# 西南大学

## 硕士学位论文

# 解构主义与翻译探索
## ——辩证唯物主义视角

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# 内 容 摘 要

所有的翻译理论归根结底都可以追述到哲学层面，其根源都与哲学思想密不可分。中国传统的翻译标准和原则是基于中国传统的哲学思想；当代西方翻译理论主要流派，尤其是建立在索绪尔、列维斯特劳司等人的结构主义语言学基础之上的翻译理论都是以西方传统的哲学思想"逻各斯中心主义"，即"在场的形而上学"为哲学基点的。"逻各斯中心主义"追求"一个中心，一个本原，一种绝对真理"。按照这一思想建构起来的翻译理论无不视原作为权威，原作者享有至高无上的地位，而翻译的宗旨就是要用译文语言将原文的思想准确而完整地重新表达出来。

以德里达为代表的解构主义者质疑传统的"逻各斯中心主义"，其认识论力图证明世界的多元性，无中心性，无绝对的权威性。自上个世纪九十年代以来，解构主义思想逐渐开始对翻译界产生影响，建立在这一思想基础之上的翻译理论认为：文本没有终极意义，没有核心，文本是始终开放着的。由于文本的意义是不确定的、非同一的，因而原文与译文具有互文性，其意义是相互补充的。根据这一翻译理论思想，原作与原文作者的地位被彻底颠覆，译作与译文作者的地位被无限拔高。

撰写此文的原因在于，虽然解构主义已走过了近四十个春秋，翻译理论也经历了其十多年的洗礼，竟管人们对其仁者见仁，智者见智，众说纷纭，莫衷一是，但是对其从宏观、战略层面的考查和系统的分析却鲜见；撰写此文的目的在于力图突破一种只见树木而不见森林的世界观以便于对解构主义及其翻译策略有一个较为客观、公正和相对全面的认识。文章从分析现当代西方主要翻译理论及中国传统翻译思想所遵循的原则入手，指出无论是中国传统的翻译理论以及翻译实践，或者是西方传统的以及近当代的翻译理论家都以忠实于原文为准绳，同时指出：解构主义虽

然是在反西方传统哲学思想的基础之上建立起来的，它和中国传统翻译理论的思维模式也是大相径庭的，但是其思想体系及其翻译策略对中国译界尚有很强的启示作用。作为对解构主义及其翻译策略的系统探索，文章对解构主义的相关背景知识、国内外的研究状况作一综述。同时文章对解构主义思想的代表人物及其翻译思想及策略以述评的方式加以介绍。解构主义是富有极强的哲理性的思想，它不着眼于微观的、技术层面的探讨，欲对其进行较为全面而深刻的解读务须站在哲学的高度，因而本文作者尝试用马克思辩证唯物主义的观点对解构主义翻译理论观的核心思想进行剖析。本文的结尾在高度概括和总结的基础上，作者提出了今后在这方面研究的一些建议。

关键词：解构主义；逻各斯中心主义；二元对立论；辩证唯物主义

# M. A. Dissertation

# Construing Deconstruction and Translation:
## A Perspective of Dialectical Materialism

**Major:**       English Language and Literature

**Specialty:**   Linguistics and Applied Linguistics

**Supervisor:**  Professor Chen Zhi'an

**Author:**      Zhang Ao

# Abstract

All the translation theories may ultimately find their philosophical roots. Traditional Chinese translation criteria and principles are based upon Chinese philosophy. The contemporary Western translation theories, especially those based on the structural linguistics of de Saussure and Levi-Straules treat the traditional Western philosophical ideas of logocentrism, i.e. "the metaphysics of the presence" as the philosophical basis. Logocentrism searches for "one center, one original and one absolute truth". The translation theories based on this thinking regard the original as the authoritative, and regarding the writer as holding a sovereign status in the translation activity. And the tenet of translation is just to revoice the ideas of the original precisely and completely.

The deconstructionists represented by Derrida put logocentrism into question, the epistemology of whom attempts to prove the pluralism, the non-centricity and non-absolute authority of the text world. Since the 1990s, the deconstructive thought has come to show its impact on the field of translation: translation theory based on this thought acknowledges no ultimate meaning and kernel for the text and regards the text as open to all possible interpretations all the time. Since the meaning of the text is undeterminable and non-identical, the original and the translation share inter-textuality, the meanings of

which are mutually supplementary. Following this theory, the sovereign status of the writer and the original is overthrown, and the status of the translation and that of the translator are raised to an infinite high.

In spite of the facts that deconstruction has got its birth for nearly forty years and has seen its impact on translation studies for more than one decade, and that it has obtained various comments, praises, or attacks, there is little systematic investigation into it and its translation ideas from the macroscopical and tactic level, and this is just the rationale for writing this dissertation. This dissertation aims for breaking up the somewhat narrow-minded and shortsighted worldview, endeavouring to give deconstruction and its translation strategies an objective and systematic analysis. Starting from the analysis of the principles and criteria followed by the main contemporary Western translation theories and the Chinese translation thoughts, this dissertation points out that the traditional translators either domestic or abroad see fidelity to the original as the yardstick. At the same time the dissertation points out although deconstruction got its birth from opposing the traditional Western philosophical ideas, it also brings inspirations to Chinese translation studies due to the universal nature of philosophy. As a systematic investigation into deconstruction and its translation strategies, this dissertation introduces some background knowledge concerning deconstruction together with the reviews of the studies done in this domain both abroad and in China. Also a survey of the major representatives of deconstruction and their translation strategies are brought out in a narrating and commenting manner. The dialectical analysis to the deconstruction translation strategies is the kernel of this writing, the purpose of which is to give deconstruction and its translation views a thorough and complete interpretation from the standpoint of philosophy. In the conclusion part of this dissertation, the author gives some suggestions for further study in this sphere in the future after a brief summary.

**Key Words:** Deconstruction    Logocentrism    Binary Oppositions    Dialectical Materialism

# 独创性声明

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# Chapter One

# Introduction

## 1.1 The Rationale of the Study

Deconstruction, also called post-structuralism or post-modernism, is a revolt against structuralism. The thought can be traced back to Nietzsche who announced, "The God had died". Deconstruction formally originated in the mid of the 1960s with Jacques Derrida, Foucault, Heidegger, Roland Barthes, Paul De Man, Walter Benjamin, Andrew Benjamin and Lawrence Venuti, etc. as the representatives. As a fundamentally philosophical thought, deconstruction attempts to break the Western metaphysical tradition. After its birth in France, deconstruction has seen its influence in various areas including sociology, humanities, physiologies and ideologies and has brought forth a revolution to the thoughts of the scholars. Deconstruction came to shed its light on translation since the late 1980s and the early 1990s. This thought arouses great shock in the translation field, since it attacks many traditional concepts. But it also brings a multi-dimensional research methodology to translation study so as to replace the single pattern of the structural linguistics.

Since the mid of the 1990s, deconstruction has found its impact on the translation study in China. The Chinese scholars have done much work concerning the study and interpretation of deconstruction: on the one hand they introduce deconstruction by way of describing and commenting contemporary Western linguistic philosophies or through bringing to the Chinese readers contemporary Western literary criticism from the linguistic point of view; on the other hand there have been direct introductions and commendatory on the theory of deconstruction from different angles in China since the late of the 1980s. Through these channels, the Chinese scholars are getting mature in the interpretations of deconstruction and its translation strategies.

However, there is little systematic and thorough investigation into deconstruction and

its translation strategies especially from the standpoint of philosophy, which is essentially significant since deconstruction is a highly philosophical thought. In the nearly past two decades, many Chinese translation scholars seem to have not comprehended the essence and spirit of deconstruction. Instead, they seem to have grasped only the superficial features of deconstruction such as its negation, its suspicion and its dismantling features, etc. Starting from this understanding they lead the translation study into some extreme cases, putting forward some seemingly fashionable propositions such as "translation is to paraphrase", "translation is to betray", "translation means to conquer", "translation means to deconstruct", etc. It is to be admitted that the translation scholars no longer search for the utopian fidelity on account of the influence of deconstruction thought. They no longer treat the meaning as being pre-established only by linguistic semiotics, and no longer regarding the text as closed but open to all the possible interpretations. Nevertheless there lacks some insightful understanding toward the essence of deconstruction. It is of particular significance to grasp the essential spirit of deconstruction in order to investigate translation study in a thorough and extensive manner first of all. And this is what the author intends to do in this dissertation: standing on the high of dialectical materialism to make a construing of deconstruction and translation.

## 1.2   The Objectives of the Study

In order to deal with the problems existing in the interpretation of deconstruction and its translation views, the author of this dissertation aims for the following objectives:

Firstly, the author of this dissertation intends to give deconstruction and its translation strategies a systematic and insightful exploration from its revolt against the traditional Western philosophy of logcentrism to its application into the translation studies. After the painstaking and systematic examination, the author expects that it will be clear that deconstruction is but a thoughtway of suspicion and a cultural style of dismantling. It is a must-be process and the weapon to break up the monism instead of being the aim or the result. The real purpose of studying deconstruction lies in its reconstruction. It is out of the same reason for us to deal with the application of deconstruction in translation studies: developing and constructing translation theories on solid and reasonable basis in the light of deconstruction essence and spirit.

Secondly, standing on the high of dialectical materialism, the author of this dissertation attempts to make some objective, just, and in-depth comments on deconstruction and its translation strategies: the studies done on deconstruction and its translation views in the nearly past two decades show that many Chinese translation scholars exaggerate some factors revealed by deconstruction and run into some radical and extreme cases due to the lack of insightful interpretations about deconstruction. Deconstruction came into being by way of its dialectical negation to structuralism. In order to advance deconstruction, it is also advisable to insist on the dialectical negation view. Practice is the only criteria for the truth, thus the reality of deconstruction and its translation strategies must experience the test of social practice.

Thirdly, this dissertation endeavors to grasp and highlight the essence and spirit of deconstruction through its superficial phenomenon in order to broaden our world view: deconstruction seems to be against tradition in various aspects, but its essence lies in first of all its potential reconstruction—trying to combine the factors within the structures with those outside the linguistic structures based on its discovering the defectiveness of structuralism and its questioning about the traditional metaphysical rationality in the Western philosophy. Although the deconstructionists have not made clear this point, their suspicion to the rationality of structures implies this reconstruction. The essence of deconstruction also lies in its thinking mode of phenomenology, which releases us from the restrain of logic-mathematics thinking mode thus activates our ability of imagination and association. This thinking mode is of much significance in the interpretation of the texts and in translation activities. The essence of deconstruction also lies in its multidimensional thinking style, which contributes to the cultivation of the openness of thought. Deconstruction criticizes some old rationality in order to dig out the errors and weaknesses. And this open-minded spirit is essential for a person engaged in the scientific work, not being restricted by the old traditions, old rationalities and those seem to be rational.

## 1.3   The Organization of This Dissertation

This dissertation is composed of six chapters. The first chapter serves as the introduction to the whole dissertation, in which the rationale and the objectives of this

writing are included. In the second chapter you will read the survey of traditional Chinese translation criteria and principles together with their relied philosophical basis; logocentrism, structuralism and the essence of traditional Western translation views and a brief introduction to deconstruction and its views about text meaning and translation are also found in this chapter. The third chapter introduces some background knowledge about deconstruction and the reviews of the studies done in this domain both abroad and in China. In the fourth chapter a survey of the major representatives of deconstruction and their translation strategies is made. The fifth chapter is about the dialectical analysis to deconstruction and its translation strategies. In the last chapter you will read the summary of this study and the implications for further study in this sphere.

# Chapter Two

# A Review of Traditional Translation Criteria and the Philosophical Roots

A survey of the principles and criteria followed by the traditional translators either in China or in the West will prove to this point: fidelity to the original has been regarded as the yardstick in translation. And this pursuit is influenced by the thinking modes and the relevant philosophical traditions.

## 2.1 Traditional Chinese Translation Criteria and the Philosophical Basis

In thousands years long history of Chinese translation studies and practice, the scholars have regarded fidelity among various translation principles as the highest standard to measure the translations. And to a large extent, this adherence is fundamentally dominated by the unitary thinking mode—the pervasive influence of Confucianism on the Chinese humanities and natural sciences.

