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Published in:
Across Languages and Cultures

DOI:
[10.1556/Acr.13.2012.1.2](https://doi.org/10.1556/Acr.13.2012.1.2)

Published: 01/06/2012

Document Version:
Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Tan, Z. (2012). The translator's identity as perceived through metaphors. *Across Languages and Cultures*, 13(1), 13-32. <https://doi.org/10.1556/Acr.13.2012.1.2>

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THE TRANSLATOR'S IDENTITY AS PERCEIVED THROUGH METAPHORS

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Abstract: The (de/re)construction through translation of the linguistic-cultural identity of the One in relation to that of the Other can only be made possible by the translator functioning as its core participant. The present paper offers a study of this type of translator function. Specifically speaking, it studies translatorial identity as manifested through translational metaphors. Stemming from a project on Chinese and Western metaphors for translation undertaken by the author, the paper examines a selection of images taken from history and discusses how they may be seen as depicting different aspects of the translator's varied identity. The paper argues that by viewing this varied identity through the use of metaphors, we may be able to more fully understand the heterogeneous nature of translation and appreciate how best translation is to be performed, both within different language-cultural contexts and for various socio-political and intercultural communication purposes.

Keywords: translator, identity, metaphor, heterogeneity, diversity, cross-culture

1. INTRODUCTION

In the discipline of translation and cross-cultural studies, the mention of 'identity' is often first and foremost associated with the linguistic-cultural identity of the One (the self) as opposed to that of the Other (the foreign). Indeed, in a post-modern world characterized by globalization, immigration and localization, the means by which the identity of a translated text or a minority language/culture is established and recognized in the process of translation or intercultural communication is very much the concern of the translator and translation studies scholar. However, there is another type of identity that is often of primary importance and should not be neglected in our discussion of identity issues in translation, namely the identity of the translator. Questions concerning whether a translation assumes an identity close to the source or target language culture, whether a translation can have an identity of its own, or whether it is but the surrogate existence of another identity, are to a large extent dependent on the kind of identity the translator assumes in the translation process. This paper attempts to examine the kind of identity the translator assumes in the process of translation and how that identity is reflected or represented in metaphorical discourse on translation. The aim is to draw attention to the relevance of metaphorical discourse in translation studies, and to insights from such discourse that may not be easily gained from non-metaphorical discourse, especially with regard to the study of translator identity issues.

2. APPROACHING TRANSLATORIAL IDENTITY

What is 'translatorial identity'? To answer this question, arguably one must first briefly address the more basic question "what is identity?" Over the past few decades, scholars in various fields of socio-political and cultural studies have shown an immense interest in questions concerning 'identity'. For example, in the 1980s and 1990s heated discussions were devoted to the 'identity politics' of race, gender and sexuality, as well as to the role of identity in nationalism and ethnic conflict (Fearon 1999: 1). Numerous definitions of 'identity' have been proposed. To cite a few from the many presented by James D. Fearon (1999: 4): (1) identity is "people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others" (Hogg & Abrams 1988: 2); (2) identity "refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities" (Jenkins 1996: 4); (3) identities are "relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self" (Wendt 1992: 397); (4) my identity is defined by the commitments

and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose (Taylor 1989: 27); and (5) yet what if identity is conceived not as a boundary to be maintained but as a nexus of relations and transactions actively engaging a subject? (Clifford 1988: 344)

Though other definitions are also important, these five are perhaps the most useful for our present purpose, because they can all be drawn on to help us address our central question - “what is the identity of a translator?” For example, in describing the identity of the translator, we could follow what is presented above and say that a translator’s identity consists of other people’s perceptions of what sort of social person a translator is and how different s/he is from other social persons, that it refers to the ways in which translators are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities in society, etc.

On the other hand, discussions in the translation studies field itself tend to take the meaning of ‘identity’ for granted and seem more concerned with other issues such as its relations with the cultural and general socio-politics of translation. For example, in her thought-provoking work (1996), Sherry Simon is concerned with the issue of cultural identity by arguing for feminist views on translation, encouraging translators (including women translators) to be literary activists and be more innovative in translating. Edwin Gentzler’s concern on the identity issue in translation is mainly with ‘nation building’ and the role translation plays in helping build the various national identities in countries and regions in North and South America including the USA, Canada and Brazil (2008). Other translation studies scholars address issues on identity and translation from yet different perspectives, e.g. from the transdisciplinary perspective as adopted by Michael Cronin (2006) and the sociologically-based ‘cultural translation’ perspective as adopted by Michaela Wolf (2008).

