bild', p. 4 (repr. in *Edgar Hilsenrath*, ed. by Thomas Kraft, pp. 83–88).

⁴⁷⁹ See Martin Hielscher, 'Das Flüstern des Todes: Edgar Hilsenraths *Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*', *Die Zeit*, 6 October 1989, p. 75. For another example of praise on the fairy tale cp. Ota Filip, 'Großer Poet und überzeugender Lügner', *Welt am Sonntag*, 8 October 1989, p. 70.

tausendundeinenächtliche Exotismus und die Schwarzweißmalerei vorangegangener Kapitel.’⁴⁸⁰ Bauer believes that the novel is marked by orientalist structures and as a proof cites the alleged simplistic binary opposition of Christian victims and Muslim rapists and murderers. In this respect he compares the world of the novel to the wild Kurdistan as portrayed in the books of the German author Karl May, who is also mentioned by Kurzke. Bauer’s evaluation of the novel as orientalist and sexist is summoned up in his final satirical image: ‘Halbmond über den runden Gesäßen christlicher Bräute und ihrer muselmanischen Schänder.’ This to my mind unfounded assessment of Hilsenrath’s novel as orientalist stands in stark contrast to the explicit and exoticist praise of the oriental quality of Hilsenrath’s text in other articles. Comparing Hilsenrath’s description of the Armenian village Yedi Su to the dream-like pictures by Marc Chagall, Hoppe states: ‘Denn so zeigt Hilsenrath, daß er nicht nur Meister des bissig-verknappenden Dialogs ist, sondern auch ein Epiker von tiefer Zartheit und orientalischer Bilderfülle.’ Similarly Götze describes the passages on the village life as ‘spannend, farbig und fremdartig wie die Märchen aus 1001 Nacht’. And Mannack claims that the second book of the novel narrates the happy scenes of Armenian village life. Both the reproach of orientalism and the simplistic exoticist interpretation of the novel overlook the fact that Hilsenrath intentionally employs and reflects on orientalist discourses, an aspect which shall be further elaborated in the sections on the translations of the novel into English and French.⁴⁸¹

Besides their remarks about genre all of the critics comment on the link Hilsenrath draws between the Armenian genocide and the Shoa. Not only does Hilsenrath use words associated with the Shoa such as ‘Endlösung’ in the context of the Armenian

⁴⁸⁰ Michael Bauer, ‘Fabulieren, um nichts zu verschweigen: Hilsenraths *Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* und andere Prosa zur Geschichte Armeniens’, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 16/17 October 1989, supplement, p. 16.

⁴⁸¹ See the section 2.3.2.1 Orientalism and Fairy Tale: Otherness as an Organizing Principle, pp.180ff. of this chapter and the following subsections.

genocide, he also leaves his protagonist, who magically survives the mass murder of the Armenians, to die in a Nazi death camp in Poland. In general this comparison finds the approval of the critics. Staudacher writes: ‘Gespenstisch leicht lassen sich Bezüge herstellen, allzumal zu den vom Autor schließlich selbst erwähnten, knapp ein viertel Jahrhundert später am jüdischen Volk begangenen Verbrechen...’ and the anonymous writer in *Der Spiegel* comments: ‘Für den Juden Hilsenrath ist der armenische Opfergang auch ein Anagramm der jüngeren Geschichte, der eigenen Biographie; wie sich die Schreckensbilder gleichen.’⁴⁸² Furthermore, Hielscher recognizes that Hilsenrath’s novel presents the reader with strategies of othering which to his mind can be traced back to Turkish and German nationalist megalomania: ‘Es ist die — jeglichem Völkermord zugrundeliegende — nationalistisch-größenwahnsinnige Logik, die aus den Armeniern Volksfeinde, Parasiten und Ratten macht, die wie Ungeziefer vertilgt werden müssen.’ However, he himself falls prey to these strategies by citing the statement of a German major who compares the Armenians to the Jews: ‘Nicht nur ihre jahrhundertealte Leidensgeschichte, ihre soziale Rolle und ihr Überlebenswille macht Juden und Armenier einander so ähnlich (“Diese beiden Völker sind fast zum Verwechseln”, heißt es im Buch.)’⁴⁸³ Unlike Hielscher, who traces the similarity between these two people back to their histories of suffering and the similarity of the historical circumstances leading to their persecutions, the major draws a link between alleged Armenian and Jewish avarice. He thus anticipates the strategies of justification for the Shoa, which in this particular scene provide Turkish officials with an explanation for several executions of Armenians in Bakir. Götze, who uses the same quotation, puts it in context by citing a whole set of stereotypes, albeit without further qualification:

Die Armenier überleben es immer wieder, sind tüchtig, schlau, geschickt. Sie zahlen Steuern an die Kurden und die Türken, dennoch bleibt den meisten von ihnen noch ein Goldstück, um es im Stiefelabsatz zu verstecken, als eiserne Ration, wenn man

⁴⁸² Anon., ‘Pierrot des Schreckens’, p. 233.

⁴⁸³ The quotation from Hilsenrath’s novel can be found in Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 39.

wieder einmal plötzlich fliehen muß. Kurz: sie sind wie die Juden. “Diese beiden Völker sind fast zum Verwecheln. Es ist unglaublich.”

Only Kurzke strongly attacks the link drawn between the Armenian genocide and the Shoa. He insists that Hilsenrath degrades the suffering of the Armenians to a simple excuse to write about his own story: ‘Der kleine Völkermord ist nur eine Folie für den großen.’ Kurzke would have preferred Hilsenrath either to write solely about the Armenian genocide and to leave it to his readers to make the connection to the Shoa, which to his mind lacks subtlety in Hilsenrath’s text, or to write an openly autobiographical text — ‘eine radikal ehrliche Lebensgeschichte’. The latter suggestion reveals Kurzke’s underlying demand for realism and thus also explains why he attacks the form of the fairy tale.

Focusing on and countering the allegations uttered in the novel’s reception in the German press and further explored in later research, the following sections will analyse the reactions to Hilsenrath’s defamiliarization technique in the English and the French translation of *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*.

2.3.2 Defamiliarization and Analogy: Hilsenrath’s Response to the Claim of Otherness

Hilsenrath’s novel *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* is marked by two seemingly opposing narrative strategies. On the one hand, the novel uses a whole set of devices which mark the text as foreign and strange, such as foreign terms and names as well as their German explanations, the translations from Turkish into Armenian and vice versa, the genre of the oriental fairy tale and the dialogical form. On the other hand, the author creates clear links between the genocide in this foreign and strange world and the Shoa. However, these two apparently opposing tools can also be described as one single strategy. The manifold foreignizing devices are used as a means of Brechtian defamiliarization which Brecht in 1935 described as follows:

Von keiner Seite wurde es dem Zuschauer weiterhin ermöglicht, durch einfache Einfühlung in dramatische Personen sich kritiklos (und praktisch folgenlos)

Erlebnissen hinzugeben. Die Darstellung setzte die Stoffe und Vorgänge einem Entfremdungsprozeß aus. Es war die Entfremdung, welche nötig ist, damit verstanden werden kann.⁴⁸⁴

In analogy to Brechtian epic theatre, Hilsenrath creates a dialogical novel which defies the demand for identification and the development of personal sympathy and thus forces the reader to concentrate on and consider the similarities underlying the uniqueness of the two genocides. Rather than limiting the execution of a people to one specific country and one particular historical background, the text thus implicitly and explicitly uncovers the structures of othering which serve as justification for both of these mass murders. As the following discussion of the English and the French translations will demonstrate, they, in particular the English text, both tend to diminish the defamiliarization devices, which will form the focus of the following section, and the manifold links to the Shoa, which will be discussed subsequently. Ignoring the wider implications of the text, the translations thus limit the novel to a realist presentation of Turkish and Armenian histories.

2.3.2.1 Orientalism and Fairy Tale: Otherness as an Organizing Principle

As my discussion of the reception of *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* in the German press has already indicated, the foreignizing devices in Hilsenrath's novel met with opposing reactions from the start. While his decision to present the novel as a fairy tale was praised as ingenious, the folkloristic elements were disparaged as orientalist. In her study on the image of the Middle East in selected prose of contemporary German-speaking authors, Ishrak Kamaluddin extends the orientalist evaluation to the whole of the novel. Kamaluddin's dissertation focuses on key scenes in nine novels which she, drawing on Edward W. Said's *Orientalism*, scrutinizes for their use of Western concepts on the Orient such as barbarity and despotism, the end of civilization and the experience

⁴⁸⁴ Bertolt Brecht, 'Vergnügungstheater oder Lehrtheater?', in *Bertolt Brecht: Ausgewählte Werke in Sechs Bänden*, Jubiläumsausgabe zum 100. Geburtstag (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1997), VI, pp. 188–198 (p. 191).

of the extreme. In this comparative reading Hilsenrath's novel comes out worst. Kamaluldin accuses Hilsenrath of using the Turkish Meddah as a puppet in order to conceal the European omniscient viewpoint which determines his portrayal of the Middle East. In his depiction of rural Anatolia Hilsenrath not only employs the idyllic but also the barbarian concept of the orient and indulges in voyeuristic descriptions of brutal and sexist eroticism. Furthermore, Kamaluldin argues that the text reveals the author's lack of insight into the historical and political background of the Armenian genocide which in the end only serves as a foil for the Holocaust:

Seine Darstellung aus der Sicht eines deutsch-jüdischen Autors gerät zwangsläufig in den übermächtigen Sog der deutschen Geschichte. Der Autor muß sich fragen lassen, warum er einen historischen Roman über einen Völkermord im Nahen Osten schreibt, obwohl ihm klar sein muß, daß sein eigentliches historisches Thema in Europa liegt.⁴⁸⁵

While it is true that Hilsenrath makes use of orientalist concepts, he does not simply project the brutality of European history onto the Middle East. As his examination of the Holocaust in his earlier novels *Nacht* and *Der Nazi und der Friseur* shows, Hilsenrath does not need to use the Middle East as a means of deflection. The following discussion of the English and the French translation of otherness in Hilsenrath's novel will therefore contend that Hilsenrath uses orientalism as a means of defamiliarization. However, in the English and French translation the diverse devices used in the novel, such as the foreign words and names, the genre of the fairy tale and the grotesque representation of the body, are to some extent refamiliarized. Moreover the discussion of orientalism implicit in the text has partly been ignored.

⁴⁸⁵ Ishrak Kamaluldin, *Das Bild des Nahen Ostens in der deutschen Prosa nach 1945: Untersuchungen zum Charakter und der Funktion von Orientalismuskonzepten bei modernen deutschsprachigen Autorinnen und Autoren* (Frankfurt/Main: Lang, 1997), pp. 70–71.

2.3.2.1.1 *Tan, Arabatschi and Mustafa Kemal: The Refamiliarization of the*

Foreignizing Translation

As Kamaluddin rightly points out, Hilsenrath manages to create an oriental atmosphere by using a vast amount of foreign words.⁴⁸⁶ However, while she interprets this strategy as a means of deflection, this chapter will read Hilsenrath's novel as a kind of Benjaminian translation which serves to reveal the foreignness of the self rather than the strangeness of the other.⁴⁸⁷ For the foreign words are not only employed to create an oriental atmosphere, they are also used to demonstrate the closeness of the Armenian and the Turkish cultures as well as the comparative strangeness of the occidental cultures. When the Mudir, the chief constable of the Anatolian town Bakir, questions Wartan about his family's relations to the only Turkish family in the village Yedi Su, Wartan describes how, after a bad harvest, they helped each other with food: 'Wir brachten ihnen ganze Tontöpfe mit Tan, Patat und Harissa.'⁴⁸⁸ Since the Mudir does not know any of these words, he asks for an explanation, and except for the last one, which is described as the Armenian national dish, Wartan finds Turkish words to translate all of the Armenian dishes for the Mudir:

- Tan wird aus Madsun gemacht, dem armenischen Joghurt, und ist dasselbe wie der türkische Ayran. [...]
- Und was ist Patat?
- Dasselbe wie das türkische *Sarma*. Es sind gewöhnliche Krautblätter mit Fleisch, Reis und Bulgur.⁴⁸⁹

However, as soon as he is asked to explain American life and culture — Wartan emigrated to the United States after his first wife had died —, he runs out of Turkish translations and resorts to describing the foreign words and referents, such as the skyscraper, in long and complicated definitions:

⁴⁸⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 49.

⁴⁸⁷ See 1.3.2 'Die Fremdheit der Sprachen': Walter Benjamin, pp. 41ff. of this thesis.

⁴⁸⁸ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 80.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 80–81. Italics in the original. *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* uses quotation marks for the conversation between the Meddah and Thovma, while the dialogues related in this passage are set off with dashes.

Es ist ein Haus, das aussieht, als würde es jeden Moment einstürzen, sagte dein Vater. Denn es ist nicht flach gebaut wie hier bei uns ... oder viereckig ... sondern wie ein Denkmal aus Stein, dessen Sockel auf dem Boden sitzt und dessen Kopf in die Wolken ragt. Drinnen sausen Fahrstühle herum, Eingangstüren drehen sich im Kreise und schlucken die Menschen und spucken sie wieder aus, und wenn man in so ein Haus hereinkommt, glaubt man, man wäre auf einem Basar.⁴⁹⁰

Nevertheless, the Mudir is not able to grasp the concept: 'Das versteh ich aber nicht' and finally dismisses Wartan's description as pure imagination: 'So was gibt es nicht.' He reacted in a similar fashion towards the Armenian's earlier explanations for the concept of evening education and his claim that in America the road signs carry numbers instead of names.⁴⁹¹ So the novel not only draws on oriental concepts but juxtaposes these with images of the strange occidental other. This strategy estranges the occidental readers from their own culture. Moreover it confronts them with their concepts of the oriental other.

Both the English and the French translation to some extent refamiliarize Hilsenrath's foreignizing translation. Firstly, they draw a clearer dividing line between the diverse languages used in the text by taking a different stance to marking foreign words. While in German the Armenian and Turkish terms very often are integrated into the body of the text without being marked as foreign at all, the French translator italicizes the words taken from other languages the first time they are mentioned and subsequently integrates them into the text, whereas in the English translation the foreign words are italicized throughout the whole text. The English and French versions of Wartan's translation of Armenian dishes into Turkish illustrate these different strategies:

"[...] We've taken them whole pots of *tan*, *patat* and *harissa*."

"What is that, efendi?"

"*Tan* is made from *madsun*, the Armenian yoghurt. It's the same as Turkish *ayran*.

"..."

"And what is *patat*?"

"The same as Turkish *sarma*."

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 87.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., p. 87 and cp. p. 85.

- [...] Nous leur avons apporté des potées de *tan*, de *patat* et d'harissa.
- Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça, Effendi?
- Le tan est fait avec du madsoun, le yoghourt arménien. C'est à peu près la même chose que l'*ayran* turc. [...]
- Et le patat, c'est quoi?
- La même chose que le *sarma* turc.⁴⁹²

While in the German text cited above only the Turkish word *sarma* is marked as foreign, the French translation italicizes the new words *tan* and *patat* when they are first mentioned whereas the English translation marks all of the foreign words regardless of whether they have already been mentioned before or not. Furthermore, the English translator also increases the number of words in the glossary by adding words such as *sarma* and *tan* from this particular passage.⁴⁹³ Despite the fact that the narrator inserts a German explanation for most of the foreign words into the text, as he does for the Armenian *patat* in the quotation above, the English translator (or publisher) diminishes the defamiliarization effect of the novel by supplying the reader with further information on the terms in the glossary. Sometimes the English translator even decides to use an English term straight away in the main text. When the Mudir orders a Saptieh, i.e. a Turkish policeman, to do something quickly in order to improve the poor physical condition of the prisoner Wartan Khatisian, he uses Turkish words in the German text, which are translated in the following sentence: 'Haide, Haide! sagte der Müdir zu dem Saptieh. Na los, mach schon.' In French the foreign words are italicized: '*Haïde, haïde!* lança le mudir au zaptieh. Allons, remue toi.' The English text, however, replaces the foreign command with its English translation: "'Get a move on!'" said the Mudir to the saptieh. "Come on, look sharp!"⁴⁹⁴ Similarly, the Armenian word *Kertastan* is translated as 'family', the Turkish word *Arabatschi* is rendered as 'coachman' and finally the Turkish *Döschek* is simply described as a 'mattress'.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹² Edgar Hilsenrath, *The Story of the Last Thought*, trans. by Hugh Young (London: Sphere Books, 1991), p. 71 and *Le conte de la pensée dernière*, trans. by Bernard Kreiss (Paris: Albin Michel, 1992), pp. 76–77. Italics in the originals. For the German version see p. 182 of this thesis.

⁴⁹³ See Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, pp. 507–509, *Story*, pp. 467–471 and *Conte*, pp. 477–479.

⁴⁹⁴ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 66, *Conte*, p. 62 and *Story*, p. 57. Italics in the original.

⁴⁹⁵ See Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, pp. 206, 261, 293 and *Story*, pp. 186, 236, 266.

Secondly, the translations refamiliarize a foreign name, Mustafa Kemal Pascha, in order to more clearly identify the person to their readers. In the passage below the narrator explains that the Turkish troops, after having recovered from their initial losses in World War I, reconquer the lost ground under a new leader:

Irgendwann kam die geschlagene türkische Armee wieder auf die Beine und trieb die fremden Truppen aus dem anatolischen Land. Sie hatte jetzt einen neuen Führer, der hieß Mustafa Kemal Pascha. Die Händler sagen, daß dieser Kemal nicht nur der Vater und Befreier aller Türken sei, sondern auch ein Eroberer, [...].

At some time the defeated Turkish army came back to life and drove the foreign troops out of Anatolian territory. They had a new leader now, whose name was Mustafa Kemal. The traders said that *this Mustafa Kemal would certainly one day be called Atatürk*, for he was not only the father and liberator of all Turks, but was also a conqueror [...].

L'armée turque avait repris du poil de la bête et chassa les troupes étrangères qui occupaient encore l'Anatolie. Les Turcs avaient à présent un nouveau chef du nom *d'Atatürk*. Les commerçants dirent que cet *Atatürk* n'était pas seulement le père et le libérateur de tous les Turcs, mais aussi un conquérant [...].⁴⁹⁶

The German text only implicitly mentions the name under which Mustafa Kemal is known in the occidental world by using the German translation 'the father of the Turks' for the Turkish term Atatürk. In English, however, the traders not only talk about Kemal's current deeds but seem to have the gift of second sight and predict his future name. The French translation simply replaces the unknown Mustafa Kemal with the better known Atatürk. In this particular case the defamiliarizing use of Atatürk's foreign name, Mustafa Kemal Pascha, and the German translation of the name Atatürk in the German text is thus refamiliarized by the use of the more familiar name in the English and the French translations.

Trapped in the tradition of translation as a form of hermeneutic understanding, both translations tend to reduce the foreignness of the words and names used in the novel,

⁴⁹⁶ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 481, *Story*, p. 443 and *Conte*, p. 453. My italics.

albeit the English more so than the French.⁴⁹⁷ This observation will be further supported in the following chapter on the translation of the genre and the term 'Märchen'.

2.3.2.1.2 *Märchen, Story, Conte: A Comparative Reading*

By choosing a fictional genre characterized by its inalienable happy ending for his novel about one of the most atrocious historical events, Hilsenrath combines the two extremes of the factual and the fictional. This strategy led Dittmann to conclude: 'Nur das Reden im Paradox, einst der sprachlich nicht zu bewältigenden religiösen Erfahrung vorbehalten, wird diesem Thema gerecht.'⁴⁹⁸ However, Hilsenrath does not maintain the paradox but uses it to blur the boundaries between the topic and the genre. Just like Derrida in his *Monolinguisme de l'autre*, he consciously employs allegedly paradoxical constructions in order to open up new ways of perceiving the issue under discussion.⁴⁹⁹ Hilsenrath's fairy tale blurs the strict borderlines between historical truth and narrative deception, between the atrocities committed in the past and the beauty of the fairy tale. As has been pointed out by Brecheisen, this narrative strategy can be traced back to Jewish traditions.⁵⁰⁰ Hilsenrath's transcendence of the boundaries between fact and fiction is inspired by the Jewish concept of history which finds expression in tales such as the Passover Haggadah. This vivid narrative, which is recited on the first two nights of the Passover and usually takes the form of a dialogue between parent and child, relates the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt which represents the founding myth of the Jewish nation. Describing a historical event in narrative form, this text thus implies that fact and fiction are closely related. Moreover, as Yerushalmi explained, the Haggadah can be read as a 'celebration of the Jewish experience and conception of

⁴⁹⁷ On the concept of translation as a form of hermeneutic understanding see section 1.2 'Übersetzung und Aneignung': The Nation in Translation, pp. 19ff. in the first chapter of this thesis.

⁴⁹⁸ Dittmann, p. 177.

⁴⁹⁹ For Derrida's argument see pp. 49f. of the section 1.3.3 'Les limites du concept courant de traduction': Jacques Derrida, pp. 47ff. in the first chapter of this thesis.

⁵⁰⁰ See Brecheisen's argument related on pp. 173f. in the introduction to this chapter.

history'. Regularly rewritten and extended, the Haggadoth link the Jewish founding myth to later experiences of slavery and liberation, such as the Shoa: 'Every oppressor is a Pharaoh, and Egypt every exile.' Yet, the text also contains a glimpse of the Messianic future. The ritualistic formula 'next year in Jerusalem' implies the end of the permanent exile.⁵⁰¹ So rather than perceiving history as a continuum of events, the Haggadah creates a Messianic link between past, present and future.⁵⁰² This Jewish concept of history underlies Hilsenrath's critical discussion of historical writing in *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*. However, as the following comparative reading of the three versions of the text will show, the translators to some extent refamiliarize his thought-provoking juxtaposition of Holocaust and fairy tale.

In his book on the interpretation of fairy and folk tales Max Lüthi points out that the German word 'Märchen', the diminutive form of the old-fashioned 'Mär', was initially used to refer to a short story. Even before the meaning of the word was restricted to fairy tales, it acquired the pejorative sense of mendacious stories. Only in the eighteenth century, when, under French influence, fairy tales and the stories of *Thousand and One Nights* became fashionable in Germany and when Herder established his exoticist view of popular culture as a source of poetry, did the word 'Märchen' primarily take on the meaning of fairy tale. Since then the term has implied a tension between a superior and beautiful world and a world of lies. Lüthi goes on to explain that the term 'Märchen' is currently also used to refer to a wider variety of popular folk tales such as legends, myths and religious stories.⁵⁰³

Exploiting the polysemy of the term, Hilsenrath at the same time draws on and transcends the 'law of the genre'.⁵⁰⁴ Firstly, the juxtaposition of the Armenian genocide

⁵⁰¹ Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Haggadah and History*, 3rd edn (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1997), p. 15.

⁵⁰² On Jewish Messianism also see my discussion of Benjamin's writing in section 1.3.2 'Die Fremdheit der Sprachen': Walter Benjamin, pp. 41ff. in the first chapter of this thesis.

⁵⁰³ See Max Lüthi, *Märchen*, rev. by Heinz Rölleke, 8th edn (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990), pp. 1–5.

⁵⁰⁴ See Derrida, 'Survivre', p. 130.

and the allegedly beautiful fairy-tale world initially serves to generate shock. However, in the course of the novel the borderlines between the fictitious world of the fairy tale and reality become blurred. The German 'Märchen' mentioned in the text, such as *Hänsel und Gretel*, do not counter the brutality of the genocide but demonstrate the closeness between fantastical tales and reality.⁵⁰⁵ When the Meddah tells Thovma the tale about the two children who, left by their parents in the woods, were taken in by a witch planning to cook and then to feast on them, he calms down his listener by deflecting the horrors onto Europe: 'Die Hexe wohnte im Frankistan und nicht in Anatolien. Hier ist alles ganz anders.' Yet, this projection of brutality onto the Occident, which just like Wartan's description of skyscrapers reflects on the occidentalist concepts of the Orient, is reversed in the following sentence: 'Hier steigt die Angst nicht aus dem Dampf gewisser Kochtöpfe, hier hängt sie überall in der Luft.'⁵⁰⁶ As far as genocide is concerned the Orient and the Occident can certainly compete. In a similarly shocking juxtaposition an analogy is drawn between the occidental counterpart of the Armenian genocide in this novel, the Shoa, and the fate of Max and Moritz in Wilhelm Busch's eponymous rhymed tale.⁵⁰⁷ Busch's work, which is also categorized as a 'Märchen' in Hilsenrath's novel, relates seven tricks played on diverse people by two boys. In the sixth poem Max and Moritz attempt to steal cake from the local baker and fall into his dough. When the baker finds the boys, he forms them into two loaves of bread and bakes them in his oven. In *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* Wartan Khatisian tells this story to calm down the panicking Jews, who, having reached the death camp, believe they recognize the smell of burning human flesh. Temporarily, the tale relieves the Jews

⁵⁰⁵ See 'Hänsel und Gretel', in: *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, ed. by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, enlarged reprint of the first edn from 1812 and 1815, 2 vols (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), I, pp. 49–58. The shocking brutality of this tale was already uncovered in Max Schulz's surreal encounter with the witch Veronja, see Edgar Hilsenrath, *Der Nazi und der Friseur*, 8th edn (Munich: Piper, 2000), p. 117 and Braese, *Das teure Experiment*, p. 260.

⁵⁰⁶ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 129. Frankistan is the Turkish nickname for Europe.

⁵⁰⁷ See Wilhelm Busch, 'Max und Moritz: Eine Bubengeschichte in sieben Streichen' (1865), in *Das Gesamtwerk des Zeichners und Dichters*, 6 vols, (Olten: Fackelverlag, 1962), I, pp. 225–281.

from their fears: 'Es ist wirklich nur ein Märchen. Denn so was gibt es doch nicht.'⁵⁰⁸ However, the practice of the Shoa, which, unlike the Armenian genocide is not explicitly described in the novel but is assumed to be known, turns out to be even more brutal than the most cruel of German fairy tales: 'Für Max und Moritz hat das Erlebnis nämlich keine weitere Konsequenz. In der nächsten Geschichte erscheinen sie wieder gesund und munter. Für die Juden bleiben die Vorteile eines Märchens irrelevant, sie sterben.'⁵⁰⁹

Secondly, the term 'Märchen' is also used to indicate that in Turkey the Armenian genocide is still considered to be a lie. The Turkish government has as yet still not formally acknowledged the Young Turks' responsibility for the genocide. While conceding that some Armenians were killed, the website of the Turkish ministry of culture puts the blame on the victims, who, motivated by their desire for national independence, collaborated with the Russian enemy in World War I.⁵¹⁰ Furthermore, the official Turkish version of the genocide insists that the deportation of the Armenians constituted a proper resettlement programme which served to remove the possible traitors from the Russian border.⁵¹¹ However, as pointed out by Yves Ternon and as described in Hilsenrath's novel, almost none of the resettled Armenians ever reached the alleged final destination. Indeed, the official order specified that as many of the deportees as possible should be slaughtered on the march. The small number of people who survived the death marches were left to die of starvation in the deserts beyond Aleppo in which there was neither food nor water.⁵¹² Moreover, the so-called provocation thesis has more than once been refuted. In his comparative analysis of the Armenian genocide and the Shoa, Robert Melson states that the Armenians did not

⁵⁰⁸ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 496.

⁵⁰⁹ Brecheisen, pp. 225–226.

⁵¹⁰ At the time the Armenian people lived on both sides of the Turkish–Russian border.

⁵¹¹ See the official Turkish version on the web: Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Culture, 'Armenian Allegations and the Facts' <http://www.kultur.gov.tr/portal/tarih_en.asp?belgeno=271> [accessed 12 March 2003].

⁵¹² See Yves Ternon, *Les Arméniens: Histoire d'un génocide* 2nd edn (Paris: Seuil, 1996), pp. 253–300, Melson, pp. 144–145 and Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, pp. 427–435.

actually represent a threat but were so perceived.⁵¹³ And Yves Ternon argues that the influence of the Armenian revolutionary movement was exaggerated and used as justification for the genocide. The pan-Turkish intentions led to the construction of an Armenian foe image.⁵¹⁴ In Hilsenrath's novel the absurdity of the provocation thesis is mirrored in the exaggerated ludicrousness of the crimes committed by the three men who were sentenced to death and hanged at the Gate of Happiness in Bakir: one of them was found to be in possession of a bottle of Russian alcohol, although Russia at the time was at war with Turkey; the second received a letter from his Armenian grandmother in Russia; and the third, an Armenian priest, was said to have been praying for the Russian leader. That the first one claimed to have bought the bottle before the war, that the letter arrived two years too late and that the priest could also have been saying a prayer for the Turkish leader was intentionally ignored by the Turkish authorities.⁵¹⁵ Furthermore, the novel explicitly mentions the Turkish refusal to acknowledge the genocide. In an imaginary dialogue — related within the imaginary dialogue between the Meddah and Thovma Khatisian which takes place in Thovma's head — Thovma demands official recognition of the genocide from the Turkish Prime Minister, who, using the German word 'Märchen', dismisses the genocide as a lie:

- Es ist wirklich schon sehr lange her, sagte ich. Im Jahre 1915. Während des ersten Weltkriegs. Da wurde ein ganzes Volk ausgelöscht. [...]
- Irgendwann habe ich mal was davon gehört, sagte der türkische Ministerpräsident, aber ich habe immer geglaubt, das wären nur die Lügenmärchen unserer Feinde.
- Es ist kein Märchen, sage ich.⁵¹⁶

For this reason the story of the genocide in Hilsenrath's text is a Turkish fairy tale introduced with the formula '*bir varmiş, bir yokmuş, bir varmiş...* Es war einmal einer, es war einmal keiner, es war einmal...' which captures the seeming paradox of true

⁵¹³ See Melson, pp. 10–12 and 152–159.

⁵¹⁴ See Ternon, *Les Arméniens*, pp. 196–197 and 282–332.

⁵¹⁵ See Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, pp. 36–38.

⁵¹⁶ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, pp. 15–16.

fiction particularly well.⁵¹⁷ The Armenians who lived in Anatolia were not only murdered but also annihilated in a historical sense and thus only survive in stories. This view of history coincides with Benjamin's famous dictum: '[A]uch die Toten werden vor dem Feind, wenn er siegt, nicht sicher sein. Und dieser Feind hat zu siegen nicht aufgehört.'⁵¹⁸ As Bettina Hey'l has pointed out, the form of Hilsenrath's novel in this respect reflects on the research methods of historiographical writing as encapsulated in the official Turkish version of the genocide. The fairy tale exemplifies the paradox that invented stories can turn out to be more truthful than historical narratives: "Es war einmal" stößt den Leser auf die Paradoxie, daß erfundene Geschichten ihre Wahrheit haben, die Anschaulichkeit der Fakten dagegen ein Lügengebäude sein kann.'⁵¹⁹

Finally, the typicality of the protagonists and the mythical happy ending of the novel draw on the structure of the fairy-tale genre. In her study on fairy tales Marina Warner stresses the utopian foundation underlying this genre: 'Fairy tales typically use the story of something in the remote past to look towards the future, their conclusions, their "happy endings" do not always bring about total closure, but make promises, prophecies.'⁵²⁰ Thovma Khatisian, the Armenian counterpart of the English John Bull, is supposedly the son of Wartan, the namesake of an Armenian hero, who in the fifth century fought against the Persian king Yazdgard, and Anahit, an Iranian goddess of fertility — a remainder of pre-Christian beliefs in Armenia. While the baby Anahit magically survived the first massacres under Sultan Abdul Hamid II, Thovma, reliving his mother's fate, was born during his mother's deportation and found in a ditch by a Turkish woman and her husband who, in an allusion to the bible, are described as the virgin Mary and her husband Yussuf.⁵²¹ Furthermore, when Thovma's last thought,

⁵¹⁷ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 23.

⁵¹⁸ Benjamin, 'Geschichte', p. 695.

⁵¹⁹ Bettina Hey'l, 'Hilsenraths Zauberformeln: Narration und Geschichte in *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*', in *Edgar Hilsenrath*, ed. by Thomas Kraft, pp. 150–163 (pp. 156–157).

⁵²⁰ Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairytales and Their Tellers* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994), p. XVI.

⁵²¹ See Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 14.

following folkloric beliefs, reaches his reinvented country and ancestors, Thovma is renamed Hayk, who according to myth was the ancestor of the Armenians and their country, which they named Hayastan after him.⁵²² The Meddah's tale ends with the thoughts of an Armenian priest who envisions a mythical future Armenia: 'Hayk wird fruchtbar werden und viele Nachkommen haben [...]. Und die Kinder Hayks und ihre Kindeskinde werden das Land bevölkern, das für immer für sie bestimmt war.'⁵²³ In the fairy-tale like ending the novel thus not only recreates the founding myth of this country and people annihilated in the genocide but also provides a glimpse of a better future.