### 2.1.1 Principles and Criteria Followed by Traditional Chinese Translators

In spite of the facts that China enjoys a five-thousand-year long history of civilization and a three-thousand-year long history of translation, and that the Chinese translators have attempted to develop their own translation theories, it is hard to find a systematic translation theory to guide the practice of translation. However, a brief survey of the influential figures in the translation field of China from the ancient to the present for their ideas about translation will exhibit the essence of translation activities in their minds.

In China, the first official definition of translation was found in the late Zhou Dynasty: "translation is to replace one written language with another without changing the meaning for mutual understanding." The early stage of translation in China was from the mid of the first century to the fifth century. In this period, the main activities of translation were

about the translation of the Buddhist Scriptures from the Sanskrit language. The imperial officer, Dao An, and the famous Indian Buddhist monk Kumarajiva were important figures in the circle of translation. Kumarajiva emphasized accuracy of translation, applying a free translation method to transfer the true essence of the Sanskrit Sutras. In this period of time there was discussion on literal translation vs free translation— "a core issue of translation theory." The criteria for guiding the translation of the Buddhist Scriptures were " accuracy and smoothness".

The period of the Sui Dynasty and the Tang Dynasty was regarded as the first peak of translation in Chinese translation history. Translators of this period were mainly Buddhist monks. Xuan Zang, the famous monk of the Tang Dynasty was not only a great translator, but also a great translation theorist whose contribution to translation studies still remains significant today. Translation criteria set down by Xuan Zang was that translation "must be both truthful and intelligible to the populace". The Song Dynasty saw little progress in translation theory and practice although translation schools for Buddhist Scriptures were established then.

During the Yuan and Ming Dynasties, the main purpose of translation was to introduce the Western technical knowledge. Translations during the Ming Dynasty had two distinguishing characteristics: (1) The subject of translation shifted from Buddhist Scriptures to scientific and technological writings; (2) translators in this period of time were mainly scientists and government officials who were erudite scholars, and the western missionaries who brought Western knowledge to China. Although translations carried out during the Ming dynasty were mainly on science and technology: mathematics, astronomy, medicine, hydrology etc., there were also some translations of philosophy and literature in this period. Li Zhizao, with assistance of the foreign missionaries, translated some of Aristotle's works like *On Truth* into Chinese. In 1625, the first translation of *Aesop's Fables* was also introduced to Chinese readers. By comparison with translation in the Tang Dynasty, translation in the Ming Dynasty was not so influential in Chinese translation history. In the Tang Dynasty, there was a quest for systematic translation theories, but during the Ming Dynasty, translation practice was overstressed—the main purpose of translation was to introduce Western technical knowledge, and no translation theories were developed during this period of time.

Yan Fu, one of the most important figures in the modern period of translation in

China, was the most influential translator and translation theorist. He won his reputation as a famous translator and also as a result of his contribution to translation theory. His theory successfully guided technical translation during the late Qing Dynasty and the early People's Republic of China. He set down the triple translation criteria of "Faithfulness, Fluency and Elegance," which he called "Xin Da Ya" in the preface of the translated *Evolution and Ethics*. "Faithfulness" requires that the meaning in the target language should be faithful to the meaning of the original; "Fluency" is the requirement of intelligibility of the target language text, and the translated text should be in accordance with the language rules of the target language; "Elegance" requires a translation to be esthetically pleasing. Yan Fu's triple criteria greatly influenced translators in contemporary China. Ma Jianzhong, the author of the very influential *Ma 's Grammar*, was another figure during the Qing Dynasty who has long been neglected as a translation theorist. Ma set forth three requirements for a good translation, namely: (1) A translator should have a good mastery of the two languages. He is required to know the differences and similarities between the two languages. (2) A translator should have a full understanding of the meaning, style and spirit of the source text and transfer them exactly into the target language. (3) There should be no discrepancy between the source text and the target text. The target text is required to be identical with the source text. During the late Qing Dynasty, literary translation was popular and marked another peak of translation in China. As the first translator to translate Western literature into classical Chinese, Lin Shu's contribution to China's literary translation cannot be denied. The development of translation theory during the late Qing Dynasty remained a discussion and expansion of Yan Fu's theory, and literal vs free translation was still the core issue then.

The May 4th Movement opened a new chapter in the history of translation in China. The translation focus was on the translation of Karl Marx and Lenin's works on socialist and communist theories, plus the translation and re-translation of Western literature. Translation theory, especially literary translation theory, was effectively developed during this period of time when large quantities of literary works were translated. Translation issues, such as the necessity of translation, translatability and untranslatability, the relation between translation and literary creation, the improvement of translation quality etc. were raised and adequately discussed by translation practitioners. However, the heated topics on translation theory were still translation criteria, literary vs free translation. Lin Yutang put

forward his translation criteria: "the first is fidelity, the second coherence, the third is elegance." Namely, the meaning of a translation should be faithful to the original, and the language of the translation should be smooth, coherent and esthetically pleasing. As can be seen that Lin's translation criteria were no more than a reproduction of Yan Fu's "Xin Da Ya" (faithfulness, intelligibility and elegance). Lu Xun, one of the greatest writers of China, gave particular importance to faithfulness. He believed that the value of a translation lies in its faithfulness to the original text. Lu Xun advocated strict literal translation so as to be more faithful to the original text. Qu Qiubai was a politician. But his views on translation were very influential in China. He was one of the early translators of Russian literature into Chinese. His translation has been highly valued for its faithfulness to the meaning, the syntactic structure and the writing style of the original text. He believed, like Lu Xun, that translators should be faithful to the original text. "A translation should be faithful to the original meaning and enable the target language readers to have the same concept from the translated text as the source language readers get from the original text." (accurapid.com/journal/24china.htm)

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, literary translation was separated from general translation. Most of the translators in this period (1949-1978) took a literary approach to the study of translation theory. Fu Lei is one of the famous translators who translated from French into Chinese. The transfer of the original spirit, advocated by Fu Lei, was regarded as one of the main tasks of literary translation. The advocating of "being alike in spirit" for literary translation does not deny the significance of "being alike in appearance." A good translation product should both be "alike in spirit and appearance." Fu's theory is just a extension of Yan Fu's "Xin Da Ya" (faithfulness, fluency, elegance). If Yan's three-character criteria are a guideline for general translation, Fu's "be alike in spirit" may be regarded as the ultimate requirement for literary translation. In 1964, Qian Zhongshu, a member of the cultural elite in present-day China, put forward his "transmigration theory" for literary translation: A literary translation is like the act of transmigration in which the soul, the spirit of the original text remains in the target text even although the carrier of them, the language, has changed.

Since China opened its door to the outside world, Chinese translators and translation theorists have been able to broaden their views. With the introduction of different views on translation from the West, Chinese translators are rethinking the theories and criteria

they have followed, and researches on translation theories have been diversified. Generally speaking, there are two main schools of translation theorists, namely, the linguistic school and the literal and cultural school. The former school brought to the translation community of China a more westernized model of translation theory. They absorbed the essence of Western translation theory and combined them with their own research in order to develop a new theory, which is more applicable in China. The latter did their research on translation theory with references which were mainly from the history of translation of China, took a literal and cultural approach towards their research. The main issues on translation they discussed continued to be the principles, criteria and methods of translation, and the criteria set down by Yan Fu are still influential in their discussions.

Since the mid of the 1980s, the Western structuralism has come to influence the Chinese translation studies. Structuralism brings us the scientific analysis methods, guiding us to the linguistic laws and text structures. By way of the analysis into the linguistic objects, we attempt to recognize the inside structures and layers of the languages. Translation studies based on structural linguistics have made noticeable achievements in China, so that some scholars have proposed to establish the science of translatology. Although structural linguistics is a scientific theory for the study of linguistic systems, many deficiencies are shown once it is applied into linguistic practice, for instance, in the translating activity, since it excludes the subjects and the linguistic contexts. This will be discussed in detail later.

The Western deconstruction and its translation views have come to influence the Chinese translation studies since the mid of the 1990s. As an anti-traditional thought, deconstruction arouses great interests of Chinese scholars. But many of us have not grasped the essence and spirit of deconstruction. Instead, we have just taken hold of the superficial features such as the natures of suspicion, negation, and deconstruction, etc. so that some of us lead translation studies into the extreme cases. Based on this understanding of deconstruction, some wrong propositions have been put forward. In order to make an in-depth investigation into the highly philosophical theory of deconstruction, we must first of all grasp its essential spirit. And this is just the purpose of this study.

### 2.1.2 The Philosophical Basis for the Translation Criteria of the Chinese Translators

One point is apparent from the above brief review of traditional Chinese translation criteria and principles followed by the Chinese translators: while doing the translation work, there is a center in their minds, and there exists a supreme authority. For them, the center to be focused on is the original meaning of the source text, and the supreme authority is the status of the original writer.

From the first definition of translation in the late Zhou Dynasty "without changing the meaning", to Yan Fu's triple criteria, from Xuan Zang's translation criteria to Qian Zhongshu's transmigration theory, from Lu Xun's translation principle to "being alike in both spirit and appearance" of Fu Lei, it is not difficult to find that the first and most important principle for the translators to follow is to be faithful to the source text. That is, the status of the original writer, who has the ultimate explanation right for the meaning of the text, cannot be invaded. To think from the philosophical level, we can see a trace of the influence of the traditional Chinese thinking models on the translators and translation theorists. Confucianism, which has dominated Chinese society for more than two thousand years, cannot be ignored when discussing Chinese culture. During the period known as the Warring States in China (475-221 B.C), Confucianism became the state philosophy, and through most of the subsequent history of China, the ideas of Confucius permeated all aspects of Chinese life. Confucianism clearly typifies the mainstream of Chinese philosophy, while Taoism and Buddhism, the two religious systems which also prevailed in China during the same periods in its history, seem to have served as supplementary elements in meeting the spiritual needs of the people. One of the most important principles in Confucianism is loyalty, or faithfulness, which lies at the center of all basic human relationships in the system. Loyalty can be directed to the emperor, the king, family members, and friends. It can also be expressed toward an ideal, such as truth and Justice. As a result of the pervasive influence of Confucianism, in the circles of scholars there are also some ideal, some truth, and some supreme authority for them to be faithful to. That is, the ideas of Confucianism have found the impact on the Chinese humanities and natural sciences. Consequently, after living in such a loyal and faithful atmosphere for centuries, Chinese translators and translation theorists come to regard the original texts as their ideal and ultimate truth to be faithful toward. Philosophically, we

may see that it is the unitary thinking mode that has dominated the traditional Chinese scholars from the above-mentioned ideas. This sort of thinking mode may lead to the individual worship or individual heroism in dealing with the human relationships when running into the extreme cases; and also result in the blind worship toward a certain theory or a certain so-called truth in the scientific work. And in the following we shall find some identical tendencies in the traditional Western mode of thinking.

## 2.2 Logocentrism, Structuralism and the Essence of Traditional Western Translation Views

For a long time in history, structuralism, which is based on the theory of logocentrism has taken a leading position in the West. Logocentrism is also called the "metaphysics of presence". It is central to all systems of Western philosophy from the ancient Greek philosopher Plato through the sixteenth century Descartes up to the twentieth century Derrida, who put forward his renowned theory of deconstruction. Under the notion of logocentrism, people habitually tend to attribute things a fixed nature, hoping to find a fixed result or answer in a certain fixed point. People frequently find them being bewildered once the feeling of stability and fixedness is lost. Then they try their best to create a certain stability and fixedness so as to make themselves feel free from anxiety. Since for such a long time logocentrism has been taking the leading position in the ideologies of the Western people, naturally various translation schools and especially the translation views based on structuralism have got influence from it by means of, consciously or unconsciously taking logocentrism as their theoretical basis.

### 2.2.1 Logocentrism

Logocentrism has characterized Western philosophy since Plato. Logocentrism desires for a center or a fixed point, which guarantees the derivative meanings of all things. That is, it supports the idea that there is an origin, a starting point of knowledge from which "truth" can be ascertained. In the field of humanities, logocentrism is a term usually employed by the critics to refer to the idea that words have some specific and determinate meaning that does not change, and accordingly logically a text must have some specific and determinate meaning. This philosophical idea consciously or unconsciously, is the

root for the notions of traditional translation views.