However, while the discussion presented in this paper has been inspired in one way or another by current debates and the above-cited general approaches to identity, the specific nature of translatorial identity has yet to be adequately addressed. To answer the rather complex question “what is the identity of a translator?”, one could in fact look at how one might answer simpler, age-old questions such as “what is a translator?” or “what does a translator do?”. Thus, the whole issue of describing the identity of the translator is but one of describing what a translator does in the process of translation and how s/he does it.

Perhaps the most straightforward answers are to be found in dictionaries. For example, the *Oxford Dictionary of Current English (fourth edition)* defines “TRANSLATOR” as “a person who translates from one language into another”, and “TRANSLATE” as “1. express the sense of words or writing in another language. 2. be expressed or able to be expressed in another language. 3. (translate into) convert or be converted into another form or medium” (Soanes 2006: 974). The same type of definition is also found in the *Modern Chinese Dictionary (Revised Edition)* (現代漢語詞典〔修訂本〕): “[翻譯]: 做翻譯工作的人” (“*fanyi/translator: a person who translates*) while the related verb “[翻譯] *fanyi/translate*” means:

把一種語言文字的意義用另一種語言文字表達出來（也指方言與民族共同語、方言與方言、古代語與現代語之間一種用另一種表達；把代表語言文字的符號或數碼用語言文字表達出來）。（Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 2003: 345）

To express the meaning of words of one language by way of another language (it also refers to expressing by way of another form between a dialect and a national language, between different dialects, and between a classical and a modern form of the same language; or expressing by way of verbal language the meaning of signs that stand for words or codes). (Translated by the author)

However, outside the conventional dictionary, we often hear alternative definitions which characterize the translator as a mediator, a painter, an actor, a photographer, an imitator, a slave, a servant, or a matchmaker. Thus, the work the translator does is seen to involve the ‘building of bridges’, ‘mediating between two language-cultures’, ‘imitating or ‘copying the original like a painter’, or ‘matching the one to the other like a matchmaker’.

While all of the above definitions may be seen as valid answers to the question “what is a translator?” they differ in presentation. The first type of answer is given in plain, straightforward language and the second uses a special type of language; special in the sense that instead of directly saying that a translator is ‘a person who translates from one language into another’, it uses images of other social persons (e.g. painters, mediators, matchmakers, etc.) to describe what a translator is or should be like. In other words, while the first group relates to a [conventional] dictionary type of definition of what a translator is, the second contains metaphorical descriptions of the wide range of roles fulfilled by the translator.

This way of approaching the identity of the translator immediately reveals two important aspects of the nature of this identity, namely: (1) that which equates the said identity with the overall identity of the translator, i.e. the composite identity that makes the translator different from all other social entities such as scientists, doctors, engineers, businessmen and creative writers; and (2) that which tells of the contingent roles the translator undertakes in specific contexts, e.g. those of mediating, conveying information, introducing alien cultural elements, creating a new genre of literature, entertaining a local audience, and so forth. In simple grammatical terms, the difference between the two can be accounted for by different uses of the word: one in its singular form and the other plural.

As demonstrated by the five previously quoted definitions, in the social sciences “a person’s identity is how the person defines who he or she is” (Fearon 1999: 11) and so, whether physiologically, psychologically or sociologically, any individual person may have but one overall identity. Physiologically, a person is identified by his/her physical and biological features such as height, facial features, finger prints, and colour of the skin and hair. Psychologically, the notion of personal identity covers the idiosyncratic things that make a person unique, and is often associated with the awareness of self and the capacity for self-reflection, as seen in gender identity. Sociologically, identity has to do with a person’s role-behaviour in relation to other people in society, or the collection of group memberships that define the individual. In the words of Richard Jenkins (1996: 4), it “refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities”.

Viewed from these angles - either separately or simultaneously - the identity of a person is the person him/herself, and the person him/herself is that identity. This can be proven true by the fact that in some societies, such as Hong Kong and China, any individual person is and can be assigned only one identity card number, and in other societies, such as Britain and the USA, individual persons can each be assigned only one national insurance number, social security number, driving licence number, etc. under most circumstances. Although under some circumstances a person may assume more than one identity (e.g. in the case of a double agent, a theatrical performance or a false passport), there can only be one true identity for that particular person in the general case.