Neither Hugh Young's *The Story of the Last Thought* nor Bernard Kreiss' *Le conte de la pensée dernière* can capture the polysemy of the German title. The English 'story' and the French 'conte' do not specifically refer to the fairy tale but serve as generic terms for a wider, more diverse field of genres which even exceeds the non-specific use of the term 'Märchen'. Both translations thus lose the initial element of shock implied in the juxtaposition of the beautiful fairy-tale world and the brutal reality of the genocide as well as the eventual transcendence of this clear-cut distinction in the course of the novel. Furthermore, ignoring Hilsenrath's structural allusions to the genre of the fairy tale, they neither submit to nor overcome the 'law of the genre'. However, although both the French 'conte' and the English 'story' currently describe any account of imaginary or real people and of past events, their historical developments show significant differences between the two concepts. While the 'conte' leans towards the fantastical, the 'story' is closely linked to historical writing. As will become apparent in the detailed discussion of the translations, these differences also mark the diverse choices for the rendering of the term 'Märchen' within the novel.

⁵²² For the background on Armenian myths and beliefs cp. Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, pp. 184 and 200 as well as A. E. Redgate, *The Armenians* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 14, 108 and 144–146. While the name Armenia was bestowed on the Armenians by others, Hayastan was the name they used for their country themselves (cp. Redgate, pp. 23–24).

⁵²³ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 503.

Derived from the verb 'conter' the French term 'conte', like the English 'tale', invokes a narrative manner reminiscent of oral delivery and thus, unlike the term 'story', encapsulates Hilsenrath's use of the oral tradition as a means of defamiliarization. Furthermore, the specific use of this term in the seventeenth century inscribed this genre with an element of fantasy. While the term 'conte' has in general been used interchangeably with 'nouvelle' and 'histoire', a literary controversy in the seventeenth century entailed the creation of a temporary distinction between these narrative forms. With his *Contes et nouvelles* (1665–1669), which recount tales by Boccaccio and other Renaissance authors in verse form, Jean de La Fontaine established the 'conte' as an entertaining and ironic written genre. In explicit opposition to the psychologized realism of the 'histoires' or 'nouvelles historiques' by Madame de La Fayette, La Fontaine's tales defied the illusionist means of creating an allegedly realist historical account. His fantastic 'contes' engender the fashion of the 'contes de fées' initiated by Charles Perrault. In combination with the French translation of the tales of *Thousand and One Nights* these develop into the 'contes orientaux' followed by the 'contes licentieux', whose orientalist concentration on the eroticist elements of the 'contes orientaux' are finally ridiculed in the 'contes philosophiques'.⁵²⁴ It is this French tradition of oriental tales which serves as a publication strategy in the cover text of the French translation: '[T]out se mêle et se répond dans ce roman prodigieux, envoûtant à la manière des contes orientaux, tour à tour truculent, lyrique, grand-guignolesque, subversif, cinglant pour raconter les milles et une nuits de l'Arménie.' Hilsenrath's *Conte de la pensée dernière* thus logs into a rich French tradition of literary fairy tales, which in its generation of oriental and licentious tales even exceeds the German tradition.

⁵²⁴ This short overview is based on Wolfram Krömer, 'Introduction', in *Die französische Novelle* (Düsseldorf: Bagel, 1976), pp. 7–21 and Karl Alfred Blüher, *Die französische Novelle* (Tübingen: Francke, 1985).

While English literature has also been markedly influenced by the stories and the structure of folk tales, the genre has not been as popular as in French and German literary culture. The fairy tale has only sporadically engendered literary forms, most notably in the works of recent British women writers such as Angela Carter.⁵²⁵ Furthermore, the English translation of Hilsenrath's 'Märchen' as 'story', rather than 'tale', not only omits the allusion to this genre, usually identified by the term fairy tale, but also constructs an etymological link to the term 'history'. Derived via Anglo-Norman French from the Latin *historia*, the word 'story' used to refer to historical accounts or representations including biblical narratives and legends of saints, which were presumed to be true. The term did not acquire the sense of a fictitious narrative until the sixteenth century and was also regularly used to describe tales and children's stories.⁵²⁶ However, rather than using the imaginative element of the term 'story' in order to deconstruct the distinction between the narrative forms, the English translator redraws the boundaries between stories, fairy tales and legends, which in the German text are transcended in their subsumption under the generically used term 'Märchen'. This leaning towards categorization instead of the transcendence of the 'law of the genre' links in with his realist rather than postmodern understanding of reality and history. This I see as a prerequisite for the detailed discussion of the translations.

When Thovma Khatisian questions the Meddah on the truth of his story, he answers: 'Alles, was im Kopf eines Menschen passiert, ist wahr [...] *obwohl es eine andere Wirklichkeit ist, als die wirkliche Wirklichkeit, die uns oft unwirklich erscheint.*'⁵²⁷ In this statement the Meddah distinguishes between the reality within a single person's mind and the real reality which, however, often appears more unreal than

⁵²⁵ For an account of the diverse influences of the folk tale on English literature cp. for example Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976). For the productivity of the genre in recent British women's writing, see Warner.

⁵²⁶ See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

⁵²⁷ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 138. My italics.

the subjective reality. The paradoxical formulation of his statement reveals the difficulty of pinning down the concept of the term reality. The Meddah defers the meaning of the concept, taking it beyond the traditional fixed understanding of the term towards a differential interpretation of language as embodied in Derrida's irreducibly polysemic creation 'différance' which undermines the idea that meaning can be fixed.⁵²⁸ Yet, the paradox of the seemingly unreal reality does not solely constitute an abstract theoretical issue, it concretely refers to the unbelievable extent of human cruelty, as demonstrated in the Armenian genocide and the Shoa. Although the novel neither draws on the realist tradition, nor pretends to deal with real people, it still presents the structures underlying genocides. So while the Meddah does not completely discard reality, he believes that the supposed surreal or unreal narrative imagination can serve as a tool to grasp a reality which otherwise takes on an unreal dimension. This has also been pointed out by Agnieszka von Zanthier:

Hilsenraths Werke sind eine Antwort auf die Paradoxie der erlebten, unbegriffenen Realität, die die Grenzen der Vorstellungskraft, der Ratio und der Gesetze der normalen Welt sprengt. Sie zu beschreiben, heißt bei Hilsenrath, das Absurde, Unvorstellbare in die Literatur hineinzunehmen und es darzustellen. Daß dies provoziert, auf Ablehnung stößt, kalkuliert Hilsenrath in sein Werk ein.⁵²⁹

The French translator imitates the German paradoxical formulation: 'Tout ce qui se passe dans la tête d'un homme est vrai [...] *bien que la réalité de ce qui se passe dans la tête d'un homme soit d'une autre nature que la réalité réelle, laquelle, il faut bien le dire, nous paraît souvent irréaliste.*' The English translation, by contrast, omits all of the signs hinting towards a differential understanding of the term reality: 'Everything that happens in a man's head is true [...] *though there is another truth that often seems impossible to us.*'⁵³⁰ Replacing the word reality with the more malleable term truth, the

⁵²⁸ See Jacques Derrida, 'La Différance', in *Marges de la Philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), pp. 3–29.

⁵²⁹ Agnieszka von Zanthier, *Julian Strykowski und Edgar Hilsenrath: Zur Identität jüdischer Schriftsteller nach 1945*, Literaturwissenschaft in der Blauen Eule, 31 (Essen: Die Blaue Eule, 2000), p. 156.

⁵³⁰ Hilsenrath, *Conte*, p. 130 and *Story*, p. 124. My italics.

English translator poses reality as a given and unquestionable concept. Furthermore, he takes the edge off the paradoxical effect of the German sentence and thus defies the postmodern deferral of the signifier 'reality'.⁵³¹

The realist stance of the English translator also influences the translation of the implicit reflection on orientalism in the novel, again linked to the term 'Märchen'. After all of the Armenians who used to live in Bakir have been murdered or deported, the German soldiers ironically complain about the lack of presents to send home to their wives. All of the shops and stalls on the bazar, which in German eyes created the particular oriental atmosphere, had closed:

Geschlossen waren die Schneiderwerkstätten, die Buden der Stoff- und Seidenhändler, die Spezereien, auch sämtliche armenischen Läden, *die Märchenhaftes anboten für die Augen aus dem Abendland*. [...] Sie [die Straßen, WS] rochen auch anders, denn der *Märchenduft, den die Deutschen in romantischer Anwendung so gerne geschnuppert hatten*, obwohl er nicht nur nach Süßem, *Fremdem* und Leckerem, sondern auch nach Abfall und Faulem roch, der fehlte auf einmal.⁵³²

In this passage the text reflects upon the German projection of orientalist concepts onto the market in Bakir. The foreign and strange goods the soldiers acquire on the market are linked to the literary foreknowledge of this world supplied by the tales of *Thousand and One Nights* regularly mentioned in the novel. Consequently, through the soldier's eyes the goods are accredited with an air of surreal magic implied in the word 'märchenhaft'. Yet, the text not only mentions the romanticizing occidental gaze on the Orient, the Romantic idea of the Orient also governs the occidental sense of smell. The seemingly particular smell of Bakir not only comprises foreign and sweet airs but also

⁵³¹ Even in Dagmar Lorenz's translation of this passage in her review essay on Hilsenrath's *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* the differential effect has only been imitated to a certain extent: 'Everything that takes place in the mind of a human being is true [...] *although it is a different reality from the actual reality, which often appears unreal to us.*' Opting for the translation 'actual reality', Lorenz does still hold on to a realist understanding of reality whereas the German description 'real reality' encapsulates the impossibility of defining the concept, see Dagmar Lorenz, 'Hilsenrath's Other Genocide', *Simon Wiesenthal Centre Annual*, 7 (1991) <<http://motlc.wiesenthal.com/resources/books/annual7/chap11.html>> [accessed 12 March 2003], p. 1. My italics.

⁵³² Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 426. My italics.

the stench of rubbish and filth. Nevertheless the Germans describe this odd mixture as 'Märchenduft', a term which ignores its displeasing features. In the English translation the link to the literary foil for the projections has been omitted. Instead the English translator plays on the ambiguity of the words 'fabulous' and 'legendary'.

Closed too were the tailors' shops, the stalls where they sold fabrics and silks, the spice stores, in fact all the Armenian shops where they offered *those goods that looked so fabulous to Western eyes*. [...] They [the streets, WS] even smelt different, for that *legendary scent that the Germans loved to sniff on their romantic walks*, although it not only smelt of sweet and *strange* and delicious things but also of rubbish and filth — that had suddenly gone.⁵³³

These two words, which allude to mythical fables and legends, also invoke fame and notoriety but they do not imply the projection inherent in the German word 'Märchen'. Furthermore, rather than referring to the German flights of romantic fancy as the source of orientalist projections, the English translation renders these as *real* walks. Although the French translation also omits the romanticism of the Germans, Kreiss stresses the orientalist projection in the first sentence by turning the occidental gaze into the agent rather than the passive recipient of the exotic goods.

[B]ouclés aussi les ateliers des tailleurs, les magasins des marchands de tissus, de soieries en particulier, ainsi que les boutiques des marchands d'épices et autres magasins arméniens *auxquels les yeux occidentaux ne manquaient jamais de trouver un air de conte oriental*. [...] Cela ne sentait plus pareil non plus, car *cet air de conte que les allemands avaient humé avec tant de plaisir*, bien qu'il ne fût pas uniquement chargé de senteurs suaves, *exotiques* et délectables, mais aussi d'odeurs de déchets et de pourriture — cet air avait subitement disparu.⁵³⁴

The buyer projects the 'air de conte oriental', which also includes the allusion to the literary source of these projections, onto the goods. Moreover the German 'fremd' in French is rendered as 'exotiques'. The French translation thus explicitly mentions the exoticism implied in the act of seeing and smelling. The English translation of this term, by contrast, maintains the order of the strange other and the normal self.

⁵³³ Hilsenrath, *Story*, p. 391. My italics.

⁵³⁴ Hilsenrath, *Conte*, p. 401. My italics.

Once more Hilsenrath juxtaposes this projection of the romantic Orient with its opposite: the Occident as the modern and progressive and thus surreal other. At the beginning of the novel's third book the narrator uncovers the diverse interests of European nations in Turkey: while the Russians aimed to conquer a port on the Bosphorus in order to have a direct link to the Mediterranean and the English dreamed of getting access to India via Turkey, the Germans were mainly driven by economic interests: they sold arms to the Turks, they trained the Turkish army and they built a railway which in the text is accredited with magic qualities: 'Sie bauten den Türken auch eine Märchenbahn, die sie Bagdadbahn nannten'. While the English translation maintains the link between the fairy-tale like atmosphere on the oriental market and the surreal modernity of the German train by again resorting to the ambiguity of the term 'fabulous', it neglects the projection of surreal modernity on the Occident: 'They also built the Turks a fabulous railway, which they called the Baghdad line'. The French translation, by contrast omits the comparative structure of these two projections by not using the term 'conte': 'Ils construisirent aussi aux Turcs un chemin de fer de rêve, qu'ils appelèrent "chemin de fer de Bagdad"'.⁵³⁵ However, unlike the English translation the French text accredits the railway with surreal features and thus stresses the incomprehensible modernity of the railway.

In keeping with his more realist approach, the English translator introduces a distinction between narrative imagination and historical truth. When the Meddah relates the horrors of the Armenian genocide, he insists: 'Die Märchen, die ich erzähle, sind keine Märchen. Es sind wahre Geschichten.' In analogy to Magritte's 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe', the Meddah opposes the signifier 'Märchen' with its signified and thus again points to the fact that the meaning of a signifier cannot be pinned down but depends on differences. While the French translator imitates the postmodern deferral of meanings —

⁵³⁵ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 357, *Story*, p. 327 and *Conte*, p. 335.

‘Les contes que je rapporte ne sont pas des contes. Ce sont des *histoires vraies*’ —, the English translator opts for a clear-cut definition: ‘The *story* I’m telling you is not a *fairy tale*. It’s *true history*.’⁵³⁶ He inserts a dividing line between the world of imagination in fairy tales and the truth of historical writing. Yet, as explained above, Hilsenrath’s novel is very critical of the differentiation between true history and invented narrative. The Meddah openly attacks the historians whose research on the genocide is limited to the quantification of the dead and the categorization of the disaster in new terms:

[D]ie Historiker werden sich ins Fäustchen lachen, besonders die Zuständigen für zeitgenössische Geschichte, denn sie brauchen zur Unterbrechung ihrer Langeweile neuen Stoff, einen Stoff, mit dem sich arbeiten läßt. In ihrer Phantasielosigkeit werden sie nach Zahlen suchen, um die Massen der Erschlagenen einzugrenzen – sie sozusagen: zu erfassen –, und sie werden nach Wörtern suchen, um das große Massaker zu bezeichnen und es pedantisch einzuordnen.⁵³⁷

Despite the fact that the German text tries to transcend the distinction between narrative imagination and historical truth, the English translation seems to maintain this differentiation. This also holds for the cover text of the English paperback edition which sells *The Story of the Last Thought* as history *and* fable rather than as a fable which is history: ‘The story is that of the best-forgotten crime of the century; the Holocaust of the Armenian people by the Turks in 1915. Yet here it is both history and fable’. Furthermore, the translator introduces a clear-cut categorization between the genres of the surreal fairy tale and the historically motivated legend. In his translation the term ‘fairy tale’ is linked to the children’s world and limited to the magical and wonderful. This idea of the fairy tale also finds expression in the British cover illustration which shows a surreal depiction of the village Yedi Su.⁵³⁸ Yet, this restricted interpretation of the term excludes the base animal instincts emphasized in the intertextual allusions to the fairy-tale tradition in the German text. Telling Thovma about his father’s childhood,

⁵³⁶ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 431, *Conte*, p. 406 and *Story*, p. 395. My italics.

⁵³⁷ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 174.

⁵³⁸ See Figure 12 on the following page. As the French translation of Hilsenrath’s novel was published in Albin Michel’s series ‘Les Grandes Traductions’, it does not have a cover illustration in accordance with the design of the whole series.

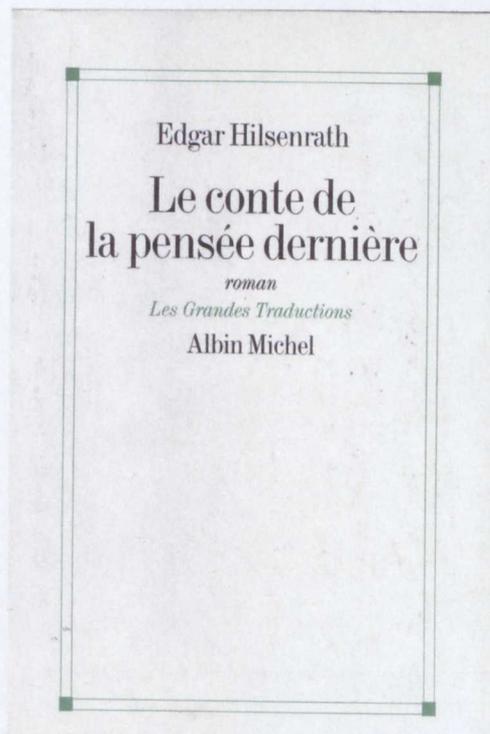
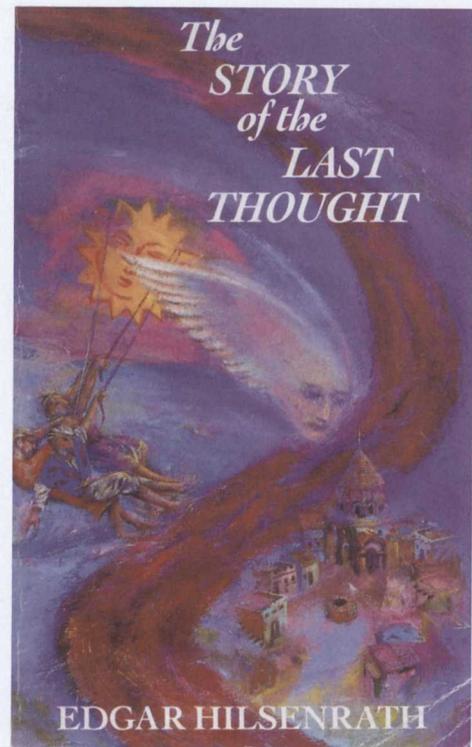
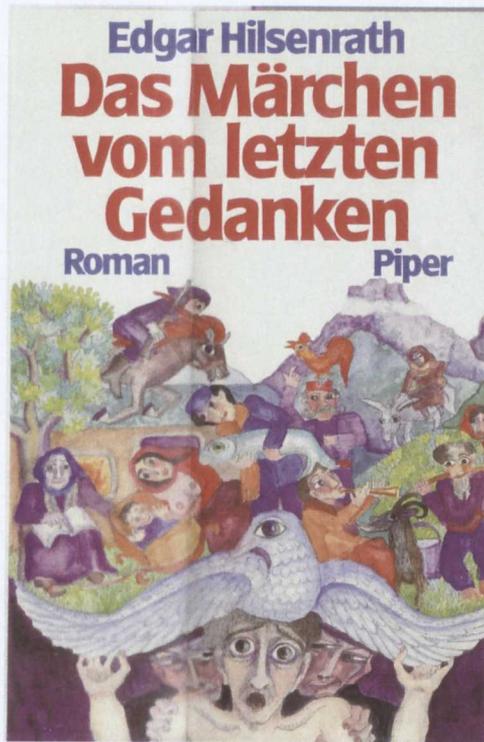


Figure 12: German, English and French covers of Edgar Hilsenrath's *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*

the Meddah notes: 'Noch lebte dein Vater in einer *Märchenwelt*. Und wahrlich: es waren *wunderliche Geschichten*, die ihm der Großvater erzählte.' The French translator only uses the specific translation 'conte de fées' in this one example: 'Ton père vivait encore dans un *monde de conte de fées*. Et en vérité, c'étaient *d'étranges histoires* que lui racontait le grand-père.' However, the English translator not only clearly categorizes this world as belonging to the fairies, he also imprints his interpretation of the fairy-tale world on his translation of the term 'wunderlich' which in German describes something strange and surprising: 'Your father was still living in a *fairy-tale world*. And they really were *wonderful tales* that his grandfather told him.'⁵³⁹ Furthermore, he categorizes the German 'Geschichten' as 'tales' rather than as stories which proves his insistence on the clear-cut differentiation between these genres.

This world of wonders in the English translation also includes the storyteller's voice and his 'magical' devices. The storyteller uses his soothing voice to calm down his listeners when they are frightened by his stories: 'Der letzte Gedanke hatte sich erschrocken, als das Glasauge des Müdirds aus der Augenhöhle zu springen drohte, und deshalb streichelte der Märchenerzähler den letzten Gedanken mit seiner *Märchenstimme*.' While the French translator describes the voice as tender and soothing — 'le conteur caressa la dernière pensée de sa *voix caressante de conteur*' —, the English translator reestablishes the link between the storyteller's voice and the world of fairy tales which he lost in the translation of the 'Märchenerzähler': 'the story-teller soothed him with his *fairy-tale voice*'.⁵⁴⁰ However, though he applies the familiar interpretation of the fairy tale by accrediting the voice with magical features, he ignores the defamiliarizing synaesthesia of the voice *caressing* the last thought. Only in the second book, when the storyteller 'caress[es] little Vartan, who is only three weeks old, with

⁵³⁹ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 246, *Conte*, p. 230 and *Story*, p. 222. My italics.

⁵⁴⁰ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 70, *Conte*, p. 67 and *Story*, p. 62. My italics.

[his] fairy-tale voice', does Young imitate this rhetorical figure.⁵⁴¹ The magic qualities of the fairy-tale world are also accredited to one of the Meddah's devices: in order to hide the cruel torture of the imprisoned Wartan Khatisian from the eyes of his son Thovma, the Meddah casts 'ein dunkles Märchentuch' over the events. While in French the cloth is solely described as 'un sombre voile', the English translation explicitly mentions its magic powers and thus links it to the traditional understanding of the fairy-tale world: 'the story-teller had cast a dark magic cloth over the whole *hukumet*'.⁵⁴²

In the English translation this fantastic world of the fairy tale is clearly demarcated from the 'legend', popularly believed to contain a kernel of historical truth. The English translator applies the categorization 'legend' to the Meddah's tale about the Armenian smiths who have to be considered the true saviours of the world because once a year from Easter Monday till Ascension Day they strengthen the chains of the giant imprisoned inside Mount Ararat. Just like the other stories the Meddah describes this tale as a 'Märchen': "Wieso sind die armenischen Schmiede die Erretter der Welt?" "Weil es die armenischen *Märchen* erzählen, besonders die vom Berge Ararat." While the French translator opts for the term 'conte', the English translator accredits this particular tale with legendary qualities: 'The Armenian *legends* tell us so, especially those about Mount Ararat.'⁵⁴³ A similar interpretation is applied to the use of the term 'Märchen' in a discussion on a former Armenian realm — which probably alludes to the Armenian empire established in the first century — between an Austrian journalist and the Mudir of Bakir.⁵⁴⁴ In this passage the term 'Märchen' classifies the Armenian claims for national independence as unjustified by describing the historical evidence of an

⁵⁴¹ See Hilsenrath, *Story*, p. 176. For the German and French versions see *Märchen*, p. 195 and *Conte*, p. 184.

⁵⁴² Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 138, *Conte*, p. 130 and *Story*, p. 124. Italics in the original text. The *hukumet* is a government building.

⁵⁴³ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 235, *Story*, p. 213 and *Conte*, p. 221. My italics.

⁵⁴⁴ On early Armenian history cp. Ternon, *Les Arméniens*, p. 23.

Armenian state in the area of Turkish Anatolia to be a tale belonging to an ancient past and thus to be comparable to a lie and of no relevance to the present:

- Es gab mal ein großarmenisches Reich, sagte der österreichische Journalist, und zwar genau in dieser Gegend.
- Das ist aber schon lange her, sagte der Müdir. Schon so lange, daß es gar nicht mehr wahr sein kann.
- Ein *Märchen* also?
- Ein *Märchen*, sagte der Müdir.⁵⁴⁵

In this discussion both translators opt for the terms ‘legend’ and ‘légende’ respectively and thereby accredit the ‘Märchen’ with a kernel of truth.⁵⁴⁶ However, this translation ignores that the use of the term ‘Märchen’ in this particular instance uncovers the importance of power when it comes to designating what is historical truth and what are fictitious lies.

In the above discussion on the clear-cut genre classification in the English translation, it should have become apparent that Bernard Kreiss in most of the examples did not insert a genre specification. However, while the use of the German term ‘Märchen’ in Hilsenrath’s novel has a foreignizing effect which initiates the transcendence of the ‘law of the genre’, the imitation of this structure in the French rendering ‘conte’ less constitutes a Benjaminian foreignizing translation than an application and a confirmation of the already blurred borderlines in the French context. For in the French language, in contrast to German and English, genre categories have never been strictly applied. Apart from the short time span of particularization in the seventeenth century described above, the terms ‘conte’, ‘fable’, ‘légende’ and ‘histoire’ have always been used interchangeably.⁵⁴⁷ In the French translation of Hilsenrath’s novel the deviations from the term ‘conte’ in general follow a different pattern from the English deviations from the term ‘story’. Since the usage of the term ‘conte’ to describe

⁵⁴⁵ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 146. My italics.

⁵⁴⁶ See Hilsenrath, *Story*, p. 130 and *Conte*, p. 137.

⁵⁴⁷ See Blüher, p. 7 and Krömer, p. 15.

a lie is outmoded and only used in literary language, the French translator opts for a different term when the word 'Märchen' is used to mark a statement as a lie. In the above-mentioned imaginary conversation between the Turkish Prime Minister and Thovma Khatisian, for example, the English translator renders the term 'Märchen', used by the Prime Minister to designate a lie, as 'story', which in popular usage can also mean 'lie': 'I've always thought it was a lot of *lying stories* put out by our enemies.'" "It's no *story*," I said.' The French translator, by contrast, decides to clarify the meaning towards the sense of a lie by using the term 'fable' rather than 'conte': ' j'ai toujours pensé que c'étaient des *fables inventées* par nos enemies. – Ce n'est pas une *fable*, dis-je.'⁵⁴⁸ The literary usage of the word 'fable' is similar to 'conte'. However, the translator seems to believe that the 'fable', which unlike the 'conte' is mainly used to refer to imaginary stories rather than to accounts of real events, is more apt to connote inventions and lies. This strategy is further confirmed in the French translation of Bulbul's dismissive description of the Armenian tale which contends that children are found under a grapevine: 'Das sind nur Märchen, die man den kleinen Kindern erzählt.' Again opting for the term 'fable', the French translator clearly marks these stories as lies: 'Ce ne sont que des fables que l'on raconte aux petits enfants.' In the English translation these stories, which belong to a child's world, are described as fairy tales: 'That's only fairy-tales that people tell to children.'⁵⁴⁹ The French translator thus introduces a distinction between truthful and deceptive narratives. However, by applying the same term to all of his tales, Hilsenrath reveals the importance of power in the creation of narrative truth.

⁵⁴⁸ Hilsenrath, *Story*, p. 11 and *Conte*, p. 17. My italics. The German text can be found on p. 190 of this thesis. For a similar translation cp. *Märchen*, p. 177, *Story*, p. 159 and *Conte*, p. 167.

⁵⁴⁹ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 211, *Story*, p. 190 and *Conte*, p. 198.

The more realist stance in the treatment of genre and the transcendence of fact and fiction in the English translation also marks its rendering of the grotesque features in the novel which is the subject of the following section.

2.3.2.1.3 *The Male Bone: The Translational Elision of the Grotesque*

Drawing on theories by Thomas Cramer, Michael Steig and Jürgen Landwehr, Dietrich Dopheide argues, in his study on the grotesque in Hilsenrath's works, that the grotesque in modern literature aims to shock the reader by ridiculing the brutality of the modern world without diminishing its horror.⁵⁵⁰ In his reading of *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* Dopheide rightly points out that the grotesque, as a means of defamiliarization, unlike in *Der Nazi und der Friseur*, is subordinate to the use of the fairy tale. However, he adds that just as in the earlier novel, it enables the narrator to talk about the ineffable and thus to present the events of the genocide to the reader.⁵⁵¹ The main intention of the grotesque presentation is thus to provoke laughter which because of its ambivalence is immediately swallowed by a feeling of shock. While agreeing with Dopheide's understanding of the modern form of the grotesque, the following reading will take his interpretation further by incorporating Mikhail Bakhtin's theory on the subversive and utopian qualities of grotesque writing which are ignored in Dopheide's critical evaluation of Bakhtin's works.⁵⁵² This interpretation will highlight the reintegration of the pre-modern and the modern form of the grotesque in Hilsenrath's work.

⁵⁵⁰ See Dietrich Dopheide, *Das Groteske und der Schwarze Humor in den Romanen Edgar Hilsenraths* (Berlin: Weißensee, 2000), pp. 57–58, 61–62 and 76.

⁵⁵¹ The Shoa has often been described as the ineffable with a rather unreflected reference to Adorno's famous dictum 'nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch' which stems from his essay 'Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft' written in 1949 and first published in 1951, see Theodor W. Adorno, 'Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft', in *Prismen: Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), pp. 7–31 (p. 31). Like many other literary critics, Dopheide reduces Adorno's dictum to the writing of literature. However, as Detlev Claussen rightly points out, Adorno attacks the bourgeois cultural industry, see 'Nach Auschwitz: Ein Essay über die Aktualität Adornos', in *Zivilisationsbruch: Denken nach Auschwitz*, ed. by Dan Diner (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1988), pp. 54–68 (p. 59).

⁵⁵² See Dopheide, pp. 157 and 75–76.

In his study on *Rabelais and His World* Bakhtin traces the grotesque elements in Rabelais' *Gargantua et Pantagruel* back to their origins in medieval carnivalesque folklore. In the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance the carnival, in contrast to official festivities, which served to confirm the existing patterns, temporarily liberated the individual from the prevailing truth and the established order by turning the world upside down: 'A second life, a second world of folk culture is thus constructed; it is to a certain extent a parody of the extracarnival life, a "world inside out".' However, Bakhtin emphasizes that the parodic manner of the carnival is not solely negative 'but it revives and renews at the same time.' Within this framework Bakhtin rereads Rabelais's grotesque images of the body. Differentiating between the description of bodies in pre-modern and modern literature, Bakhtin argues that in modern works the perception of the human being as an individual is mirrored in the description of the body as a whole, closed up and single entity: 'The new bodily canon, in all its historic variations and different genres, presents an entirely finished, completed, strictly limited body, which is shown from the outside as something individual.' The description of the body in medieval texts, by contrast, focused on the orifices, such as the mouth and the anus, which open up the body to the world or incorporate the world into the body, as well as on the body parts which stick out and outgrow the borderlines of the one body, such as the nose or the penis. The grotesque body thus does not represent a single and closed up entity but transcends the borderlines of the individual. Bakhtin describes it as a body in transition, a carrier of eternal death and rebirth: 'It is a point of transition in a life eternally renewed, the inexhaustible vessel of death and conception.' In his discussion of Wolfgang Kayser's theory he consequently criticizes Kayser's description of the grotesque as foreignizing our own world, arguing that the grotesque not only reveals the otherness of the here and now but at the same time 'discloses the potentiality of an entirely different world, of another order, another way of life. [...] The existing world

suddenly becomes alien (to use Kayser's terminology) precisely because there is the potentiality of a friendly world, of the golden age, of carnival truth.'⁵⁵³

In Hilsenrath's *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* Thovma Khatisian embodies the grotesque. In the prologue the Meddah serves as a mirror for Thovma who is about to die: 'Du siehst häßlich aus, Thovma Khatisian. Keine Frau würde sich in dich verlieben, außer deiner Mutter. Deine Augen sind leicht verdreht und gucken auf den Fußboden. Aus deinem halbgeöffneten Mund rinnt stinkender Speichel.' Thovma's body bears all the signs of a dying person, of a body in transition. Yet, overcoming the delimitations of time in the fairy tale, his body magically survives the narration of the whole novel. Furthermore, as mentioned above, his death will mark the beginning of a new era. Not only will his last thought on the return to the land of his reinvented ancestors be renamed Hayk, who was the mythical father of all Armenians, it will also rectify the accounts on the Armenian genocide in Turkish history books: 'Ich weiß, daß mein letzter Gedanke zurückfliegen wird in die Lücken der türkischen Geschichtsbücher.'⁵⁵⁴ In Bakhtin's words, Thovma's body 'swallows the world and is itself swallowed by the world': the whole of the novel takes place in his head, he incorporates the Armenian people who died in the genocide as well as their ignored history and he has to die to invoke a different future. However, Thovma's is not the only body in transition; the whole novel is populated with descriptions of grotesque bodies and abounds with grotesque scenes of eating, digestion, sex and death. Such practices, as Bakhtin points out, overcome 'the confines between bodies and between the body and the world'.⁵⁵⁵ In the translations of *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* these grotesque elements have been omitted to a large extent.