Derrida, the founder of deconstruction describes logocentrism as the structure that sustains metaphysics and all of Western thought. According to Derrida, the existence of metaphysics and all of Western thought depends on the structure of logocentrism, which privileged the system of binary oppositions. In a literal sense, logocentrism means "word-centered." Philosophy is structured on the notion that there exists some meaning, truth, being, and some presence that can be articulated. (Culler, 1981).

The spirit of logocentrism is the soul of structuralism. The essence of logocentrism is that all systems or structures are created of binary pairs or oppositions, of two terms like God and man, presence and non-presence, speech and writing. That is, Western metaphysics is structured in terms of binary oppositions or dichotomies. Within this structure the opposed terms are not equally valued: one term occupies the structurally dominant position and takes on the power of defining its opposite or other. The dominant and the subordinated terms are simply positive or negative—the dominant term defines the other by negation. The first term is given privilege of defining the other by all that it is not. Speech is privileged over writing; presence is privileged over absence. The logocentric Western tradition has always given primacy to the spoken word or oral language, leaving the written on mere secondary status, because logocentrism holds that speech-thought (the *logos*) is a privileged, ideal, and self-present entity, through which all discourse and meaning are derived.

### 2.2.2 Structuralism

Structuralism rose in France in the 1960s. Its methodology originates from Switzerland linguist Saussure. The aim of structuralism is to make the humanities and social science precise and scientific like the natural science. Structuralists believe that scientific investigation should not stay on the external and experiential level, but to seek the internal order or structure.

Logocentrism is the kernel of structuralism. Logocentrism presupposes that intrinsic meaning (logos) exists before linguistic expressions: meaning is like the spirit, while linguistic signs are the coarse body. Structuralists believe that a super-structure determines the meaning of linguistic signs and that this super-structure is the basis or center of the meaning.

Structuralists like Saussure and Levi-Straules are interested in language as a system or structure. They are interested in the interrelationship between units, which are also called "surface phenomena," and rules, which are the ways that units can be put together. That is, more specifically, they look at the units of a system, and the rules that make that system work, without regard for any specific content. In language, for instance, structuralists believe that the units are words (or, actually, the 31 phonemes which make all the sounds of words in English) and the rules are the forms of grammar which order words. In different languages the grammatical rules are different, as are the words, but the structure is still the same in all languages: words are put together within a grammatical system to make meaning.

Structuralists believe that the underlying structures, which organize units and rules into meaningful systems are generated by the human mind itself, and not by sense perception. As such, the mind is itself a structuring mechanism which looks through units and files them according to rules. This is important, because it means that, for structuralists, the order that we perceive in the world is not inherent in the world, but is a product of our minds. It's not that there is no "reality out there," beyond human perception, but rather that there is too much "reality" (too many units of too many kinds) to be perceived coherently without some kind of "grammar" or system to organize and limit them. (Freedman & Miller, 1995).

So structuralism sees itself as a science of humankind, and works to uncover all the structures that underlie all the things that humans do, think, perceive, and feel—in mathematics, biology, linguistics, religion, psychology, and literature, to name just a few disciplines that use structuralist analyses.

Structuralist analysis posits these systems as universal: every human mind in every culture at every point in history has used some sort of structuring principle to organize and understand cultural phenomena. For instance, every human culture has some sort of basic language structure to produce meaning. Every human culture has some sort of social organization. In short, a structure is any conceptual system. And the rules govern the structure is universal.

Structuralism forms the basis for semiotics, the study of signs: a sign is a union of signifier and signified, and is anything that stands for anything else. Saussure provides us with a structuralist analysis of language as a signifying system. And his ideas apply to any

language—English, French, Chinese, computer languages—and to anything we can call a "signifying system". The bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. There is nothing in either the thing or the word that makes the two go together, no natural, intrinsic, or logical relation between a particular sound image and a concept. This principle dominates all ideas about the structure of language. It makes it possible to separate the signifier and the signified, or to change the relation between them. Saussure insists that all things are arbitrary; the signifier only has meaning because a community has agreed upon what it signifies, not because it has some intrinsic meaning.

In essence and in short, the structuralist model argues: Firstly, the structure of language itself produces "reality"—that we can think only through language, and therefore our perceptions of reality are all framed by and determined by the structure of language. Secondly, language speaks us; that the source of meaning is not an individual's experience or being, but the sets of oppositions and operations, the signs and grammars that govern language. Meaning doesn't come from individuals, but from the system that governs what any individual can do within it. Thirdly, rather than seeing the individual as the center of meaning, structuralism places the structure at the center—it's the structure that originates or produces meaning, not the individual self. Language in particular is the center of self and meaning. I can only say "I" because I inhabit a system of language in which the position of subject is marked by the first personal pronoun, hence my identity is the product of the linguistic system I occupy.

### 2.2.3 The Essence of the Traditional Western Translation Views

On account of the impact of logocentrism and the influences of structuralism views, traditional Western translation theories hold on the following views as certain: any text as a combination of linguistic sign combinations represents reality. The meaning of the text is fixed. And the meaning is determined by the structure, which is believed by the structuralists to be at the center of the meaning in a text. Due to the nature of linguistic signs—the signifier and the signified relationship is established by the agreement of human beings, and the universal characteristics of linguistic structures, traditional translation theorists either in China or in the West hold that translation between languages is possible. According to traditional translation views, it is the author who, by making use of the linguistic signs and grammatical rules, creates the source text. Thus the author of

the source text has the ultimate right to the ultimate meaning of the text. The relationship between the source text and the translation work is that of model and duplication.

Therefore, traditional translation theorists either in the West or in the East take "faithfulness" as the highest criterion of translation. They claim that a translation should reproduce the thought of the original completely, the style and manner of writing should be the same as those of the original, and the translation should have the same ease as the original composition (Lu Yang 1996). Thus traditionally, the author has been regarded as taking the supreme position. He is the authority who manipulates the meaning of the text. As the creator of the text, the author may manipulate the linguistic signs within the grammatical rules as he likes to express his ideas. But the translators have no right to do so. The relationship between the author and the translator is that of the master and servant, who must faithfully and accurately express the ideas of the author by way of translation. The translator has no privilege to add or subtract any idea to the text. According to the seventeenth century translation critics Daniel Huet, the best translation methodology should be: firstly the translator must closely keep to the ideas of the author; secondly, the translator should also keep to the wording of the author if possible; thirdly, the style of writing and the character of the author should also be kept as precisely as possible. (Tanzai Xi, 1991). Accordingly, the translation terms for traditional translation theorists either in the East or in the West are commonly: faithfulness, equivalence, and accuracy.

## 2.3   Deconstruction: A New Theory for Translation

In the 1960s, decostruction as a trend of anti-tradition thought sprung up in France. The major representatives include Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, and Julia Kristeva. Fundamentally, the appearance of the philosophical thought of deconstruction is to be different from the traditional unitary thinking mode with the purpose of completely negating the rationality of structuralism. By being based on this purpose, it attempts to reverse the traditional structural idea of fixed center so as to reverse logocentrism—the philosophic foundation of Western thoughts.

According to Derrida, the thinking mode of human beings has prevented them from recognizing the world in a further deep way. And the root of this regular thinking tendency

is the metaphysical epistemology since Plato. This epistemology has the purpose of seeking for ultimate "truth" and is with the characteristics of the thinking way of binary oppositions. (Silverman, 1989). Deconstructionists, by the way of reversing the philosophic basis of traditional Western metaphysics, deconstruct the view of ultimate "truth" and the binary oppositions in the studies of languages and translation.

Derrida denies the pre-existed centered meaning (logos) outside of language. The meaning of language does not refer to a certain ideology or thought outside of language itself. Instead, the meaning exists in the interplay and mutual difference of linguistic signs, i.e. the meaning is disseminated among the game of linguistic signs. The meaning of language is not stable and fixed. The system of meaning is open and the linguistic structure itself is unstable and not explicit, therefore the text created with language is not a closed and stable identity, but is of multiplicity. (Wang Zhihe, 1998). So Derrida has the conclusion that the meaning of a text is not ascertained. The ultimate fixed meaning of a text does not exist. The text is always in a state of being unfinished. The meaning of a text is the legacy of the past meaning and it is to be extended. With this premise, the thoroughly anti-tradition translation view—the deconstruction translation theory is put forward, since traditional translation theories regard any text as having fixed central meaning. Deconstruction disapproves the distinguishing between text and translation. According to Derrida, either writing or translation is an activity of manipulating linguistic signs to create meaning. Hence the writer and translator are of the same status. Writing and translation are two chains of signification for the same text as stated by Gentzler, "What do exist are different chains of signification—including the 'original' and its translations in a symbolic relationship—mutually supplementing each other, defining and redefining a phantasm of sameness, which never has existed nor will exist as something fixed, graspable, known or understood" (Gentzler, 2001).

Thus, from the very beginning, deconstruction puts the basis of the language of translation into question, rejecting the presuppositions of meaning determined by structuralism, the meaning based on the unity and identity of language. It further involves a questioning of language and the very terms, systems and concepts that are constructed by that language, and rejects the primacy of meaning fixed in the word. Apparently,

deconstruction is beginning to dismantle some of the key premises of linguistics, starting with Saussure's clear distinction of signified and signifier and any concept of being able to define, capture or stabilize meaning. Although not offering a specific translation theory of its own, deconstruction does provide people some fresh views on traditional translation theories and their related criteria by means of raising questions concerning the nature of language.

# Chapter Three

# Previous Studies on Deconstruction

As mentioned above, deconstruction is an anti-traditional thinking mode. In order to have a clear understanding of it, a systematic investigation into it from its birth to its recent development is of quite necessity. In this chapter, we shall read the historical background for the birth of deconstruction, and its challenges to traditional Western philosophical notions. A brief introduction to the research works done either in the West or in China is also given in the final part of this chapter.

## 3.1  Jacques Derrida and the Birth of Deconstruction Theory

Jacques Derrida has been respected as the father of deconstruction. An understanding of his deconstructive thought may be the entrance into the deconstruction world. Thus, a summarized introduction to the historical background for the appearance of deconstructive thought and Derrida—the pioneer of deconstruction are in the immediately following:

### 3.1.1 The Historical Background of Deconstructive Thought

In 1968, student riots on the streets of Paris and Berlin swept right across Europe, attacking the authoritarianism of the institutions of learning, even threatening to collapse the French state. The return of Charles de Gaulle returned from exile led to a crushing defeat for the 'revolutionary' student forces in France in the name of patriotism, law, and order. In Germany the resistance continued in the small but very active student terrorist groups. This revolutionary chaos, unable to defeat the existing structures of state institutions by physical force, turned in on itself and in post-structuralism and found a way instead to subvert language and destroy institutions effectively from inside. That which was once open now began to work secretly, hidden away from public gaze. The enemy was any coherent 'hierarchical' belief-system offering a total, or 'big picture' view of life. Anarchistic spontaneity replaced systematic thought of any kind, which was condemned

as repressive. Organised left-wing politics was abandoned for 'decentred' alternatives, local political projects. Dogma was damned, whether capitalist or Stalinized Marxism. (Tan Zaixi, 1981).