On the other hand, however, any one person can and does have more than one personal trait or defining characteristic, and any one person can and does have more than one social role to play. For example, a person can be a father/mother and at the same time a son/daughter or a brother/sister at home; or a professor/scientist/doctor/worker and at the same time an administrator or someone of a high/ low social status, and so on. All of these relate to the various roles a person may perform in different contexts and can thus be equated with the various or contingent identities a person appears to have while fulfilling these roles. It is therefore true to say that an individual person is in fact endowed with two types of identities, one being the composite, overall identity that a person is placed under at all times, and the other being a variety of context-dependent identities that a person will assume, either intentionally or unintentionally.

By the same token, the translator’s identity is also multifaceted. On the one hand, like any other social person, a translator must have an overall and composite identity comprising the idiosyncratic things that make the translator (i.e. interlingual translator in our present case) a unique social entity, namely a person who translates from one language into another. On the other hand, a translator does not work in a vacuum but in real life situations, in which his/her identity as a translator is dependent on contextual elements. These range from the target readership and the function and the purpose of translation, to the norms and poetics of translation, and further to the cultural setting in which the act of translation takes place. As a result, in an actual translation situation the translator will not assume an abstract, superordinate, static identity, but a concrete, perhaps ‘subordinate’ of ‘secondary’ identity that will vary from situation to situation.

As mentioned above, this secondary type of translatorial identity is linguistically indicated by the plural form of the word, because it refers to more than one identity that the translator can assume and is often presented through the special language of metaphors. The fact that the translator has been likened in translational discourses to a painter, an actor, a mediator, a bridge-builder, a matchmaker, a photographer, a transformer, a slave, a traitor or other types of entity that could be thought of as fitting provides ample evidence to support the notion that the contingent identities of the translator or our perceptions of them are numerous and, at least in theory, are not finite. For the dynamics of translation always entails changes to, or development of, the kind of role or roles the translator plays in the act of translation. Examples that come readily to mind include the role change or role development of the Roman translator, from being submissive to their Greek authors at first to acting like conquerors in later times; of the French translator in the 17th and 18th centuries from sometimes working like a humble servant (Ladborough 1938-1939: 92) to sometimes behaving like an unrestrained, beautiful woman or “*le belle infidèle*” (Comment by Gilles Ménage [1613-1692], cited in Hurtado Albir 1990: 14); and of the Chinese translator during the New Culture Movement of the early 20th century from being a mere transcriber (*sacrificing comprehensibility to faithfulness*; 寧信而不順) to being a ‘*lying matchmaking lady*’ (*sacrificing faithfulness to comprehensibility*; 寧順而不信), and sometimes *vice versa*, from behaving like a ‘*lying matchmaking lady*’ to being a dogmatic literalist (Liu 1996: 18-20).

The point being argued here is that whilst the primary identity of the translator remains relatively stable, the secondary type of identity is of a dynamic nature. As these contingent translatorial identities are often not brought out by straightforward language but by the language of metaphors, the examination of such metaphorical language and how it defines the various contingent translator identities is in order.

3. THE FORCE OF METAPHORS

The history of translation, both Chinese and Western, is full of examples of metaphors being used as a special form of translational discourse. Among the earliest examples from the Western tradition are Cicero’s treatment of the role of the translator as an eloquent orator and not as a literal “interpreter” (*ut interpres*; Cicero 46 B.C.E.), and Philo’s comparison of translators of the *Septuagint* to “prophets and priests of my mysteries” (Philo 20 B.C.E.). In the Chinese tradition a similarly figurative use of language to describe/discuss translation may be traced back to as early as the Buddhist translator Kumārajīva in the fourth century, who compared the act of translating to “*feeding people with masticated food*” (有似嚼飯與人; Kumārajīva 4th century: 32; *translated by the author*), and his contemporary Dao’an, who compared it to “[*producing*] *diluted wine*” (葡萄酒之被水者也; Dao’an 382: 27-28; *translated by the author*).

In a recent research project on Chinese and Western metaphors for translation undertaken by the author, it was found that all of these translational metaphors either directly described or were related in one way or another to the role or roles of the translator. The reason for this is that the translator is always at the centre of the translation act, and that no act of translation would ever be possible without the participation of the actor, i.e. the translator. Therefore, whether comparing the translator [of oration] to an orator (Cicero) or the activity of translation to “*feeding people with masticated food*” (Kumārajīva), the creators of such metaphors could be understood to be referring directly/indirectly to what or who the translator is, what s/he does and how s/he does it.