⁵⁵³ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. by Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 11, 320, 318 and 48.

⁵⁵⁴ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, pp. 7 and 505.

⁵⁵⁵ Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, p. 317.

During their endless discussions about their plans and reasons for the annihilation of the Armenians, the Turkish officials and their German and Austrian guests drink coffee and raki, smoke their chibouk or their nargile and eat baklava.⁵⁵⁶ This consumption of food and drugs while planning barbaric acts is reminiscent of the Wannsee conference, where over a good meal, the Nazi administrators decided on the annihilation of European Jewry. It is therefore revealing that the Basch-Kjatib, the Turkish chief clerk in Bakir, develops stomach problems while listening to the Mudir's elaborations on the Armenian world conspiracy. The Mudir's theory is based on the fake *Protokolle der Weisen von Zion*, which he heard about during his studies abroad. First published in Russian, the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, as they were called in the English translation published in 1920, describe an alleged meeting of an invented secret Jewish government, the *Elders of Zion*, and their intention to conquer the world by means of cunning, deceit and violence. Although the *Times* proved them to be a forgery in the early 1920s, the protocols served the Nazis as a means of justification for the annihilation of the Jews and they are still giving rise to new translations — thus a Greek version was published in 1980.⁵⁵⁷ Drawing on one of the many versions of this fake document, the Mudir absolves the Jews and puts the blame for the state of the world on the Armenians: 'Die Armenier sitzen überall, sagte der Müdir, wo das Böse am Rad der Geschichte dreht. Alle Hebel sind in ihren Händen.' The Basch-Kjatib's disagreement with this theory first becomes apparent in his failure to write down and thus to eternalize the Mudir's words: 'Die armenische Weltverschwörung! Bei diesem Satz hatte die Stambuler Feder des Oberschreibers ein paar Sprünge gemacht'.⁵⁵⁸ Then the lies affect his stomach: 'es zuckte in seinem Magen und stach wie tausend und eine Nadel, als ob

⁵⁵⁶ See Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, pp. 30, 34, 78 and 144.

⁵⁵⁷ See Béla Rásky, 'Plagiierte Höllendialoge: Die Fälschungs- und Wirkungsgeschichte der *Protokolle der Weisen von Zion*', in *Die Macht der Bilder: Antisemitische Vorurteile und Mythen*, ed. by Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien (Vienna: Picus, 1995), pp. 264–271.

⁵⁵⁸ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 98.

alle Armenier auf dieser Welt das Märchen von der armenischen Weltverschwörung mit tausend und einer Nadel in seinen Magen ritzen.⁵⁵⁹ It therefore comes as no great surprise when in the third book of the novel Wartan finds out from the blind beggar in Bakir, a talking source of information, that the Basch-Kjatib was arrested because he supplied several Armenians with false papers.⁵⁶⁰ However, the Mudir interprets the chief clerk's stomach problems, which embody his aversion to swallowing the Mudir's theories, to spring from his excessive consumption of Armenian baklava. Again he links this observation to his theory on the Armenian world conspiracy: 'Diese armenischen Bäcker legen Nadelspitzen in ihre Baklava, damit wir Türken glauben, es sei die Schuld unseres eigenen Magens, der das Fremde nicht integriert.'⁵⁶¹ The Mudir's German statement interprets the chief clerk's stomach problems as surpassing the limits of the individual body. He reads them as a symbol for the whole people. According to his theory, the Armenians hide needle points in their baklava which make the Turks believe that their stomachs defy the integration of the foreign. However, the German sentence 'der das Fremde nicht integriert' is ambiguous. The lack of integration does not only refer to the Armenian baklava in the Turkish stomachs but it implies the general refusal to integrate the Armenians into the Ottoman empire. Neither the English nor the French translation maintains this ambiguity of the German statement.

Those Armenian bakers put needle points in their *baklava* to make us Turks believe it's the fault of our own stomach, which won't digest anything unusual.

Ces boulangers arméniens mettent des aiguilles dans leur baklava de manière à nous faire croire, à nous autres Turcs, que nos estomacs turcs sont incapables de digérer ce qui est étranger.⁵⁶²

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 99. In analogy to the above interpretation the English translation of this passage ironically renders the term 'Märchen' as 'history' (cp. Hilsenrath, *Story*, p. 88).

⁵⁶⁰ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 446.

⁵⁶¹ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 100.

⁵⁶² Hilsenrath, *Story*, p. 89 and *Conte*, p. 94. Italics in the original.

The unusual employment of the German word 'integrieren' in this context, rendered as 'digest' and 'digérer' in English and French respectively, is reduced to the digestive problems within the individual body. Both translators thus ignore the grotesque understanding of the body underlying this word. Furthermore, while the French translation at least uses the word 'étranger' for 'das Fremde' and thus alludes to the discourse on the integration of a foreign people, the English translator, who opts for the word 'unusual', normalizes the strangeness of the German sentence and thus loses any hint of its ambiguity.

While in the above example the grotesque serves to reveal and to ridicule the Mudir's argumentative strategies, Hilsenrath chiefly uses the grotesque to uncover personal and political power structures. In the patriarchal Turkish and Armenian societies described in the text the penis embodies power. Like the discussions on the annihilation of the Armenians, many of the scenes in the novel take place in an exclusively male world. After the scene in the Mudir's office the Meddah follows the Basch-Kjatib to the open-plan toilets in the government building. In a conversation with a Turkish interpreter about the Germans the chief clerk is reminded of his visit to a Turkish hamam, another male dominion, where he observed a masturbation scene between a Turkish major and a German officer:

Als er genauer hinblickte, durch den Dampf hindurch, sah er, daß der Türke den Schwanz des Deutschen in der Faust hielt, *so als könne er den Schwanz nicht mehr loslassen*. Bei Allah, dachte der Oberschreiber kopfschüttelnd, und es schien ihm, als wäre der Schwanz des Deutschen nichts weiter als die Verlängerung vom Schwanz des großen deutschen Kaisers.⁵⁶³

The chief clerk reads this scene in the hamam with reference to the growing German influence in Turkey. In his grotesque interpretation of the two bodies he imagines the penis of the German officer to be the extension of the German Kaiser's. That is why he interprets the Turk as not being able to let go of the German's penis. The French text

⁵⁶³ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 113. My italics.

imitates this foreignizing image: ‘En regardant plus attentivement à travers le voile de vapeur, le greffier constata que le Turc tenait la queue de l’Allemand serrée dans son poing, *comme s’il était accroché à cette queue.*’ The English translation, by contrast, describes the German as being unable to free his penis from the Turkish fist: ‘When he could see more clearly through the steam, he saw that the Turk had got the German’s prick in his fist, *so that he could no longer get his prick free.*’⁵⁶⁴ Again opting for a realist rather than a grotesque interpretation of the scene, the English translator turns around the power structures implied in the grotesque image.

Just like the Turks in Bakir, the Armenians in the village Yedi Su, described in the second book of the novel, live in a male-dominated world. The novel does not subscribe to the oriental stereotype which limits patriarchy to Muslim society but also uses the means of the grotesque to reveal the patriarchal values inscribed into Christian beliefs. For the women this community does not constitute the ‘idyllic mountain village’ as it has been described on the cover of the English paperback edition as well as in many of the German reviews. Furthermore, as the following discussion will show, the novel constructs a link between male aggression within the family and the brutal rape scenes on the death marches. In analogy to his earlier novels, which served to uncover and refute philosemitic attitudes in West Germany after World War II, this novel challenges the construction of the good Armenian victims. Just like the Turks, the Armenian people in the village Yedi Su tend to exclude the mad, such as the water carrier who is rumoured to practise bestiality, and also to construct their own foe images of the Turks and the Kurds. Their patriarchal system contains the aggressive and animalistic features which also mark the treatment of the women during the death marches.⁵⁶⁵ The Armenians are thus not necessarily the better but the less powerful people.

⁵⁶⁴ Hilsenrath, *Conte*, p. 107 and *Story*, p. 101. My italics.

⁵⁶⁵ For a study on the sources and the effects of male aggression cp. Vera von Aaken, *Männliche Gewalt: Ihre Wurzeln und ihre Auswirkungen* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 2000).

The cornerstone of patriarchy in Yedi Su consists in a system of honour which includes the man's right and duty to deflower his wife. The embodiment of male pride and power, which implies female subordination and fear, is therefore the 'Männerknochen', the male bone. This grotesque German designation pictures the penis to be in a constant state of erection, an image which embodies male potency. At the same time the grotesque description of the penis as a bone aims to ridicule and thus to reveal and turn over the patriarchal structures. As the following discussion will show, neither the English nor the French translator decides for a similarly grotesque and unusual image: while the French text in most of the cases uses the biological description 'membre viril', which ignores the image of constant erection, the English translator adapts his renderings to the individual passage. Both thus lose the grotesque and revealing foreignness of the German text.

The patriarchal system is transmitted from one generation to the next in mythic biblical and historical stories told by family members and in statements uttered by authorities. In Yedi Su women are excluded from education because a former mayor of the village once pronounced that educated women are the ruin of the family. Furthermore, using the authoritative biblical term 'wahrlich', the priest claims that education goes to women's heads. According to this learned man, educated women neglect their housewifely duties, instil their husbands with fear and decrease the men's potency: 'Ihre Männer sind lustlos und zahm, denn sie haben Angst, denn wahrlich: der Dünkel des Weibes läßt den besten Männerknochen schrumpfen.' While the French translator in this particular passage decides for his usual translation of the 'Männerknochen' as 'membre viril', the English translation opts for a clarification by explicitly stating the penis to be erect: 'a woman's airs will shrink a man's erection.'⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁶ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 287, *Story*, p. 261 and *Conte*, p. 269.

This translation again reveals a realist understanding of the body which omits the grotesque image of a constantly erect penis, an image which reveals power structures.

Unshrinkable male potency also features in the construction of the community's main foe image projected onto the Kurds. Living in the mountains as a nomadic community, the Kurds regularly attack the Armenian villages unless they pay taxes to the Kurds. One of the goods liable for Kurdish taxation is the bride's dowry. If the Kurds are not supplied with their share, they abduct and rape the virgin bride and thereby also violate her husband's honour. That is why the Christian virgins perceive Kurdish men to be the embodiment of threatening male potency: 'Für die christlichen Jungfrauen in den weitabgelegenen, schutzlosen Dörfern der Hochebenen *ist der wilde Kurde von Kopf bis Fuß Symbol eines stoßenden, zuckenden, toreinreißenden männlichen Knochens. Alles an ihm ist knochig. Sogar der dunkle, stechende Blick.*' Their fear of deflowerment and shame results in the construction of the Kurdish man as the embodiment of a male bone. Furthermore, even his gaze is marked by his threatening male potency. Though the French translator in this passage uses the grotesque image of the 'membre osseux', he does not apply it to the whole person but reduces it to the penis: 'Pour les vierges chrétiennes des villages éloignés des hauts plateaux, *le Kurde sauvage est le symbole vivant d'une virilité tout entière contenue dans son membre osseux, tressaillant, perçant comme une dague.*' *Tout en lui est perçant, même son sombre regard.*' Instead of transferring the grotesque construction into French, the translator explains the image by describing the Kurd to be a symbol rather than the embodiment of virility. In the English version the bony threat is turned into an 'irresistible penis', the image of threatening male potency metamorphoses into an attraction: 'To Christian virgins in the remote, undefended villages of the plateaux, *the wild Kurd is every inch of him the symbol of a thrusting, flashy, irresistible penis. Everything about him is male.*

Even the dark, piercing gaze.⁵⁶⁷ Not only does the translation thus not use the ridiculing grotesque image to reveal the construction of the male in the patriarchal society but it is also filled with admiration for aggressive male potency. However, this interpretation would seem to be contradicted by the later rape scenes on the Armenian death marches where aggressive male potency, a central feature of the patriarchal system in both the Turkish and the Armenian community, is taken to its extreme. In their ruthless manifestations of their cruel virility the Turkish perpetrators are further stimulated by the women's fear:

Und sie zeigten den Frauen ihre *Männerknorpel*, die von roten Fleischwülsten gekrönt und gehäutet und beschnitten waren und mächtig und bedrohlich anzusehen. Manchmal halfen die Tschettes mit den Bajonetten nach, wenn das *Männergewächs* zwischen den Schenkeln die Öffnung zwischen den anderen Schenkeln nicht fand oder nicht finden konnte, weil die Angst des Opfers die Öffnung versperrt hatte. [...] Es war als würden die Schreie der Frauen und ihre Angst das Blut der Täter erst richtig in Wallung bringen.⁵⁶⁸

In both the English and the French translation the grotesque image of the 'Männerknorpel', which in analogy to the metaphor of the bone describes the penis as gristly, is rendered with the common designation 'penis'. The organic metaphor 'Männergewächs', which further stresses the growth of the male organ already implied in the image of the bone, in English is simply rendered as 'organ' whereas the French translator opts for the 'membre dressé' and thus at least stresses the state of erection in this particular scene.⁵⁶⁹

Via his mythic stories Wartan's grandfather passes on the sexual beliefs of his community to his grandson. He tells him about the brutality of the oversexualized Turks and warns him against masturbating linking it with madness and the failure to beget a son.⁵⁷⁰ However, Wartan refuses to conform. His first sexual experiences are tainted by

⁵⁶⁷ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 230, *Conte*, p. 216 and *Story*, p. 208. My italics.

⁵⁶⁸ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 432. My italics. The Tschettes were robbers and murderers set free and organized in special organizations to assist the Turkish soldiers and policemen in the deportation and annihilation of the Armenians (cp. Melson, p. 145).

⁵⁶⁹ See Hilsenrath, *Story*, p. 369 and *Conte*, p. 407.

⁵⁷⁰ See Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, pp. 243–245.

impotence. Gerstenberger and Pohland argue that male impotence in Hilsenrath's works, in particular in *Nacht* and *Der Nazi und der Friseur*, implies the male protagonist's inability to assert his self.⁵⁷¹ However, read against the backdrop of the grotesque, Wartan's impotence denotes his unwillingness to comply with the absurd and bestial system. On his wedding day Wartan is so confused that he does not obey his parents' order to deflower his wife immediately. When he takes her out for a walk in the village where the inhabitants are celebrating the young couple's wedding, the bride is abducted by the Kurds who threaten to rape her unless the couple's fathers pay the tax on the dowry. On her return to the village Wartan, who is in a state of shock, again neglects to fulfil his male duties. The following morning his desperate father Hagob, who fears for his honour, questions Wartan's virility: 'Hab ich dir nun einen gesunden Männerknochen mit ins Leben gegeben oder nicht?' while Bülbül, the Kurdish medicine woman, asks Hagob: 'Hat dein Sohn keinen Männerknochen?' In this particular passage both translations opt for variation rather than revealing reiteration of the same term. While the French translator in the father's sentence decides for the usual 'membre viril', he lets the woman say 'ce qu'il faut'. In English Bülbül, who talks about a 'hard on', is far more direct. She names the erect penis while the father's talk of a 'sound male organ' is rather more euphemistic.⁵⁷² Again none of the translations render the grotesque imagery which does, however, constitute the background for the later love scene between Wartan and his second wife Anahit.

Only with his second wife Anahit, whose foster parents significantly have provided her with an education, does Wartan experience fulfilling sex, implied in the sudden tenderness of his 'male bone': 'Und all das, was knochig und hart war beim Mann und gnadenlos, wie es hieß, wurde sanft, und selbst die Lust, die sich selber suchte, suchte

⁵⁷¹ See Katharina Gerstenberger and Vera Pohland, 'Der Wichser — Edgar Hilsenrath: Schreiben über den Holocaust, Identität und Sexualität', *Der Deutschunterricht*, 44 (1992), 74–91.

⁵⁷² Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 339, *Conte*, p. 318 and *Story*, p. 309.

den anderen und wurde zärtlich.' In this comparison both translations decide to use the grotesque image of the male bone: 'And all that was hard and bony and ruthless', 'Et tout ce qui était osseux et dur chez l'homme'.⁵⁷³ However, having ignored the image in earlier passages, the translators restrict this meditation on power and sexual relations to this one passage and thus to this individual couple. Yet, as should have become apparent in the discussion above, Hilsenrath's novel implies a general critique of the patriarchal system. Significantly, while the child begotten with his first wife is stillborn and she dies in childbirth, Thovma, the child of this love, represents the source of a utopian vision of a new Armenia following his metamorphosis into Hayk.

Finally, the grotesque plays an important part in the parody of an official letter which describes a demand for the installation of new toilets in the government building in great length. The writer of the letter, the lawyer Hassan Agah, argues that the *saptiehs*, i.e. the policemen, as the representatives of law and order, could no longer be expected either to wait in the endless queue in front of the one and only toilet or to relieve themselves against the wall which separates the *hukumet* from the prison. He therefore demands funding for new toilets. The parody juxtaposes the high-grown official language with the lowly topic of the toilets. The German text further stresses the parodical effect of this juxtaposition by using the colloquial term 'Klo'. The translators, by contrast, who decide for the euphemistic terms 'lavatory' and 'lieu d'aisance', adapt the profanity of this lowly topic to the high genre. However, the French translator tries to make up for the loss of the grotesque element by ironizing the official style of the letter with his constant reiteration of the words 'une telle situation' not used in the German text.⁵⁷⁴ These toilets in the government building, like the market place at the carnival,

⁵⁷³ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 371, *Story*, p. 340 and *Conte*, p. 348.

⁵⁷⁴ See Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, pp. 102–104, *Story*, pp. 91–93 and *Conte*, pp. 96–98. On the repetition in French cp. the following examples: 'Une telle situation — comme l'avait écrit l'avocat — était en contradiction flagrante avec les idées défendues par le Comité pour l'union et le progrès [...]. Et — comme l'avait encore l'écrit l'avocat — une telle situation n'était tout simplement plus défendable'. (pp. 97–98)

are supposed to represent a meeting place for the high and mighty and their subordinates. In another juxtaposition of the high and the profane the toilets are described as being in keeping with the democratic ideology of the Committee of Union and Progress, also known as the Young Turks.⁵⁷⁵ Nevertheless, hierarchical structures prevail: when the Mudir enters the toilets, all of the saptiehs leave the scene.

The Ottoman toilet habits, which might estrange a Western reader, are immediately countered with an occidentalist discussion of the strange German toilet habits initiated by the interpreter Faruk Agah with the following words: ‘Diese Deutschen sind ein merkwürdiges Volk.’ By using the word ‘étrange’, the French translator imitates the discourse of otherness underlying this discussion, while the English translator opts for ‘extraordinary’.⁵⁷⁶ Not only do the Germans always carry a newspaper in their trousers because of the lack of toilet paper in Turkish toilets, their toilets also differ markedly from the Turkish: ‘Wollen Sie etwa behaupten, daß die Franken *auf* einem Loch sitzen, wenn sie Allah zurückgeben, was sie nicht verdaut haben? [...] Die Franken sitzen auf einem Loch. Das ist doch nicht menschenmöglich.’ In this particular passage the English translator reduces the grotesque idea of the Germans sitting on a hole: ‘Do you mean to say that the Franks sit *over* a hole when they give back what they haven’t digested to Allah?’ Furthermore, he omits the saptieh’s statement that it is impossible for human beings to sit on holes. Though the French translation contains this sentence, the French translator diminishes the saptieh’s disbelief: ‘Voulez-vous dire que les Frenks sont assis *sur* un trou quand ils rendent à Allah ce qu’ils n’ont pu digérer? [...] Les Frenks sont assis sur un trou. C’est pas croyable.’⁵⁷⁷

Both of the translations tend to reduce the grotesque elements in Hilsenrath’s text and thus to ignore their subversive revelation of power structures. However, as I have

⁵⁷⁵ See Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 104.

⁵⁷⁶ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 106, *Story*, p. 95 and *Conte*, p. 101.

⁵⁷⁷ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 108, *Story*, p. 96 and *Conte*, p. 102. My italics.

demonstrated for the other defamiliarization devices, the English translation tends to lessen the foreignness of the text more significantly than the French. The reduction of foreignness can also be observed in the similarities drawn between the Armenian genocide and the Shoa which I will discuss in the following section.

2.3.2.2 The Armenian Genocide and the Shoa: The Otherness Underlying the Self

The means of defamiliarization in Hilsenrath's novel, discussed in the previous sections, defies the readers' expectation for identification and prevents the development of personal sympathy. With the use of this device Hilsenrath diverts his readers from personal fates and realist descriptions and instead forces them to concentrate on the similarities between the two genocides. He further emphasizes the comparability of these two crimes by drawing linguistic links between the Turkish and German othering strategies used vis-a-vis the Armenians and the Jews as well as between the description of the crimes committed against them. These allusions tally with the findings of Robert Melson's comparative historical study of the Armenian massacre and the Shoa. According to Melson, the Armenians and the Jews constituted tolerated ethnoreligious minorities in the Ottoman and the German Empire respectively, where they suffered othering, exclusion and finally extermination in the wake of the development and spread of pan-Turkish and pan-German ideas.⁵⁷⁸ Unlike the foreignizing devices, the comparisons drawn between the Armenian genocide and the Shoa, as we have seen, met with a very positive reception in the German press. In general critics applauded Hilsenrath's accurate analysis of the structures underlying both events. Only Kurzke condemned the structural link for, as he argued, reducing the Armenian genocide to a foil for the Shoa. In her dissertation Kamaluddin took Kurzke's criticism further by claiming that Hilsenrath's novel betrayed a lack of insight into Turkish administrative

⁵⁷⁸ See Melson, pp. 247–248.

structures and the military organization of World War I.⁵⁷⁹ However, she fails to take into account that Hilsenrath is not aiming to achieve a realist representation of these structures but instead intends to supply the reader with a more general understanding of history. In his novel Hilsenrath does not describe the two genocides as singular events. Nor does he solely aim at a comparison of these two massacres. Suggesting that the mass extermination of a people represents the extreme manifestation of othering strategies which can be found in any culture, he implies that genocides can recur in the most diverse cultures and at any moment in time.⁵⁸⁰ This conviction is aptly encapsulated in the Meddah's description of history as 'die Aneinanderreihung kleinerer und größerer Massenmorde vom Anbeginn der Zeit'.⁵⁸¹ As his transcendence of the strict Western borderlines between fact and fiction, Hilsenrath's understanding of history can be traced back to Jewish thought and narrative. Thus the Passover Haggadah is constantly rewritten in order to include new experiences of exile and slavery, such as the Shoa.⁵⁸² In a similar vein, Benjamin describes history as 'eine *einzig* Katastrophe, die unablässig Trümmer auf Trümmer häuft'.⁵⁸³ In Hilsenrath's novel the embodiment of this cyclical understanding of history, the eternal victim, is Wartan Khatisian who magically survives the Armenian genocide but dies in the Holocaust.⁵⁸⁴ So despite his comparatist stance to the Shoa, Hilsenrath still emphasizes the extreme brutality of the Holocaust in this continuing process of extermination. As the following analysis will show, the two translators confine the text to this singularist interpretation by diminishing the links drawn between the Armenian genocide and the Shoa. They thus ignore the

⁵⁷⁹ See Kamaluddin, p. 70.

⁵⁸⁰ For a short introduction to the particularist and the comparatist stance to genocides, see Melson, pp. 33–39.

⁵⁸¹ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 423.

⁵⁸² See the beginning of section 2.3.2.1.2 Märchen, Story, Conte: A Comparative Reading, pp. 186f. of this chapter.

⁵⁸³ Benjamin, 'Geschichte', p. 697.

⁵⁸⁴ See Brecheisen, pp. 78–80 and 151–152.

wider implications of Hilsenrath's text which would reveal that genocide could also occur in their cultures.

2.3.2.2.1 *Structures of Othering: The Strategies of Justification for the Two Genocides*

Just like the Germans in the discussion on toilet habits described in the section on the grotesque, the Armenians are marked as being different and strange with the German word 'merkwürdig': 'Das kann aber nicht sein, sagte der deutsche Major, denn laut der Statistik leben in der ganzen Türkei nur eins Komma zwei Millionen von diesem merkwürdigen Volk.' Both the English and the French translator turn the wariness and mistrust expressed in the German text into a kind of admiration: in English the Armenians are described as 'remarkable', in French as 'singulier'.⁵⁸⁵ However, these translations ignore the importance of derogatory othering for the justification of the genocide. In this utterance the Armenians are not marked as an outstanding but as an untrustworthy people which needs to be eradicated. The word 'merkwürdig' thus expresses a polarized view of self and other as well as mistrust towards the alleged other. As Nicoline Hartzitz points out in her essay on the language of anti-Semitism, these two strategies of polarization and disdain constitute the basic linguistic components of the language used to convince the people of the difference and the inferiority of the Jewish other.⁵⁸⁶ These particular linguistic means employed in the process of othering the Jews are recreated in many of the Turkish utterances about the Armenians in Hilsenrath's novel. While the most obvious links drawn between the othering of the Jewish and the Armenian people, such as the allusions to the Jewish world conspiracy and to racist theories, have been transferred into English and French,

⁵⁸⁵ See Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 35, *Story*, p. 28 and *Conte*, p. 34.

⁵⁸⁶ See Nicoline Hartzitz, 'Die Sprache der Judenfeindschaft', in *Antisemitismus: Vorurteile und Mythen*, ed. by Julius H. Schoeps and Joachim Schlör (Munich: Piper, 1995), pp. 19–40 (p. 19).

the projections of falseness and treachery as well as the strategies of dehumanization have to some extent been ignored by the two translators.⁵⁸⁷

In anti-Jewish discourses Jewishness has traditionally been equated with falseness.⁵⁸⁸ As Erhard Stölting points out, this alleged inherently deceitful Jewish character, often traced back to Judas's betrayal of Jesus, came to be linked to treason in modern anti-Semitic discourses. The Dreyfus affair in France is one of the most prominent examples of this. Stölting goes on to explain that in Germany this discourse served as a means to contest the emancipation which the Jews had been granted in the nineteenth century:

Als Teil des modernen Antisemitismus kann der Vorwurf des Verrats [...] als Instrument im Kampf gegen die Emanzipation gesehen werden — und dabei vor allem als Kampfmittel, eine schon gelungene Emanzipation rückgängig zu machen. In diesem Sinne gehört der Verratsvorwurf zum Kern des modernen Antisemitismus. Er ordnet sich dann insbesondere dem Topos der Zersetzung ein, der Zerstörung der ursprünglichen und natürlichen Kraft, der Dekadenz.⁵⁸⁹

Sultan Abdul Hamid II used similar arguments to justify the Armenian massacres in 1894–1896, accusing the Armenians of betraying the Ottoman Empire. Not only did he allege they had invented stories against the government, he also contended that they, just like the Bulgarians before them, wanted independence from the Empire which, in view of the size of the territory they inhabited, could, however, never be granted. Describing them as 'Nihilists, Socialists, and Anarchists', Abdul Hamid thus accuses them of aiming to destroy the Ottoman Empire, as well as of having a generally deceitful nature.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁷ For the racial theories cp. Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, pp. 35 and 114–115, *Story*, pp. 29 and 102, *Conte*, pp. 35 and 108–109. For the theories on the alleged world conspiracy cp. *Märchen*, pp. 97–99, 158ff., *Story*, pp. 87–88, 141ff. and *Conte*, pp. 92–93, 148ff.

⁵⁸⁸ See Hartzitz, p. 22.

⁵⁸⁹ Erhard Stölting, 'Sechzehntes Bild: "Der Verräter"', in *Antisemitismus*, ed. by Julius H. Schoeps and Joachim Schlör, pp. 218–228 (p. 224).

⁵⁹⁰ See the letter from Sultan Abdul Hamid II addressed to Sir Philipp Currie, then British ambassador, cited in Melson, pp. 59–60.

In his novel Hilsenrath unveils the similarities in these two discourses of othering. In the absurd letter demanding new toilets for the policemen in the government building, the lawyer Hassan Agah, who is himself of Armenian descent, employs anti-Armenian propaganda in order to advance his own career, which again disproves the claim that Hilsenrath's novel paints a simplistic black and white image of the two people involved in the genocide.⁵⁹¹ Yet even the Vali's appreciation of his services does not liberate the lawyer from the usual stereotypes: just like the other Armenians he is described as cunning.⁵⁹² In his letter the lawyer argues that saptiehs could not be expected to relieve themselves against the wall separating the hukümet from the prison that was full of Armenians: 'Dies sei schlecht für die Moral der Truppe, schrieb der Rechtsanwalt, denn diese Armenier waren *verschlagen, hatten vor niemandem Respekt, unterwanderten jeden Türken*'. The English translation of the lawyer's statement does not only omit the disrespectful behaviour ascribed to the Armenians but also turns the treacherous infiltration into a desire for integration: 'That was bad for the morale of the troops, wrote the lawyer, for those Armenian [sic!] were *cunning, mixed with the Turks*'. The French translator, by contrast, at least recognizes the strategies of othering implied in this remark: 'Une telle situation, avait encore écrit l'avocat, nuisait au moral de la troupe, car les Arméniens étaient terriblement *sournois*, ne respectaient rien ni personne, *trompaient tous les Turcs* qui leurs tombaient dans les pattes'.⁵⁹³ However, just like his English counterpart, the French translator does not chose to adopt the discourse of infiltration and destruction of a people. Only when the accusation of falseness is used in combination with a number of other stereotypes and when the Armenians are directly compared to the Jews, do both translators retain the Anti-Jewish means of othering ascribed to the Armenians in the German text:

⁵⁹¹ See the section on the German press reception of the novel, in particular p. 176 of this chapter.

⁵⁹² See Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 103. Vali is the Turkish term for a governor, in this case the governor of Bakir.

⁵⁹³ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 103, *Story*, p. 92 and *Conte*, p. 98. My italics.

[...] so wie viele Armenier, von denen die Türken sagen, sie *unterwandern* die Völker so wie die Juden [...]

[...] like so many Armenians, of whom the Turks say that they *infiltrate* the people like the Jews [...]

[...] comme c'est le cas de nombreux Arméniens que les Turcs accusent de *s'infiltrer* dans les différents peuples, à l'instar des Juifs [...]⁵⁹⁴

After the German surrender in 1918 this accusation that the Jews had committed an act of treason against the German Reich came to be linked to the so-called *Dolchstoß*, the theory of the stab in the back which implied that the German army had not lost the war on the battlefield but was betrayed by politicians and by Jews.⁵⁹⁵ In Hilsenrath's novel this German discourse is mirrored in a conversation between the Mudir and the Vali that contains various anti-Armenian/anti-Semitic stereotypes, such as their obvious wealth, their financial influence and their subversive disloyalty. In this context the Vali says about the Armenians: 'Sie warten nur darauf uns den *Dolch* in den Rücken zu stechen'. Neither the English nor the French translator imitate this allusion to German anti-Semitic discourses. In English the *Dolchstoß* is generally referred to as the 'stab in the back', but the translator's rendering of the Vali's sentence does not incorporate this expression: 'They are just waiting to stick a *dagger* in our back,' says the Vali.' Neither does the French translation make reference to the French rendering of the *Dolchstoß* — 'le coup de poignard': 'Ils n'attendent que le moment de nous plonger le *couteau* dans le dos, dit le vali.'⁵⁹⁶

A second linguistic strategy of derogatory othering, which is also described by Hertzitz, is the process of dehumanization involved in the description of Jews as vermin or parasites. In this organic metaphor the German state, pictured as a living organism,

⁵⁹⁴ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 278, *Story*, p. 253 and *Conte*, p. 261. My italics. For the accusation of falseness used in combination with a number of other stereotypes cp. Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 39, *Story*, p. 32 and *Conte*, p. 38.

⁵⁹⁵ See the article 'Stab in the Back' in *The Macmillan Dictionary of the Second World War*, ed. by Elizabeth Anne Wheal and Stephen Pope, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 442. For the link of the *Dolchstoß* to anti-Semitic discourses cp. Stölting, p. 226.