### 3.1.2 Jacques Derrida and the Deconstruction of Meaning Fixity

Jacques Derrida could claim to be one of the few philosophers of the late 20th Century. In 1930, the famous French philosopher was born into a Jewish family in Algeria. In 1952 he began studying philosophy in Paris, where he later taught from 1965 to 1984. From 1960 to 1964, Derrida taught at the Sorbonne in Paris. Since the early 1970s, he has divided much of his time between Paris and the United States, where he has taught at such universities as Johns Hopkins, Yale, and the University of California at Irvine. In 1967 Derrida published three books—*Speech and Phenomena*; *Of Grammatology*; and *Writing and Difference*, which introduced the deconstructive approach to reading texts, hence announced the establishment of deconstruction. Deconstructionism, a body of ideas closely associated with post-structuralism and post-modernism, is a strategy of analysis that has been applied primarily to linguistics, literature, and philosophy. His other works include *Glass* (1974) and *The Post Card* (1980). Critics have charged that Derrida's writings are "absurd", but his mark on modern thinking is undisputed. His greatest influence has been in philosophy and literary criticism in the United States where the above works were translated and published in the 1970's. Derrida's name has probably been mentioned more frequently in books, journals, lectures, and common-room conversations during the last 30 years than that of any other living thinker. He was the subject of films, cartoons and at least one rock song; he generated both adulatory and vituperative journalism; and he wrote some of the most formidably difficult philosophical works of his time. If he is to be remembered in future centuries, it is likely to be for his contributions to our understanding of language, meaning, identity, ethical decisions and aesthetic values. Derrida also campaigned for the rights of immigrants in France, against apartheid in South Africa, and in support of dissidents in communist Czechoslovakia. He was so influential that in 2003, a film was made about his life—a biographical documentary. Jacques Derrida, one of France's most famous philosophers suffered from cancer died at the age of 74 on October 8, 2004 in a Paris hospital.

Derrida's work focuses on language. He claims that the traditional, or metaphysical

way of reading makes a number of false assumptions about the nature of texts. Derrida's deconstructive style of reading subverts these traditional assumptions that language is capable of expressing ideas without changing them, that in the hierarchy of language writing is secondary to speech, and that the author of a text is the source of its meaning. And his work also challenges the idea that a text has an unchanging, unified meaning. Drawing on psychoanalysis and linguistics, Derrida questions the assumption in traditional Western culture that speech is a clear and direct way to communicate. At the heart of deconstruction is the notion that each word and by extension each text contains layers of meanings which have grown up through cultural and historical processes. A writer may not know it, but what he puts on paper has all kinds of other significance than the obvious and this can be "deconstructed" by the expert. This increases the number of legitimate interpretations of a text. Deconstruction shows the multiple layers of meaning at work in language. By deconstructing the works of previous scholars, Derrida attempts to show that language is constantly shifting.

In the revolutionary activity of the European intellectuals, language itself takes the central stage displacing terror as a means of political and intellectual subversion. Derrida seeks to show that all ideas of truth, reality, knowledge, and the meaning depend upon a naive understanding of language in which the meaning is represented directly by appropriate words. Words, he believes, are not a stand-in for the reality. Meaning being the fleeting product of words and inherently unstable, it is partly present and partly absent in the word. This effectively kills off all possibility of the communication of truth, reality, and meaning. Reality is constructed immediately by language rather than language being a reflection of it. "The only reality to be known is that of our own discourse. The interpretation of a text, biblical or literary, has been concerned largely with understanding the meaning of the past. It now remains to be asked whether there is any past to be known other than as part of the function of the present discourse" (Norris, 1988).

Meaning is not immediately present in a word, because meaning is equally a matter of what the word is not and so is always in some sense absent from it. Words are only what they are because of what other words are and equally what they are not. Furthermore, each time a word is used, because the context of that use will be different, so too will the meaning. No two situations ever being the same—change being the constant watchword— it becomes impossible to speak of words as having an 'original' meaning. Meaning will

be scattered in some vague and undefined way along a whole string of words. The sense of a sentence is not mechanically found in a combination of individual words. Any meaning there may be in a text contains elements of the words gone before and those coming after them. No one word is ever 'pure' or its meaning final, but together with all other words form an inexhaustible complex network meanings. Deconstructionists deny that there truly is stability to language. They give us language where words cannot mean anything definite, for nothing is ever fixedly present in them. It simply is not possible for one person to convey to another what is in his heart and mind, because the meaning will always divide up and float away. (http:deconstruction.ask.dyndns.dk).

Logocentric phonocentrism view of language is that the living voice precedes any written language.  As we name things and describe their actions and states, we convey meaning and sense only because there is an inseparable bond between the signifier and the signified, between words and their meanings. To drive a wedge between the two is to fall into meaningless and chaos, infinite ambiguity. The Word of God is the meaning of meanings, the fulcrum upon which the whole system of truth moves, and it is the Sign around which all others revolve and which they reflect. (Sileverman, 1988) .

However, Jacques Derrida labels all such structured thought systems, each with their own hierarchy of meaning, as metaphysical. He believes it is difficult for us to rid ourselves of something that is so embedded in our history and social consciousness. Even his own work he views as thus 'contaminated' by metaphysical thought. There must be a complete break with all structured hierarchical ways of thinking—especially those including a God who defines all things. All such defining first principles are to be 'deconstructed'. Thus the challenge of deconstruction to structuralism and to traditional logocentric phonocentrism will be discussed in detail later.

### 3.1.3 The Definition of Deconstruction

Deconstruction is a rather difficult term to define. The term was first used by Derrida and it has been explored by many thinkers and literary critics like Chakravorty Spivak, Paul de Man, Jonathan Culler, Barbara Johnson, and Hillis Miller. However they all deny giving it a brief and precise definition. It is not even entirely clear what kind of thing deconstruction is—whether it is a school of thought, a method of reading, or a textual event. Indeed it is much easier to explain what deconstruction is not. According to Derrida,

deconstruction is neither an analysis, a critique, a method, an act, nor an operation. (Derrida, 1985). It is also not synonymous for destruction. It is not the abandonment of meaning, and it is not the same as nihilism or relativism either. Part of the difficulty to define deconstruction comes from the fact that the act of defining it in the language of Western metaphysics requires one to accept the ideas of Western metaphysics, which are regarded as the target of deconstruction.

Anyway some rough definitions of deconstruction are given from which the essence of it can be grasped. According to Jacques Derrida, deconstruction is a demonstration that Western has not satisfied its quest for a "transcendental signifier" that will give meaning to all other signs. It is "not an enclosure in nothingness, but an openness to the other" (Derrida, 1985). And Barbara Johnson defines it as:

> Deconstruction is in fact much closer to the original meaning of the word 'analysis' itself, which etymologically means "to undo"—a virtual synonym for "to de-construct." ... If anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading, it is not the text, but the claim to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another. A deconstructive reading is a reading which analyses the specificity of a text's critical difference from itself.
>
> (Johnson, 1981).

To be more specific, Deconstruction involves the close reading of texts in order to demonstrate that any given text has irreconcilably contradictory meanings, rather than being a unified, logical whole. As J. Hillis Miller, the preeminent American deconstructionist, has explained in an essay entitled "Stevens' Rock and Criticism as Cure" (1976), "Deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of a text, but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself. Its apparently solid ground is no rock but thin air."

Although its ultimate aim may be to criticize Western logic, deconstruction arose as a response to structuralism and formalism. Structuralists believed that all elements of human culture, including literature, might be understood as parts of a system of signs. Derrida did not believe that structuralists could explain the laws governing human signification and thus provide the key to understanding the form and meaning of everything. He also rejected the structuralist belief that texts have identifiable "centers" of meaning—a belief structuralists shared with formalists.

Formalist critics, such as the New Critics, assume that a work of literature is a

freestanding, self-contained object whose meaning can be found in the complex network of relations between its parts (allusions, images, rhythms, sounds, etc.). Deconstructionists, by contrast, see works in terms of their undecidability. They reject the formalist view that a work of literary art is demonstrably unified from beginning to end, in one certain way, or that it is organized around a single center that ultimately can be identified. As a result, deconstructionists see texts as more radically heterogeneous than do formalists. Formalists ultimately make sense of the ambiguities they find in a given text, arguing that every ambiguity serves a definite, meaningful, and demonstrable literary function. Undecidability, by contrast, is never reduced, let alone mastered. Though a deconstructive reading can reveal the incompatible possibilities generated by the text, it is impossible for the reader to decide among them.

## 3.2    Challenges of Deconstruction to Traditional Western Philosophical Notions

Deconstruction is a philosophical school forms after structuralism, so it is also termed as post-structuralism. By way of dismantling the structural theory proposed by traditional structuralism, it attempts to reverse the binary oppositions, the relations of thought, speech, and writing supported by traditional philosophy so as to overthrow traditional Western philosophy to the core. Deconstruction thought claims that the performance of traditional philosophy is through logocentrism and phonocentrism, so in order to dismantle Western logocentric phonocentrism, deconstructionists take the following three steps: firstly, point out the invalidity of traditional structuralism especially by Michel Focault; secondly, reverse traditional binary oppositions by the most important figure Jacques Derrida in deconstruction theory; thirdly, criticize logocentric phononism so as to overthrow the Western philosophical basis fundamentally.

### 3.2.1 The Defectiveness of Structuralism

Deconstruction (also called post-structuralism) comes to be established as a theory on its criticism of structuralism. Structuralism was put forward by Switzerland linguist Saussure at the beginning of the twentieth century in his linguistic studies. And it was applied to the study of anthropology by French anthropologist Levi-Straules. And the

trend of thought is formed after it is widely applied to various study fields. With the impact of structuralism, French thinker Michel Focault applies the structural methods into the study of history and science. However, after his exploration and analysis to the development of European modernism, he found that this development was not a consistent process. Instead, Foucault found that in the process of the development of modernism, the structures kept alternating in the scope of cognition. That is, there was a cognition mode of fixed structure in every different cognition scope, and no inherent connection can be found among these cognition modes.

According to Focault, the development of modern European cognition experienced three types of cognition modes: the first cognition mode was before the sixteenth century in the period of High Renaissance. At this period, words and concrete things are intimately clung together: words as signs of things are closely related with things, while concrete things are hidden behind words and are expressed through the signs of words; the second cognition mode was in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, in the so called classical period, and in this period difference appeared between words and things, so the focus of cognition was shifted to analysis and classification. Categories were made according to the identities of things. In this period, the popular grammar was to express one sort of objects with one noun, and different objects are expressed with different nouns; the third cognition mode was after the nineteenth century. At this period science is not satisfactory only with the saying that words are just signs of things. Instead it attempted to investigate the historical origin of this connection so as to discover the essence.

Following the general principles of structuralism, after the different cognitive structures are discovered in different periods, it is natural to search for the common structure existing among these various structures. But Focault did no do so. In the eyes of Focault, it is impossible to find out the common structure of the cognition structures in different historical periods, because there was no commonness existing among them at all. After his exploration to Western cognition modes, Focault came to the conclusion that there was no consistent history for the development of Western cultures. Focault believed that two general breaks occurred in Western cultures: the first was in the alternating from the High Renaissance to the classical period, and the second was in the meeting point of the classical period and the latter-days. This way, Focault replaced his structuralism thought with the post-structuralism thinking, i.e. the deconstruction thought.

### 3.2.2 Deconstruction and Binary Oppositions

Indeed it is not enough to say that the real purpose of deconstruction is to replace structure with non-structure, since its ultimate aim is to cancel and dismantle structure. For the deconstructionists, a thorough revolution within the scope of thinking patterns is needed to clear up all the structural theories. First of all it must destroy the traditional philosophy, which has been so long served as the theoretical basis of structural theories. As mentioned above, the binary opposition is fundamentally a structurally derived notion, which acknowledges that human beings tend to think in an opposed way. The concept of the binary opposition comes into existence on account of man inclines to organize everything into a hierarchical structure; terms and concepts are related to positives or negatives, with no obvious scope for divergence: i.e. Presence/Absence, Man/Woman, Black/White, Life/Death, and so on. It is important to note that the primary elements of binary oppositions are described by what they prohibit like in the pair of Black and White, Black excludes White, and Man excludes Woman in the pair of Man and Woman. So long as these divisions are remained, the entire hierarchical structure may operate agreeably. Essentially, the generation of binary oppositions is due to the desire of man for a center.