However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to cover everything that may be important about metaphors for translation. Instead of trying to examine an exhaustive list of such metaphors, it will present and discuss but a few of what I find most interesting that tell of various contingent identities of the translator. For this purpose, 16 different categories of these identities may be observed below. It must be noted, however, that the figure 16 is an arbitrary choice and is not supposed to indicate that this is a finite list. Just as it is impossible to include everything about translational metaphors in general, so it is also impossible to attempt an exhaustive list of specific examples of metaphors for translator identity. Nonetheless, since the purpose is to describe the multifaceted nature of translatorial identity and not to give exact statistics, any figure that designates multiplicity would be adequate. Here first is the list of what the author calls ‘categories’ of metaphors depicting translatorial identity:

- (1) The translator as a painter

- (2) The translator an actor
- (3) The translator as a musician
- (4) The translator as a mediator
- (5) The translator as a bridge-builder
- (6) The translator as a matchmaker
- (7) The translator as a photographer
- (8) The translator as a competitor
- (9) The translator as a transformer
- (10) The translator as a traitor
- (11) The translator as a slave,
- (12) The translator as a traveller
- (13) The translator as a merchant
- (14) The translator as a reporter
- (15) The translator as a pass keeper
- (16) The translator as a morning star

What follows in the table below is a selection of examples in which the relevant metaphors are found. As the purpose is to give an idea of how such metaphors are used, only one, two or at most three examples are cited for any one particular category, in English and/or in Chinese (in the latter case the Chinese is followed by an English translation by the author). Underlines are added by the author to highlight the specific images in the metaphors in both the English and Chinese texts.

1 The translator as a painter

- Just as an excellent painter must endow a copy with all the features of the original he sets out to copy, and with its complete likeness, so must an excellent translator make the wit and genius of the author he is translating visible in his translation. And just as a well-made copy should not look like a copy, but like a real original, so should an excellent translation not look like a translation, but rather a natural work, perfectly pure production in mind. (Tende 1665: 121)
- 以效果而論，翻譯應當像臨畫一樣，所求的不在形似而在神似。(Fu 1984: 80)
With regard to literary effect, translating is like painting in that the translator aims to achieve resemblance in spirit rather than in form. (Translated by the author)

2 The translator as an actor

- I think ... I might have been an actor. And when I became one, I realized that the translator and the actor had to have the same kind of talent. What they both do is to take something of somebody else's and put it over as if it were their own... translation involves: something like being on stage. (Trask in conversation with Hönig, in Hönig 1985: 13-14)
- 在演技上，理想的譯者應該是“千面人”，不是“性格演員”。(Yu 1984: 747)
In his skills as an actor, the ideal translator should be like a ‘man with a thousand faces’ and not a ‘character actor’. (Translated by the author)

3 The translator as a musician

- I say to you it [the translation of poetry without observing rhetorical numbers] is... just as when various musical instruments are badly played by performers who are ignorant of the art of music and know little of its tones and measures. (Dolet 1540: 96)
- [翻譯]正如同用琵琶、秦箏、方響、鬻栗奏雅樂，節拍雖同，而音韻乖矣。 (Qian 1984a: 31)
(Translating) is like playing music on different musical instruments such as the Pipa (Chinese lute), the Qinzheng (Chinese zither), the Fangxiang (a kind of metallophone) and the Bili (the Tartar pipe) in that the rhythm may be the same but

the sounds are different. (Translated by the author)

4 The translator as a mediator

- That is how we should look upon every translator: he is a man who tries to be a mediator in this general spiritual commerce and who has chosen it as his calling to advance the interchange. (Goethe 1824: 25)

5 The translator as a bridge-builder

- It is also not surprising that writers of fiction use precisely those elements of the discourse on translation for their plots and figure characterisation that part with the ideal of the translator as a self-confident and unbiased bridge-builder between cultures. (Strümpfer-Krobb 2003: 117)
 - The language mediator/translator's function is "that of an indispensable bridge-builder between the members of differing linguistic and cultural communities". (Wilss 1999: back-cover)
 - 他們在兩種文化之間搭著橋梁，他們的努力使翻譯工作變成一種英雄的事業。(Wang Zuoliang 1984: 837)
- They (the translators) take it their job to build a bridge between the two cultures, and strive to make translation a glorious undertaking. (Translated by the author)*