⁵⁹⁶ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 39, *Story*, p. 33 and *Conte*, p. 38. My italics.

took on the role of the exploited host.⁵⁹⁷ Relating the tortures the Armenians had to suffer, the Meddah ridicules a Turkish discourse of justification for the crimes which alludes to this type of dehumanizing metaphorization: ‘dieses Volk, das sich für ein Herrenvolk hielt und sein *Wirtsvolk* beherrschen wollte’. While both translators have no trouble in rendering the allusion to the superior ‘master race’, neither the English nor the French translation of the polysemic German word ‘Wirt’, which apart from referring to a host for parasites also describes a landlord of a pub, implies any allusion to the above organic metaphor expressed in this word. However, the French translator at least invokes the polarized discourse of self and other: ‘ce peuple qui se comportait d’ailleurs comme un peuple de seigneurs et prétendait régenter *le peuple d’acceuil*’. The English translation, by contrast, shows no understanding of this discourse at all: ‘those people who thought they were a master-race and wanted to rule over their *landlords*’.⁵⁹⁸

As has already been mentioned in the discussion of the grotesque images of the body in the novel, the discourse of othering is not limited to the relations between the Turks and the Armenians, it also characterizes the relationships between the Armenians in the village Yedi Su.⁵⁹⁹ When describing the one and only case of adultery and divorce that Wartan has ever come across in the Christian Village Yedi Su, the Meddah links his story of the adulterous wife of an imprisoned trader to stereotypical images of the hook-nosed Jews and their alleged unsatiable lust: ‘Aber eines Tages war ihre Geduld zu Ende, und das hatte was mit der krummen Nase zu tun, denn es hieß, die Krummnasigen können nicht warten, besonders dann, wenn es allzusehr zwischen den Beinen juckt.’⁶⁰⁰ As Sander Gilman points out in his essay on the images of the Jewish body, the detailed description of the hooked Jewish nose took up a lot of space in racial theories. Gilman explains this focus of interest with the aim to distinguish the Jews in Western diaspora

⁵⁹⁷ See Hartzitz, pp. 24–25.

⁵⁹⁸ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 408, *Conte*, p. 384 and *Story*, p. 374. My italics.

⁵⁹⁹ See 2.3.2.1.3 The Male Bone: The Translational Elision of the Grotesque, pp. 205ff. of this chapter.

⁶⁰⁰ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 273.

from the 'native' inhabitants of the countries where they lived. As a protruding facial organ the nose was a feature particularly liable to making the Jewish body visible.⁶⁰¹ Furthermore, grotesque images of the nose, which tend towards the animalistic in size and shape and thus imply Jewish inferiority to the superior Aryan race, were often linked to the phallus.⁶⁰² The idea of the hooked nose is thus related to the projections of uncontrolled sexuality based on the projector's suppressed sexual desires: 'Antisemitismus und sexuelle Ängste waren eng verknüpft. Geprägt von Sexualneid und verdrängten Sexualwünschen unterstellten die Antisemiten den Juden eine unkontrollierte Sexualität'.⁶⁰³ In this particular case it is the English translation that imitates both of these discourses: 'for they say that hook-nosed people never can wait, especially when there's really too much of an itch between their legs.' The French translation, by contrast, reads the generic term 'die Krummnasigen' as a gendered reference and thus limits the racial stereotype to a more specific argument on women: 'il est connu que les femmes au nez busqué ne peuvent pas attendre, surtout quand ça se met à fourmiller entre les jambes.'⁶⁰⁴

An imaginary conversation between the Meddah and the Vali of Bakir reveals that these discourses have to be regarded as projections, based on the projector's repressed desires. The Vali's statement that the Armenians' eyes betray their sexual lust, their greed and their falseness leads the Meddah to ask him to describe his meetings with Armenians. The Vali's answer confirms the Meddah's theory that his image of Armenian eyes mirrors his own desires: 'Eigentlich nur beim Geldwechselln oder wenn mich der Schwanz juckt.' The French translator interprets the ambiguous expression 'beim Geldwechselln', which could either mean that the Vali works as a money changer

⁶⁰¹ See Sander L. Gilman, 'Zwölftes Bild: Der "jüdische Körper"', in *Antisemitismus*, ed. by Julius H. Schoeps and Joachim Schlör, pp. 167–179 (p. 167).

⁶⁰² See Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, p. 316.

⁶⁰³ Christina von Braun, 'Antisemitische Stereotype und Sexualphantasien', in *Die Macht der Bilder*, ed. by Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien, pp. 180–191 (p. 181).

⁶⁰⁴ Hilsenrath, *Story*, p. 248 and *Conte*, p. 256.

or that he is the customer of an Armenian money changer, to have the first of these two meanings: ‘Oui, mais uniquement *quand je lui change de l’argent* ou quand j’ai des picotements à la queue.’ However, this translation again ignores the transfer of stereotypical images of the Jews onto the Armenians, as it has been realized in the English translation: ‘Actually only *when I’m changing money* or when my prick itches.’⁶⁰⁵ The reduced number of the links drawn between the strategies of justification informing the Armenian genocide and the Shoa in both the English and the French translations can also be observed in the description of the two crimes which I will discuss in the last subsection of this chapter.

2.3.2.2.2 *Verfolgung und Todesmärsche: The Description of the Crimes*

The interpretation of the Shoa as a singular event has meant that a number of terms, such as persecution, deportation or death marches, have been reserved for the description of this particular crime. While in Hilsenrath’s text these words are also applied to the Armenian genocide, the following analysis will show that the two translators in many instances shrank from using the equivalent terms in their own languages. Upholding the incomparability of the Shoa, the translators thus not only reduce the brutality of the Armenian genocide to a less significant incident but also subscribe to the argument that the reasons for and the scale of genocides have to be explained in national frameworks, implicitly ruling out the possibility of coming to a more general understanding of this phenomenon. To demonstrate this point, I will take a closer look at the English and French translations of the description of the crimes.

The English verb ‘to persecute’, which denotes the ill-treatment of a people because of their race or their religious beliefs, has come to be so closely linked to the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis in the Third Reich that this particular example is used to explain the word in *The New Oxford English Dictionary*. By repeatedly using the

⁶⁰⁵ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 77, *Conte*, p. 73 and *Story*, p. 68. My italics.

German word 'Verfolgung' Hilsenrath draws a link between the persecution of the Jews and the treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, which the translators do not always imitate. Significantly, the only sentence in which both translators refer to the Armenian massacre as an act of racial discrimination describes this event as being wildly exaggerated:

Diese *Armenieverfolgungen* unter Abdul Hamid sind weit übertrieben.

The *persecution* of the Armenians under Abdul Hamid is greatly exaggerated.

Ces *persécutions* contre les Arméniens sous le gouvernement d'Abdul Hamid sont très exagérées.⁶⁰⁶

This statement is uttered by Wartan Khatisian in the mock show trial in Bakir. Having been told that the police have kidnapped his pregnant wife, Wartan testifies that the persecution of the Armenians in Turkey is a myth disseminated by the agents of the Armenian world conspiracy in order to gain the support of the Great Powers in their fight for independence. He thus states: 'Ich bin nicht ausgewandert, weil hier die Armenier *verfolgt* wurden, denn eine *Armenieverfolgung* in der Türkei hat es nie gegeben.' The French translator again opts for the term 'persécuter': 'Et personne ne me fera dire que j'ai émigré parce que les Arméniens étaient *persécutés* ici. Du reste, il n'y a jamais eu de *persécutions* contre les Arméniens en Turquie.' The English translator, by contrast, decides for a different term which understates the extent of the measures taken against the Armenians under Sultan Abdul Hamid: 'I didn't emigrate because the Armenians were *oppressed* here, because there never has been any *oppression* of the Armenians in Turkey.'⁶⁰⁷

However, when the Armenians are expressly related to the Jews and the Gypsies, the English translator opts for the term persecution: "Because they are a *persecuted* race", says the blind beggar, "like the Jews and the Gypsies in other countries." This

⁶⁰⁶ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 184, *Story*, p. 132 and *Conte*, p. 139. My italics.

⁶⁰⁷ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 147, *Conte*, p. 138 and *Story*, p. 131. My italics.

statement, which stems from a conversation between the blind beggar and his grandson, is used by the beggar to explain why the Armenians hide gold coins in their boots: ‘Weil sie eine *verfolgte* Rasse sind, sagte der blinde Bettler, so wie in anderen Ländern die Juden und die Zigeuner.’ In this case it is the French translator who understates the extent of the persecutions: ‘Parce qu’ils sont une race *purchassé*, dit le mendiant aveugle. Comme dans d’autres pays, les Juifs et les Tsiganes.’⁶⁰⁸ Describing the pursuit of a criminal, the French term ‘purchasser’ does not denote the racial background of the Turkish crimes. This is true, too, of the last example. In the conversation between several Turks and Germans in the Turkish bath, one of the Turks says that he does not understand ‘Warum man die Armenier überhaupt *verfolgt*?’. Here both translators decide to diminish the crime implied in the word ‘verfolgen’. While the English translator uses the verb ‘to harass’, the French translator opts for ‘s’en prendre’, which describes the act of criticizing or attacking an opponent.⁶⁰⁹

Even more than the persecution, the death marches — a term coined by the victims to describe how Jews and others were taken on long-distance marches both to and between concentration camps — have come to be exclusively linked to the Shoa. Most of the death marches took place in the last few months before the end of the war, when the Germans moved the inmates of the extermination camps to the Western work camps in a desperate attempt to hide their crimes from the advancing allies. Yet, the primary aim of these marches was not to move the internees but to decimate them: ‘The death marches were the ambulatory analogue to the cattle car. [...] The Germans showed no concern on either one for the Jews’ comfort, dignity, or even for keeping them alive.’⁶¹⁰ It is this feature that permits the comparison of these marches to the deportation of the

⁶⁰⁸ Hilsenrath, *Story*, p. 47, *Märchen*, p. 55 and *Conte*, p. 53. My italics.

⁶⁰⁹ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 112. My italics. See *Story*, p. 100 and *Conte*, p. 106.

⁶¹⁰ See Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (London: Abacus, 1996), p. 328. Although I do not agree with Goldhagen’s particularist explanation of the Holocaust, his extensive description of the death marches provides a detailed insight into this topic.

Armenians. Also disguised as a resettlement programme, the aim of these deportations was really the elimination of the Armenians: '[S]i tous les Arméniens doivent partir en déportation, un minimum seulement doit parvenir dans les déserts de Mésopotamie.'⁶¹¹ Alluding to this similarity, Hilsenrath describes the long marches to Mesopotamia as a death march: 'Und sie wurde in Richtung Syrien und Mesopotamien deportiert. Sie war auf einem Todesmarsch.' While the English translator uses the term 'death march', the French translator drops this sentence and thus loses the allusion to the analogies between these two events.⁶¹²

Finally, this diminution of the Armenian genocide that we have seen elsewhere in the translations also affects the English description of the murders and the dead. In the first dialogue with Thovma, the Meddah observes that the Armenians usually live to be very old unless they are killed by the Turks or the Kurds: 'Die sterben nur, wenn die Türken oder die Kurden ihnen die Köpfe abschlagen. [...] *Oder sie irgendwie anders umbringen.*' The Meddah claims that the Armenians who die an early death are either beheaded or killed some other way, as Bernhard Kreiss rightly translated: 'Ou lorsqu'ils les tuent d'une autre manière'. The English translator, by contrast, again limits the extent of the Meddah's statement by implying the possibility of the Armenians dying a natural early death: 'Or else they die some other way'.⁶¹³ Similarly, the way that the English translator describes the dead bodies is less extreme than in the German text. Talking to the Meddah about the victims of the Armenian genocide, Thovma states: 'Ihre *geschändeten* Leiber faulen tief unter der heiligen Erde.' Related to the German noun 'Schande', meaning disgrace, the term 'geschändet' describes the total disfigurement of the bodies which implies that the Turks did not simply kill the Armenians but also violated and tortured them before leaving them to die on the road. The people were thus

⁶¹¹ Ternon, *Les Arméniens*, p. 255.

⁶¹² Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 484 and see *Story*, p. 446 and *Conte*, p. 456.

⁶¹³ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 8, *Conte*, p. 10 and *Story*, p. 4. My italics.

further degraded by being intentionally deprived of their physical integrity, as implied in the French translation of this sentence: 'Leurs corps *mutilés* pourissent sous la terre sacrée.' In the English translation the mutilation is lessened to a wound: 'Their *wounded* bodies lie rotting deep under the sacred earth.'⁶¹⁴ Wounded bodies would still be recognizable whereas the mutilation of the bodies ensured the final destruction of individuality and reduction to an unrecognizable mass of bones and hair.

2.3.3 Fairy Tale vs History: The Loss of the Wider Implications of Hilsenrath's Novel

Edgar Hilsenrath's *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* can be read as a multidimensional response to the claims of otherness. By using various defamiliarization devices, such as the dialogical form, the genre of the fairy tale and the grotesque, the novel alienates its readers from sympathizing with the main characters in order to focus their attention on the strategies of othering which underlie both the Armenian genocide in Turkey and the German destruction of European Jewry. Hilsenrath thus does not only provide the Armenian victims with voices in order to counter the official Turkish version of the Armenian genocide, he also reveals the links between the Shoa and this first genocide of the twentieth century which apparently served Hitler as a model for the extermination of the Jews. At least he is reported to have said: 'Wer redet denn heute noch von der Ausrottung der Armenier?'⁶¹⁵ Furthermore, Hilsenrath's subscription to a cyclical understanding of history implies the probable recurrence of genocide in any culture and at any moment in time. It thus demonstrates the otherness underlying any alleged cultural self. For in Hilsenrath's text genocide is shown to be an extreme manifestation of othering strategies which find expression in the everyday discrimination of women and minorities in many cultures.

⁶¹⁴ Hilsenrath, *Märchen*, p. 6, *Conte*, p. 8 and *Story*, p. 2. My italics.

⁶¹⁵ Cited in Ternon, *Les Arméniens*, p. 12. The German is taken from the German edition of the text: Yves Ternon, *Tabu Armenien: Geschichte eines Völkermords*, trans. by Rudolf Ernst (Frankfurt/Main: Ullstein, 1988), p. 11.

Both Bernard Kreiss and in particular Hugh Young ignore these wider implications of Hilsenrath's novel which also concern the cultures receiving their translations. Trapped in the tradition of translation as a form of hermeneutic interpretation, as it was first promoted by Schleiermacher, the French and the English translator of *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* force Hilsenrath's multidimensional response to otherness into their frameworks of understanding. This approach finds expression in the refamiliarization of Hilsenrath's foreignizing devices. Rather than alienating his audience, the English translator provides his readers with a realist interpretation of Hilsenrath's foreignizing and grotesque fairy tale in order to make them understand the text. Hugh Young not only reduces the use of foreign words and names but also supplies further explanations for these terms. The underlying idea of this strategy is to provide the reader with a deeper understanding of the text as well as of the foreign culture. This approach to translation thus clearly links in with the Romantic aim for progressive education in the foreign which also underlies the translation of Maron's texts. However, Hilsenrath's extensive use of foreign terms does not aim to provide his readers with an authentic representation of foreign cultures. On the contrary, his text could be described as a Benjaminian foreignizing translation. Juxtaposing occidental ideas of the Orient with their oriental mirror images, the novel reveals the otherness underlying the occidental selves. In a similar vein, Hilsenrath's apparently paradoxical combination of the historical topic and the fictional genre opens up a new way of understanding history. Yet, the English translator ignores the productivity of this alleged aporia. Forcing Hilsenrath's productive paradoxes into a framework of realist understanding, Hugh Young reinscribes the text with the borderlines between reality and fiction which Hilsenrath tries to transcend. Finally both the English and the French translator reduce the use of the grotesque in the novel which serves to reveal the brutality of the patriarchal power structures within the Turkish and the Armenian communities as well as their exoticist projections of brutal sexuality onto the excluded others. Since the

grotesque thus shows the strategy of othering to be a general phenomenon which underlies any establishment of a community, the neglect of this means of defamiliarization ignores the significance of Hilsenrath's text for the English and the French selves. This thesis is further supported by the two translators' minimization of the links drawn between the Armenian genocide and the Shoa. For the interpretation of both of these processes of extermination as singular and inexplicable events rules out their comparison. However, the analysis of the strategies of othering underlying these crimes, which is of centrality in Hilsenrath's text, contributes to the recognition that genocide can recur in any culture and at any time. It is this insight which is ignored to some extent in both translations.

2.4 'Expressing an Impossible Possibility of Being': Anne Duden

In his influential review of Duden's first publication *Übergang* (1982), the widely-known German poet Erich Fried, Anne Duden's mentor in Germany and abroad, describes his difficulty in writing about this book: 'Wie bespricht man in der eigenen Sprache, auch wenn man sonst glaubt, Eindrücke und Gedanken halbwegs formulieren zu können, etwas, was Sprachessenz ist, gebrannte Sprache, brennende Sprache?'⁶¹⁶ Fried's observation that, confronted with Duden's writing, he became aware of the limitations of his own language pre-empts and aptly captures the major problem of her reception in criticism and translation.⁶¹⁷ However, while Fried traces the feeling of his inarticulateness back to the confrontation with the essence of language in her writing, I will argue that the problems result from Duden's ongoing project of 'expressing an impossible possibility of being'.⁶¹⁸

As Franziska Frei Gerlach rightly points out, Anne Duden primarily thematizes the social mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. Duden's texts remember the victimization and killing of the other which is excluded by an imposed order.⁶¹⁹ For, as I have argued with reference to Waldenfels's theory of otherness, the excluded other is not annihilated but it undermines and disturbs the respective normality.⁶²⁰ Anne Duden's project could thus be read as a response to the claims of otherness. This interpretation coincides with Duden's own description of her writing. In her lectures on poetics, published as

⁶¹⁶ Erich Fried, 'Mein Gedächtnis ist mein Körper: Anne Dudens Erzählungen', *Die Zeit*, 13 May 1983.

⁶¹⁷ The difficulties of finding appropriate terms for the description of Duden's texts in literary criticism are also mentioned by Franziska Frei Gerlach in *Schrift und Geschlecht: Feministische Entwürfe und Lektüren von Marlen Haushofer, Ingeborg Bachmann und Anne Duden*, *Geschlechterdifferenz & Literatur*, 8 (Berlin: Schmidt, 1998), pp. 17 and 314.

⁶¹⁸ Anne Duden in Claudia Kramatschek, 'In den Faltungen der Sprache: Gespräch mit Anne Duden', *Neue deutsche Literatur*, 48, 2 (2000), 32–44 (p. 33). My translation. The original in context is: 'Übergang ist somit mein Versuch gewesen — und ich glaube, ich arbeite weiter daran — *eine eigentlich unmögliche Daseinsmöglichkeit auszudrücken*, und das geht für mich nur durch und in Sprache, über Schrift.' My italics.

⁶¹⁹ See Frei Gerlach, p. 314.

⁶²⁰ See section 1.1 'So viele Ordnungen, so viele Fremdheiten': Bernhard Waldenfels, pp. 12ff. in the first chapter of this thesis.

‘Zungengewahrksam: Erkundungen einer Schreibexistenz’, she describes writing as a process of translating the lost potentialities of the world into texts which at the same time express the bitterness, the outrage, the sadness and the anger of that loss. Suppressed in daily life, in the incessant enslavement of the need to work and the pressure to earn money, the potentialities of being are nevertheless stored in words and images.⁶²¹ In order to free the alternative possibilities of being from their captivity and thus to explore the border areas of our perceptions, Duden tries to overcome the daily limitations, which, as Suzanne Greuner rightly observed, demands the extension of our expressive possibilities into the impossible.⁶²² This linguistic self-reflection of Duden’s writing would have led Benjamin to describe her texts as translatable. Not only do they demand translation but their translation also requires the transgression of the limits of the translating language and thus reveals the otherness underlying the alleged linguistic self.⁶²³ However, the discussion of the English and French translations of Duden’s *Übergang* will show that the transgression of linguistic borderlines clashes with an exclusionary translation practice which is based on the understanding of language as a national property.⁶²⁴ Duden’s texts thus reveal the borderlines of the current practice of translation. This first and foremost becomes apparent in the exclusion of her writing from foreign book markets. Apart from the English and the French translation of *Übergang*, the *Index Translationum* only lists a Dutch translation of Duden’s second publication, *Das Judasschaf*.⁶²⁵ Furthermore, the comparative analyses of the publication strategies and the translations will show that the two versions reinscribe

⁶²¹ See Anne Duden, *Zungengewahrksam: Kleine Schriften zur Poetik und zur Kunst* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1999), p. 32.

⁶²² See Suzanne Greuner, *Schmerzton: Musik in der Schreibweise von Ingeborg Bachmann und Anne Duden* (Hamburg: Argument Verlag, 1990), p. 5.

⁶²³ See pp. 44ff. of the section 1.3.2 ‘Die Fremdheit der Sprachen’: Walter Benjamin in the first chapter of this thesis.

⁶²⁴ This reading draws on Derrida’s concept of translatability, see pp. 54f. in the section 1.3.3 ‘Les limites du concept courant de traduction’: Jacques Derrida in the first chapter of this thesis.

⁶²⁵ See Unesco, ed., *Index Translationum* <<http://www.unesco.org/culture/xtrans>> [accessed 15 November 2002].

Übergang with the linguistic borderlines Duden tries to transcend. However, the difficulty of translating Duden's writing does not only become apparent in the process of translation into a foreign language. The problems of her reception have been pre-empted in Germany. Duden had great difficulties in finding a publisher for *Übergang*, which was, however, to become her most popular publication. Several of her other texts, which were considered to be too difficult, were only ever published in literary journals and in anthologies.⁶²⁶ Furthermore, as mentioned above, the problem of describing Duden's text is either discussed or inherent in many of the reviews of Duden's *Übergang*. The following section will therefore focus on the diverse reactions of the German critics to the otherness underlying Duden's writing.

2.4.1 Reviewing the Ineffable: Anne Duden's *Übergang* in the German Press

Erich Fried's realization that Duden's texts reveal the limitations of his language also holds for the other reviews of her first publication *Übergang*. Although none of the other critics make their problems explicit, all of the reviews are marked by the difficulty of describing Duden's work. Confronted with the otherness of her writing, the critics either attempt to describe Duden's text in well-known terms and ideas or they exclude her from literary canons by categorizing her as insane. However, as the following discussion will show, the most obvious strategy used by the critics to evade the difficulties of having to describe Duden's writing is the exclusive concentration on the title story which is the most accessible of the short prose pieces in this collection.⁶²⁷ Focusing on a woman whose mouth has been smashed by a stone and is wired up to heal, 'Übergang' reveals the thoughts and feelings she learned to suppress in her daily life and which through the attack have also been inscribed into her body. Like in Maron's novel *Die*

⁶²⁶ See Anne-Kathrin Reulecke, 'Anne Duden', in *Kritisches Lexikon zur deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur*, ed. by Heinz-Ludwig Arnold (Munich: text + kritik, 1978–), 69th delivery, 1 August 2001, p. 3.

⁶²⁷ For an exception see Uwe Schweikert, 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes: "Übergang" — Prosa von Anne Duden', *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 20 November 1982, supplement 'Zeit und Bild', p. 4. He mentions all of the texts comprised in this work.

Überläuferin, the injury thus constitutes less a reason to panic than a trigger for the expression of a new way of thinking. However, while in Rosalind's case her body's defection initiates her mind's exploration of fantastic modes of thinking, the woman in 'Übergang' feels that her body has kept her from expressing her thoughts: 'Dabei konnte ich doch von Glück sagen, daß nun endlich auch mein Körper aufzuholen beginnen konnte, was bis dahin allein meinem Gehirnkopf vorbehalten war, nämlich dem grenzenlosen Chaos der Welt auf allen Schleichwegen und überallhin zu folgen.' Throughout her life her mouth, which is described as an alien organ, had served to swallow the general understanding of history and the official interpretation of the recent German past: 'Der Vakuummund wurde zum wichtigsten Organ. Er lernte nur eines: aufzunehmen und nach innen wegzuschlucken. Das Umgekehrte funktionierte nicht.' The violent destruction of this organ and its ensuing immobilization allows her to liberate herself from this oppression in order to invent a new language which responds to the claim of otherness: 'Das einwärts Gegessene wurde zur Grammatik einer schwerzungigen, nicht zu sich kommenden Sprache, einer Sprache im Traumzustand, jenseits der Sinn- und Formenschwelle.'⁶²⁸ This story lends itself for discussion because, unlike most of the other pieces, it has a plot. Furthermore, it is based on autobiographical experiences revealed in Sigrid Weigel's review. Duden had herself suffered such an attack, which caused her to leave Berlin for London where she wrote this book.

The review of the feminist literary scholar Sigrid Weigel, who published a well-received collection of essays on feminist literary criticism with Inge Stephan entitled *Die verborgene Frau* in the same year, provides us with a second strategy of dealing with Duden's otherness. She reads Duden's *Übergang* as a feminist quest for identity, which constituted the basic structure of women's writing at the time and thus also provided the

⁶²⁸ Anne Duden, *Übergang* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1982), pp. 67 and 70. On Maron's *Die Überläuferin* see section 2.2.3 *Realism vs Surrealism: The Defector vs La Transfuge*, pp. 143ff. of this thesis.

framework for the interpretation of their texts.⁶²⁹ According to Weigel, Duden's texts were preceded by the decision no longer to suffer her state but to expose herself to her feelings and fears. Reading her progress from the changes in her emotions, Weigel interprets the exposure to these states as a transitional stage on the woman's way to a new life of her own: 'Die Übergänge, von denen das Buch handelt, beschreiben ein Stück Wegs zu diesem eigenen Leben, den ersten, beschwerlichen und schmerzlichen Teil, den Zerfall der alten Persönlichkeit.'⁶³⁰ This reading coincides with Weigel's description of women's writing in her essay 'Der schielende Blick'. Arguing that women usually perceive themselves from a double perspective because they construct their identities on male models of female roles, she insists that the process of the search for an identity has to be initiated by a demystification of, and a liberation from, these roles.⁶³¹ This concept explains why Weigel stresses the difference of Duden's writing from other autobiographical texts on women's experiences, which, according to her, were often marked by stereotypical ideas of gender. She believes that the narrator of *Übergang*, who becomes the subject of her feelings, overcomes her status of a victim and thus provides writing women with a means to solve one of their basic problems. Nevertheless, Weigel's reading of *Übergang* is trapped in the structure of self-discovery which to some extent also characterizes Erich Fried's review. He contends that the book tells us the story of a woman's life and feelings. However, as mentioned above, in Fried's review this imposition of meaning is countered with the expression of genuine insecurity. For as Schirnding rightly points out: '[V]on einem die Substanz des Erlebnisses bildenden Ich kann in diesen Protokollen der Ichkernspaltung keine Rede

⁶²⁹ See Angelika Bammer, 'Feminism, *Frauenliteratur*, and Women's Writing of the 1970s and 1980s', in *A History of Women's Writing in Germany, Austria and Switzerland*, ed. by Jo Catling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 216–232 (p. 225).

⁶³⁰ Sigrid Weigel, 'Ohne Schutzhaut', *Courage*, 6 (1983), 46–47 (p. 47).

⁶³¹ See Sigrid Weigel, 'Der schielende Blick', in *Die verborgene Frau: Sechs Beiträge zu einer feministischen Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. by Inge Stephan and Sigrid Weigel, *Literatur im historischen Prozeß*, 6 (Berlin: Argument, 1983), pp. 83–138 (p. 98).

mehr sein.’⁶³² Furthermore, as my discussion of the translations will show, the states of transition, i.e. the ‘Übergänge’, do not necessarily have to be read as stages of transition on the way to a better life but can also be understood as the goal of Duden’s writing. Her new language, which the narrator describes as a dream language, a language which does not aim at the constitution of fixed meaning and thus of a self, undermines the Cartesian understanding of self and other. Duden thus attempts to imply the otherness of the self in her writing. As Waldenfels pointed out, this otherness first and foremost becomes apparent in the alien closeness of one’s own body: ‘Ich fasse mich nur, indem ich mir entgleite. Leiblichkeit besagt, daß ich nur *Als anderer ich selbst* bin.’⁶³³ This belief also underlies Duden’s writing which therefore departs from violent bodily experiences.

If the critics do not read Duden’s first publication in the framework of women’s writing, they tend to categorize her work as a pathological description of anxiety and madness.⁶³⁴ Thus Volker Hage believes that the prose pieces in *Übergang* are separate case studies of women, who lose their grip on reality in states of pain and madness. According to him, the woman in the title story shows the typical symptoms of anxiety.⁶³⁵ Using a similar terminology, Marita Heinz, who believes that Duden attempts to depict the fear of violence, describes the woman’s or women’s feelings as panic and apprehension.⁶³⁶ And Erich Fried states that he recommended the book to friends who suffered from mental illnesses in order to help them deal with their anxiety: ‘Das Buch kann einen die Angst, die man meist zu vermeiden sucht, so gut kennen lehren, daß man mit seiner Hilfe vielleicht lernen kann, sich wenigstens zuweilen von Angst — oder

⁶³² Albert von Schirnding, ‘Ungeheuer namens Mitleid, Angst und Liebe: Ein erstes Buch aus Notwendigkeit: *Übergang* von Anne Duden’, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2/3 July 1983.

⁶³³ Bernhard Waldenfels, *Sinnesschwellen: Studien zur Phänomenologie des Fremden 3* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1999), p. 51.

⁶³⁴ Also see Duden’s comment in *Zungengewahrnsam*, p. 15: ‘*Highly disturbed* würde man eine solche *lady in waiting* in England nennen, wo eine Statistik gerade ergeben hat, daß 87% aller Dichter zumindest einmal in ihrem Leben irgendeine Art von Geisteskrankheit gehabt haben, verglichen mit nur 35% aller Politiker.’ The description as ‘*lady in waiting*’ refers to her anxiously awaiting the states of transition.

⁶³⁵ See Volker Hage, ‘Der verklammerte Kopf: Anne Dudens Prosadebüt *Übergang*’, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 April 1983, p. 24.

⁶³⁶ See Marita Heinz, ‘Der stillgelegte Mund’, *Stern*, 24 March 1983, p. 68.

einem Teil der Angst — zu befreien'. Unlike Hage, Fried believes that the states of anxiety described in *Übergang* cannot simply be traced back to personal problems. According to him, the texts respond to the uncanny which undermines our feeling of security but is usually ignored in daily life. Albert von Schirnding and Heinz-Norbert Jocks, by contrast, interpret the narrator's anxiety in a socio-political context. Schirnding, who started reading the book on the assumption that *Übergang* would provide him with a psycho-pathological case study, concludes: 'Das Leiden, das Anne Duden schildert, hat nichts mit privater Pathologie zu tun, es steht für das schlechte Gedächtnis der andern, ist stellvertretende Passion.' Jocks, whose article was published in the left-wing paper *Deutsche Volkszeitung*, further elaborates on this collective loss of memory. He believes that Duden criticizes the forgetting and the suppression of fear and fascism. While in their idyllic and beautiful descriptions other writers simply ignore that the roots of pain, destruction and mass executions have not been erased, Duden's work creates a sense of unease, which questions the general suppression of memories: 'Was passiert, wenn man lebt, als hätte es den Faschismus nie gegeben?'⁶³⁷ To my mind, Duden reveals the intricate links between the personal and the socio-political repression of memories. Moreover, Duden does not limit her critique to her society. Her texts imply a different understanding of history.

The following analysis of the English and the French editions of Duden's *Übergang* will show that both publishers based their selling strategies on Erich Fried as an international guarantor of literary quality. However, despite the fact that both editions draw on the same review, the results differ markedly.

⁶³⁷ Heinz-Norbert Jocks, 'Leben mit der Angst: Anne Dudens Erzählband *Übergang*', *Deutsche Volkszeitung*, 4 August 1983, p. 14.