Deconstruction is completely at variance with the traditional oppositional method of classification, and Derrida is in no way agreeable with the structuralist notion of binary oppositions. According to the thought of Derrida, these oppositions are fundamentally unreliable and inherently defective. He believes that human tend to think in terms of opposites in a way which suggests that the opposite of Black is not White, but not Black, and the opposite of Man is not Woman, but not-Man. Believing that the nature of all centers supposed by the Western metaphysical logocentrism is problematic, Derrida claims that all of Western thought forms pairs of binary opposites in which one element of the pair is favored, dominating the play of the system and marginalizing the other element. By means of deconstruction, Derrida employs a strategy of de-centering so as to de-stabilize the traditionally supposed primary term. This way, the secondary term temporarily overthrows the hierarchy. For instance, in the case of speech/writing opposition, where speech has long been regarded as the privileged medium of meaning by Western philosophy, Derrida demonstrates that speech comes after writing, thus reversing the standard hierarchy. But at the same time Derrida acknowledges that this practice indeed merely reinstates the hierarchical structure, thus he realizes that the new hierarchy is

equally as unstable as the old one is. Therefore Derrida believes that the only remaining choice is to submit to the complete free-play of the binary opposites in a non-hierarchical means. Take a text as the example, this de-centering and acknowledgment of the free-play of opposites result in the realization that there is not only one or two readings of a text, but many. Therefore, deconstruction operates on binary oppositions in a threefold manner: Firstly, it exemplifies how the opposites are related, and shows how one element in the opposition is privileged over the other; secondly, it momentarily de-stablizes or de-centers the hierarchy; and thirdly, it deconstructs both elements and advocates the unstable play of meanings. However, this advocacy of play is not the casual, disorderly "free-play". Instead it is the notion of play within a limited structure and with specific purpose. This "play", according to Derrida himself, should be interpreted as "give" or "tolerance", which is opposite to the establishment of fixed meanings. And this "play" encourages the deconstructing of texts with a view to stirring up their fundamental levels and exposing their limitless interpretative possibilities.

To be more specific, the unsteady character of these traditionally supposed binary divisions can be demonstrated by offering the possible intermediary states which often inhabit these oppositions like between Man and Woman, there exists Androgyny, and between Alive and Dead there is the state of Zombie. With the application of deconstructive theory, these binary oppositions are de-stabilized, or at least, shown to be mutually weakening the strength. According to the traditional binary oppositions, if Woman is deemed the opposite or the "other" of Man: she is non-Man, defective Man, then she is given an apparently negative worth in relation to the male primary element. However, under the notion of deconstruction, woman is not only an Other because Man is recognizable as Man only on the basis of permanently excluding this Other or opposite, distinguishing himself as Man only by way of this complete exclusion of Woman. Thus deconstructionists believe that the negative element in the traditional binary opposition like Woman in the pair of Man/Woman contains much more power. Therefore, Woman is not merely an Other in the sense that Man directly excludes her, but an Other connected to him as the representation of what he is not, hence she keeps to be an important reminder of what he is. This Other is significant to Man even if he refuses to accept it. Based on this belief, deconstruction shifts attention from the traditional dominant elements in the opposition (Man, Alive, etc) to the dominated elements (Woman, Dead, etc), from the

center to the margin. That is to say, the deconstructionist position on binary oppositions implies that the separation between the two elements can no longer be validated or established by the exclusive primacy of one term over the other.

In his analysis of binary oppositions, Derrida searches for the cause for "undecidables", which essentially disrupt the oppositional logic that is fundamental to hierarchical structures. The "undecidables" skim across both sides of an opposition but do not properly correspond with either. They extend over the clearly defined boundaries of the opposition, and therefore challenge the principles of oppositional structures themselves. Since for so long the binary oppositions have come to classify and structure the world, the deconstructive belief of the undecidables within the ordered system produces confusion and the limits of order are thrown into disarray. And therefore the categorizational stability collapses. For instance, with the acknowledgement of the intermediary state—the "undecidable" Androgyny, the oppositional logic existing for Man and Woman is to be disrupted, since an androgyne is the inscription of the failure of the Man/Woman opposition. Like all the undecidables, Androgynies contaminate the oppositions clustered around them. Under the notion of binary oppositions, these oppositions ought to institute steady, unambiguous, permanent categories, but when the undecidables are brought into play, the entire oppositional system is called into question. Therefore the undecidables supposed by deconstructionists devastate classificatory stability and the oppositional logic which features these classifications.

### 3.2.3 Deconstruction and Logocentrism

It is traditionally believed that philosophy should be the reflection to the objective world. And it should regard the actual existence i.e. reality as its study object since there is the distinction of phenomenon and essence in the objective world. Following the ontological requirements, philosophy should not only correspond with the objective world, it must also maintain its own logic consistency. What deconstruction attempts to destroy is just the reality assumed by the traditional ontological theory and the logic of traditional philosophical systems. The first task of Focault was to destroy the illusion of essence, origin and unity, which have dominated the minds of people for thousands of years. Focault once definitely pointed out that the task of genealogists is to destroy origin and the superiority of permanent truth. The secret to be revealed by the genealogists is that there is

no essence for things or their essence is pieced together with things in different forms and in bits and pieces. So in the eyes of Focault, there are no such things as changeless essence, laws, and basis, and also there is no ultimate aim assumed by the metaphysics.

The same arguments were also brought forth by Jaques Derrida, who claimed that in the ideology system of Western metaphysics people always tend to assume an ultimate truth— "logos" in the final analysis. This logos, which has never been queried, forms the origin or center that can maintain the cognition system of people on the one hand, and is placed out the system on the other hand. Thus in the eyes of Derrida, there is a fatal contradiction in the logocentrism of traditional Western metaphysics: Now that the center is not to be queried, how comes to be different philosophical systems around this center? Now that the center also exists outside the structural total of a philosophical system and there are diverse philosophical systems, this center is proved in fact not the philosophical center, since following the logicality of center itself, it must maintain the consistency of the whole philosophical system and the consistency of different philosophical systems. But the Western philosophical history is found being connected inconsistently: The whole history of Western philosophy and indeed the complete cultural history is the displacement of one center with another. So according to Derrida, the continuous alternating of centers means no center at all. From this point, the conclusion made by the deconstructionists is that the logocentrism is totally wrong. (Ben-Naftali, 1999).

In the eyes of deconstructionists, the criticism of traditional philosophy is not enough by just staying at the criticizing of logocentrism. The criticism must go further to the related phonocentrism. Traditionally, "thought" in philosophy is the cognition of the objective world, and the content of thought must be expressed by "speech", which must be recorded by way of "writing". According to traditional philosophy, there is an intrinsic unification among thought, speech and writing, and speech and writing are just forms to express thought. Derrida believes that the relation supposed by traditional philosophy about thought, speech and writing is based on logocentrism. The thought of logocentrism took speech as more important than writing, so this is the thought of phonocentrism. After his investigation into philosophy, Derrida claims that speech and writing are not directly unified. He claimed that phonocentrism could be traced back to Socrates or Plato, who believed that the significance of words is devalued because the only value of words is just to recall the memory of concepts. However, while carrying out this task, words stood off

speech, thus became a threatening to speech, distorting the relation between speech and concepts. Thus the only way was to go back thoroughly to the soul. Derrida believes that the relation of speech and writing supported by Plato was correct, but his thought of going back completely to soul was incorrect. Derrida considers that the nature for the words to betray the soul is due to its parasitism. Words tend to be mutually influenced and modified, although writing is intended to express what are to be said. However, Derrida claims that the value of writing should not be devalued because in history, writing contains much more substantiality than thought and speech do. On account of the fact that the sound of speech passes away immediately, and it cannot be kept in the memory permanently, words are the only means for people to go to history.   When Plato found the side effects of writing, he did not affirm the significance of writing. Thus Plato regarded the thought and the speech as more significant than writing. Plato believed that if thought and speech cannot be expressed clearly by means of writing, it is ideal to abandon writing and go directly for speech and thought. Derrida takes this thought as the logic of phonocentrism, which has heavily influenced the thinking of people for thousands of years. According to Derrida, this phonocentrism was totally wrong, because it took the existence of logos as the precondition. Now that logosmtrism has already been overthrown, the saying of writing is inferior to speech and thought is invalidated.

Further more, in the eyes of deconstructionists, even if much more significant contents inhabit in thought and speech than in writing, they are to be interpreted by people through the channel of writing. But difference exists in writing, and the difference gets bigger with time passing by. Thus people find no fixed meaning in the text, which is regarded by deconstructionists as the explanations to explanations. That is, for deconstructionists, it is impossible to get to speech and thought through writing, and this effort is of no significance.

After logos was destroyed and the relation among thought, speech and writing was changed, and the binary oppositions was reversed, the center of traditional philosophy was dismantled. Therefore the whole metaphysical basis collapsed.

## 3.3   Researches on Deconstruction Theory

As a completely anti-traditional thought of thinking, deconstruction has aroused

immense interests among scholars since its birth in the European continent. Till now, the scholars either in China or in the West have carried out extensive researches on it, although most of the work done seem to be discursive and sometimes being lack of in-depth insights.

### 3.3.1 The Researches on Deconstruction in the Occident

Within the historical background of student riots in Europe, together with the intention of overthrowing Western traditional philosophy and the rationality of structuralism under the notion of logocentrism, the trend of deconstruction thought came to take shape in the European continent in the late 1960s. In 1967, with the publication of three books *Of Grammatology, Writing and Difference,* and *Speech and Phenomena,* the ideas of deconstruction were fully and thoroughly explained by Derrida. Since then the deconstructive thought from the deconstructionists like Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Roland Barthes found its position in France. But the term of deconstruction came to be established was in the United States in 1966, when the conference on structuralism was being held at Johns Hopkins University. At that meeting Derrida formally announced that the structuralism, together with the supported beliefs in ultimate meanings and final answers dominating all of Western thought was dead. In the later half of the past century, the ideas of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida influenced actually every area of humanistic scholarship and artistic activity, including philosophy, linguistics, literary criticism, architecture, theology, and art. The term of deconstruction has also become a familiar vocabulary of political theorists, educationalists, music critics, filmmakers, lawyers and historians. On account of the fact that deconstruction thought challenged academic norms and sometimes even the common sense, resistance to it was also widespread and sometimes quite bitter.

Generally speaking, the acceptance of deconstruction thought in the Western academia is divided into three periods. The first period was from the late 1960s to the early 70s, when people had different attitudes toward it. Some gave it a warm welcome and some questioned it and some showed their indifference toward it. The second period was from the mid-1970s to the 1980s, when theoreticians adapted their attitudes and tried to approach the deconstructive thought. And henceforth, the blind worship toward it appeared. Then finally, since the late 1980s, large group of philosophers and literary critics

shifted their attention to the intensive and critical study on the thought of deconstruction. It was since then that the works of Jacques Derrida inspired the actually fruitful investigation and study of deconstructions. Although only more than three decades have passed since the birth of deconstruction, it is of particular difficulties to sum up the explorations to deconstruction in the Western world: on the one hand, deconstruction is a complete open theory. It is not only a thinking mode intending to break through the tradition, but also a worldview and a method of reading as well. The ideas of it were expressed through a series of borrowed or coined terms and concepts. Since it has no strict conceptual system or close circle of logic, it allows diverse readings from different points of view and at various levels. Thus there are tremendous numbers of works on it. On the other hand, believing in no fixed meaning itself, deconstruction excluded the possibility of getting to absolute truth, dismantling the authority that can be established in reading. Thus according to the thought of deconstruction, every reading to deconstruction might be a misreading, just representing the voice of one group. It cannot be determined whose voice is the orthodoxy or mainstream, and whose represents just the heterodoxy or derivation.