6 The translator as a matchmaker

- 它[翻譯]是個居間者或聯絡員，介紹大家去認識外國作品，引誘大家去愛好外國作品，仿佛做媒似的，使國與國之間締結了“文學因緣”。(Qian 1984b: 268)
- The translator is a middleman or liaison whose duty it is to lead people to know about foreign literature, to induce them to love foreign literature in the same way they were doing matchmaking, by means of which they would bring about a 'marriage of literature' between nations. (Translated by the author)*
-有些譯本不免是“說謊的媒婆”，青年們上過一次當，遂以神經過敏起來合著一句俗話：“三年前被蛇咬了一口，於今看見草繩還心驚”。(Mao 1934: 350)
- ... some translations are like the 'lying matchmaking lady' and they scare away the young. As the old saying goes, "once bitten by a snake, one shies at a coiled rope for the next ten years". (Translated by the author)*

7 The translator as a photographer

- Scientific translations are manifestly paralleled by the work of the photographer, and contain, perhaps, about the same proportion of art, as the artist understands the word. Yet both translation and photography are affected by the technical knowledge of the operator. (Savory 1968: 32)
 - 翻譯是畫畫，不是照相；是念臺詞，不是背書。(Wang 1984: 906-907)
- Translation is painting, not photography. It is acting the lines, not reciting a book. (Translated by the author)*

8 The translator as a competitor

- Since the Roman translator... does not regard the integrity of the original as the value which he must dutifully preserve, translation becomes a literary contest rather than a service. The original author is a literary rival who must be subdued. (Ritcher 1938; cited in Renner 1989: 301)

9 The translator as a transformer

- ... by what means then did they (the Roman poets) so enrich their language, even almost to equality with the Greek? By imitating the better Greek authors, transforming themselves through them, devouring them; and, after having digested them well, converting them into blood and nurture... (Du Bellay 1549: 104)
- 真有靈感的譯文，像投胎重生的靈魂一般，令人覺得是一種“再創造”。(Yu

1984: 742)

A truly inspired translation is like a transformed and re-born soul and impresses one as a work of "complete re-creation. (Translated by the author)

10 The translator as a traitor

- *Traduttore traditore.* / The translator is a traitor/betrayer. (Italian saying)
 -生硬的一毋寧說死硬的一翻譯是雙重的“反逆”，既損壞原作的表達效果，又違背了祖國的語文習慣。(Qian 1984b: 280)
- ... *rigid word-for-word translation is double 'betrayal': it both destroys the flavour of the original and violates the customs of the translator's own language.*
(Translated by the author)

11 The translator as a slave

- The translator is a slave; he wracks his brain to follow the footprints of the author he is translating, devotes his life to it, and employs every graceful turn of phrase with currency among his peers, in order to conform as closely as possible to the meaning of the other. (Pasquier 1576: 112).
- ...slaves we are, and labour on another man's plantation; we dress the vineyard, but the wine is the owner's: if the soil be sometimes barren, then we are sure of being scourged; if it be fruitful, and our care succeeds, we are not thanked; for the proud reader will only say, the poor drudge has done his duty... (Dryden 1697: 175)
- ...They [translators] are the 'sherpa' silently bearing the burden and following in the footsteps of the master; they are the 'ferryman' (sic), transporting materials and running errands between cultures; their work is one of transition, and thus transitory. (Thill 1995, cited in Flotow 1997: 36)

12 The translator as a traveller

- Let him take the scales, weigh the expressions on either side, poise them every way, he will be allowed alterations, provided he preserve to the thought the same substance, and the same life. He [the translator] will act only like a traveller, who, for his conveniency, exchanges sometimes one piece of gold for several of silver, sometimes several pieces of silver for one gold. (Batteux 1747-48: 198)
- We will gladly make this journey with the translator, if only he would take us with him to Greece and show us the treasures he has found...he must be our tour guide, point things out to us ... as pilgrims seeking the great state secrets of Greek literature. (Herder 1766-1767: 208)

13 The translator as a merchant

- If a translator finds himself compelled to omit something, he may be excused if he offers something else in its place, as if he were a merchant who, having promised to deliver a specified weight of some commodity, has failed to do so and must make amends by the gift of an unexpected bonus. (Savory 1968: 85)
- ...to what Eugene Nida describes as a "spirit of exclusivism", where the translator appears as a skillful merchant offering exotic wares to the discerning few. (Bassnett 1980: 74)

14 The translator as a reporter

- The business of a translator is to report what the author says, not to explain what he means; that is the work of the commentator. (Longfellow 1980: 73)
- ... Such a translation is a reported speech; the translator recodes and transmits a message received from another source. Thus translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes. (Jakobson 1959: 233)

15 The translator as a pass keeper

- [传媒翻译]這種角色斷非只是區區一名翻譯員而已，而是新聞傳播中在文字上

的把關人。這個把關人的角色，好比一夫當關的大將，勝敗就在乎他是否武藝精湛……(Cheng 2004: 134)