2.4.2 Female Autobiography vs Ambiguity: *Übergang* in the Light of its Publications

First published in 1982, Anne Duden's *Übergang* was translated into English by Della Couling and published in Britain and Australia by Pluto Press in 1985 under the title *Opening of the Mouth*. The French version *Traversée*, translated by Pierre Furlan and Dominique Jallamion and issued by Alinéa, followed in 1987. Considering the usual difficulty of selling contemporary German prose to British publishers, this order is rather surprising.⁶³⁸ Yet, as with Hilsenrath's first publications, the earlier English translation can be explained by the fact that Duden lives in London.⁶³⁹ Furthermore, through her prior work for the publisher Rotbuch in Berlin the author had established contacts with British publishers, who had similar interests, such as Pluto Press. Duden's English publisher even announced the translation of her second German publication, *Das Judasschaf*, on the cover of *Opening of the Mouth*. Unfortunately, they never realized this project probably due to financial problems, which entailed a concentration on non-fiction. There are also no further publications to be expected from Duden's French publisher: Alinéa went bankrupt in 1993.⁶⁴⁰

The strategies used for the publication of the three editions again reveal the differences in, and thus the difficulties of, positioning the text. Like Sigrid Weigel, the French publishers locate *Traversée* within the framework of autobiographical feminist literature, which in France, as in Germany, gained in significance with the women's movement in the 1970s and 1980s.⁶⁴¹ The cover illustration of *Traversée* shows the face of a woman, whose mouth is hidden behind indefinable greenery studded with red

⁶³⁸ See the section 2.1.1 'Self-Satisfied Rubbish'? German Literature in the Foreign Market Place, pp. 63ff. of this thesis.

⁶³⁹ See the introduction to the chapter 2.3 Genocide and the Fantastic: Edgar Hilsenrath, pp. 169ff. of this thesis.

⁶⁴⁰ For a description of Pluto Press see Turner, p. 71. For more information on Alinéa also see p. 75 in section 2.1.1.2 A Wide Field: The Central Significance of Translation in France, pp. 74ff. of this thesis.

⁶⁴¹ See Elizabeth Fallaize, 'Introduction: Women's Writing and the French Cultural Context in the 1970s and 1980s', in *French Women's Writing: Recent Fiction* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1993), pp. 1–29 (p. 23).

spots.⁶⁴² The blurb describes the book as a lively description of a woman's life and feelings:

Entre les paroles du début et celles du fin, Anne Duden retrace ce qui arrive à une femme et ce qui se passe en elle. Pour une grande part, ces choses appartiennent aussi à l'Allemagne, et ne peuvent en être dissociées. Mais, curieusement, elles correspondent aussi aux pensées, aux attentes et aux sentiments les plus profonds et les plus essentiels des lecteurs non allemands.⁶⁴³

Apart from the third sentence which, in order to attract French readers, adds that *Traversée* also expresses the thoughts, expectations and feelings of non-German readers, this description is a translation of an excerpt from Erich Fried's German review of *Übergang*: 'Was geschildert wird, ist, was einer Frau geschieht und was *in* ihr geschieht, körperlich und seelisch, vieles von diesem Geschehen untrennbar zu Deutschland gehörend.' Furthermore, Alinéa does not cite the German weekly *Die Zeit* as the source for the quotation, which would be the usual practice, but they expressly mention the author himself. However, while Fried openly admitted his difficulties in describing Duden's text, the French cover only implicitly reveals this problem. The second sentence elusively describes the experiences and feelings of the woman with the general term 'ces choses'. Similarly, the French adverb 'curieusement' qualifies the possibilities of identification for the French reader with this essentially German book as unexplainable. These loose characterizations of the content and the effect of *Übergang* in the French blurb show that the publishers were confronted with the limits of their own language when they had to describe Duden's text. Yet, they counter their insecurity with a monolithic interpretation of her prose by describing the first-person narrators in the eight texts and in the short passages which introduce and conclude the collection as one single woman. However, it is neither obvious that the eight voices in Duden's texts belong to one and the same person, nor is this creature always categorized as female. As

⁶⁴² See Figure 13, p. 247 of this thesis. Since the original is no longer available, I resorted to a photocopy.

⁶⁴³ Anne Duden, *Traversée*, trans. by Pierre Furlan and Dominique Jallamion (Aix-en-Provence: Alinéa, 1987). The French verb 'retracer', unlike its English derivation, also denotes the action of telling a story in a lively and interesting manner.

Susanne Baackmann pointed out: ‘Die Geschlechtsidentität des sprechenden Subjekts stellt sich erst im Lese- und Deutungsprozeß als weiblich her.’⁶⁴⁴ The French cover thus draws on a concept of identity which contributes to the exclusion of the other in the form of the female or the irrational and which for this reason is undermined in the texts of *Übergang*. Yet, Duden does not simply reverse the process of exclusion by replacing the male with a female subject. As will become apparent in the detailed analysis of the translations, Duden’s writing vacillates between subject and object position. Implying the violence of a self wresting itself from an other, which always precedes this self, Duden in her language tries to dissolve the binary opposition between self and other.⁶⁴⁵ Her texts have therefore often and rightly been read with reference to the theories of a specific ‘écriture féminine’ which were developed by Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva in France in the 1970s and 1980s and represent an alternative to the predominant concept of women’s writing as a quest for a female self.⁶⁴⁶

This is not to say that *Übergang* cannot be read as autobiographical fiction. On the contrary, Georgina Paul has shown the affinities of Duden’s writing to this genre, albeit not in the sense of a quest for identity.⁶⁴⁷ However, it is exactly this understanding of autobiographical fiction which underlies the illustration and the cover text of the French edition of *Übergang*. The choice of title further confirms this thesis. The word ‘traversée’ denotes the crossing of a river, a mountain or a country. Read as a metaphor

⁶⁴⁴ Susanne Baackmann, *Erklär mir die Liebe: Weibliche Schreibweisen von Liebe in der Gegenwartsliteratur* (Hamburg: Argument, 1995), p. 144.

⁶⁴⁵ This interpretation draws on a quotation from Merleau-Ponty’s *Keime der Vernunft* cited in Waldenfels’s chapter on the ‘Otherness of the Other Sex’ in *Grenzen der Normalisierung*, p. 180: “Männlichkeit impliziert Weiblichkeit” und umgekehrt: “Grundlegender Polymorphismus der bewirkt, daß ich den Anderen nicht vor den Augen des Ego konstituieren muß; er ist schon da, und das Ego ist ihm abgerungen.”

⁶⁴⁶ See Frei Gerlach, Baackmann, pp. 135–166 and, significantly, Sigrid Weigel, *Die Stimme der Medusa: Schreibweisen in der Gegenwartsliteratur von Frauen* (Dülmen-Hiddingsel: tende, 1987), pp. 123–129. In this reading Weigel counters her earlier review by arguing that Duden’s writing undermines and thus criticizes the constitution of a subject (see p. 124).

⁶⁴⁷ See Georgina Paul, “‘Life-writing’: Reading the Work of Anne Duden through Virginia Woolf’s “A Sketch of the Past””, in *Autobiography by Women in German*, ed. by Mererith Puw Davies and Beth Linklater (Oxford: Lang, 2000), pp. 291–305.

for autobiographical writing, the term implies that the protagonist has to go through a continuum of events and experiences in order to find his or her self. The German title *Übergang*, by contrast, stresses the state of transition.⁶⁴⁸ This reading of *Übergang* is confirmed in Duden's poetics. Duden does not describe *Übergang* as a necessary stage on a way to a new identity. On the contrary, she believes that each of the texts in this book implies a state of transition: 'Jeder Text, immer schon, ein glückender Übergang, [...]. Ein Zwischenzustand, Gebilde zwischen den Kriegen, zwischen Bewegung und Stillstand, Vergessen und Erinnern.'⁶⁴⁹ These states of transition, which take the protagonists into the border areas of perception, do not only undermine the strict borderlines between subject and object. They also affect the delimitations between inside and outside in 'Das Landhaus', between dream and reality in 'Herz und Mund' and between life and death in 'Die Kunst zu ertrinken': 'Nach allem blieb ihr nur noch eines: weder unterzugehen noch aufzutauchen. Weder zu schlafen noch zu wachen, weder zu leben noch zu sterben.'⁶⁵⁰ Significantly, it is exactly this space which Waldenfels describes as the place of otherness: 'Wenn es einen (Nicht-)Ort des Fremden gibt, so verbirgt er sich in dem Spalt, der Normales von Anomalem, Ordentliches von Außer-ordentlichem trennt.'⁶⁵¹ This denotation of the term 'Übergang', which 'traversée' does not contain, in French is expressed in the term 'passage' which is synonymous with 'traversée' apart from this one aspect. In the French translation of *Übergang*, the term 'passage' is used for the translation of the German title story.⁶⁵² Implying that this story constitutes the turning point in the woman's experiences, this decision completes the French reading of Duden's text within the framework of

⁶⁴⁸ See Elsbeth Dangel, 'Übergang und Ankunft: Positionen neuerer Frauenliteratur', *Jahrbuch für internationale Germanistik*, 22, 2 (1990), 80–94 (pp. 81–82).

⁶⁴⁹ Duden, *Zungengewahrsam*, p. 49.

⁶⁵⁰ See Duden, 'Das Landhaus', in: *Übergang*, pp. 11–43 (pp. 14 and 17), 'Herz und Mund', in *Übergang*, pp. 44–49 (pp. 44–45) and 'Die Kunst zu ertrinken', in *Übergang*, pp. 135–139 (p. 138). Also see Baackmann, p. 141.

⁶⁵¹ Waldenfels, *Grenzen der Normalisierung*, p. 13.

⁶⁵² See Duden, *Traversée*, p. 71.

teleological autobiographical fiction. Without a doubt, 'Übergang' deserves this exceptional status as a turning point in Duden's book. In the first three pieces the narrators are usually surprised by the states of transition. Furthermore, the narrator of the third text, 'Chemische Reaktion', expresses her happiness about her return to normality. Drawing on a stereotypical description, which caricatures daily life, she concludes: 'Ich begann mich auf einen Nachmittagskaffee zu freuen. Kuchen würde ich mir besorgen, und für den Abend hatte ich eine Verabredung mit einer Kinokarte.'⁶⁵³ In the pieces following the title story, by contrast, the narrators actively provoke and consciously expose themselves to these states of transition. Nevertheless, Duden from the start of the first text undermines the concept of a teleological search for an identity. All of her texts imply an 'opening of the mouth' for 'an impossible possibility of being'.

This last sentence uncovers one of the possible readings of *Übergang*'s English title. *Opening of the Mouth* creates a link between the violent destruction of the protagonist's mouth and the ensuing search for a new language in the title story. A significant moment in this development is the change of perspective from the third to the first person. Both Weigel and Adelson claim that this change takes place with the start of the operation and the reconstruction of the mouth.⁶⁵⁴ However, while the initial choice of words might support this interpretation, the first paragraph, which relates the events from a first-person perspective, shows that the reason for the change of perspective is linguistic rather than medical:

Mit einem unblutigen, präzisen Schnitt trennte der Arzt mich ab von dem, was war. Ein Überfall also. *Hinter dem zentralen Wort sackte alles weg.* Es setzte sich augenblicklich an die Stelle dieses Gemisches aus Sequenzen, Wirbeln und Stillständen, aus hohler Dunkelheit und diffuser Beleuchtung, angespannt ruhig verharrenden und abrupt agierenden Körperteilen, Gesichtsarealen und Mauerkanten, aus diesiger Feuchtigkeit und glänzendem Asphalt. [...] Ich konnte

⁶⁵³ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 58.

⁶⁵⁴ See Weigel, *Medusa*, p. 125 and Leslie Adelson, 'Anne Duden's *Übergang*: Racism and Feminist Aesthetics: A Provocation', in *Making Bodies, Making History: Feminism and German Identity* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), pp. 37–55 (p. 46).

nichts damit anfangen. Überfall. Das Loch, das Maul sollte mir gestopft werden, kaum, daß es aufgerissen worden war.⁶⁵⁵

The unbloody and precise cut does not refer to the beginning of the operation. The medical terminology is used to refer to an instance of linguistic concealment which implies the loss of alternative readings. By summarizing the narrator's hazy idea of the attack, which consists of a mixture of sequences and stills, in his dismissive statement 'So it was an attack, then', the doctor classifies the events and thus determines their meaning. However, this categorization does not coincide with the narrator's experiences. Feeling that her mouth, which has only just been opened, is about to be shut up again by somebody else's interpretation, she decides to shed light on the hidden and suppressed alternatives, albeit without initiating further exclusions. Focusing on this particular moment of transition, the English title thus also describes the basic idea of the book which consists in the search for a language responding to the claim of otherness.

However, it is not only the title which allows a diversity of possible readings. The whole British edition strives for ambiguity. Like the French blurb, the English text draws on Fried's review of *Übergang*, though on a different passage: 'Acht Geschichten, wenn es Geschichten sind und wenn es acht sind, nicht in Wirklichkeit nur eine, die immer gleiche, immer andere Geschichte eines Menschen, einer Frau, stillstehend, dann wieder springend, dann wieder gequält und qualvoll langsam, immer unerträglich spannend.' The second part of this sentence is used as a direct quotation on the English cover: '[The] never changing, ever-changing story of a person, a woman, motionless, then wildly active, then again tortured and agonisingly slow, always unbearingly gripping...'.⁶⁵⁶ Unlike the quote from Schirnding's article, which is ascribed to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Fried's statement is referenced with the name of the author as on the French edition. However, in contrast to the French cover text, the English blurb, which draws on the first part of the above quotation from Fried's review, explicitly

⁶⁵⁵ Duden, 'Übergang', p. 67. My italics.

⁶⁵⁶ Anne Duden, *Opening of the Mouth*, trans. by Della Couling (London, Leichhardt: Pluto Press, 1985).

includes the problem of describing Duden's work by opening up a diversity of interpretations for her text. While *Übergang* is first described as consisting of 'eight stories', the final passage implies a different reading: 'Perhaps these stories are really one.' Furthermore, the text is primarily described in questions rather than in prescriptive statements: 'How can a woman recover in this world? How does she emerge from a breakdown, or from madness?' The English cover illustration incorporates further dimensions of Duden's writing. The detail from the painting *Christ as a Man of Sorrows*, which was chosen by Anne Duden and can also be found on her later German publication *Steinschlag*, shows a bleeding wound in Christ's body. A frail hand, which bears the mark of a nail, carefully palpates the wounded area.⁶⁵⁷ Resembling an open mouth, the bleeding wound underlines the metaphor used in the English title. However, it is not only the mouth that receives injuries in Duden's *Übergang*. In the short text completing the collection, the narrator states that her whole body carries the wounds of memory: 'Mein Gedächtnis ist mein Körper. Mein Körper ist löchrig.'⁶⁵⁸ As will become apparent in the analysis of the translations, these injuries mark the history of exclusions and extermination which has become inscribed into the narrator's body.⁶⁵⁹ Finally, the illustration also alludes to one of the many intertexts which provide Duden's texts with their polyphonic quality. The bible, which stores multitudinous levels of hidden meanings and abounds with ambiguity, plays an important role in Duden's writing.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁷ See Figure 14 on the following page. 'Christ as a Man of Sorrows' is generally ascribed to the unknown Master of the St Bartholomew Altar, who was active in Cologne from 1470 to 1510. A complete reproduction and comments can be found in *Genie ohne Namen*, ed. by Rainer Budde and Roland Krischel (Cologne: Dumont, 2001), pp. 382–383. Also see Anne Duden, *Steinschlag* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1993).

⁶⁵⁸ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 141.

⁶⁵⁹ See section 2.4.3.2 Closing Doors to Excluded Possibilities: Ambiguity and Polyphony, pp. 262ff. of this chapter.

⁶⁶⁰ In her analysis of Duden's use of the Apocalypse Andrea Geier reveals some of these allusions, see 'Unterminierte Apokalypse: *Michel, sag ich* (Ulla Berkéwicz) und *Übergang* (Anne Duden)', in *Apokalypse: Der Anfang im Ende*, ed. by Maria Moog-Grünwald and Verena Olejniczak-Lobsien (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, forthcoming). I would like to thank Andrea Geier for providing me with the manuscript of her essay.



Figure 13: Cover of Anne Duden's *Traversée*

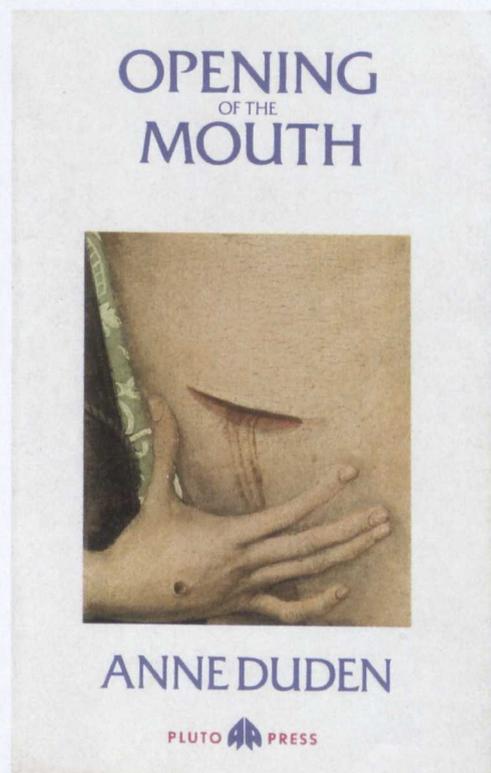
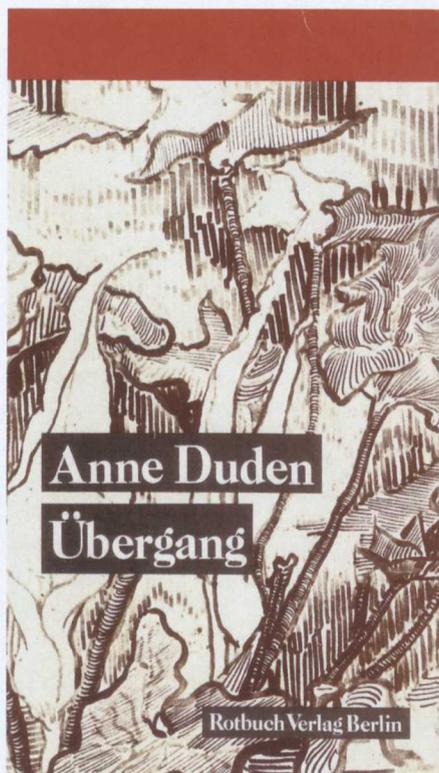


Figure 14: Covers of Anne Duden's *Übergang* and *Opening of the Mouth*

The drawing used for the German illustration, Vincent van Gogh's *Aronstab*, evokes the same intertext, albeit only in its German version (see Figure 14 on the previous page). The German word 'Aronstab' denotes a plant whose name is based on the Latin word 'aron' which in popular etymology was related to the High Priest Aaron in the book of Exodus. Supporting Moses in his liberation of the people of Israel from Egypt, Aaron carried a rod which turned into a serpent in front of the Pharaoh's eyes in order to convince him that Moses and Aaron really were acting on God's behalf.⁶⁶¹ The German title of this illustration thus encapsulates Anne Duden's project of getting to the root of language. The English title of Van Gogh's drawing, *Study of Arums*, would not have conveyed the same allusions.⁶⁶² Moreover, in Van Gogh's painting the trees seem to dissolve into the dark background.⁶⁶³ As in Duden's text the clear borderlines become blurred. The drawing used for the German edition thus underlines the German title *Übergang* but also evokes further dimensions of the text. The English edition imitates this strategy though it uses a different illustration and a different title. Unfortunately, Duden's translators only rarely show the kind of innovation which finds expression in the English cover design.

2.4.3 The Borderlines of Translation Practice: *Übergang* in English and French

Like the German reviewer and the French publisher of Duden's *Übergang*, her translators tend to reinscribe her text with the borderlines she tries to transcend. However, rather than excluding it as insane or including her work in a given interpretative framework, such as autobiographical women's writing, the translations force Duden's project of 'expressing an impossible possibility of being' into the

⁶⁶¹ See Exodus 7. The book of Exodus also plays an important role in the text 'Herz und Mund', which will be discussed later.

⁶⁶² See *Vincent van Gogh's Drawings*, ed. by Johannes van der Volk, Ronald Pickvance and E.B.F. Pey (Otterlo: Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller; Milan: Arnoldo Mandadori Arte; Rome: De Luna Edizioni D'Arte, 1990), p. 289. Also cp. Schweikert, 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes'.

⁶⁶³ See the interpretation of the drawing in Matthias Arnold, *Vincent van Gogh: Werk und Wirkung* (Munich: Kindler, 1995), p. 299.

normative straitjackets of their own languages. As the first section of the analysis will show, this strategy, on the one hand, entails a diminution of Duden's use of defamiliarization devices, such as parody, exaggeration and repetition, which serve to reveal the foreignness of language. In a theoretical text, which is reminiscent of Benjamin's essay on language, Duden traces this foreignness back to the fall of man and the ensuing expulsion from paradise:

[Es geht] nicht gewaltfrei zu in der Sprache, und jedenfalls scheint unserem üblichen Satzbau, unserem gemeinen Satz, ein Engelsturz vorausgegangen zu sein und eine Paradiesaustreibung dazu. Es ist ein Urteil ergangen. Und der gemeine Satz betont das oft genug, um sich zu behaupten. Ihm sitzt der Schreck noch in den Gliedern, die Angst davor für vogelfrei erklärt zu werden. Und die Ahnung, das heimlich gewordene Wissen, daß jeder *Be-* eine *Enthauptung* folgen kann oder bereits vorausgegangen ist, bleibt ihm als Nachgeburt verschwistert, behält er als Schatten neben, vor, hinter sich.⁶⁶⁴

Since the end of linguistic identity and the spread of linguistic confusion each single sentence is undermined by otherness. However, in the daily use of language this otherness is countered with a cruel imposition of meanings. In order to retrace the cruelty of linguistic othering without reiterating the continuous process of exclusion, Duden, just like Derrida, resorts to the conscious use of ambiguity and polyphony.⁶⁶⁵ As the second section of the analysis will show, these devices pose particular problems for Duden's translators. It is their omission that reveals the borderlines of the current understanding of translation.

⁶⁶⁴ Anne Duden, 'Vom Versprechen des Schreibens und vom Schreiben des Versprechens', in *Lobreden auf den poetischen Satz*, ed. by Robert Gernhardt, Peter Waterhouse and Anne Duden (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1998), pp. 37–45 (p. 41). On Benjamin's understanding of the foreignness of languages and his linguistic interpretation of the fall of man see section 1.3.2 'Die Fremdheit der Sprachen': Walter Benjamin, pp. 41ff. of this thesis.

⁶⁶⁵ See p. 49 of section 1.3.3 'Les limites du concept courant de traduction': Jacques Derrida, pp. 47ff. of the first chapter of this thesis. For an interpretation of Duden's writing which draws on Jacques Derrida's *Grammatologie* see the chapter 'Mundtot: Die leibhaftige Prosa Anne Dudens' in Hubert Winkels, *Einschnitte: Zur Literatur der 80er Jahre* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1988), pp. 42–52.

2.4.3.1 *Minimizing the Caricature of Normality: Exaggeration and Repetition in Translation*

The language of normality and order finds its most extreme expression in the assumed objectivity of academic writing which forms the basis of the events and is satirized in 'Das Landhaus'. In this text, which is reminiscent of Guy de Maupassant's 'Auberge', the narrator has agreed to housesit for a couple of academics who are away on a research trip. During her stay in their allegedly idyllic cottage in the countryside, which takes her out of her daily routine, the narrator's senses are exposed to the war-like conditions underlying the exclusionary mechanisms of this normality. Her sudden perceptiveness for these conditions can, on the one hand, be traced back to the location: the cottage seems to lie on the edge of perceptibility. On her tragicomic shopping trip to the nearby village, the narrator finds out that neither the baker nor the post officer seem to know of the cottage or their inhabitants.⁶⁶⁶ Furthermore, the house disturbs the narrator's perception. From inside the dark cottage the brightness outside blinds her and prevents her from perceiving contours. From the outside the low windows and the obscurity make it impossible to get a glimpse of the rooms inside the cottage. The feelings of disintegrating brightness and of impenetrable darkness which the narrator experiences when she leaves or enters the house anticipate the later disintegration of her self under the influence of the sense perceptions flooding her body. Describing the rooms as 'insisting on the diffuse darkness', the narrator feels this obscurity is maintained on purpose: 'Sie [die Räume, WS] beharrten, gleich zu welcher Tageszeit und trotz unterschiedlicher Licht- und Wetterverhältnisse, auf dem diffusen Dunkel.' However, this only holds for the German version. The English and the French translations omit the personification of the house in this sentence: '[T]hey remained in a diffuse darkness' and 'les pièces demeuraient dans cette obscurité diffuse'. Significantly, it is the place of

⁶⁶⁶ See Duden, *Übergang*, pp. 21–22.

supposed academic enlightenment that lies in complete darkness. This obscurity is further increased by the trees, 'die fast schwarzen Lebensbäume', standing in front of the house. Apart from denoting a cypress, the 'tree of life' is another name for the biblical tree of knowledge. However, these trees do not shed light on life and being but their darkness aids and abets in the process of hiding excluded alternatives which takes place in the academic household. Nevertheless, the trees' symbolic value is ambiguous for it is the darkness that enables the narrator to gain access to the alternative possibilities of being. Furthermore, the trees anticipate the change in the narrator's perception because they transgress the borderlines between inside and outside: '[Die Räume, WS] spiegelten, von einem bestimmten Punkt aus gesehen, zu allem Überfluß auch noch die fast schwarzen Lebensbäume und andere Büsche wider, als wüchsen diese sehr wohl und selbstverständlich drinnen wie draußen.' Deciding for the biological description of the trees as 'cypresses' and 'thuyas', which, as the following discussion of the academic language will show, is also of major importance in this text, both translators ignore their symbolic meaning. However, the polyvalence of this symbol gives us a first idea of Duden's linguistic response to the claim of otherness.⁶⁶⁷

On the other hand the narrator's new perceptiveness is triggered by the fact that the imposed normal system is taken to extremes in the academic household. The academics are the masters of clear-cut categorizations. From the multitudinous card-index boxes, containing their research observations, to the extensive collections of records and books, everything in their house is arranged in alphabetical and correct order.⁶⁶⁸ As a consequence the female academic takes the narrator on a seemingly endless tour of the house in order to explain how to operate the freezer, the stereo equipment, the lights, the locks, the washing mashine and the toilet. This exaggerated orderliness also leaves its

⁶⁶⁷ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 14, *Opening*, p. 14 and *Traversée*, pp. 18–19. For the ambiguity of Duden's use of light and darkness in 'Das Landhaus' see also Adelson, p. 45.

⁶⁶⁸ See Duden, *Übergang*, pp. 13 and 16.

mark on the language the narrator uses for the description of the two academics. They are never named but consistently referred to as ‘Wissenschaftler’, i.e. as researchers or academics. To distinguish between the two, the narrator uses a biological feature, their sex: ‘der männliche und der weibliche Wissenschaftler’.⁶⁶⁹ While the normal politically correct description of a ‘female academic’ in German would be ‘die Wissenschaftlerin’, their estranging description in the text implies a linguistic and biological classification of the couple. In English and French, the ‘Wissenschaftler’, which in German comprises researchers in the sciences as well as in the arts, are rendered as ‘scientists’ and ‘scientifiques’ respectively. By restricting the text’s sarcastic criticism of the academic striving for an alleged objectivity to the sciences, the translators, who probably hold a degree in Modern Languages, neutralize the condemnation of their own métier. Furthermore, the French translation omits the exaggerated use of the classificatory adjectives male and female in the narrator’s summary of her impression of the house and its inhabitants:

Das ließ mich vermuten, daß *der männliche und der weibliche Wissenschaftler* möglicherweise nicht mal miteinander redeten, und daß alle Energie, Freude, Lust und ähnliches, aber auch alle Traurig- und Schwierigkeit in die schon beschriebenen Karteikästen ging, um von dort gut geordnet und alphabetisiert, abschließender Verarbeitung zugeführt zu werden.⁶⁷⁰

While the English translator decides to translate the classificatory description of the German couple as ‘the male and female scientists’, the French translators simply render the estranging German as ‘les deux scientifiques’. Hence they ignore the fact that the academic obsession with categorizations and order, which implies the loss of an emotional life, is reflected in the narrator’s description of the couple. The English translation of this passage, by contrast, uses a syntactical device to stress and at the same time ridicule their orderliness. In this version the narrator suspects ‘that all the energy,

⁶⁶⁹ See Duden, *Übergang*, pp. 11, 12 and 15.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16. My italics.

joy, desire, and so on, but also all the sadness and difficulties, went into the card-index boxes already mentioned, in order, well classified and arranged alphabetically, to be then subjected to final processing'. By dividing the conjunction 'in order to', the English translator allows an ambiguous reading of the phrase 'in order'. The English sentence structure thus reveals and at the same time deconstructs and satirizes the academic imposition of order. Furthermore, the English version maintains the length of the German sentence which hints towards the narrator's detection of the excluded possibilities in the language of otherness. The French translators, by contrast, divide her thought into two sentences separated by a full stop: 'toute leur énergie, leur joie, leur désir et autres affects de ce genre — ainsi d'ailleurs que leur tristesse et leurs tracas — allaient dans les fichiers déjà mentionnés. Une fois là, après avoir été bien ordonnés et rangés alphabétiquement, ils étaient acheminés jusqu'à leur traitement final'.⁶⁷¹ This division of the winding German sentences, which play a significant role in the exploration of the alternative possibilities of being, constitutes a typical strategy in the French translation.

As mentioned above, the academic orderliness implies a loss of emotions. The feelings and experiences of the two academics are stored in their card-index boxes. Before the narrator in the above scene consciously formulates it, she has already intuitively grasped this observation. When she and her partner first perceive the boxes from outside the cottage, she comments: 'Sie [die Karteikästen, WS] ließen gerade so viel Platz, schien uns, daß ein nicht allzu hoch aufgeschossener Wissenschaftler sehr gebückt vor einem Holzgeviert sitzen und weitere Karteikästen *befingern* konnte.' The German verb 'befingern' describes the act of touching something without showing any embarrassment. Containing sexual allusions, this term thus hints towards the significance of these boxes revealed in the above quotation. On the one hand, they stand for the

⁶⁷¹ Duden, *Opening*, p. 15 and *Traversée*, p. 20.

academics' daily obligations, their enslavement to work, and thus undermine the perceptiveness for alternative possibilities of being, such as an emotional life. Furthermore, they represent the necessary tool for the academic categorization of the world. On the other hand, they also serve as a means of vicarious satisfaction. Unfortunately neither the English translation, 'deal with further card-index boxes', nor the French rendering, 'feuilleter d'autres fichier', include this sexual connotation.⁶⁷²

The third piece of the collection, entitled 'Chemische Reaktion', contains a similarly revealing image. At the beginning of this text, the narrator anxiously anticipates that she will be inundated by a flood of sense perceptions: 'Ich hatte den Wahnsinn den ganzen Tag lang kommen sehen.'⁶⁷³ As she is invited to a restaurant by her partner, she tries to fight the deluge. However, the atmosphere in the restaurant has a devastating impact on her which, amongst other possible reasons, she traces back to the man who plays background music for the diners:

Ich weiß nicht, was die verheerendsten Auswirkungen auf mich hatte. Der Mann, der die elektrische Orgel mit seinen Händen *besprang*, dabei das Gesicht verzerrte wie im Krampf und mit spastisch verdrehtem Hals Beatlesfetzen und anderes aus sich herauspreßte und mir zu allem Überfluß auch noch wiederholt in die Augen zu sehen versuchte.⁶⁷⁴

As the following section will show, music can serve to open doors towards alternative possibilities of being. However, this musician merely does his job which again serves as a kind of vicarious satisfaction. The conduct of the organ player towards the narrator mirrors stereotypical ideas of gender roles which are revealed and ridiculed in her exaggerated description of his behaviour. Singing love songs by the Beatles, he attempts to catch the narrator's eye and court her. At the same time he abuses her and his organ to satisfy his suppressed animalistic lust implied in the German verb 'bespringen' which is normally used to describe a stallion covering a mare. In this case both translations

⁶⁷² Duden, *Übergang*, p. 12, *Opening*, p. 12 and *Traversée*, p. 16. My italics.

⁶⁷³ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 50.

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.* My italics.

include the sexual connotations of the passage. The French translators use the same image as Duden: 'était-ce l'homme qui *couvrait* de ses deux mains l'orgue électrique'. The English translation, by contrast, excludes the animalistic feature of the German description and thus minimizes the criticism of the stereotypical role models: 'The man who was *groping* the electronic organ with his hands'.⁶⁷⁵

Duden links the belief in an order which excludes alternative possibilities to the constitution of a clearly defined self. In German this link is already implied in words such as 'selbstverständlich' and 'selbstbewußt'. While Duden's use of these terms deconstructs their implications, the translators only rarely follow her example. In the first three texts the narrators in vain try to keep in control of the situation. They fight the anxiety and the flood of perceptions inundating their senses by expressly holding on to and maintaining a sort of order. In the text 'Das Landhaus' the narrator is thrown into a state of panic one evening when she imagines that a burglar might be standing outside in the dark watching her and waiting for the right moment to enter the house. In order to reduce her panic, she resorts to the conscious performance of a daily ritual: she prepares herself some tea.