Thus we may only attempt to see the panorama of deconstructive studies in the West through several representative angles of view. The scholars of deconstructive study in the Western world roughly take the following four forms: One. Theory Introduction and Criticism. Scholars of this kind have their positive positions. They try to affirm, criticize or hold an objective view toward it. Starting from this point of view, they intend to analyze the theoretical formation and operating principles of deconstruction, making a judgment of its theoretical meaning and its practical value. The representative works of this sort include *Deconstructive Criticism: An Advanced Introduction* (1983) by Leitch, Vincent B, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (1983) by Johnoson Culler, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (1982) by Christopher Norris, *Translator's Preface* by Spivak for the English version for *The Grammatology*, *The Yale Critics: Deconstruction in America* (1983) by Arac Jonathan, and *Postmodernism Illusion* by Eagleton Terry. They have different emphasis points in their analysis and criticism: the advanced introduction of Leitch is a comprehensive and in-depth guidance to the deconstructive theory with an objective standpoint; the translation preface of Spivak focuses on the philosophical principles of deconstruction, and Culler pays much attention to the theoretical depth of criticism. Eagleton, by standing on the point of view of Western

Marxism, gives critical analysis to the deconstructive ideas of Derrida and the theory of Yale School respectively. Two. The Study in an Intensively-Reading Way. It is a common practice for large number of critics to get to the bottom for the truth of every aspect in the deconstruction of Derrida in an intensively reading method, since the methodology of New Criticism is deep rooted in the minds of the Western scholars. The most representative work is *Derrida: A Critical Reader* (1992) by David Wood. Three. Study in a Lengthways Way. On the one hand, deconstruction is analyzed within the historical background for its origin; and on the other hand, standing on the historical point of view of deconstruction, scholars detect the trace of the development of deconstruction and anticipate the philosophical fate after deconstruction. The representative works include *Derrida and Deconstruction* (European Continental Philosophy II) (1989) by Hugh Silverman, *Heidegger and Derrida: Thinking on Time and Language* by Herman Robbert, and *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy* (2000) edited by Mark C. Taylor. Four. Cross- courses Study and the Application. The works of this kind study focus on the arising and development of deconstruction and its relationship with contemporary critical genrers and other theoretical courses, analyzing the impact of deconstruction on those geners and courses. Works of this sort feature in studying on the margins of the works of Derrida, discovering his hidden views from some of his not so attractive discussions. *Marxism and Deconstruction: A Critical Articulation* (1982) by Michael Ryan, *Derrida and Phenomenology (1995)* edited by William R. McKenna and J. Claude Evans, and *The Margins of Deconstruction* (1998) by Martin C. Srajek are the representative works of this kind.

### 3.3.2 Deconstruction in China

As the outcome of thinking at Western post-modern times, deconstruction is doubtlessly related not only with the Western historical background and cultural context, but also is of definite relation with the formation of Western two-thousand-year thinking mode and the accumulations of its philosophical ideas. Therefore, the difference in tradition between the west and the orient, and the variance in ideology and culture of people between the West and China may be the barriers for us to appreciate deconstruction; and furthermore, they may be taken as the reasons for us to reject deconstruction. However, it is not difficult for us to see that although deconstruction got its birth on the

alien cultural ground, we may obtain great enlightenment from its spirit and its thinking

mode if we try to overcome the barriers within the precondition of admitting the difference.

Indeed, Chinese scholars have done much work in this aspect: Firstly Chinese academia

showed quite sensitive response to the impact on criticism from the linguistic turn brought

by deconstruction itself. Besides large number of works about Western linguistic

philosophies by philosophical scholars like Tu Jiliang, Xu Youyu, Zhou Guoping, there are

also many works describing and commenting contemporary Western literary criticism

from the linguistic point of view. *Commendatory on the Twentieth Century Western

Literary Criticism* (1986) by Zhang Longxi, *Comments and Introduction of Western

Literature Critique Methodologies* (1986) by Nai Ganqian, and *A Survey of Modern

Foreign Critical Methodologies* (1987) co-authored by Ban Lan and Wang Xiaoqin.

People are getting familiar with linguistic turn and the understanding of it is getting

mature. Secondly, there have been introductions and commendatory on the theory of

deconstruction from different angles in China since the late 1980s. *Dimensionality of

Deconstruction* by Lu Yang as the first domestic monograph on deconstruction has

produced noticeable impact on Chinese academia. It is notably knowledgeable, concerning

various aspects of deconstruction. Shen Lin, Zhao Yifan, and Wang Lin are comparatively

early scholars to introduce Western post-modernism, and deconstruction is also their focus.

They either translate and edit Western thesis or write introductory and critical thesis,

leading Chinese readers to understand contemporary Western humanism thought. Zhen

Ming, based on his thorough understanding of deconstruction after ten years study,

grasping its essence and spirit. Thus while discussing Chinese problems, he introduces the

thought of deconstruction. Such a combination gives us a clearer and deeper recognition

of the root and crux of Chinese problems. From this we may see that the prevalence of

deconstruction is a process from spontaneity to consciousness, from a mature stage to the

stage of gradually deepening.

# Chapter Four

# Deconstruction and Its Translation Views

As has been mentioned above, after the birth of deconstruction in the 1960s, it has swept over various areas including sociology, humanities, physiologies and ideologies, thus bringing forth a revolution to the thoughts of scholars. As one branch of humanities, translation study has also been invaded by the thought of deconstruction since the late of 1980s. As it is suggested by Derrida, "deconstruction and translation are inexorably interconnected" (Derrida, 1981). Since there are intimate relations between deconstruction and translation, the fruit of deconstruction study is inevitably being taken into the study of translation theories. Just as suggested by Edwin Gentzler, " the deconstructionists' entire project is intricately relevant to questions of translation theory, and that their thinking is similar to any understanding of the theoretical problems of the translation process" (Gentzler, 2001).

The divergence between the translation school of deconstruction and the previous translation schools lies in that: it suggests a dialectical, dynamic and developmental philosophical view for translation by way of attacking Western logocentrism. It no longer looks text as a stable and closed system in a mechanical way like the structuralists do. Instead, it takes the meaning of the text not as stable and fixed due to the assumed difference between the signifier and the signified. According to the deconstructionists, the meaning of the text is only being confirmed in the context for the momentary being, without permanent fixed value. Because the meaning of the original text is not fixed, the translator should make full use of his subjectivity to search for the meaning hidden in the text, so as to dig out the elements that may keep the original text alive. This school rejects the opposite position between the original and the translation texts and their derivative binary oppositions, suggesting that the source text and the translated text, writer and translator are of interdependent relations rather than the relation of copy and imitation supposed by the traditional theories, since it is difficult to determine and grasp the

structure and the meaning of the original text. They believe that the survival of the original text does not depend on the features of itself but on those of the translated text, and that the original text relies on translated text, without which, the original text cannot survive. The meaning of the text is determined by the translated text instead of the original text. Derrida even goes so far as to suggest, "perhaps the translated text writes us and not we the translated text" (Gentzler, 2001). The thought of deconstruction translation is not for the "sameness", but for "difference". Furthermore, this school goes beyond the discussion over microcosmic translation skills so that they may scan the nature and function of translation from the super-metaphysics point of view and the result of this is that people's concept about translation has been fundamentally changed.

Jacques Derrida, the founder of deconstruction and the other two important representatives of deconstruction, Roland Barthes and Michael Foucault, have put particular views about translation forward. And the upsurge of deconstruction has urged people to scan again the essay, *The Task of the Translator* written by German translation theorist Walter Benjamin in 1923. And many deconstructionists like Paul de Man had some new comments and interpretations about this essay in the 1980s. The theory of deconstruction is now an upsurge in the Western translation world. Deconstruction theory of translation is somewhat widely discussed in the collection of thesis *Rethinking Translation* (1992) by Lawrence Venuti, the translation theorist of America. Another American translation theorist Edwin Gentzler discusses in *Contemporary Translation Theories,* the formation process and nature of the deconstructive translation thinking. The study of translation has got fresh vigor and vitality after deconstruction was introduced into the theories of translation. The view of translation study has been widened and the translation school of deconstruction, which is also termed as the innovation school of translation is being established. However there are few monographs concerned with translation and deconstruction in the world, let alone in China. In the following, the translation views of these important representatives of deconstruction, together with the challenges to traditional translation criteria will be discussed.

## 4.1    Derrida's Notion of "Differance" and His Translation View

In the three books: *Speech and Phenomena, Of Grammatology,* and *Writing and*

*Difference* published in1967, Derrida introduced the deconstructive approach to reading texts. Derrida's works focus on language. Deconstruction shows the multiple layers of meaning at work in language. By deconstructing the works of previous scholars, Derrida attempts to show that language is constantly shifting. He contends that the traditional, or metaphysical way of reading makes a number of false assumptions about the nature of texts. A traditional reader believes that language is capable of expressing ideas without changing them, that in the hierarchy of language writing is secondary to speech, and that the author of a text is the source of its meaning. Derrida's deconstructive style of reading subverts these assumptions and challenges the idea that a text has an unchanging, unified meaning. (Wang Zhihe, 1998).

The translation view of Derrida is based on his philosophy of deconstruction. He intends to elucidate his philosophical ideas, especially the ideas concerned with meaning and the nature of meaning through the discussion about translation. As mentioned above, Derrida believes that essentially Western metaphysical logocentrism takes a certain way of getting to the truth as being superior to the others. Thus the traditional Western metaphysical thinking mode is established on binary oppositions like speech/writing, presence/absence, truth/fallacy, etc. Translation study is also restricted by this thinking mode. The binary oppositions assumed in traditional translation theories include original text/translated text, writer/translator etc. According to Derrida, the two elements in Western binary oppositions are not of equal status but are placed in the hierarchical order, in which the first element is supposed to be superior to the second element. Thus the former is regarded as primary, essential, central and original, while the latter is taken to be secondary, non-essential, marginal and derivative. Derrida calls Western philosophy the "metaphysics of presence", and his theory of deconstruction is to overthrow this philosophy, which assumes one origin, one center, and one absolute truth. He puts forward several deconstructive strategies to break up the presence, which include the terms such as *differance, dissemination, trace, substitution,* etc. In the eyes of Derrida, language is the accomplice and accessory of traditional philosophy. But to overthrow it will not do without the aid of language. Thus he coined these words to help resolve this problem.

*Differance* is the key term coined for breaking up the meaning fixity supposed by structuralism. *Differance* is derived from difference in its origin. The English word difference and the French word *différence* are both from the Latin word *differre,* which is

of two connotations: One is to differ in place and the other is to defer in time. But difference and *différence* have only the first connotation of *differre*, without the second connotation. The word differance coined by Derrida has the two connotations of the Latin word *differre*. It means both "defer," to put off, which is what happens to the meaning in language in a relational system where signs themselves do not have essential meanings, and from "differ," to be unlike, not identical. The "ance" gerund form of the word puts it somewhere between the passive and the active, like "resonance" or "dissonance". He joins the sense of *différance* as time (defer) and *différance* as space (unlike, distinction between proximate things) to make the point that an idea of "being" and/or "presence" that has been so central to Western culture is not so authoritative. In spite of the divergence in one letter, the two words *differance* and difference are of the same pronunciation. It is generally assumed by traditional semiotics that the signifier and the signified are closely related, the relation of which is compared to the two sides of a coin by Saussure. But Derrida does not think so. He claims that the presence of the sign does not guarantee the presence of the signified. In fact, according to Derrida, the presence of the sign usually means the absence of the signified. And it means the *deferred* presence. What we get is just the signifier of signifier and the explanation of explanation while searching for the meaning from the sign. Not only so, every sign is composed by the difference of the other signs. By means of coining *differance*, on the one hand, Derrida alternates the modern usage supposed by the contemporary philosophers, on the other hand, it inherits the traditional usage of the Latin word *differre*, thus being assigned the double tasks: to put off and to be unlike. To be concrete, *differance* shows that signs are always the dual movements of being put off and being not identical. Derrida explains, in space (synchronically), a sign is always restricted by the other signs, thus it relies on the other signs for its meaning, which is not the ultimate meaning but the meaning determined through the context; in time (diachronically), a sign is the outcome of series of differences thus it always defers the presence of the signified. According to Derrida, the sign always puts off the realization of the intention. The synchronic distinction of the sign and the diachronic differing intensify the nature of meaning indeterminacy. So he thinks that language is just the unending play of difference without final conclusion. In the eyes of Derrida, meaning, instead of being taken as an end point or fixed point by the structuralism, is regarded as a constantly changing and developing process.