This [the media translator's] role is far more than that of an interpreter, but s/he is a pass keeper of language in the media transmission process. Such a pass keeper functions like a warrior guarding a pass whose success depends on his skill and capability...(Translated by the author)

16 The translator as a morning star

- He [the translator] shall be the morning star of a new day in our literature... (Herder 1768: 207)

To restate my view, the creation and use of metaphors for what the translator is or should be like are governed by the dynamic nature of human cognition and thought, and since there is no end to the dynamic development of human cognition and thought, neither will there be an end to the dynamic development of metaphors for the translator or for translation in general. Therefore, the above is not supposed to be an exhaustive, but a rather selective, list of categories and examples. In spite of its small scale, however, the selection can nevertheless be considered representative of what is commonly found in metaphorical discourses on the translator, hence sufficient enough as a basis for analysis and discussion.

4. FROM METAPHOR TO IDENTITY

Before we proceed with the translator identity issue at more length, it may be important to briefly look at the situation of metaphor studies in general. We will note that history has been far less innovative and productive in metaphor theory than in metaphor practice. However, rapidly increased interest in metaphor theory in the contemporary world has led to important advances in the field. Of the most significant developments in metaphor studies over the last couple of decades or so, three kinds of effort can be identified. The first, found in Black (1962), Lakoff & Johnson (1980), Lakoff & Turner (1989), and Goatly (1997, 2006, 2007), discusses metaphor theory in general, which though not specifically addressing translation is nonetheless helpful in providing the broad framework within which translational metaphors can be studied. The second, seen in such works as Hermans (1985, 1996, 2007), Hannoosh (1986), Evans (1998) and André (2010), is an attempt to define translation as metaphor, focusing on an explanation of what translation is or what it can be through the use of metaphors, “through which practitioners and theorists figure the pragmatics of translation” (Evans 1998: 149). And the third kind of effort, epitomized by Chamberlain (1988, 1998) and D’Hulst (1992), is a step forward in the reflection on translation as metaphor with a clear touch of the postmodern times in translation studies: While D’Hulst emphasizes the important role metaphors play in modern or postmodern translation studies, Chamberlain explores the “metaphorics” of translation from the perspective of gender studies and within a postcolonial context.

Clearly, these are all important efforts and have helped broaden our vision of the usefulness of metaphors as a special form of discourse on translation. It is against this background that this author proposes to take a new step and sees the concrete identities of the translator through metaphors. A ready observation which may be made on analysing the examples above is that the use of various images in metaphors for translators amply reflects the existence, or an expectation of the existence, of the various identities of the translator, and that these various identities all derive from a common superordinate form that defines the overall makings of a translator, namely: a translator is a person who translates from one language to another. Whoever does not make ‘transfers’/‘changes’ between two language-cultures and achieve some kind of equivalence between the target and source texts will not be called a *translator*. But a translator may assume more than one identity in specific translation situations, real or imagined, depending on what s/he is translating, and/or for whom and for what purpose s/he is translating.

Following on from this observation, we may go on to argue that to compare the role of the translator to that of a mediator (Cat. 4), that of a bridge-builder (Cat. 5), or that of matchmaker (Cat. 6) is to say that in a given situation the translator assumes the identity of a mediator, in the sense that s/he

acts as a go-between, a liaison, bringing two language-cultures together and making exchange or interchange between the two possible, mainly for constructive rather than destructive purposes. To compare the role of the translator to that of a painter (Cat. 1) is to identify the translator with a painter in the sense that s/he produces a target text from a given source text (a) by using language expressions in the same way that a painter paints/draws a picture of a model by using the same kind of colours (i.e. resemblance in form); or (b) by achieving the same kind of overall resemblance, rather than resemblance in detail, between the TT and the ST as a painter does between his/her painting and the model (i.e. resemblance in spirit). To compare the role of the translator to that of a competitor (Cat. 8) is to say that the translator always competes with the author in order to be better than him/her, in the same way as a business or a sports competitor always tries to defeat his/her rival in the competition. To compare the role of the translator to that of a slave (Cat. 11) is to say that the translator is equal to the slave (a) in status, in the sense that s/he is not as important as the author (i.e. the master), (b) in freedom, in the sense that while the master (i.e. the author of the text being translated) enjoys complete freedom in his/her work the slave has absolutely no freedom and must do whatever s/he is told to do by their master, or (c) in the way s/he is rewarded (or not rewarded) for his/her work (a slave toils while his/her master reaps the fruits of their toil; and while the master receives the credit if the work is good, the slave has to bear whatever blame there may be if the job is not well done).