Selbstbewußt ging ich in die Küche und kochte mir erstmal einen Tee. Alle Bewegungen und Griffe gelangen mir völlig normal, routiniert und sicher. Ich wußte genau, wie der Wasserkessel zu bedienen war, wo der Tee und die Tassen standen, geschäftig öffnete ich den Kühlschrank und nahm die Milch heraus, während das Wasser im Kessel schon zu sieden begann.⁶⁷⁶

The narrator believes that this routinely performed action will make the alleged burglar believe that she is the regular inhabitant of the cottage. She also tries to prevent herself from looking out of the window for she assumes that a regular inhabitant would not do something as absurd as that: 'Am besten gar nicht mehr raussehen. Kein normalerweise hier wohnender Mensch würde nachts aus dem Fenster sehen, nur um nichts zu

⁶⁷⁵ Duden, *Traversée*, p. 57 and *Opening*, p. 46. My italics. For a similar reduction of the animalistic features of human sexuality in an English translation, see the section 2.2.2.3 The Influence of Gender Discourses: Josefa's Partner, pp. 135ff. in the chapter on the translation of Monika Maron's works.

⁶⁷⁶ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 28. My italics.

sehen.⁶⁷⁷ For the same reason she sits down at the desk and starts to read a book. Excluding the outside world and her anxieties, all of these ordinary actions also serve for her to gain control of and reconstruct her disturbed self. Thus she buries herself in her work in order to shut out the invading possibilities of being and to regain the feeling of a self. This goal is already implied in the first word of this paragraph. Denoting self-confidence, the term 'selbstbewußt' in this passage also implies the narrator's conscious awareness of her self and her actions. However, this self-consciousness condemns her attempt to impose some normality on her life to failure. Furthermore, it reduces her behaviour to a caricature of normality. However, this only holds for the German version. The French translation simply decides to render the denotative meaning of the German word: 'Avec assurance je suis allée à la cuisine où j'ai commencé par me préparer un thé.' Yet, the English version not only ignores the ambiguity of the German term 'selbstbewußt', it also changes the word order: 'I marched boldly into the kitchen and first of all made myself some tea.'⁶⁷⁸ Omitting the ambiguity and starting the sentence with the personal pronoun, the translator turns the German sentence, which is undermined by otherness, into a straightforward English sentence.

Significantly, the narrator believes that the academics do not seem to be in need of this process of self-construction. They constitute the embodiment of self-assurance. However, the grotesque situation, in which the narrator becomes aware of this fact, again mocks academic life. Sitting on the toilet, she realizes that even this private room is not shielded off from the outside which leads her to conclude: 'Das mußte Selbstsicherheit sein, echte wissenschaftliche Autonomie. Ohne Seitenblick arbeiten, leben und auf die Toilette gehen.' Like the term 'selbstbewußt', the term 'Selbstsicherheit' includes the self which constitutes itself on excluded otherness. While they again ignore this allusion to the self, the French translators reveal the link between

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁸ Duden, *Traversée*, p. 32 and *Opening*, p. 26.

the narrator's self-conscious self-confidence and the academics' self-assurance: 'Ce devait être une question d'assurance personnelle, de véritable autonomie scientifique.' The English translation, by contrast, includes the allusion to the term self: 'That had to be self-assurance; genuine scientific autonomy.'⁶⁷⁹ However, it excludes the link to the earlier passage.

The terror and anxiety, which at first only overwhelmed the narrator of 'Das Landhaus' during the night, also starts to invade her days. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the situation gets worse, the narrator's belief in daily rituals remains unbroken: 'Ich machte *selbstverständlich* so weiter wie bisher, als hatte den Kleinigkeiten, den alltäglichen Abläufen, den Winzighandlungen eine stoische Unbeirrbarkeit an, auf der sie desto mehr beharrten, je terroristischer und zerstörerischer alles Übrige wurde.' Describing a natural behaviour, a behaviour that does not need further explanation because it conforms to the norms, the word 'selbstverständlich' contains the linguistic link between the acceptance of an order and the ensuing understanding of the self as a subject within this order. The two translations again ignore this link. However, even though the translators decide for the dictionary meaning of the term 'selbstverständlich', they come up with words which uncover different aspects of the foundations of conformist behaviour. Thus the English translation questions the understanding of naturalness: 'I naturally went on as before, as though a stoic steadfastness were attached to the little details, the day by day course of events, the trifling actions, on which they stuck the harder, the more terrorizing and destructive everything else became.' The French translation, by contrast, reveals the dependence of the order on '[t]he ineluctable modality of the visible', as Stephen calls it in the third chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. 'Evidemment j'ai continué comme avant, comme si quelque chose de stoïquement

⁶⁷⁹ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 29, *Traversée*, p. 33 and *Opening*, p. 27.

inébranlable collait aux petites choses, aux processus quotidiens, aux minus gestes.’⁶⁸⁰

The word ‘évidemment’, which derives from Latin *videre* (to see), shows that the alleged natural order is based on the visible and thus provable world which again excludes other sense perceptions.

The narrator in the text ‘Chemische Reaktion’ displays similar strategies of holding on to her daily life in order to keep in control of the situation as the narrator in ‘Das Landhaus’. After a flood of perceptions inundated her senses in the restaurant, she tries to reconstitute her self and return to her normal life the following day:

Ich begab mich an die Arbeit des Tages, was mir bewies, daß ich entschlossen war weiterzumachen. Als ich zur Bushaltestelle ging, war ich noch durchaus zielbewußt. In meinem Gehirn waren einigermaßen klar und folgerichtig die verschiedenen Dinge, die ich zu besorgen hatte, hintereinander aufgereiht.⁶⁸¹

As in ‘Das Landhaus’, the narrator in ‘Chemische Reaktion’ is afraid of losing hold of the normality of her daily life. In order to fight this feeling, she assembles a logically ordered list of duties which is supposed to help her find a daily routine and thus regain control of her self. When she leaves the house, she is full of energy and has a clearly defined goal on her mind. However, as in ‘Das Landhaus’, her strategy of resistance fails. A minor event which is not accounted for in her plans, such as a late bus, knocks her sideways: ‘Der erste kleinere Teil des Vertrauens in die *Selbstverständlichkeit* des Tages und der Dinge entglitt mir, als nach einer Dreiviertelstunde der Bus noch immer nicht gekommen war.’ In this case both translations omit the link drawn between the two narrators in ‘Das Landhaus’ and ‘Chemische Reaktion’ with the term ‘selbstverständlich’. The French translators decide to render ‘Selbstverständlichkeit’ as normality: ‘La *normalité* du quotidien et des choses commença à m’échapper dans ses manifestations les plus infirmes lorsqu’il s’avéra qu’au bout de trois quarts d’heure le bus n’était toujours pas arrivé.’ The English translator employs the term ‘matter-of-

⁶⁸⁰ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 34, *Opening*, p. 31 and *Traversée*, p. 38. My italics. And James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 14th edn (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 45.

⁶⁸¹ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 54. My italics.

factness': 'First, the smaller part of my trust in the *matter-of-factness* of the day and of things slipped from me when after three quarters of an hour the bus had still not come.'⁶⁸²

In the text 'Übergang', the translators use yet another term to render the German word 'selbstverständlich'. The first examination of the narrator's head in hospital implies a severe critique of the doctor's and the nurses' scientific and impersonal behaviour. While identifying the missing teeth and the injuries to the rest of the mouth and dictating them to his assistant, the doctor never once looks his patient into her eyes. Furthermore, the nurse who helps her undress assembles a comprehensive list before she carefully puts the clothes into a plastic bag.⁶⁸³ However, while these scenes shed a critical light on the matter-of-factness of the hospital's personnel, this systematic behaviour provides an anchor when the narrator is inundated by feelings of panic and anxiety during one of the nights after the operation. The nurse's matter-of-factness immediately makes the narrator feel part of the order again: 'Ja, was ist denn. Die Frage kam so ruhig und *selbstverständlich* und aus einer so normal sich weiterbewegenden Welt, daß ich schon allein dadurch fast den Anschluß wiedergefunden hätte.' Again the translators do not maintain the link between the texts. While the French translators this time decide for 'naturellement', the English translator chooses the word 'automatically'.⁶⁸⁴

The narrator in 'Das Landhaus' experiences a similar effect when she watches television. The news makes her forget her frightening surroundings and automatically evoke a feeling of normality and belonging.

Das strahlende Lächeln der Hausfrauen, ihre Anschmiegsamkeit mit frisch gewaschenem Haar, dann der unaufgeklärte Mord an einem kleinen Mädchen irgendwo im Norden des Landes, ein wieder einmal aufgetauchtes Leck in einem

⁶⁸² Ibid. and Duden, *Traversée*, p. 61 as well as *Opening*, p. 49. My italics.

⁶⁸³ Duden's critique of the doctor, who treats the narrator like pure matter, has also been observed by Andrea Geier.

⁶⁸⁴ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 80, *Traversée*, p. 90. and *Opening*, p. 73. My italics.

Atomreaktor, die bevorstehende Stationierung neomodischer amerikanischer Raketen auf einheimischen Boden, das alles faszinierte mich gleichermaßen und gab mir nun *augenblicklich* das Gefühl zurück, dazuzugehören, hier und jetzt.⁶⁸⁵

In the English translation, this spontaneous feeling is turned into a transitory emotion: 'I found it equally fascinating and *for the moment* it gave me back the feeling that I belonged, here and now.' This translation aptly describes the situation for the narrator loses her feeling of belonging as soon as the news is over. However, the English text does not convey the narrator's experience of the automatic reconstitution of her self at the sight of these horrifying images. This interpretation is captured in the French translation of the passage: '[C]es choses m'ont également fasciné et *momentanément* redonné le sentiment de faire partie de tout cela, de l'ici et maintenant.'⁶⁸⁶ Significantly, the narrator's feelings of belonging are evoked by an order that includes the murder of small girls, the dangers of nuclear power and the continuous preparation for the complete destruction of the world in a nuclear war. This war-like normality which makes the narrator feel at home is interspersed with stereotypical images of beautiful and subservient women from the advertisements. As soon as she has given up on her vain attempts to hold on to, and constitute her self in, this absurd order, the narrator of 'Das Landhaus' experiences the consequences of the war-like conditions on her own body. Yet in this scene the war-like normality still evokes a feeling of joy: 'Ein intensives Gefühl von Lebensfreude blitzte in mir auf.' However, the juxtaposition of this happiness with the verb 'blitzen' hints at the violence on which this feeling is based. Both translators imitate this construction: 'An intense feeling of joie de vivre shot through me. '; 'Une intense sensation de joie de vivre a alors jailli revanche.'⁶⁸⁷

Just like academic writing, the language used in the presentation of the news is characterized by an extreme matter-of-factness which aims for an alleged objectivity. Duden uses this characteristic style for the description of the attack at the beginning of

⁶⁸⁵ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 24.

⁶⁸⁶ Duden, *Opening*, p. 22 and *Traversée*, p. 28. My italics.

⁶⁸⁷ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 24, *Opening*, p. 22 and *Traversée*, p. 28.

the title story: 'In der Nacht von Samstag auf Sonntag wurde in einer Diskothek in West-Berlin ein 25-jähriger Mann von einer Gruppe schwarzer GIs zusammengeschlagen.' Reminiscent of a report for the police, the ensuing detailed chronological description of the events, which stands in stark contrast to the hazy mixture of sequences and stills evoked by the narrator in hospital, maintains this impersonal and unsentimental style. The report contains neither explanations nor accusations. Furthermore, the people involved in the attack are not named but reduced to their roles in categorizations such as 'die Eingeschlossenen' and 'die Schlagenden': 'Die Eingeschlossenen redeten auf die Schlagenden ein, versuchten, sie abzuwehren; jemand schrie: Hört auf, warum macht ihr das, was hat er euch getan. Aber aus der Mauer hörte keiner und reagierte keiner.' In the French translation, this descriptive and unsentimental style is charged with emotions: 'Les encerclés ont voulu parler à ceux qui frappaient, ils ont essayer de les repousser *et* l'un deux a même crié: Arrêtez, pourquoi faites-vous ça, qu'est-ce qu'il vous a fait. *Mais personne dans le mur n'a entendu. Pas un n'a réagi.*' By linking the sentences with the conjunction 'and' and by including the modal particle 'even', the French translators change the impersonal description into a personalized and emotionalized narrative. This is further enhanced by the change of the second sentence. Instead of the parallel construction in German, which describes an observation, the French translation implies a reproach. The English translation, by contrast, renders the impersonal style used in the German text: 'Those enclosed reasoned with the attackers, tried to fend them off; someone shouted: stop it, why are you doing that, what has he done to you. But no one from the wall heard and no one reacted.'⁶⁸⁸

Altogether Duden's critique of an allegedly objective and classificatory language poses more problems for Pierre Furlan and Dominique Jallamion than for Della Couling. While Furlan and Jallamion diminish Duden's critique by neglecting to maintain the

⁶⁸⁸ Duden, *Übergang*, pp. 61–62, *Opening*, p. 58 and *Traversée*, p. 72. My italics. For the later description of the events by the narrator see the quotation on p. 244f. of this chapter.

alleged objectivity in the report on the attack and by omitting the exaggerated classifications of the academic couple, Couling even increases it by including her own critique of the English language of order. However, both translations betray difficulties in rendering Duden's transgressions of the linguistic borderlines, such as her deconstruction of the order inherent in the word 'selbstverständlich' or the polyvalence of symbols such as the 'Lebensbäume'. I will therefore further explore both of these features in the following section.

2.4.3.2 Closing Doors to Excluded Possibilities: Ambiguity and Polyphony in Translation

As described above, Duden's response to the claim of otherness incited two opposing reactions in the German press: the critics either attempted to include it in a pre-existing order or they expressly excluded it from that order by categorizing it as mad. The ensuing academic analysis of *Übergang* resulted in a third response which provoked a continuous debate: Leslie Adelson accused Duden of racism. She charges the author with precisely the crime which Duden tries to reveal in her works. I will therefore use Adelson's argument as a starting point for my description of the ambiguity of Duden's writing. Adelson bases her accusation on the lack of detail provided on the black GIs who attack the narrator and her friends in the title story of *Übergang*. The attackers are neither named nor are they described nor are their motivations ever analysed. 'They are characterized only by ruthless unexplained violence, which takes the form of "a moveable but impenetrable wall."' Hence, Adelson argues, the black GIs are victims of othering in Duden's story. They are abused as the embodiment of evil which in Western thought has traditionally been linked with blackness. To her mind, this thesis is further supported by the fact that the stone, which destroys the narrator's mouth, is thrown by one of these unnamed black GIs. She thus concludes: 'What we have here, one might contend, is the affirmation of the racist stereotype that black men pose an inherent

danger to white people and to white women in particular.’⁶⁸⁹ In the course of her study Adelson demonstrates that Duden’s texts not only use but also deconstruct this stereotypical Western link between blackness and evil. Thus the violent attack opens the narrator’s mouth for the expression of alternative possibilities of being. This ambiguity is aptly captured in the French translation which describes the destruction of the narrator’s mouth as a ‘coup de chance’: ‘Et pourtant c’était un coup de chance, je pouvais le dire, qu’enfin mon anatomie à son tour soit fêlée.’ Meaning a stroke of luck, the French ‘coup de chance’ includes the word ‘coup’ which denotes a strike. Neither the German text nor the English translation use a similarly revealing description.⁶⁹⁰ Nevertheless, despite her recognition of the ambiguity of Duden’s use of blackness, Adelson upholds her criticism. She believes that Duden should have provided the social and historical context for her stereotypical construction of the black GIs. For while ‘Übergang’, according to Adelson, includes the background for its critical reconsideration of the Holocaust, it does not give the reader any idea of the GIs’ racial awareness, which primarily shaped by their experiences in the United States, was confronted with the remainder of National Socialist racist propaganda in Germany.⁶⁹¹ Adelson is certainly right when she states that ‘Übergang’ objectifies and impersonalizes the black GIs and that the story does not provide any social and historical background on their motivations. However, as shown above, the impersonal style at the beginning of the title story does not only affect the black GIs. This passage also objectifies the people who are attacked by them. The whole description of the attack thus constitutes an example of bureaucratic impersonalization and objectification. Furthermore, Adelson’s

⁶⁸⁹ Adelson, p. 39.

⁶⁹⁰ Duden, *Traversée*, pp. 77–78. For the German version see Duden, *Übergang*, p. 67 and the quotation on p. 236 of this chapter. The English version is: ‘Yet in fact I could consider it fortunate that now, finally, my anatomy too had cracked.’ (Duden, *Opening*, p. 63).

⁶⁹¹ See Adelson, pp. 53–54. Adelson’s attack was refuted by Weigel (see *Medusa*, pp. 128–129) and by Andrea Allerkamp in *Die innere Kolonisierung: Bilder und Darstellungen des/der Anderen in deutschsprachigen, französischen und afrikanischen Literaturen des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1991), pp. 35–44, whereas Geier defended Adelson.

claim that the text provides the necessary background on the Holocaust neglects the fact that, as the following discussion will prove, this background does not consist of hard facts but of allusions which the reader has to relate to the historical background. Yet, unlike the situation of the GIs, the background on the Holocaust is well-known to Adelson and thus easily constructed from these allusions. Her interpretation of the black GIs, by contrast, shows that she is unaware of the ambivalence of their position. She overlooks the fact that they defend a system which in turn implies their own exclusion. This ambivalence was further increased in the defeated occupation zones, where the GIs met with diverse reactions. On the one hand, their superior position inspired awe as well as envy and hatred for just as they liberated the Germans from the National Socialist regime, they also imposed a new system. On the other hand, in contrast to their white colleagues, they were deemed to be an inferior race and were confronted with racist stereotypes.⁶⁹²

It is this ambiguity of the black GIs' position, their vacillation between oppressor and oppressed, that is of major importance for the narrator's opening of the mouth. For after the attack she becomes aware of the ambiguity of her own position as victim of and perpetrator in a process of continuous extermination:

Ich war dreiunddreißig Jahre alt geworden, als ich mir endlich eingestehen konnte, was ich lange schon geschluckt hatte, nämlich, daß es um Ausrottung ging. Die Spezies, zu der ich gehörte, kam zuallerletzt dran; es war zugleich die Spezies der Verantwortlichen. Die meisten unter ihnen wußten nicht einmal das. Auch ich war von kleinauf immer vom Gegenteil ausgegangen. Das Gegenteil war Gesetz, unterbrochen durch Schicksalsschläge wie Tod und Weltkrieg.⁶⁹³

The extermination can be read as a reference to the Holocaust. In this reading the species of those who are responsible denotes all the people who aided and abetted in this mass

⁶⁹² This ambiguity has been aptly captured by Wolfgang Koeppen in the characters of Odysseus Cotton and Washington Price in his novel *Tauben im Gras*, first published in 1951. See Wolfgang Koeppen, *Tauben im Gras, Das Treibhaus, Der Tod in Rom: Drei Romane* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1994), pp. 30, 33, 41, 64, 198, 201 and 209.

⁶⁹³ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 68. In the original text this critical reconsideration of the narrator's past, like six other passages which imply similar re-assessments, is set off from the rest of the text in italics.

murder and in its later suppression in West Germany. Born in the last years of the Third Reich, the narrator grew up at a time when the horrible truth of a final solution and death camps was repressed. Furthermore, after having left East Germany with her parents, she is exposed to an entertainment industry which, as Rachel Palfreyman rightly points out, 'served to mask or conceal the immediate past'.⁶⁹⁴ In her reminiscences of these times the narrator juxtaposes the flood of idyllic Hollywood and German *Heimat* films with the singular experience of watching Alain Resnais's *Nuit et brouillard* (1955/56), a documentary on the death camps in Auschwitz: 'Dann sah ich das Wegbaggern der Leichenberge in "Nacht und Nebel" und wußte, wenn das einmal passiert ist, kann das jederzeit wieder passieren, eigentlich allen, je nachdem.'⁶⁹⁵ This documentary combines historical film material with contemporary shots which show how nature slowly covers the remainders of the camp and thus imply the process of forgetting. At the same time the music and the comments warn the spectator of the consequences of this process: 'Nous qui feignons de croire que tout cela est d'un seul temps et d'un seul pays, et qui ne pensons pas à regarder autour de nous et qui n'entendons pas qu'on crie sans fin.'⁶⁹⁶ Initially the narrator in Duden's story might be described as a victim of the social conditions which permitted the repression of the Holocaust in West Germany. However, by swallowing the obvious lies without protesting, the narrator also becomes a perpetrator in this crime: 'Ich schluckte ganze Schlachten weg, Leichenberge von Besiegten. Für einen Moment von Frieden, der nie eintrat.'⁶⁹⁷ She still subscribes to the general belief that murder, war and mass extermination constitute the exception in the historical process rather than the norm. However, having come to realize that history is a continuous catastrophe,⁶⁹⁸ the narrator with hindsight describes her experience of the

⁶⁹⁴ Rachel Palfreyman, *Edgar Reitz's Heimat: Histories, Traditions, Fictions*, British and Irish Studies in German Language and Literature, 21 (Oxford: Lang, 2000), p. 24.

⁶⁹⁵ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 69.

⁶⁹⁶ Cited in Peter W. Jansen, *Alain Resnais* (Munich: Hanser, 1990), p. 81. The text for the film was written by Jean Cayrol, a survivor of Mauthausen. The music was composed by Hanns Eisler.

⁶⁹⁷ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 77.

⁶⁹⁸ Also cp. Benjamin's description of history in 'Geschichte', p. 697.

suppression of the past in idyllic films and love comedies in West Germany as more alarming than her prior witnessing of a Russian soldier's execution in the East: 'Erster wurde es, als wir in den Westen kamen.'⁶⁹⁹ For while the repression of the past in the West veiled the fact that extermination and mass murder constitute elements of daily life, the execution of a traitor openly demonstrated the violence inherent in the exclusionary system. The process of extermination described in the above quotation thus does not exclusively refer to the Holocaust but it implies the exclusionary violence inherent in any order. In this respect the understanding of the Holocaust underlying Duden's text is comparable to Hilsenrath's in *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*. Of course, their positions have evolved from different historical experiences. Hilsenrath's works are inscribed with the traumatic experiences of a survivor whereas Duden's incorporate the traumatic experiences of a descendant of the perpetrators.⁷⁰⁰ Nevertheless, both contend that genocide represents an extreme manifestation of the sanctioned daily cruelty.⁷⁰¹ Or to cite Jean Cayrol's words from Resnais's film again: 'On crie sans fin.' Like Hilsenrath's, Duden's thematization of genocide met with criticism. Both were accused of degrading the singular events to a symbol for othering and extermination.⁷⁰² As a descendant of the German perpetrators, Duden was further attacked for trying to equate herself with the victims of the Holocaust and thus to liberate herself from the guilt of her people.⁷⁰³ However, as should have become apparent in the discussion, despite the fact that the narrator in 'Übergang' blurs the boundaries between victims and perpetrators, she clearly criticizes herself and her

⁶⁹⁹ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 69.

⁷⁰⁰ For the autobiographical aspects of Duden's writing see Alexander von Bormann's article "'Besetzt war sie, durch und durch": Traumatisierung im Werk von Anne Duden', in *Deutsche Nachkriegsliteratur und der Holocaust*, ed. by Stephan Braese and others, pp. 245–267 (pp. 252–253).

⁷⁰¹ For Hilsenrath see pp. 211ff. of the section 2.3.2.1.3 The Male Bone: The Translational Elision of the Grotesque, pp. 205ff. of the chapter on the translation of Hilsenrath's *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*.

⁷⁰² For the attack against Hilsenrath see the review by Kurzke and my discussion on p. 179 of this thesis. The attack on Duden is implied in Bormann's refutation of this reproach.

⁷⁰³ See Geier.

society for the suppression of the catastrophic course of history. She acquits neither herself nor the Germans. On the contrary, she extends the charges even further.

The French translation of the narrator's realization that she had for a long time ignored the catastrophic course of history reads the passage with reference to the recent German past: 'J'avais tout juste trente-trois ans, lorsque je pus enfin m'avouer quelque chose que j'avais longtemps *refoulé*, qu'il s'agissait d'extermination.' As should have become apparent, in the original text the term 'schlucken', which means to accept a truth without questioning, is not only used in this figurative sense. By swallowing numerous wars and mountains of corpses, the narrator retraces the concrete cruelty implied in this term. Using the Freudian term 'refouler', which describes the act of repression, the French translation stresses the suppression of the recent past in West German society. This reduction of the text to a criticism of the German 'inability to mourn' conveniently evades any condemnation of the French self. For the wider historical and political implications of the continuous process of extermination do not only concern German but also French and English society. Furthermore, the French translation omits the reference to the narrator's mouth which is stressed in the English translation: 'I was just thirty-three years old when I was finally able to admit to myself what I had long been *swallowing*, namely that it was a question of extermination.'⁷⁰⁴ As explained earlier, the mouth, which can be read as a symbol for language, plays a significant part in the process of hiding and unveiling the alternative possibilities of being. Duden thus draws a link between the imposition of a language and the imposition of a system. The destruction of her mouth liberates the woman in 'Übergang' from aiding and abetting in the ongoing process of linguistic imposition and hiding. In her polyphonic and ambiguous writing she reveals the cruelty inherent in language without imposing a new order.

⁷⁰⁴ Duden, *Traversée*, p. 79 and *Opening*, p. 63. My italics. For the German original see the quotation on p. 264 of this chapter.

Duden's striving for an ambiguity which gets to the very roots of language can be found in every one of the texts in *Übergang*. In the short introductory passage, the narrator describes her attempt to escape from other people who reduce her to an object and abuse her for the constitution of their selves. She experiences this process of being othered as a series of concrete acts of violence. The other people rip out her eyes and attach them to their own bodies in order to force the narrator to look at them. She thus serves as the mirror of their selves, their personalities and their deeds. When subsequently the others show their gratitude, the narrator compares their alleged affection to the tortures of hell: 'Dann überschütten sie mich mit ihrer Dankbarkeit, die sich als Zuneigung ausgibt. Aber tatsächlich ist beides *Pech und Schwefel*, was nun aus ihnen herausläuft und für das sie — ich verstehe wohl — nur unbedingt ein Drainage-System brauchen.'⁷⁰⁵ The phrase 'Pech und Schwefel' evokes the idiom 'wie Pech und Schwefel zusammenhalten' which describes the indissoluble solidarity between two people. However, Duden's specific use of the phrase traces the idiom back to its etymological roots, namely the popular belief that hell consisted of burning pitch and sulphur.⁷⁰⁶ Alluding to Sartre's famous dictum 'l'enfer, c'est les Autres', the ambiguity of the term 'Pech und Schwefel' thus retraces the people's solidarity and friendship to their etymological roots in the torments of hell.⁷⁰⁷ Furthermore, this phrase contains the idea underlying the whole passage. The relationship of the other people to the narrator is revealed to be an agonizing dependency. They fight their fears of death by wresting an idea of self from the narrator who in the process is objectified. However, neither the English nor the French translation imitate the ambiguity of the German term 'Pech und Schwefel'. The French translation simply renders the denotations of the two words

⁷⁰⁵ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 7. My italics.

⁷⁰⁶ See Regina Hessky and Stefan Ettinger, *Deutsche Redewendungen: Ein Wörter- und Übungsbuch für Fortgeschrittene* (Tübingen: Narr, 1997), p. 85.

⁷⁰⁷ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Huis Clos suivi de Les Mouches* (Paris: Gallimar, 1990), p. 93. *Huis clos* was premiered in 1944.

which in French do not evoke any further levels of meaning: ‘Puis ils déversent sur moi leur reconnaissance comme si c’était de l’affection. Mais c’est bien *de la poix et du soufre* qui coulent d’eux maintenant, et, pour ça — je le comprends bien — ils n’ont que trop besoin d’un système de drainage.’ The English translation, by contrast, includes the allusion to the tortures of hell: ‘Then they overwhelm me with their thankfulness, which poses as affection. But in fact it is both *fire and brimstone*, which now runs out of them and for which they — I do understand — just urgently need a drainage system.’⁷⁰⁸ However, rather than a forgotten expression which evokes an idiom, the English translator uses a conventional idiom. Furthermore, the English allusion to the tortures of hell does not include the evocation of the idiom denoting indissoluble solidarity. The English translation thus does not uncover the cruelty hidden in the linguistic description of this solidarity. However, it is exactly this concrete cruelty inscribed in and imposed through language which Duden tries to retrace.

The concrete bodily experience of this cruelty of linguistic othering finds its most revealing and at the same time most disturbing expression in the ‘Entmündigung’ which is central to the text ‘Herz und Mund’. The German term ‘Entmündigung’, which literally means ‘demouthing’, describes the legal incapacitation of a subject. However, in ‘Herz und Mund’ Duden combines the abstract meaning with the concrete cruelty inherent in this term which is ignored in its daily usage. She thus reveals the marks which the exclusionary system has left on language. Like ‘Übergang’, ‘Herz und Mund’ describes the destruction of the narrator’s mouth, albeit not with a stone but with an iron bar. Representing a phallic symbol, the iron bar relates the attack to sexual discrimination. This interpretation is supported by the phrases used for the description of the attack such as ‘rape of the head’ and ‘penetration and violent ejaculation’. Moreover the bar, which is painted red and white, is linked to the fairy-tale character Snow White

⁷⁰⁸ Duden, *Traversée*, p. 11 and *Opening*, p. 7. My italics.

whose description 'Weiß wie Schnee. Rot wie Blut', which is ritually repeated in the fairy tale, is cited in the text. The weapon, which destroys the narrator's mouth, thus combines the violent exclusion of the woman with a female role model which permits her inclusion in the system: the mythical image of the beautiful, humble and silent girl who obediently awaits her prince. Although the rusty colours imply that this role model has lost its attractiveness, the rusty pieces of the bar form an indissoluble mixture with the content of the narrator's head. The narrator thus experiences the exclusion of women as others, which is combined with an incorporation of female role models, as a concrete attack on her mouth. The destruction of this particular organ implies the abstract consequences of the German term 'Entmündigung'. The woman is condemned to perform the role of a sleeping speechless beauty. Her inalienable human right of speech and thus her right to have a say in her daily life are alienated by a system which excludes the expression of her thoughts and feelings and thus reduces her to an object, or in her own words, to a lump in a wheelchair: 'Ich konnte nicht sagen, wie ich litt. *Man hatte mich — ich war entmündigt. Ich litt also nicht. Ich, das war der Klumpen im Rollstuhl. Zusammengepappt und gehalten von Bandagen und dünnen Stoffhüllen.*'⁷⁰⁹

The ambiguity of the crucial term 'Entmündigung' constitutes a major problem for the translation of this text. Both the French translators and their English counterpart decide for the normal abstract use of the German term. However, by limiting the abstract meaning of 'Entmündigung' to the 'right of say' and the 'droit de parole' respectively, both of which are legal terms describing the right to have a say in political or judicial decisions, the translators create a figurative link to the destruction of the narrator's mouth. Nevertheless, these translations do not uncover the cruelty which has become inscribed into this particular term.⁷¹⁰ Furthermore, in the German original the linguistic violence against the excluded other not only finds expression on the paradigmatic but

⁷⁰⁹ See Duden, *Übergang*, pp. 46 and 47.