The central issue of philosophy has always been taken as the conceptual problem of translation by Derrida. Just as pointed out by Gentzler, "All of Derrida's writing, regardless of the 'subject matter' or text in question, continually revolves around problems pertaining to the possibility or impossibility of translation. According to Derrida, all of philosophy is centrally concerned with the notion of translation: 'the origin of philosophy is translation or the thesis of translatability'" (Gentzler, 2001). While discussing translation, philosophers and linguists do not put forward idiographic philosophical or canonical translation mode, or probe into the translating process, or actually analyze translation works. They attempt to make clear their philosophical ideas, especially their views about meaning and its nature by means of exploring the issues of translation. Philosophers believe that the issues related to the nature and meaning of language can be really revealed through the in-depth investigation into translation. That is the reason for philosophers at all times all over the world to talk about translation. On the other hand, by way of approaching Derrida's views and theory, the nature of translation can be profoundly understood from the points of view of the philosophers. From the notion of Derrida's *differance*, we may get the following enlightenments for translation study:

Firstly, by means of *differance*, Derrida puts into question the notion of ontological "presence": is presence existence? According to Derrida, the postponed presence, or the presence of *differance* means absence, since it does not exist at all. When this notion is applied to the reading of the texts, the meaning is always in a state of being different in space and being postponed at time, with no possibility of being confirmed. Then the text is no longer a fixed structure prescribed by the "presence", but a deconstructive world with multiple layers of meanings. The reader always feels familiar with it but with some fresh understanding every time he reads it. But he can only apperceive the certain result of *differance*—the *trace*, and he can never go to the genuine world, which means there is no possibility for the text meaning being confirmed. What is apperceived by the reader might be the specious *trace* of meaning. Thus through the notion of *differance*, Derrida announces the no longer existence of origin and the eternal un-integrality of the text.

Secondly, by the notion of *differance*, Derrida intends to show: in the process of being interpreted, meaning is always postponed thus it is always in a state of absence. Structuralists regard these absences or non-presence as the meaning of the text, regardless the absence of presence.

*Differance* contributes to the absence of presence and the uncertainty of meaning. Then how does the reader search for the text meaning? Derrida believes, in spite of the non-existence of presence, there is the postponed presence, by following the *trace* of which, the temporary meaning may be obtained. The *trace* is everlasting because *differance* is everlasting. In every time of *differance*, meaning is extended in a starry, linear, and systematic manner. The everlasting *differance* leads to the everlasting extension, which contributes to the *dissemination* of meaning and the expansion of meaning scope. Thus in the eyes of Derrida, a text contains infinite possibilities of interpretation. The text, as a dynamic process of undecidability, forms a frame of reference with the other texts through the signs: it depends on the other texts and is distinct from the other texts, expecting to be *supplemented* and *substituted* in the net of meanings. The text, going further beyond its own meaning, is a forever demanding process, and series of moving *traces*. Since the meaning is floating and infinite, it is impossible to grasp the final meaning. The ultimate text does not exist. Based on these ideas, a text is taken by Derrida as an open and incomplete system rather than a complete and closed one. Thus, on breaking up the theories of metaphysics utterly, Derrida considers that, in translation, due to the lack of incompleteness and unity, original text contains multiple layers of meaning, any interpretation and translation to it cannot embrace its meaning fully. Even the authoritative or the assumed perfect version cannot embrace the complete meaning of the original text and thus takes it as a fixed and closed system.

Derrida also discusses the nature and function of translation, the relation between the original text and translated text from the perspective of deconstruction. His translation view of deconstruction gives new energy to translation studies and broadens the view of the translation theorists and translation practitioners. Derrida believes that the information and codes of the original text are not important. What really count are the different expression forms of translation and their inter-relations. There is no identical fixed meaning for translation, which just offers ground for the play, extending boundaries, and paving ways for the difference. Thus translation should be redefined. According to Derrida, translation is the "regulated transformation" from one language to another language, and from one text to another text. The traditional text meaning has been changed under the definition of translation by Derrida.   His assumption about translation is that there is no common core or deep structure, which is just contrary to Chomsky's translation views

based on the common nucleus and deep structure theory. His translation theory is based on the principle of de Saussure that "there are only differences and no absolute relations in languages" (Wilss, 2001). He believes that translation is a process to displace the original text, during which the original text is constantly modified or deferred. In his eyes, the nature of translation can be better reflected through "regulated transformation" than through the term of "translation", since in the transformation from one language to another, there is no absolutely pure signified. We will never and indeed have never transformed the pure signified from one language to another or within one language. Derrida intends to illustrate, with the substitution of "transformation" for "translation", the original text is developing and getting mature for its final renewal through modification and supplement in the process of translation. Translators expand language and encourage language to develop, so they are inventors and the translated texts are the invented new languages.

According to Derrida, the difference in semantic meanings, syntactic patterns and pronunciation of various languages contributes to different modes of expressions, or "modes of intentions". Translation is to have similarity and difference on the string in the endless analysis (Derrida, 1985). We may get a more profound and accurate recognition of the difference and particular expression ways of various languages through translation. This means the difference between languages should be exposed instead of being concealed in the process of translation. Therefore, the aim of translation should be for the "difference", not for the "sameness". The value of a translation depends on its extent in the reflection and emphasis of the difference in languages. The difference among languages is elucidated by Derrida in the notion of *differance*, and in the concept of "pure language" by Benjamin.   The aim of translation theory is to protect and demonstrate these forms of differences, not to hide them. What is important for translation is not to exhibit the content, i.e. the center of the text, since as mentioned above, deconstruction denies the existence of center. Derrida talks about translation from the perspective of exploring the nature of language. His aim is to emphasize that the difference among languages can be discovered only by way of translation, so he does not deal with the concrete translation principles or methods. This shows the particular perspective of Derrida's translation ideas, since it is quite different from the traditional translation schools, which put emphasis on the translation of meaning.

Derrida also explains the relation of the original text and the translated text from the

perspective of deconstruction. In his view, the text and its translation are of symbiosis, i.e. mutually supplementary relations, rather than the relation of "model-duplication" assumed by the traditional translation theories. Deconstructionists reject the distinction between the original and translated text, and they also deny the distinction between language and meaning. Derrida claims that translation presents language, which is not related with things, but is related with language itself. Just as Derrida puts it, "In translation, what is visible is language referring not to things, but to language itself. Thus the chain of signification is one of infinite regress—the translated text becomes a translation of another earlier translation and translated words, although viewed by deconstructionists as 'material' signifiers, represent nothing but other words representing nothing but still other words representing" (Gentzler, 2001). That is to say, all the texts viewed by deconstructionists as of "intertextuality" and writing itself is just the process of infinite loop representing the mutually copying and reprinting among numerous forms of texts. Thus intertextuality negates the authority and creation of the original, even denying the copyright of the writer. This way, the status of the translator and that of the translation is raised, since there is no longer the distinction between the original and the translations. This idea of Derrida virtually opens up the avenue of thought for translation studies. (Lu Yang, 1996).

Roland Barthes, the contemporary literary critic, another representative of deconstruction explicitly announces, "The author is dead". He believes that, once the text is finished, linguistic signs begin to function. The reader interprets the meaning of the text through his reading of the signs. Thus the survival of the text depends on the reader. He also denies any central meaning of language itself, since in his opinion, the text has neither central system nor ultimate meaning. Now that the text has no sole, un-variable meaning, the readers may have various interpretations of it. Then the writer can no longer limit the reader's interpretation about the text. What now functions is the linguistic signs and the reader's understanding of the signs. Applying this idea to translation studies, deconstructionists believe the survival of the original cannot be without the translations. The meaning of the text is not determined by the text itself but by the translations: after every translation, the meaning of the original is changed, since the text has no fixed meaning. In the process of reading, the translator and translation readers keep giving interpretations to the text, and these interpretations supplement each other. The original

can only keep living on with it being continuously translated and its translations being continuously read. Furthermore, the survival of the original depends not on the characteristics contained within itself, but on those contained in the translations.

It is not difficult to find out reasonable proofs for the translation views of Roland Barthes. At all times in all over the world, tremendous amount of literary masterpieces, keep being translated intra-lingually and inter-lingually. This means the original are given continuous new interpretations and read repeatedly. What the readers read are not the original but their translations or the annotations for the original. If without constant new versions or annotations, there will be no readers, then the original cannot go on living. That explains the saying of the deconstructionists "the original depend on the translation for the survival". However, the original can still not survive if the translations are of poor quality, which means no reader will read the roughly translated versions. But the works will get its life again if better versions appear later. This also illustrates the point that the survival of the works depends not on the characteristics of itself, but on that contained in the translated versions.

Michel Foucault, another important representative of French deconstruction school, whose translation ideas are closely related with those of Derrida. In 1977, in the epigraph to *Language, Counter-memory, Practice* (1977), Foucault cites Jorge Luis Borges as saying, "The fact is that every writer creates his own precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future" (Foucault, 1977). He believes that our understanding of the works of the antecedents is restricted by the history epochs: at different times, reading and translation of the source text are impressed with historical marks, that is, it is historically featured. Like the other deconstructionists, Foucault claims that original texts are constantly being rewritten and each reading or translation means a reconstruction for the source text, since the readers or translators have different interpretations about it at different times. Thus there is no "pure" original text, and the status of which should not be superior to that of the version. Further more, the author himself is also the product of times: the author's works represent not the author himself, but his times; and it is not the author who illustrates the text, but the text that illustrates the author, so both of them belong to history.

Thus the translation views of deconstruction are incompatible with any traditional translation theory, which takes the original text as having definite meaning as its theoretical preposition. That is, the primary task of translation is to iterate the meaning of

the original. Deconstructive translation views are completely against tradition. Following these views, the status of the original and the translations, and that of the writer and the translator are reversed: the writer is no longer the authority who has the final saying about the original, and the translator finds his creativity in the versions.

## 4.2    Walter Benjamin and His Idea of "Pure Language"

The rise of deconstruction in the 1960s' Europe and the later upsurge of deconstruction study in the Euro-American academia urged people to rediscover that some of the deconstructive views had been discussed much earlier in the essay "The Task of the Translator" written by Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) in 1923. This extraordinary piece, published as a preface to his own translations of Baudelaire's "Tableaux Parisiens" in 1923, has highly influenced the theory of translation. Walter Benjamin is the earliest urger of deconstruction translation idea and is the most contributive and influential proser, literary critics and linguistic philosopher in translation studies of the twentieth century Germany. His translation ideas and views are mainly represented through the above-mentioned essay, which is actually on linguistic philosophy instead of discussing merely about translation. He intends to make clear his views about linguistic philosophy, i.e. the views about "pure language" or "universal language" by way of the discussion about translation.

After being formally issued in 1955, "The Task of the Translator" did not get much attention but criticism, so it found no place for a long time in the common collections of essays. In the 1960s, many contemporary philosophers emulatively made comments and elucidations about it. In the 1980s and the 1990s, this essay got much more attractive when deconstruction thought got increasingly influential in the Western literary criticism circle. Then it came to invade the field of translation theories and was elucidated by theorists such as Derrida, Paul de Man, and Andrew Benjamin, etc. from the perspective of deconstruction. Willis Barnstone claimed, although it is not lengthy, this article has the quality of *Bible*. Because of its profoundity and penetrating insight, although it is hard to understand, it is extremely enlightening. (Barnstone, 1993). According to Gentzler, on account of the influence of Derridean theory, "In Euro-American circles, the post-Derridean discussion about translation centers around an ongoing debate about 'The Task

of the Translator'"(Gentzler, 2001). Lawrence Venuti also believes that the elucidations about "The Task of the Translator" by the deconstructive theorists did not go beyond the frame of its translation thought. (Venuti, 1992).   American deconstructive representative Paul de Man goes so far as to say "that you are nobody unless you have written about this Text" (Man, 1986). After many comments and elucidations by many deconstructive scholars on this essay, Walter Benjamin came to be treated as the founder of deconstructive translation theory. Thus it is of extreme importance to be clear of Benjamin's translation ideas for the understanding of deconstruction translation theory. As above-mentioned, "The Task of the Translator" seems to be directed at translation issues, but it actually is mainly concerned with linguistic philosophy, especially about "pure language". Even those portions concerned with translation are not about the standard, process or methods of translation. Benjamin's discussions about translation are about the translatability of the text, issues of language translation and the language of translation within the framework of linguistic philosophy. In the following, his translation ideas will be discussed:

### 4.2.1 Carrying out Translation in the Light of "Pure Language"

Benjamin builds his metaphysical translation view on the concept of "pure language". In his view, the primary goal of translation is to turn various languages into an all-embracing particular language, i.e. "pure language" or "universal language" through harmonizing the plurality of languages, and by way of their inter-connections and mutual supplements. Benjamin defines the recondite term of "pure language" as: there exists a superhistorical kinship among various languages, and this kinship posits in the whole intention of every language, but no one language alone is able to represent this intention. Only the totality of intentions, i.e. pure language based on the mutual supplements of languages is able to represent this intention. According to Benjamin, the kinship refers to a superhistorical and transcendental linguistic kinship, which not necessarily contains the element of "likeness". And this kinship posits in the total intention of every language, but it can only be completely exhibited in the totality of intentions in the series of languages. Benjamin takes the totality of intentions as the pure language. In this totality, the mode of intention of each language supplements each other.