It must be noted that different, sometimes rather critical, views may be taken of the same metaphor. For example, though the 'bridge-builder' image of the translator is normally one of positive value, like in the present context, Mona Baker nevertheless alerts us not to take things for granted. In her paper "Narratives in and of Translation" published on-line, she warns: "No one questions whether bridges are always built for the (morally) 'right' reasons, nor the fact that just as they might allow us to cross over and make positive contact with a different culture, they also allow invading troops to cross over and kill, maim and destroy entire populations" (Baker 2005: 9). Take also the 'painter' image. Apart from the above 'resemblance in spirit/in form' kind of interpretation, other interpretations may also be possible, including focusing on the individuality of the resulting translation in the same way as a painting bears the personal characteristics of the painter, and so on. This kind of analysis and argument can run on and be applied to all other metaphors.

Nevertheless, the point under discussion here is that apart from working under an overall, composite identity which would make them unique from other social beings such as writers and artists, translators can and will have a variety of additional identities. So, for any given translation task, whoever qualifies as a *translator* will not only translate from one language to another, but will also translate 'faithfully', 'accurately' or 'semantically' like a 'slave' or a 'photographer', 'freely', 'idiomatically' or 'communicatively' like a 'competitor', a 'transformer', or a 'creator', or otherwise, like any other image or any combination of images described in the cited metaphors.

This then leads us to another issue, that of how the relationship between metaphors for translators and translatorial identities can be studied. It is true, as can be seen in the above examples, that the easiest thing to do is to put the various metaphors into categories based on the images contained within them. For example, those metaphors centring around the image of 'slave', '*sherpa*' or even 'servant' are gathered together and form a category, put under the heading of '[translator] as a slave'; those centring around the image of 'painter' or 'artist' form another category, i.e. the '[translator] as a painter' category; and so on and so forth. But when we co-relate the two kinds of descriptors, i.e. [translating] 'faithfully', 'accurately' or 'semantically' and [translating] like 'a slave' or 'a photographer'; or [translating] 'freely', 'idiomatically' or 'communicatively' and [translating] like 'a traitor', 'a transformer', or 'a competitor', then we are redefining our scope of translatorial identities from one of infinity to one of finite themes. This is because in spite of the volatile, hence unlimited, nature of the structure and variety of metaphors, as described by Robinson (1991: 134), there are regular patterns in the creation and use of metaphors (including translatorial metaphors) that can be traced by looking into the major themes behind a given set of metaphors. These themes naturally relate to the nature of translation, the principles and methods of translation, etc., and they are not infinite. In other words, the potentially infinite number of metaphors for translators can after all be classified into a smaller, practically finite number of categories, based on layers of translation themes.

In any discussion of the translator's identity or identities via translational metaphors, the issue of generality will inevitably be raised. We may tend to ask: are metaphors for the translator/translation a universal phenomenon, or are they language-culture-specific? Clearly, this question can be answered

from various perspectives. Firstly, there is the ‘universalist’ perspective, from which we may contend that metaphors for the translator are a general or universal phenomenon; that they apply to the translator of all text types, literary, religious, scientific and technical, political, legal or business; and that the various translatorial identities perceived through the metaphors are true and understandable across language-cultures, and at all times. This can probably be proven by the fact that foreign metaphors, when translated literally into any given target language, often readily make sense to the target readers.

Secondly, there is the opposite, ‘particularist’ perspective, from which we may argue that metaphors for the translator are not universal, but are related to specific languages and cultures, and even to the geopolitical and ethnical background of their creators and users; that they are created and used only with some text types, predominantly literature; and that consequently, the various identities of the translator represented by metaphorical images are neither true across language-cultures nor applicable across textual domains, but are confined to specific language-cultures and specific types of texts. For example, when one takes a comparative look at Chinese and Western metaphors for the translator, one finds that more familiar to the Western mind seem to be such images as ‘the morning star’, ‘the competitor/the conqueror’, ‘the betrayer’ and ‘the slave’; whereas the more traditional Chinese figures are *youzhe* (誘者/*inducer*), *meipo* (媒婆/*matchmaking lady*), *baguanren* (把關人/*pass keeper*) and so on. These various images and figures all carry their own cultural meanings and implications, and they are not commonly shared.