⁷¹⁰ That '[t]he English translation lacks the double-entendre' was also observed by Adelson (p. 143).

also on the syntagmatic level. The grammatical subject of the second part of this sentence ('ich war entmündigt') constitutes the object of the first part ('man hatte mich'). This estranging German sentence thus mirrors the linguistic othering of the narrator in her grammatical objectification. The English translator not only changes the order of this sentence, she also clarifies the link between the two clauses: 'I was without my right of say — it had been taken away.' Hence the sentence gains in linguistic transparency in the English translation, while it loses the cruelty implied in the grammatical structure. The French translation, by contrast, reveals the specific elements of cruelty inherent in French grammar: 'On m'avait — j'étais privée du droit de parole.'⁷¹¹ While the German text does not explicitly clarify whether the narrator is a man or a woman, the second 'e' in 'privée' categorizes the subject of this French sentence as female. As a consequence of the objectification, inherent in the first part of this sentence (on m'avait), the narrator loses her female sex. This French sentence thus expressly demonstrates the exclusion of the narrator's female otherness in the process of her violent inclusion in the system. At the same time it reveals a particular feature of linguistic violence inscribed into the French marking of the female gender. Unfortunately, the French translation of this sentence seems to be an unconscious stroke of genius rather than a strategic decision for the revelation of the grammatical cruelty inherent in French. For in an earlier passage the grammatical object is marked as female: 'L'infirmier *m'a poussée* dans l'ascenseur.'⁷¹² Of course, French grammar prescribes that the gender of a preceding direct object has to be marked. Nevertheless, if the translators had aimed to expose the cruelty inherent in their grammar and thus to unveil the otherness of the French self rather than the foreignness of the German other, they could have decided for an altogether different version of this sentence.

⁷¹¹ Duden, *Opening*, p. 43 and *Traversée*, p. 53.

⁷¹² Duden, *Traversée*, p. 52. My italics. The German version is: 'Der Pfleger schob mich in den Fahrstuhl.' (Duden, *Übergang*, p. 46).

The ambiguity of the text 'Herz und Mund' is not limited to the central image, the whole text is based on an aporia. Despite the abundance of bitterness which has accumulated in her body, the violently silenced object claims that her mouth, unlike in Jesus' famous saying to which this text alludes, does not open. Deeds and life, as they are implied in the title of Bach's cantata 'Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben' go unmentioned.⁷¹³ Yet, this object also represents the speaking subject of this text. Written from a position of uncategorizable otherness, the text thus undermines the system which excludes its subject. As in 'Übergang', the description of the destruction of the mouth expresses an opening of the mouth for an excluded and thus 'impossible possibility of being'. Furthermore, the destruction of the narrator's mouth is not a singular event. The description of the narrator's gaping wound, which is no longer categorizable as a mouth but is made up of a mixture of formless matter, such as sludge, saliva and phlegm, incorporates the continuity of this process of exclusion and extermination.

Blick auf die sich vom Gesicht wegbewegende Hand, die nicht über weichfeste Formen und Flächen hinweggeglitten ist, sondern in etwas nur noch weich Matschiges gegriffen hat. Warm Schleimiges und Glitschiges, auch Mengen von Speichel, der irgendwo dickflüssig herauskam. Und in ein Kreuz- und Quergerage innerhalb dieser Masse aus Vergänglichem und Kadaver: Zähne, Knochen, Splitter. *Pfahl/ Pfählchen im Fleisch*. Abbildung der Wasserleiche Rosa Luxemburgs. Ein kleiner verrotteter Zahnstumpf-Zaun, Tor zum verwilderten Kadavergarten. Der Schädel eine einzige wulstige Weichteilmasse.⁷¹⁴

Alluding to a photograph of Rosa Luxemburg's drowned body, the text evokes the ophelian images of women who drown themselves in order to evade the system. However, Luxemburg, who coined the famous statement 'Freiheit ist immer die Freiheit des Andersdenkenden', was killed for her ideas which undermined the order. The 'Pfahl im Fleisch', by contrast, alludes to Martin Luther's translation of the second epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians: 'Und auf daß ich mich nicht der hohen

⁷¹³ For the allusion to the bible see Matthew 12, 34: 'For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' The intertextual link to the Bach cantata was revealed by Uwe Schweikert, 'Nachwort', in *Übergang*, Anne Duden (Rotbuch: Hamburg, 1996), pp. 132–138 (p. 133).

⁷¹⁴ Duden, *Übergang*, pp. 45–46. My italics.

Offenbarungen überhebe, ist mir gegeben ein *Pfahl ins Fleisch*, nämlich des Satans Engel, der mich mit Fäusten schlage, auf daß ich mich nicht überhebe.⁷¹⁵ However, neither the English ‘Stakes/sticks in my flesh’ nor the French ‘Bâton/bâtonnet dans ma chair’ includes this allusion.⁷¹⁶ Since the French culture lacks a canonical translation of the bible, such as the Luther bible in German or the King James bible in English, the evocation of the biblical context constitutes a major problem for the French translators. In French the biblical narratives are not stored and automatically evoked in ritualized words and phrases.⁷¹⁷ The English translation, by contrast, would have had the possibility of alluding to a similarly ritualized version as the German text. However, just like the French translators, Couling focuses on the diminutive form which would have been more difficult to render if she had used the King James version of this phrase: ‘thorn in the flesh’. Both translations thus lose the polyvalent relationship of the text ‘Herz und Mund’ to its biblical intertext. In his second epistle to the Corinthians, Paul attempts to convince his followers, who had strayed from his path under the influence of other preachers, to return to his community. Apparently Paul was accused of not being a true apostle because he was not appointed by Jesus.⁷¹⁸ He tries to refute this accusation by boasting about the repressions he has to suffer for his preaching. He has received stripes, was beaten with rods and was once stoned.⁷¹⁹ Yet he is aware that this boasting does not comply with Christian laws and that he might be punished for his arrogance. The ‘thorn in the flesh’ has in general been interpreted to refer to an illness.⁷²⁰ However, Paul believes this illness to be ‘the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.’⁷²¹ Implying the punishments inherent in Christian beliefs, the thorn in the flesh anticipates the Church’s repressions against those who do not subject

⁷¹⁵ 2. Korinther 12. 7. My italics.

⁷¹⁶ Duden, *Opening*, p. 41 and *Traversée*, p. 51.

⁷¹⁷ See Henri Meschonnic, *Poétique du traduire* (Lagrasse: Verdier, 1999), pp. 33–34.

⁷¹⁸ See Hermann Schelkle, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1964), pp 33–34.

⁷¹⁹ See II Corinthians 11. 23–33.

⁷²⁰ See Schelkle, p. 206.

⁷²¹ II Corinthians 12. 7.

themselves to its laws. At a time when the apostles were still acting independently and suffered persecution, 'the thorn in the flesh' thus pre-empted the consequences of the institutionalization of Christianity which was initiated by Paul. In the context of 'Herz und Mund', the 'Pfahl im Fleisch', like the allusion to Rosa Luxemburg's drowned body, retraces the history of exclusion and extermination. It represents a trace of the eternal war between the dominant order and the otherness which is excluded from, and at the same time evades and thus threatens, this order. The diminutive form 'Pfählehen' originates from the association of the 'Pfahl' with the narrator's teeth which are described as a fence preventing the narrator's bitterness from overflowing and thus from being expressed. The association of the 'Pfählehen' with the teeth thus demonstrates that the narrator's silence does not only result from external pressure but is also self-imposed. Furthermore, the 'Pfahl' is reminiscent of the iron bar which has destroyed the narrator's mouth. In this reading it evokes a medieval form of execution ('pfählen') in which the victim was pierced with a stake.⁷²² It is this image which is evoked again in 'Übergang'. In this text the narrator has to insert a sort of stick into her mouth for an x-ray. Describing this examination as one of her most horrible experiences in her life, she compares it to an execution with a stake: 'Der Stab durchragte mich wie ein *Pfahl*, der mir von hinten in die Kehle gepflanzt worden war.' The French translator ignores the obvious link between these two passages: 'La tige qui émergeait me traversait comme un *pieu* que l'on aurait planté par derrière dans ma gorge.' The English translator, by contrast, imitates Duden's repetition: 'The rod rose through me like a *stake* implanted in my throat from behind.'⁷²³ Furthermore, the term stake, like the German 'Pfahl', evokes

⁷²² This interpretation of the 'Pfahl im Fleisch' is of major importance in Duden's descriptions of several paintings which show Saint George killing the dragon with a stake, see Anne Duden, *Der wunde Punkt im Alphabet* (Hamburg: Rotbuch, 1995). Frei Gerlach uses this particular paradigm of exclusion as a starting point for her interpretation of Duden's works (see pp. 316–344).

⁷²³ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 83, *Traversée*, p. 93 and *Opening*, p. 76. My italics.

a medieval form of execution, even though a different one, and thus stresses the continuity of the process of exclusion and extermination.

The text 'Der Auftrag die Liebe' begins with one of these eternal executions: 'Es ist alles in Ordnung. Ich habe ihr soeben den Kopf abgeschlagen. Sie blutete kaum, was soll ich als nächstes erledigen?'⁷²⁴ This utterance, which lacks a speaker, can be assigned to various characters in the text. In her interpretation Baackmann decides for the most obvious candidate: she ascribes the words to Saint Michael who has just completed his task of killing the snake.⁷²⁵ Unlike the biblical reference in 'Herz und Mund', this intertext is not evoked with a quotation from the Book of Revelation.⁷²⁶ The narrator in 'Der Auftrag die Liebe' provides an extensive description of Piero della Francesca's painting of the eponymous saint.⁷²⁷ Standing on the snake's body, Saint Michael holds his weapon in the one hand while in the other he clutches the head of his recently killed victim. His victorious posture and his arrogant stare express the simplicity of the task and his obvious superiority. It is this attitude which is rendered in the English translation of the above quotation from 'Der Auftrag die Liebe': 'Everything's all right. I've just chopped off its head. It scarcely bled. What shall I do next?' However, as the French translation shows, the English translation omits the ambiguity of these sentences: 'Tout est en ordre. Je viens de lui trancher la tête. Il a à peine seigné. Qu'est-ce que je dois exécuter maintenant?'⁷²⁸ The German phrase 'Es ist alles in Ordnung' does not only express relief and reassurance, it also implies the reconstitution of the normal order, which was threatened by this uncategorizable monster. Furthermore, apart from describing the execution of a job, the term 'erledigen' also refers to the execution of a person. The ambiguity of this term thus reveals the continuous process of extermination

⁷²⁴ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 117.

⁷²⁵ See Baackmann, p. 152.

⁷²⁶ See Revelation 12.

⁷²⁷ The painting is reproduced in the book, see Duden, *Übergang*, p. 123.

⁷²⁸ Duden, *Opening*, p. 107 and *Traversée*, p. 128.

to be a daily and sanctioned duty. Yet, this utterance even implies further levels of meaning because it does not necessarily need to be ascribed to the saint. The extensive description of Francesca's painting is set in a frame narrative which deals with the narrator's love to a man who ignores her feelings. In this text love is personified: she speaks, cries and sits on the narrator's neck: 'Die Liebe hatte sich inzwischen hochgehangelt und saß mir nun im Nacken.' Both translations render this description literally: 'Meanwhile the love had clambered up and was now crouching at the back of my neck' and 'Entre-temps l'amour m'avait excaladée et il était maintenant assis sur ma nuque.'⁷²⁹ However, the concrete image also has an abstract meaning: love is hanging around the narrator's neck, it is the narrator's pain in the neck. She feels responsible for it but she also would like to get rid of this burden in order to return to a normal life in a system which excludes her love: 'Heimlich dachte ich, wie gut ich ohne sie auskommen würde, welche Entfaltungsmöglichkeiten ich ohne sie hätte. Ich würde mich wieder in den unterschiedlichsten Bereichen nützlich machen können, z.B. in einem Büro.'⁷³⁰ The narrator thus attempts to free herself from a burden which prevents her final inclusion in the order. Her love needs to be excluded for her to be able to join the rest. The 'Ich' in 'Ich habe ihr soeben den Kopf abgeschlagen' could thus also be read to refer to the female narrator. For the text is not structured in clearly delimited binary oppositions of male and female, as has been implied by Baackmann who believes that it contrasts the narrator and love (which in German is a female noun) with her lover and Saint Michael.⁷³¹ Duden also draws a link between the narrator and Saint Michael who are introduced with parallel sentences: 'Ich wartete, ich harrete aus.', 'Er wartete, er harrete aus.'⁷³² So the continuous exclusion and extermination of love from the order is a joint project and both parties suffer the consequences. Referring to the inscription on the

⁷²⁹ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 120, *Opening*, p. 110 and *Traversée*, p. 132.

⁷³⁰ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 122.

⁷³¹ See Baackmann, p. 152.

⁷³² Duden, *Übergang*, pp. 117 and 124.

waistband of Saint Michael's suit of armour (POTENTIA), which covers his genitals, the text implies that the Saint by killing love has also castrated himself: 'Er hat seinen Auftrag soeben ausgeführt. POTENTIA oder der Liebe den Kopf abgetrennt. Standort ist der tote Leib. SIE BEFINDEN SICH HIER.'⁷³³ By killing love, the saint cuts off his nose to spite his face. Yet, he makes up the loss of emotion with an act of vicarious satisfaction which is again ignored in both translations: 'In blutroten Schnürstiefeletten mit Perlenbesatz auf den Leib treten, den Leib *besteigen* und dann fest auf seiner weichen, nachgiebigen, feuchten Masse stehen.' The word 'besteigen' does not only mean that he climbs his victim, as the English translator rendered it.⁷³⁴ Like the word 'bespringen', 'besteigen' also refers to the act of a male mounting a female animal for the purpose of copulation. So as in the other texts, Duden blurs the clear dividing line between the female victim and the male perpetrator by uncovering their joint repetition of an eternal exclusion.

Apart from revealing the cruelty of language and daily life, the ambiguity and polyphony of Duden's writing thus also implies a liberation from basic structures of thinking such as the simplistic construction of binary oppositions and the teleological concept of history. This liberating effect could be described in the words the narrator of 'Das Landhaus' uses to grasp the sensation inspired by Thomas Thallis's polyphonic motet in forty parts, *Spem in Alium*:

Erst öffnete sie einem eine Kammer, dann einen Raum, der zu einem weiteren größeren Raum führte, und so immer weiter, bis man halb träumend, halb wach wahrnahm, daß man mittlerweile durch alle Räume und Mauern und Dächer hindurchgeschleust war und fortgetragen von einer einzigen großen einsammelnden und aufhebenden Bewegung, einer Luftwege, die einen schließlich mitnahm ins Offene und einen dort ruhig und gleichmäßig beatmete.⁷³⁵

⁷³³ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 127. Emphasis in the original text.

⁷³⁴ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 125 and *Opening*, p. 114. My italics. The French translation is: 'Poser un pieds sur le corps, monter sur le corps avec des brodequins lacés.' (*Traversée*, p. 135)

⁷³⁵ Duden, *Übergang*, p. 23.

Just like Tallis's motet, Duden's texts open doors towards alternative readings of words and images without imposing a new order. In the above passage the narrator not only describes the effect of this particular piece of music; the uplifting sensation also leaves its mark on the floating structure of the sentence. While the English translation imitates this structure, the French translation breaks the sentence up into two sections separated by a full stop.⁷³⁶ As should have become apparent, this is only one of the many instances where the translators close rather than open doors to alternative possibilities of being.

2.4.4 Questioning Dominant Concepts of Translation

Anne Duden retraces the continuous process of the violent inclusion and exclusion of otherness. In order to reveal this process she uses several devices. She caricatures the daily acceptance of the functioning order, which sanctions this process of extermination, by satirizing the extreme manifestation of order in academic research and the news as well as in the deconstruction of daily rituals. Furthermore, she retraces the marks this process has left on language. The concrete cruelty implied in linguistic othering is inscribed into the narrators' bodies. However, Duden not only reveals the wounds left on women, whose feelings are excluded by the order, she also uncovers the historical dimension of this process by linking the women's experiences to texts and paintings which store the history of exclusions. Duden's texts thus question the general understanding of history as progress by replacing it with the Benjaminian understanding of history as an ongoing catastrophe.

My account of the diverse reactions to Duden's *Übergang* has uncovered another instance in this continuous process of violent inclusions and exclusions. Refusing to accept Duden's criticism of their society, some critics characterize her texts as pathological case studies of anxiety and thus vehemently exclude them from the functioning order. Others limit her criticism to one particular aspect. Both Weigel's

⁷³⁶ See Duden, *Opening*, p. 21–22 and *Traversée*, p. 27.

German review and the French edition include Duden's text within the framework of feminist writing as a search for identity which implies the exclusion of the wider political and historical dimensions of her writing. This exclusionary reading also leads to the omission of Duden's caricature of daily life in the French translation. Furthermore, the French translators to some extent delimit Duden's criticism to the West German society. However, the most obvious exclusion affects the ambiguity and the polyphony of Duden's writing. Apart from rare exceptions, which do not seem to hint at conscious strategies of translation, the translators tend to fix the ambiguous openness of Duden's texts to one single meaning. Her transgressions of rational and logical thinking clash with a practice of translation which, based on hermeneutic understanding, appropriates and excludes her response to the claim of otherness.

3 TOWARDS A CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE IN TRANSLATION

Quelle philosophie de la traduction dominera en Europe? Dans une Europe qui devrait désormais éviter aussi bien les crispations nationalistes de la différence linguistique que l'homogénéisation violente des langues à travers la neutralité d'un médium traducteur, prétendument transparent, métalinguistique, universel?⁷³⁷

If we go by current British and French practice, translation in Europe is still governed by a nationalist assurance of linguistic and cultural differences. As a consequence of these nationalist tendencies, the multidimensional complexity of otherness is reduced to the one-dimensional foreign other. This reductive approach is rooted in theories which were conceived at a time when the European nations were developing and which still inform the understanding of translation today. The invention of the national communities involved the clear delimitation of national languages which came to be understood as expressing national characteristics. This understanding of language also left its mark on the contemporary theoretical and practical approaches to translation which, according to the theories devised in the German Romanticist period, tallied with the characteristics of the respective language, people and culture. While the inflexibility of the French language and the imperialism of the French people led French translators to adapt foreign texts to their taste, the malleability of the German language and the cosmopolitanism of the German people allowed the preservation of otherness in translation. Compared to the French practice, the German understanding of translation in the Romantic period has thus generally been regarded as subverting proto-national bonding. As a consequence Schleiermacher's introduction to the diverse methods of translation, in particular, served as a source of inspiration for those twentieth-century theoreticians, such as Berman or Venuti, who attempted to counter nationalist and imperialist tendencies in the theory and practice of translation. However, even

⁷³⁷ Jacques Derrida, 'L'autre cap', in *L'autre cap suivi de la démocratie ajournée* (Paris: Minuit, 1991), pp. 7–101 (p. 58).

Schleiermacher's allegedly cosmopolitan understanding of translation is ultimately still trapped in nationalist thinking. Located within the framework of Romantic striving for universality, translation, according to Schleiermacher, serves to further the education in the foreign which means that it should aim to introduce the German people to other national languages and cultures and thus sharpen their senses for national differences. It is for this end that Schleiermacher demands the preservation of the features of the respective other language in the process of translation. Schleiermacher thus equates otherness with the national other. Furthermore, proposing that the foreign language and culture is understandable and representable within the German cultural framework, he accredits the translator with a superior position in the process of translation. The foreign other, by contrast, is reduced to a stepping stone in the progressive education of the German self which secures the continuous growth of the German nation and thus makes translation superfluous as soon as the Germans have reached literary, cultural and thus national self-containment.

This ultimate concentration on the self, which is deflected by an alleged interest in otherness, also leaves its mark on the approaches devised by Schleiermacher's followers. While Berman simply adopts his predecessor's tenets, Venuti, who attempts to put Schleiermacher's foreignizing ideas into practice, comes up with an exoticist approach to translation. However, the national other is only one of the manifold dimensions of otherness which include the ideological, the social or the sexual other. Furthermore, all of these others are devised by a self which depends on the delimitation from this constructed other. Hence, any alleged self is haunted by otherness. It is this more complex understanding of otherness that has been explored in Benjamin's and Derrida's theories. Benjamin believes that translation should uncover the otherness of the translating self. However, in translation practice, which is mainly governed by capitalist goals, Benjamin's ideal has often been discarded as impracticable and even absurd. Drawing on Derrida's deconstructionist approach in order to uncover the borderlines of

the contemporary concept underlying the practice of translation, my analyses of existing translations demonstrate that most of these are still influenced by the nationalist ideas devised by Schleiermacher.

Particularly in Britain but to some extent also in France, the translation of texts is still based on Schleiermacher's theory of translation as a means of understanding the national other. Governed by a framework formed in the receiving cultures, this process is controlled by reviewers, editors and translators who assume a superior stance towards the respective text — a position which does not seem to be an invention of the late twentieth century for such arrogance had already inspired Benjamin to call for a new concept of criticism. The critical evaluation not only decides whether texts are of interest for publication but also significantly influences their reception and translation. Texts which undermine or defy the borderlines of these frameworks and thus in Benjamin's theory could be described as translatable, such as Anne Duden's prose, are as a consequence generally excluded from translation. Furthermore, if the texts chosen for translation contain passages or elements which resist understanding, these are either forced into the existing frameworks or eliminated from the translation. Thus the translator and/or editors of Monika Maron's *Flight of Ashes* omitted whole passages which did not match their discourses on the communist and the female other. In the translations of Hilsenrath's *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*, by contrast, this practice finds expression in the minimization of the foreignizing devices which serve to estrange the reader from his own background in order to make him perceive the othering strategies underlying any kind of exclusion of minorities. Both Hugh Young and Bernard Kreiss reduce the foreign terms and the grotesque elements in Hilsenrath's novel to realist descriptions which again prevents the recognition of the otherness underlying the self.

The belief that translation represents an act of understanding goes hand in hand with a reduction of otherness to the foreign and understandable other which in turn serves the

progressive education in the foreign and thus contributes to the growth of the self. This circle of translational labours, as Schleiermacher called it, is close to completion in Britain where the virtually self-contained bookmarket has resulted in the continuous marginalization of translation. However, this linguistic self-containment does not necessarily prevent the publication of English texts which respond to the claims of otherness. The understanding of translation as a tool for progressive education, by contrast, has entailed the exclusion of non-realist texts as well as the omission of fictional elements from the foreign texts selected for publication on British and U.S. American bookmarkets. In the last two decades of the twentieth century, this selective practice has become particularly obvious in the West German and English reception of the texts from the former communist countries. The publication of literary fiction from the GDR and Romania in West Germany and their subsequent translation in Britain and the United States was primarily motivated by a desire to get first-hand information from the foreign and evil other. Particularly after the changes in the Eastern Bloc, the texts by Monika Maron, Herta Müller and Richard Wagner were read as testimonies which allowed the reader in the receiving cultures to get a glimpse of the atrocious living conditions in the countries behind the Iron Curtain. However, these insights usually did not provide any new information but the selection and interpretation of these texts for publication and translation confirmed the already known which served to make the capitalist self shine more brightly. The construction of the foreign other in reception and translation thus tallies with pre-existing discourses. With respect to reception of Maron's works in the English-speaking world, this practice set in with the publication of her first novel in Britain and the United States. Having been abused for the corroboration of Cold War discourses in West Germany, *Flugasche* also served anti-communist goals in Britain and the United States. This thesis also holds for the British reception of Müller's and Wagner's prose which were employed to confirm the liberating effects of the capitalist victory over the communist countries. As a consequence, the British publishers

and translators of these texts generally ignored that these also reveal the otherness underlying the receiving cultures for they criticize Western capitalism and support communist ideals. This reductive approach which defies any consequences for the receiving culture also marks the English translation, in particular, and to some extent the French translation of Hilsenrath's *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* as well as the French translation of Duden's *Übergang*. In these renderings the comparatist stance to the Holocaust, which suggests that genocide could recur at any time and in any cultural background and thus also in the cultures receiving the translations, is replaced with a singularist interpretation, which takes the Holocaust to be a disaster made in Germany.

The focus on the factual dimension of the texts chosen for translation in Britain leads to the negligence of their intentional fictionality which usually includes their responses to the claim of otherness. Maron is marketed as a realist while the fantastic dimension of her writing, which helps her to transcend national delimitations, is ignored. Hilsenrath is relocated as belonging to those orientalist discourses which he tries to question. And the translators impose a one-dimensional reading on Duden's postmodern polyvalence. However, even when the publishing strategies focus on the literary elements of the texts, this does not necessarily imply that the publishers reveal the otherness underlying the self. On the contrary, in general they only employ literary elements when they coincide with the prevalent mode of writing in the respective receiving culture. The distinctly literary marketing of Moníková's writing in Britain latches onto the well-known British sense of humour. Similarly, the French focus on the surreal elements in Maron's writing confirms the significance of French surrealism abroad.

The contemporary practice of translation thus mainly serves to confirm the superiority of the receiving culture. Except for rare examples, such as the French translation of Maron's *Stille Zeile sechs* or the French marketing and reception of Müller's *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt*, this practice excludes the

recognition of the otherness of the translating self and the receiving language and culture which Benjamin described as the goal of translation. It is therefore high time for a change of perspective in the theoretical and practical approaches to translation. Translation should no longer be regarded as a means of delimiting our selves from a national other than as a way to uncover the otherness underlying these alleged selves. Only a general change of mind will make translators and publishers perceive the criticism of Western capitalism, as it becomes apparent in Maron's, Müller's and Wagner's writing, as well as the universality of exclusionary mechanisms described in Hilsenrath's and Duden's works.

4 APPENDIX: THE CORPUS

The case study is based on a corpus of translations I collected in a database mainly drawing upon the *Index Translationum*, a bibliography of translations published by UNESCO, as well as upon the respective National Bibliographies. For translations distributed in Britain, I additionally consulted *The Babel Guide to German Fiction* and the publication *New Books in German*. *Babel Guides* are a series on contemporary world fiction available in English translation; they include a database as well as reviews of, in their own words, 'a representative choice of books'.⁷³⁸ The 1998 and 1999 autumn journals of *New Books in German* contained a list of translations published in recent years which I have used to supplement the information drawn from the other sources.⁷³⁹ For the French data I additionally referred to the bibliographical publications *Littérature contemporaine de langue allemande: Traductions françaises des œuvres parues entre 1945 et 1982* assembled by M. Zangl-Lorriaux and *Französische-deutsch-französisch Übersetzungen: Les traductions de livres en langues française et allemande 1986-1989*, a bibliography of translations edited by the Syndicat National de l'Édition on the event of the *Salon du Livre's* thematic focus on Germany and the Frankfurt book fair's spotlight on France in 1989. Finally, I consulted the bio-bibliographical anthology of contemporary German-speaking authors *Jetzt-Autoren: Ils écrivent en allemand*.⁷⁴⁰ Of course, I do not lay any claim for the information contained in my database to be complete. On the one hand the main bibliographical sources, which are based on information provided by publishers, have in the course of my research also proven to

⁷³⁸ *The Babel Guide*, ed. by Ray Keenoy, Mike Mitchell and Maren Meinhardt, p. 1.

⁷³⁹ *New Books in German*, ed. by Rosemary Smith 2 (1998) and 2 (1999). The more recent publications do no longer contain these lists of translations. These are now available on the internet, see Philip Jenkins, 'Translations from German into English', last updated by Stephen S. Wilson <<http://www.new-books-in-german.com/information.html>> [accessed 8 May 2003].

⁷⁴⁰ See *Littérature contemporaine de langue allemande*, ed. by M. Zangl-Lorriaux, *Französische-deutsch-französisch Übersetzungen*, ed. by the Syndicat National de l'Édition and *Jetzt-Autoren: Ils écrivent en allemand*, ed. by Kerstin Behre and Petra Metz (Paris: Pauvert, 2001).

have gaps and to contain errors. On the other hand a number of authors and works recorded in the above-mentioned sources could not be identified and have thus not been included in my database although they might be possible candidates. The criteria determining the inclusion and exclusion of authors and works resulted from the initial focus of my case study on German unification. For this reason the authors and works included in my database had to fulfil three criteria: first they had to write in German, second they had to either live in Germany or be of German descent and third their works had to be written and translated between 1980 and 1999. My database thus excludes Austrian and Swiss German authors as well as retranslations of older texts but includes a wide variety of writers, such as the Czech writer Libuše Moníková and the Mongolian author Galsan Tschinag, who on the basis of traditional definitions would not have been considered German. The following lists contain all the translations fulfilling these criteria. The titles which are discussed in the text in more detail have also been included in the bibliography.