Thirdly, there is the view which sits somewhere between the ‘universalist’ and the ‘particularist’ and might be seen as a compromise of sorts between the two. Taking neither in absolute terms, this approach is based on the constructivist idea of relativity. It is ‘constructivist’ because it sees the ‘universalist’ and ‘particularist’ views as ‘constructive’/‘complementary’ rather than ‘destructive’ forces, and it is ‘relative’ because it contends both that the creation of metaphors of translation and translators is a ‘universal’ phenomenon, and that what is actually created is often related to specific language-cultures (e.g. the images of ‘conqueror’, ‘traitor’, ‘slave’ ‘morning star’, etc. in the West; and those of *youzhe* (誘者/*inducer*), *meipo* (媒婆/*matchmaking lady*), *baguanren* (把關人/*pass keeper*), etc. in Chinese). However, it believes that even such language-culture-specific metaphors and images will not create insurmountable obstacles to comprehension. Take ‘slave’ for example. From the prisoners of war of the Roman army to the African slaves of the later European colonial powers, the image of the ‘slave’ and ‘master-slave’ or ‘master-servant’ relationship were more a social and cultural phenomenon in the West than in China. Consequently, the ‘slave’ identity is quite an established identity in the Western translator. However, such an identity is not difficult to comprehend within a Chinese context, even if the relevant English/Western metaphor is literally rendered into Chinese, and especially if the target receptors of such translated metaphors have been adequately exposed to Western language-cultures. The same may be true of Western receptors of translated Chinese metaphors such as *meipo* (媒婆/*matchmaking lady*). In 1930s and 1940s China, many a translator was widely criticised for not being accurate in presenting the picture of their original – they behaved just like an exaggerating and “lying matchmaking lady” (Mao Dun 1934: 350). Though the Western ‘matchmaker’ image is often that of the ‘mediator’ (Goethe 1824: 25), it would not be too difficult for a Western audience to understand and appreciate the difference between their ‘matchmaker’ and the basically pejorative Chinese *meipo* (媒婆/*matchmaking lady*) image of the translator, especially when provided with some kind of contextualisation. This constructivist principle applies to all alien metaphors, as well as to the entire situation in which metaphors, where originally created or in borrowed status, are employed to represent the various identities of the translator.

Finally, there is the relationship between translatorial identity and identity in general. As mentioned in the opening paragraph of this paper, when people talk about ‘identity’ in translation studies, their ‘unmarked’ reference most frequently seems to go with the linguistic or cultural ‘identity’ of a translated text in relation to that of the source text. However, on a deeper level of analysis, the identity of a translator and the linguistic or cultural identity of a translation are not and cannot be totally detached one from the other. The process of translation involves the deconstruction of the identity of the author and the source text and their reconstruction in the receptor language-culture through the action of the translator, without whom nobody and nothing’s identity can ever be deconstructed or reconstructed. Therefore, we cannot talk about the linguistic or cultural identity of

any text, source or target, without first keeping in mind the identity of the translator. Of course, the specific identity or identities the translator assumes in specific translational acts will always be affected by a variety of factors, ranging from who or what they are translating, for whom or for what purposes they are translating, or whether there are commissioners or patrons for their tasks, and so forth. But occupying the central position during the entire process of translation is the one who does the actual work of translating. So it is how this person, the actual translator, sees his/her identity that bears directly on the kind of identity any text hopes to have in and through translation.

5. CONCLUSION

Three concluding points can be drawn from the arguments presented in this article. Firstly, that the concept of ‘translational identity’ has two basic references, i.e. it refers to (a) the general and composite *identity* of the translator that makes him/her different from all other social entities; and (b) the contingent *identities* that a translator assumes or is expected to assume in concrete translation situations. Secondly, that while the most valid and efficient way of describing the general identity of the translator may lie in the use of ordinary language, as in the dictionary type of explanations, that of describing the various, contingent identities of the translator lies in the use of figurative language such as the various metaphors discussed in the paper. And finally, that metaphors for translation and translators provide an important window, perhaps a much more important window than non-metaphors, through which we may begin to more fully understand the heterogeneous nature of translation. The simple reason is that the great variety of metaphors for the varied translator identity not only reveals the diversity of roles required of the translator, but also the very heterogeneity of the nature of translation itself. Seen on a different level, it is not that non-metaphorical, ‘scientific’ language is not capable of describing the diversified identities of the translator or the heterogeneous nature of translation, but the alternative to the use of metaphors in describing translational identities would be a situation in which the various identities of the translator would be much more difficult to understand and appreciate, and consequently the study of translation would be a much less culturally-enriching enterprise.

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