4.1 Translations Published in Britain

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Anthologies						
		Night Drive: Modern German Short Stories	Various	London	Serpent's Tail	1996
		Fringe Voices: Texts by and about Minorities	A. Harnisch and others	Oxford	Berg	1998
Arjouni	Jacob	Happy Birthday Turk	Anselm Hollo	Harpenden	No Exit	1994
		More Beer: A Kayankaya Mystery	Anselm Hollo	Harpenden	No Exit	1996
		One Man, One Murder		Harpenden	No Exit	1996
		Magic Hoffmann	Geoffrey Mulligan	Harpenden	No Exit	1998
Berthold	Will	Inferno I	Fred Taylor	London	Sphere	1984
		Inferno II: Bloody Turning Point	Fred Taylor	London	Sphere	1986
		Siegfried's Sword	Fred Taylor	London	Sphere	1986
Beyer	Marcel	The Karnau Tapes	John Brownjohn	London	Secker & Warburg	1997

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Biermann	Pieke	Violetta	I. Rieder, J. Hannum	London	Serpent's Tail	1996
Böll	Heinrich	The Stories of Heinrich Böll 1917-1985	Leila Vennewitz and others	London	Secker & Warburg	1986
		The Casualty	Leila Vennewitz	London	Chatto & Windus	1986
		Women in a River Landscape	David McLintock	London	Secker & Warburg	1988
Brückner	Christine	Desdemona, If Only You Had Spoken!	Eleanor Brown	London	Virago	1992
Brussig	Thomas	Heroes Like Us	John Brownjohn	London	Harvill	1997
Buch	Hans Christoph	The Wedding at Port-au-Prince		London	Faber	1987
Demski	Eva	Dead Alive	Jan van Heurck	London	Methuen	1989
Dörrie	Doris	Love, Pain and the Whole Damn Thing	John E. Woods	London	Viking	1989

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Duden	Anne	Opening of the Mouth	Della Couling	London	Pluto	1985
Elsner	Gisela	Offside	Anthea Bell	London	Virago	1985
Goldschmidt	Georges-Arthur	Worlds of Difference	James Kirkup	London	Quartet	1993
Grass	Günter	Headbirths, or, The Germans Are Dying Out	Ralph Manheim	London	Secker & Warburg	1982
		The Rat	Ralph Manheim	London	Secker & Warburg	1987
		Show your Tongue	J. Wood	London	Secker & Warburg	1989
		The Call of the Toad	Ralph Manheim	London	Secker & Warburg	1992
		Wide Field	Krishna Winston	London	Secker	1997
		My Century		London	Faber	1999
Guha	Anton-Andreas	Ende: The Diary of a Third World War	Fred Taylor	London	Corgi	1986

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Hauptmann	Gabi	In Search of an Impotent Man	Shaun Whiteside	London	Virago	1998
Hein	Christoph	The Distant Lover	Krishna Winston	London	Picador	1991
Herlin	Hans	Solo Run	J. Maxwell Brownjohn	London	Collins	1983
		The Last Spring in Paris	J. Maxwell Brownjohn	London	Deutsch	1985
		Assassin	J. Maxwell Brownjohn	London	Hutchinson	1987
Hildesheimer	Wolfgang	Marbot. A Biography	Patricia Crampton	London	Dent	1983
Hilsenrath	Edgar	The Story of the Last Thought	Hugh Young	London	Scribner	1990
Hofmann	Gert	The Spectacle at the Tower	Christopher Middleton	Manchester	Carcenet	1985
		Our Conquest	Christopher Middleton	Manchester	Carcenet	1987
		The Parable of the Blind	Christopher Middleton	London	Secker & Warburg	1988

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
		Balzac's Horse and Other Stories	Ch. Middleton, M. Hofmann	London	Secker & Warburg	1989
		Before the Rainy Season	Edna McCown	London	Secker & Warburg	1991
		The Film Explainer	Michael Hofmann	London	Secker & Warburg	1995
Jeschke	Wolfgang					
		The Last Days of Creation		London	Century	1982
		Midas		Sevenoaks	New English Library	1990
Jünger	Ernst					
		Aladdin's Problem	Joachim Neugroschel	London	Quartet	1993
Kirchhoff	Bodo					
		Infanta	John Brownjohn	London	Harvill	1992
Kirst	Hans Hellmuth					
		Heroes for Sale	J. Maxwell Brownjohn	London	Collins	1982
Krausser	Helmut					
		The Great Bagarozzy	Mike Mitchell	Sawtry	Dedalus	1998
Krüger	Michael					
		The End of the Novel	Ewald Osers	London	Quartet	1991

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
		The Man in the Tower	Leslie Wilson	London	Quartet	1993
		Himmelfarb	Leslie Wilson	London	Quartet	1994
Lansburgh	Werner	Driftwood: an Odyssey in Our Time	Karin Reinfrank	London	Wolff	1985
Lenz	Siegfried	Training Ground	Geoffrey Skelton	London	Methuen	1991
Loest	Erich	The Monument	Ian Mitchell	London	Secker & Warburg	1987
Maron	Monika	Flight of Ashes	David Newton Marinelli	London	Readers International	1986
		The Defector	David Newton Marinelli	London	Readers International	1988
		Silent Close No. 6	David Newton Marinelli	London	Readers International	1993
Matsubara	Hisako	Cranes at Dusk	Leila Vennewitz	London	Secker & Warburg	1985
Meckel	Christoph	Image for Investigation about my Father	M. S. Jones	Tayport	Hutton	1987

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Monksová	Libuše	The Façade: M.N.O.P.Q.	John E. Woods	London	Chatto & Windus	1992
Müller	Herta	The Passport	Martin Chalmers	London	Serpent's Tail	1989
Nadolny	Sten	The Land of Green Plums	Michael Hofmann	London	Granta Books	1998
		The Discovery of Slowness	R. Freedman	London	Viking	1987
		The God of Impertinence	Breon Mitchell	London	Viking	1997
Noll	Ingrid	Hell Hath No Fury	Ian Mitchell	London	Collins Crime	1996
		Head Count	Ian Mitchell	London	Collins Crime	1997
		The Pharmacist	Ian Mitchell	London	Collins Crime	1998
Palmer	Lilli	Night Music		London	Weidenfeld & Nicolson	1982
		Face Value		London	Grafton	1986
		When the Nightbird Cries		London	Grafton	1989

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Pirinçi	Akif	Felidae	Ralph Noble	London	Fourth Estate	1993
Rosendorfer	Herbert	Felidae on the Road	Anthea Bell	London	Fourth Estate	1994
		The Night of the Amazons	Ian Mitchell	London	Secker & Warburg	1991
Sander	Helke	Letters Back to Ancient China	Mike Mitchell	Sawtry	Dedalus	1997
Schlink	Bernhard	The Three Women K.	Helen Petzold	London	Serpent's Tail	1991
Schneider	Peter	The Reader	Carol Brown Janeway	London	Phoenix House	1997
Schulze	Ingo	The Wall Jumper	Leigh Hafrey	London	Allison & Busby	1984
Sebald	W. G.	33 Moments of Happiness	John E. Woods	London	Picador	1999
		The Emigrants	Michael Huise	London	Harvill	1997

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
		The Rings of Saturn	Michael Hulse	London	Harvill	1998
		Vertigo	Michael Hulse	London	Harvill	1999
Spengler	Tilman					
		Lenin's Brain	Shaun Whiteside	London	Hamilton	1993
Strauß	Botho					
		Tumult	Michael Hulse	Manchester	Carcanet	1984
Strittmatter	Thomas					
		The Raven	Ian Mitchell	London	Chatto & Windus	1993
Süskind	Patrick					
		Perfume: The Story of a Murderer	John E. Woods	London	Hamilton	1986
		The Pigeon	John E. Woods	London	Hamilton	1988
		The Story of Mr Summer	Michael Hofmann	London	Bloomsbury	1992
		Three Stories and a Reflection	Peter Howarth and others	London	Bloomsbury	1996
Wagner	Richard					
		Exit: A Romanian Story	Quintin Hoare	London	Verso	1990

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Walser	Martin	The Swan Villa	Leila Vennewitz	London	Secker & Warburg	1983
		Breakers	Leila Vennewitz	London	Deutsch	1987
Wellershoff	Dieter	The Winner Takes All	Paul Knight	Manchester	Carcenet	1986
Wodin	Natascha	Once I Lived	Ian Galbraith	London	Serpent's Tail	1992
Wolf	Christa	Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays	Jan van Heurck	London	Virago	1984
		Accident: A Day's News	H. Schwarzbauer,	London	Virago	1989
		What Remains and Other Stories	R. Takvorian			
			H. Schwarzbauer,	London	Virago	1993
		Medea	R. Takvorian			
			John Cullen	London	Virago	1998

4.2 Translations Published in France

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Alberts	Jürgen	L'anarchiste de Chicago	Patrick Kermann	Paris	Gallimard	1997
Anthology						
		Berlin: anthologie littéraire.		Paris	Quai Voltaire	1993
Arjouni	Jacob	Bonne fête, le turc: une enquête de Kayankaya	Stefan Kämpfer	Paris	Fayard	1992
		Café turc: une enquête de Kayankaya	Stefan Kämpfer	Paris	Fayard	1992
		Demi pression: une enquête de Kayankaya	Stefan Kämpfer	Paris	Fayard	1993
		Magic Hoffmann	Stefan Kämpfer	Paris	Fayard	1997
Baier	Lothar					
		Le délai	Christine Delory-Momberger	Arles	Actes Sud	1992
Bayer	Ingeborg					
		Voyage a Vichy	Claude Raucy	Paris	Duculot	1988

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Becker	Jurek	Les Enfants Bronstein	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Grasset	1988
		L'ami du monde entier	Brigitte Hébert	Paris	Grasset	1993
		Amanda sans coeur	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Grasset	1994
Becker	Thorsten	La caution	Élisabeth Landes	Paris	Flammarion	1988
		Ma belle Allemagne	Robert Simon	Paris	Gallimard	1998
Behrens	Katja	La treizième fée	Jeanne Étoré	Paris	Flammarion	1986
Berling	Peter	Les enfants du graal	Jacques Say	Paris	Lattès	1996
		Le sang des rois	Olivier Mannoni	Paris	Le Grand Livre du Mois	1997
		La couronne du monde	Olivier Mannoni	Paris	Le Grand Livre du Mois	1998
		Le calice noir	Olivier Mannoni	Paris	Chambon	1999
Beyer	Marcel	Voix de la nuit	François Mathieu	Paris	Calmann-Lévy	1997

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Beyse	Jochen	Ultraviolet	Nicole Stephan-Gabinel	Paris	Flammarion	1993
Bienek	Horst	Terre et feu	Bernard Kreiss	Arles	Actes Sud	1991
Biermann	Pieke	Potsdamer Platz	Michèle Valencia	Paris	Payot/Rivages	1992
		Violetta	Michèle Valencia	Paris	Payot/Rivages	1993
		Battements de coeur	Michèle Valencia	Paris	Rivages	1996
Billier	Maxim	Ah! Si j'étais riche et mort	Nicole Stephan-Gabinel	Paris	Flammarion	1992
		Au pays des pères et des traîtres	Martin Ziegler	Paris	Flammarion	1998
Böll	Heinrich	Femmes devant un paysage fluvial	D. Dubuy, C. Riehl	Paris	Seuil	1987
		De la compassion à la colère	E. Wintzen, R. Wintzen	Paris	Belfond	1991
Braun	Volker	Libres propos de Hinze et Kunze	G. Bodia, V. Jezewski	Paris	Messidor/Temps actuel	1985

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
		Le roman de Hinze et Kunze	A. Lance, R. Lance-Otterbein	Paris	Messidor	1988
		Phrase sans fond	Alain Lance	Arles	Actes Sud	1993
		Les Quatre Outils	Alain Lance	Paris	L'Inventaire	1998
Brenner	Wolfgang					
		Welcome Ossi!	Françoise Périgaut	Paris	Payot/Rivages	1998
Brückner	Christine					
		Pourquoi n'as-tu rien dit, Desdémone?	Dominique Petit	Paris	L'Arche	1987
Brussig	Thomas					
		Le complexe de Klaus	Olivier Mannoni	Paris	Albin Michel	1998
Buch	Hans Christoph					
		Le mariage de Port-au-Prince	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Grasset	1986
		Haïti Chérie	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Grasset	1990
		Admiral Zombie; ou, Le retour de Christophe	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Grasset	1993
		Colomb				
		Au château de Kafka: une fantasmagorie	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Grasset	1999

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Carrington	Ashley	La rivière des rêves	Danièle Darneau	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1994
Dachs	Robert	Seule contre tous	Danièle Darneau	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1996
Danella	Utta	Bonbons viennois	Serge Niémetz	Paris	Belfond	1986
		Secrète vallée	Jacques Roque	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1982
		L'âme de fond	Nina Nidermiller	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1982
		Le lac de Constance	Nathalie Kahn	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1984
Delius	Friedrich Christian					
		Otage classe touriste	Olivier Mannoni	Paris	Bourin	1989
Demski	Eva	Une mort apparente	Léa Marcou	Paris	Albin Michel	1988
		Hôtel enfer	Ghislain Riccardi	Paris	Albin Michel	1990
Dörrie	Doris					
		Amour, délire et morgue	Colette Kowalski	Paris	Flammarion	1989

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Duden	Anne	L'homme de mes rêves	Sylvie Perron	Paris	Éditions la Découverte	1992
Erbes	Volker	Traversée	P. Furlan, D. Jallamion	Aix-en-Provence	Aliméa	1987
Fels	Ludwig	La trace du floteur	Nicole Roche	Paris	Gallimard	1995
Finckh	Renate	Le ciel était un grand présent: un adieu	François Matthieu	Paris	M. Sell-Calman-Lévy	1996
Fischer	Marie-Louise	Le sourire amer	Annie Barré	Larbey	Gaïa	1996
		Un coeur pardonne	J.-M. Gaillard-Paquet	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1980
		Les lendemains de l'amour	Corinne Duquesnelle	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1981
		La rivale	Nina Nidermiller	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1981
		Un amour étouffant	Nina Nidermiller	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1982
		Claudia	Jacques Roque	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1983
		L'homme de ses rêves	Jacques Roque	Paris	Presses de la Cité.	1984

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
		Le droit au bonheur	Nathalie Kahn	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1984
		Au nom du bonheur	Jacques Roque	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1987
Forte	Dieter	Revers de fortune	Jacques Roque	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1988
		Le garçon aux semelles de sang	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Albin Michel	1997
Fries	Fritz Rudolf					
		Les nouveaux mondes d'Alexandre	Jean-Paul Barbe	Paris	Métailié	1992
Giordano	Ralph					
		Les Bertini	Olivier Mannoni	Paris	Hachette	1983
Goetz	Rainald					
		Chez les fous	Robert Simon	Paris	Gallimard	1985
Göhre	Frank					
		La nuit de St. Pauli	Patrick Kermann	Paris	Gallimard (Série Noir)	1996
Goldschmidt	Georges-Arthur					
		La ligne de fuite	Jean-Luc Tiesset	Paris	Flammarion	1994

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Goyke	Frank	Le petit Parisien	Brigitte Soelzer	Paris	Fleuve Noir	1996
		Mortelle déviance	Marie Ollivier	Paris	Fleuve Noir	1997
		Vol au-dessus d'un nid de ripoux	Marie Ollivier	Paris	Fleuve Noir	1998
		Mauvais garçon, garçon mort	Marie Ollivier	Paris	Fleuve Noir	1998
Grass	Günter	Les enfants par la tête	Jean Amsler	Paris	Seuil	1983
		La rattie	Jean Amsler	Paris	Seuil	1987
		Tirer la langue	Jean Amsler	Paris	Seuil	1989
		L' appel du crapaud	Jean Amsler	Paris	Seuil	1992
		Toute une histoire	Bernard Lortholary	Paris	Seuil	1997
Grzimek	Martin	Papillon de feu	Olivier Mannoni	Paris	Belfond	1993
		La filature	Jean-Claude Capèle	Paris	Belfond	1994
Harig	Ludwig	L'ordre, c'est la vie: le roman de mon père	Serge Niémetz	Paris	Belfond	1989

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
		Malheur à qui danse hors de la ronde	Serge Niémetz	Paris	Belfond	1993
		Les hortensias de Mme von Roselius	Serge Niémetz	Paris	Belfond	1997
Härtling	Peter					
		Dettes d'amour, Zwetl	C. Porcell, M.-F. Denet	Paris	Seuil	1984
		Felix Guttmann	Claude Porcell	Paris	Seuil	1989
		L'Éloïenne	Gérard Cornillet	Paris	Messidor	1990
		Les yeux de Waiblinger	Claude Porcell	Paris	Seuil	1991
		Bozena	Bernard Lortholary	Nîmes	Chambon	1996
		Schubert: douze moments musicaux et un roman.	Claude Porcell	Paris	Seuil	1996
		L'ombre de Schumann	Bernard Lortholary	Nîmes	Chambon	1998
Hauptmann	Gabi					
		Cherche homme impuissant pour relation	Gabrielle Merchez	Paris	Calmann-Lévy	1997
		Mensonges au lit	Olivier Mannoni	Paris	Calmann-Lévy	1999
Heiduczek	Werner					
		Départs imprévus	Bernard Genton	Paris	Flammarion	1990

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Hein	Christoph	L'ami étranger	F. Mathieu, R. Mathieu	Aix-en-Provence	Alinéa	1985
		La fin de Horn	François Mathieu	Aix-en-Provence	Alinéa	1987
		Invitation au lever bourgeois	F. Mathieu, R. Mathieu	Aix-en-Provence	Alinéa	1989
		Le joueur de Tango	François Mathieu	Aix-en-Provence	Alinéa	1990
		La mise à mort	Nicole Bary	Paris	Métailié	1995
		Le jeu de Napoléon	Nicole Bary	Paris	Métailié	1997
Heißenbüttel	Helmut	Le Bonheur de Franz Ottokar Mürbekapsel	Marianne Charrière	Nîmes	Chambon	1989
Heller	Eva	Avec un autre ce sera différent	Serge Niémetz	Paris	Albin Michel	1989
Herlin	Hans	Quatre espions dans la place	S. Lalène, G. Lalène	Paris	Grasset	1982
		Dernier printemps à Paris	M. Sinclair, S. Gleize	Paris	Le Grand Livre du Mois	1984
Herrn	Gerhard	Tempête sur la corne d'or	François Pontnier	Paris	Albin Michel	1984

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Hermlin	Stephan	Dans un monde de ténébres	Anne Gaudu	Paris	Presses d'Aujourd'hui	1982
Hettche	Thomas	Nox	Bernard Banoun	Paris	Grasset	1997
Heym	Stefan	Ahasver, le juif errant	Jan Dusay	Paris	Age d'homme	1991
Hilbig	Wolfgang	La lettre	B. Vergne-Cain, G. Rudent	Paris	Flammarion	1988
		Les bonnes femmes	B. Vergne-Cain, G. Rudent	Paris	Gallimard	1992
		Moi	B. Vergne-Cain, G. Rudent	Paris	Gallimard	1997
Hildesheimer	Wolfgang	Sir Andrew Marbot	Martin Kaltenecker	Paris	Lattès	1984
Hilsenrath	Edgar	Le conte de la pensée dernière	Bernard Kreiss	Paris	Albin Michel	1992
		Le retour au pays de Jossel Wassermann	Christian Richard	Paris	Albin Michel	1995

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Hofmann	Gert	Le cheval de Balzac	Martine Keyser	Paris	Laffont	1983
		Notre conquête	Martine Keyser	Paris	Laffont	1986
		La chute des aveugles	Martine Keyser	Paris	Laffont	1987
		Notre amnésie	Martine Keyser	Paris	Laffont	1989
		Justes avant les pluies	M. Breitman, S. Breitman	Paris	Laffont	1990
		Le conteur de cinéma	M. Breitman, S. Breitman	Paris	Laffont	1993
		Conversations à bord du Titanic	Bernard Kreiss	Arles	Actes Sud	1993
		Le bonheur	M. Breitman, S. Breitman	Paris	Calmann-Lévy	1994
		Sur la tour	Bernard Kreiss	Arles	Actes Sud	1994
		La petite marchande de fleurs	S. Breitman, M. Breitman	Paris	Laffont	1996
		Notre philosophe	Y. Hoffmann, M. Litaize	Arles	Actes Sud	1997
Honigmann	Barbara	Roman d'un enfant	F. Doussin and others	Paris	BF	1999
		Les îles du passé	Colette Strauss-Hiva	Nîmes	Chambon	1999

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Hoppe	Felicitas	Le pique-nique des coiffeurs	Y. Hoffmann, M. Litaize	Nîmes	Chambon	1999
Jeschke	Wolfgang	Le dernier jour de la création		Paris	Denoel	1981
Johansen	Hanna	L'alphabet	Bernard Kreiss	Paris	Gallimard	1984
Johnson	Uwe	Retour à Oraïbi	Colette Kowalski	La Tour d'Aigues	Éditions de l'Aube	1991
Jünger	Ernst	L'accidente	Nicole Casanova	Arles	Actes Sud	1989
Karr & Wehner		Le problème d'Aladin	Henri Thomas	Paris	Bourgois	1984
Karvan	Alex	Une dangereuse rencontre	Henri Plard	Paris	Union générale d'éditions	1988
		Le printemps du vautour	Jean-Paul Schweighäuser	Paris	Ifrane	1996
		Meurtres à Berlin	Jean-Luc Tiesset	Paris	Calmann-Lévy	1993

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Kieseritzky	Ingomar von	Le livre des désastres	Olivier Mannoni	Paris	Bourin	1989
Kinkel	Tanja	Précis d'anatomie à l'usage des artistes	Olivier Mannoni	Paris	Bourin	1992
Kirchhoff	Bodo	Le moniteur de marionnettes	Danièle Darneau	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1996
Kleeberg	Michael	La princesse de Grenade	Danièle Darneau	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1997
Klugmann	Norbert	Les ombres de La Rochelle	Danièle Darneau	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1998
Königsdorf	Helga	Infanta	Bernard Lortholary	Paris	Gallimard	1992
		Pieds nus	Nicole Taubes	Paris	Austral	1996
		Un beau cadeau	Patrick Kermann	Paris	Gallimard (Série Noire)	1997
		Viendra un nouvel automne	Jean-Marie Argelès	Aix-en-Provence	Alinéa	1989

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Konsalik	Heinz Günther	La face obscure de la gloire	Caroline Caillé	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1981
		Les masques de l'amour	J.-M. Gaillard-Paquet	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1981
		La malédiction des émeraudes	Gilberte Marchegay	Paris	Albin Michel	1981
		Entre l'amour et la haine	C. Caillé,	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1982
			J.-M. Gaillard-Paquet			
		Diabolique rival	Louise H. Wolf	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1982
		Il ne resta qu'une voile rouge	Gilberte Marchegay	Paris	Albin Michel	1982
		Bataillons de femmes	Raymond Albeck	Paris	Albin Michel	1983
		Les amants de Sotchi	Jacques Roque	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1983
		Le gentleman	Gilberte Marchegay	Paris	Albin Michel	1984
		Une croix en Sibérie	Jacques Roque	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1984
		Seuls dans la tourmente	J.-M. Gaillard-Paquet	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1984
		On ne force pas la chance	J.-M. Gaillard-Paquet	Paris	Presses Pocket	1984
		Amour d'été	J.-M. Gaillard-Paquet	Paris	Presses Pocket	1984
		Un mariage en Silesie	Louis Mezeray	Paris	Albin Michel	1984
		La guérisseuse	Raymond Albeck	Paris	Albin Michel	1986

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
		Conjuration amoureuse	Claude Ningelgen	Paris	Flamme	1986
		Amours de guerre	Jacques Roque	Paris	France Loisirs	1987
		La jeune fille et le sorcier	Danièle Friedman	Paris	J'ai lu	1988
		Le prisonnier du désert	J.-M. Gaillard-Paquet	Paris	Presses Pocket	1988
		Une étrange croisière	Jacques Roque	Paris	France Loisirs	1988
		Pour un péché de trop	Christiane Poulain	Paris	J'ai lu	1989
		Médecins de la dernière chance	Rosa Cochet-Mathieu	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1989
		Sous le ciel de Madère	J.-M. Gaillard-Paquet	Paris	Presses Pocket	1990
		Le trésor des tsars	Rosa Cochet-Mathieu	Paris	France Loisirs	1991
		La baie des perles noires	Rosemarie Lipka	Paris	Albin Michel	1991
		Roulette sibérienne	Rosa Cochet-Mathieu	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1991
		Complot en Amazonie	Rosa Cochet-Mathieu	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1992
		Le pavillon de jade	Danièle Darneau	Paris	Le Grand Livre du Mois	1993
		Pétrole connection	Danièle Darneau	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1994
		La clinique du docteur Ratja Banda	Rosemarie Lipka	Paris	Albin Michel	1995
		La mafia du sang	Rosemarie Lipka	Paris	Albin Michel	1996
		Dans l'antre du tigre	Danièle Darneau	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1997

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
		SOS avion en péril	Christian Richard	Paris	Albin Michel	1997
		La baie des requins	Anne-Judith Descombey	Paris	Albin Michel	1998
		Extase mortelle	Danièle Darneau	Paris	Presses de la Cité	1998
		La passion du docteur Rheinhard	Corinne Tresca	Paris	Le Grand Livre du Mois	1999
Köpf	Gerhard					
		La chouette, le facteur et le perroquet	Dominique Petit	Paris	Métailié	1993
		Le fou de Hemingway	Dominique Petit	Paris	Métailié	1995
Krausser	Helmut					
		Le caniche noir de la diva	François Mathieu	Nîmes	Chambon	1999
Krüger	Michael					
		Pourquoi moi?	Claude Porcell	Paris	Seuil	1990
		La fin du roman	Claude Porcell	Paris	Seuil	1992
		L'homme de la tour	Claude Porcell	Paris	Seuil	1994
		Himmelfarb	Claude Porcell	Paris	Seuil	1996
Kuczynski	Rita					
		Partition	François-Guillaume Lorrain	Arles	Actes Sud	1996

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
ky		Pour le roi de Prusse	Jean-Paul Schweighäuser	Nantes	L'Atalante	1991
Lange	Hartmut					
		Le récital suivi de la Sonate Waldstein	Bernard Kreiss	Paris	Fayard	1988
		Une fatigue suivi de La promenade sur la grève	Dominique Tassel	Paris	Fayard	1990
		Le voyage à Trieste	Bernard Kreiss	Paris	Fayard	1993
		L'immolation	Bernard Kreiss	Paris	Fayard	1995
		Le houx	Bernard Kreiss	Paris	Fayard	1995
Lenz	Hermann	L'ange exterminateur d'Arthur Schnitzler	Bernard Kreiss	Paris	Fayard	1997
		Le promeneur	Michel-François Demet	Marseille	Rivages	1988
Lind	Hera	Champ de tir	Claude Chenou	Paris	Fallois	1989
Lustiger	Gila	Chérie, je te quitte!	Françoise Toraille	Paris	Calmann-Lévy	1998
		L'inventaire	Y. Hoffmann, M. Litaize	Paris	Grasset	1998

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Maron	Monika	La transfuge	Georges Pauline	Paris	Fayard	1989
		Le malentendu	Georges Pauline	Paris	Fayard	1991
		Rue de silence, no. 6	Michel-François Demet	Paris	Fayard	1993
		Animal triste	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Albin Michel	1998
Meckel	Christoph	Portrait-robot: mon père.	Michel Baillet	Paris	Flammarion	1989
		La ville de cuivre	Claude Porcell	Paris	Gallimard	1993
Meyer	Kai	La conjuration des visionnaires	Rosemarie Lipka	Paris	Payot/Rivages	1997
		La princesse d'hiver	Rosemarie Lipka	Paris	Payot/Rivages	1999
Modick	Klaus	Le gris des Carolines	Léa Marcou	Paris	Mercure de France	1990
Moníková	Libuše	La façade: M.N.O.P.Q.	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Belfond	1989
		Pavane pour une infante défunte	Dominique Kugler	Paris	Belfond	1991
		Le préjudice	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Belfond	1992

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
		Les glaces dérivantes	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Belfond	1994
		La nuit de Prague	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Hachette	1997
Morshäuser	Bodo					
		Berlin simulation	M.-V. von Friedberg	Nîmes	Chambon	1988
Müller	Herta					
		L'homme est un grand faisan sur terre	Nicole Bary	Paris	Maren Sell	1988
		Le renard était déjà le chasseur	Claire de Oliveira	Paris	Seuil	1997
Nadolny	Sten					
		La découverte de la lenteur	Jean-Marie Argelès	Paris	Grasset	1985
		Selim; ou: Le don du discours	Anne-Marie Geyer	Paris	Grasset	1993
		Hermès l'insolent	Anne-Marie Geyer	Paris	Grasset	1996
Noll	Ingrid					
		Rien que pour moi	Jean-Luc Tiesset	Paris	Calmann-Lévy	1996
		La tête de nos amants	Jean-Luc Tiesset	Paris	Calmann-Lévy	1997
		Confessions d'une pharmacienne	Jean-Luc Tiesset	Paris	Calmann-Lévy	1998

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Ortheil	Hanns-Josef					
		Le jeu des ténèbres	Nicole Casanova	Arles	Actes Sud	1989
		La haie	Nicole Casanova	Arles	Actes Sud	1991
Paretti	Sandra					
		L'oiseau de paradis	Jacques Legrand	Paris	Belfond	1986
Pirinçci	Akif					
		Félicés	Jean-Marie Argelès	Paris	Métailié - Éd. Melchior	1992
		L'homme tronc	M. Maeno, D. Meudal	Paris	Métailié	1996
Prange	Peter					
		La dynastie des Strauss	Frank Passemberg	Paris	Orban	1993
Raddatz	Fritz Joachim					
		Oeil de veau	Dominique Tassel	Paris	Flammarion	1986
		Le buveur de nuages	Bernard Kreiss	Paris	Flammarion	1988
Rathenow	Lutz					
		Le pire est déjà prévu	Alain Huriot	Paris	Seuil	1983

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Rehmann	Ruth	Le dernier refuge	M. Clairay,	Paris	Littérature Européenne	1989
Reinshagen	Gerlind		B. Dupont-Roffiaen			
Reschke	Karin	L'ame du commerce	Dominique Petit	Arles	Actes Sud	1990
		La vocation du bonheur: journal d'Henriette	J. Chambon, É. Kahle	Arles	Actes Sud	1984
		Vogel				
		L'Espace d'une nuit	Hélène Beletto	Arles	Actes Sud	1986
		Margarete	Dominique Tassel	Arles	Actes Sud	1990
Rinser	Luise					
		Miryam	Jean-Yves Masson	Lagrasse	Verdier	1994
Rosendorfer	Herbert					
		Les saints d'or; ou Colomb découvre l'Europe	Jean-Claude Capèle	Paris	Fayard	1992
Roth	Patrick					
		Johnny Shines ou la résurrection des morts	Philippe Giraudon	Paris	Flammarion	1996

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Schädlich	Hans Joachim	Talhover	Bernard Lortholary	Paris	Gallimard	1988
Schaeffer	Max Pierre	Berlinestouest	Bernard Lortholary	Paris	Gallimard	1990
Schlesinger	Klaus	14 Adolf-Hitler-Strasse	François Ponthier	Paris	Albin Michel	1985
Schlink	Bernhard	Matulla et Busch	Jean-Marie Argèles	Strasbourg/ Paris	La Nuée bleue/ Lattès	1990
Schneider	Peter	Le liseur	Bernard Lortholary	Paris	Gallimard	1996
		Brouillard sur Mannheim	M. Ziegler, O. Mannoni	Paris	Gallimard	1997
		Le sauteur de mur	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Grasset	1982
		Cet-homme-là	Patrice Van Eersel	Paris	Grasset	1987
		La ville des séparations	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Grasset	1994

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Schulze	Ingo	Histoires sans gravité	A. Lance, R. Lance-Otterbein	Paris	Fayard	1999
Sebald	W. G.					
Sparschuh	Jens	Les Émigrants	Patrick Charbonneau	Arles	Actes Sud	1999
Spengler	Tilman	Fontaine d'appartement	Y. Hoffman, M. Litaize	Arles	Actes Sud	1998
		Le cerveau de Lénine	F. Toraille, M.-F. Demet	Aix-en-Provence	Alinéa	1992
		Le peintre de Pékin	Martin Ziegler	Paris	Payot/ Rivages	1995
Strauß	Botho					
		Raffut	Éliane Kaufholz	Paris	Gallimard	1982
		Couples, passants	Claude Porcell	Paris	Gallimard	1983
		Le jeune homme	Claude Porcell	Paris	Gallimard	1986
		Personne d'autre	Claude Porcell	Paris	Gallimard	1989
		Congrès: la chaîne des humiliations	H. Hildenbrand, L. Valette	Paris	Bourgois	1994

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
		L'incommencement	Colette Kowalski	Paris	Gallimard	1996
		Demeure, pénombre, mensonge	Colette Kowalski	Paris	Gallimard	1997
Strittmatter	Thomas					
		Le corbeau du lac Baïkal	Nicole Casanova	Paris	Albin Michel	1993
		Musique de lait	Martin Ziegler	Paris	Mauguin	1997
Süskind	Patrick					
		Le parfum: histoire d'un meurtrier	Bernard Lortholary	Paris	Fayard	1986
		Le pigeon	Bernard Lortholary	Paris	Fayard	1987
		L'histoire de Monsieur Sommer	Bernard Lortholary	Paris	Gallimard	1991
		Un combat et autres récits.	Bernard Lortholary	Paris	Fayard	1996
Theissen	Gerd					
		L'ombre du Galiléen	Jean-Pierre Bagot	Paris	Cerf	1988
Timm	Uwe					
		La découverte de la saucisse du curry	Bernard Kreiss	Paris	Seuil	1996
Treichel	Hans-Ulrich					
		Le Disparu	Jean-Louis de Rambures	Paris	Hachette littérature	1999

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Tschinag	Galsan	Ciel bleu. Une enfance dans le Haut-Altai	Dominique Petit	Paris	Métaillé	1996
		Vingt jours et un: un séjour dans le Haut-Altai	Dominique Petit	Paris	Métaillé	1997
Tuckermann	Anja	Un corps à soi	Monique J. Lebedel	Paris	Albin Michel	1991
Ulrici	Rolf	Le médecin de Dreefels	Olivier Mannoni	Paris	Éditions De la Seine	1995
Vanderbeke	Birgit	Le Dîner de moules	Claire de Oliveira	Paris	Stock	1995
		Apocalypse non!	Claire de Oliveira	Paris	Stock	1996
		Guerre froide	Anne Weber	Paris	Stock	1997
		Je veux mon meurtre	Claire de Oliveira	Paris	Stock	1998
		Alberta reçoit un amant	Anne Weber	Paris	Stock	1999
Walser	Martin	La maison des cygnes	Bernard Kreiss	Paris	Gallimard	1982
		Lettre à Lord Liszt	Hélène Belletto	Paris	Laffont	1985
		Ressac	Hélène Belletto	Paris	Laffont	1987

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
		Wolf et Doris	Hélène Belletto	Paris	Laffont	1988
		La chasse	Christian Richard	Paris	Laffont	1991
		Dorn; ou, le musée de l'enfance	Hélène Belletto	Paris	Laffont	1992
		Les uns sans les autres	M. Breitman, S. Breitman	Paris	Laffont	1994
		Et ce n'est pas toute mon histoire	Marianne Dautreya	Paris	Laffont	1995
		La guerre de Fink	Michel Cadot	Paris	Hachette littérature	1998
Weiss	Peter					
		L'Esthétique de la résistance III	Eliane Kaufholz-Messmer	Paris	Klincksieck	1993
Westphalen	Joseph von					
		Dans la carrière	Colette Kowalski	Paris	Gallimard	1993
Wissmann	Daniel Douglas					
		Le dirigeable de Dillinger	Claire de Oliveira	Paris	Seuil	1997
Wodin	Natascha					
		La ville de verre	Élisabeth Landes	Paris	Calmann-Lévy	1986
Wohmann	Gabriele					
		Le cas de Marlène Z.	Pierre Villain	Paris	Albin Michel	1985
		Le seigneur est un ami	Élisabeth Guillot	Lagrasse	Verdier	1997

Last Name	First Name	Title	Translator	Place	Publisher	Year
Wolf	Christa	Cassandra: le récit et les prémisses	Alain Lance	Aix-en-Provence	Alinéa	1985
		Incident: nouvelles d'un jour	Ghislain Riccardi	Aix-en-Provence	Alinéa	1989
		Ce qui reste	Ghislain Riccardi	Aix-en-Provence	Alinéa	1990
		Scènes d'été	L. Haag, M.-A. Roy	Aix-en-Provence	Alinéa	1990
		Médée: voix	A. Lance,	Paris	Fayard	1997
Wölk	Ulrich		R. Lance-Otterbein			
Zischler	Hanns	Match retour	Bernard Kreiss	Arles	Actes Sud	1994
		Visas d'un jour	Jean-François Poirier	Paris	Bourgois	1994

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