Benjamin believes that if there really exists a language of truth or a true language in

the world, it is the "pure language". This language plays a very important role in the process of turning various languages into a universal language. This so called "true language" or "pure language" is actually an abstract language, which transcends any concrete one. This naturally brings the notion of Adamite language or pre-Babelian language into the minds of people. Thus it is mysterious and nihilistic.

To be specific, "pure language" plays a double function in translation theories. On the one hand, it refers to an abstract language, which is of the characteristics of univocality and pure meaning. It inhabits in a series of concrete languages but is not hidden by them. On the other hand, "pure language" is the means for Benjamin to grasp the linguistic difference and supplementarity. By means of "pure language", Benjamin illuminates the difference among languages. He believes that the essence of language can be grasped in the difference of every concrete language and through the difference of them. Derrida has a further discussion about this. He believes that different modes of expression (mode of intention in Benjamin's notion) are created on account of the differences in semantics, syntactic patterns, and pronunciations. Every particular mode of intention has its limitation, so they ask for mutual supplements so as to unite into a whole. Only this way the meanings can be expressed wholly. (Chen Yongguo, 1999).

### 4.2.2 On Translatability from the Perspective of "Pure Language"

Benjamin believes that different modes of intention in various languages may still refer to the same thing. And the sameness of different intention modes further proves the existence of "pure language". By way of "pure language", Benjamin intends to build his "Des Tours de Babel"—a mythical story of the Shemites' attempt to 'make a name' for themselves by building a tour that would reach the heavens, and thus give them access to transcendence (Davis, 2004). Despite of the existence of numerous languages among various communities, they may communicate through translation since there exists translatability between languages. In the religious view of Benjamin, this means the restoration of the language shared by both the God and the human beings. The task of the translator is to make judgements from the multiple connotations of a sign for its original idea so as to communicate.

According to Benjamin, the signs of the original contain translatability, which determines the essence of both the original and the translation. In other words, the

translatability and untranslatability of the original depend on its value for translation. The assertion of untranslatability should not be reached for a certain works even if it has not been translated. What must be asked about is that whether the works needs translation, or whether there is some essential substance for translation in the original. The poorer linguistic quality of the original, the worse for the growth of its translations; and the higher quality of the original, the more translatable it is. Benjamin believes that translatability manifests the structural self and other relation between one and another language. The premise for the original being translatable is to admit the existence of the other languages. Without other languages, there is no saying of translatability or untranslatability. Thus the kinship between languages will be demonstrated clearly through translation. Translation reveals the non-integrality of the original language. And translation may supplement the modes of intention of the original by way of its own particular modes of intention. Thus he believes that translation work promotes both the original and the translation into a part of the "highest language". It is not the aim of translation to say that it reads as if it had been written in the original language. According to Benjamin, "A real translation is transparent; it does not cover the original, does not block its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully" (Benjamin, 1923). That is, an excellent translation should demonstrate its difference with the original so that the readers may witness its approaching toward the "pure language".

He considers the translatability of a given work as having "a dual meaning. Either: Will an adequate translator ever be found among the totality of its readers? Or, more pertinently: Does its nature lend itself to translation and, therefore, in view of the significance of the mode, call for it"(ibid). The translatability of the linguistic works should be given its consideration even when it is not translatable. Strictly speaking, any works is not translatable to a certain extent. But translatability must be the essential quality of a particular works, which does not mean that it must be translated. It is preferable to say that some special connotations of the original are revealed through translation. Whatever excellent work it may be, the translation would never be able to displace the importance of the original. But the original is closely connected with the translation by way of translatability.

### 4.2.3 The Survival of the Original

Benjamin regards translation as being like philosophy, like criticism or literary criticism, like history. Paul de Man made a further explanation: translation resembles philosophy in that, both of them are of critical nature. Translation is more like criticism or literary criticism, since it breaks the stability of the original, defining a canonical form for the original in the process of translation and theorization. Translation is like history, since we must not interpret history as a natural process of ripening or movement. On the contrary, we should interpret the natural change from the perspective of history. Similarly, we must not interpret the relationship between the original and the translation as one of likeness or derivation from the perspective of a natural process. Instead, the original should be understood from the perspective of the translation.

These ideas of Benjamin intend to show: The original and the translation are not related in their meaning or content, except for in their languages. Translation deconstructs the original and kills the original, and finding that it has been dead long time ago. If the original is read from the perspective of "pure language", the translation is not the life of the original, which is already dead. Instead the translation is the afterlife of the original, and this is a further demonstration that the original is dead. Thus it is sure to say that translation is the continuation of the life of the original and the eternal afterlife of the original. The task of the translator is to continue the life of the original.

### 4.2.4 The Equivalent and Supplementary Relationship between the Original and the Translation

When so many translation theorists are trying to appreciate and explore "equivalence", Benjamin took the lead in pointing out that the original cannot be equivalent with the translation, since the original has experienced changes through translation; and if there is no metamorphosis, there is no possibility for the afterlife too. He negates the dominance of the readers and claims that the task of the translator is not to copy the meaning of the original for the readers. Borrowing the foreign language and by means of the difference between languages, on the one hand, the translator overturns the order of the original; and on the other hand, he tries to reveal the hidden motif, which is not be able to be expressed by the original language.

"The Task of the Translator" radically puts into question the traditional translation

ideas: believing that there is no "fidelity" at all between the translation and the original. Translation itself should not seek for likeness but for difference. In the light of "pure language", the traditional relation of "model—reproduction" between the original and the translation is turned into one of equivalent supplementation. And the translation criteria are transferred from the traditional "equivalence" or "approximation" into the mutual "echo" in the modes of intention. Indeed, Benjamin takes translation itself as a mode of intention, which is different from the original. Because the content and the linguistic form, i.e. the mode of intention form a certain unity in the original, the earlier unity is destroyed due to the change in language form, there is no possibility for the translation to reach the unity of the original. Thus equivalence is beyond the reach.

### 4.2.5 Translation for the Form and not for the Meaning

Any traditional translation school takes the rendering of meaning as the yardstick. But Benjamin believes that translation should not aim at the meaning of the original, instead it should aim at the form of the original in detail. This idea can be seen from Benjamin's metaphor of "pure language".

Benjamin compares "pure language" to a vessel: "Fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another. In the same way a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel" (Benjamin, 1923). This way, the translation reproduces the original by way of piecing together the modes of intention of the original. The focus of translation shifts from transmitting the content or information of the original to the transmitting of the particular way of expression.

Now that the translation is for the form instead of for the meaning, the translator is only expected to deal with the writer in the translation activity, with no necessity to consider about the requirements of the readers at all. The version and the original should exist in the common continuity, rather than being two clearly cut independent entities. This further proves the above-mentioned saying that a real translation should be transparent, not covering the original and blocking its light by way of the reinforced medium of translation.

### 4.2.6 The Ideal Way of Translation: The Interlinear Version

Benjamin believes that all the great texts contain their potential translation between the lines; and this is true to the highest degree of sacred writings. He takes the interlinear version of the Scriptures as the prototype or ideal of all translation. The great works may reappear perfectly in the language of the translation and the effect of the original may resonate in the language of the version if the original is written under every line word by word in another language. The translator may peek the same thing—the "pure language" from beneath the two languages.

Starting from the traditional notions of faithfulness and freedom, Benjamin also elaborates his ideas in this aspect:

> The traditional concepts in any discussion of translations are fidelity and license—the freedom of faithful reproduction and, in its service, fidelity to the word. ...To be sure, traditional usage makes these terms appear as if in constant conflict with each other...Fidelity in the translation of individual words can almost never fully reproduce the meaning they have in the original. For sense in its poetic significance is not limited to meaning, but derives from the connotations conveyed by the word chosen to express it. We say of words that they have emotional connotations. A literal rendering of the syntax completely demolishes the theory of reproduction of meaning and is a direct threat to comprehensibility. Meaning is served far better—and literature and language far worse—by the unrestrained license of bad translators. (Benjamin, 1923).

Benjamin believes that only the literal rendering may solve the contradiction between fidelity and freedom in translation. The justification of literalness is obvious, but its legitimate ground is still of ambiguity. Therefore there must be a more meaningful context to understand the demand for literalness. His demand for literalness is the word for word translation. The significance of fidelity as ensured by literalness is that the version demonstrates the very longing for linguistic complementation. According to Benjamin in order to ensure the translation to be transparent and not to cover the original, not blocking its light, but allowing the "pure language" to shine upon the original all the more fully, he believes that the only means for this effect to be achieved is through a literal rendering of the syntax. This form of rendering takes words rather than sentences as the primary selection. For if the sentence is the wall before the language of the original, literalness is the arcade. These ideas of Benjamin are closely related with his concept of translation for

the form.

From the above it is apparent that Benjamin is against the contemporary trend of free translation and instead, he advocates the interlinear gloss as being used in the translation for the *Bible*. The potential meaning of all texts is hidden between the lines. Through literal rendering, the original language is able to absorb the new elements so as to ripen the expression. But Snell-Hornby regards this way of translation as the extreme case of the controversy between fidelity and freedom in the twentieth century.

## 4.3 Lawrence Venuti and the Deconstruction Perspective on Translation Strategy

Italy-born American translation theorist, Lawrence Venuti is also an active advocator of deconstruction translation theory. He has been engaged in translation for many years and is now the professor at the English department of Temple University. His deconstruction translation thought is presented in the three works: *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology (1992), Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation (1995), The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference (1998)*. In the three works, he makes a detailed investigation into the Western translation history since Dryden in the seventeenth century, criticizing the past inclination that takes the target language culture as the ultimate goal. Venuti tries to put the translation theory of deconstruction into practice and put forward the strategy of "resistant translation" against the traditional "smooth translation". Ideologically, this strategy aims to reverse the colonial concept of translation and the English-American culture centralism and the value of imperialist culture. In the translation principles and methods, it aims to retain "foreignness" instead of seeking for similarity. (Guo Jianzhong, 2000).

Venuti critically makes a thorough examination of the Western translation theories from the seventeenth century Dryden to the present in his *Translator's Invisibility*, finding that the strategy of "smooth translation" has been taking a leading position in the Western translation history. The underlying cause is that a canon of foreign literature is to be formed in English, taking the Western ideology as the criterion. Thus, Venuti believes that the past translation tradition, embracing the value of nationalism and imperialism, aimed at shaping the foreign texts. Accordingly, the translation principle proposed was "smooth

translation" and "domestication" translation, which is put into question by Venuti. He puts forward the translation theory and practice of resistant translation—being against the smoothness of translation. The aim of his strategy is to communicate linguistic and cultural differences instead of removing them in translation. This idea comes down in one continuous with the deconstructive thought of Derrida, Benjamin, de Man, who insist that translation is for "difference" and not for the "sameness". Venuti, after investigating the historical texts and translation of Britain, America, and the European countries, points out that translation can be studied as a locus of difference, restoring and modifying the forgotten translation so as to establish a new translation tradition.

The invisibility of the translator means the invisibility of the trace of the translator. Lawrence venuti, at the beginning of his book comments on the idea of the translator's invisibility, which requires that the translation should be kept as transparent as possible so as not to be read like a translated work. Following this idea, a good translation is to be like a piece of glass, on which there are only some blemishes—certainly the best is the one with no blemish on it at all. While reading the translation, the reader should never have the feeling as if he is reading the version. That is, the reader should read the translation as if he is reading the original. Venuti points out that the illusion of making the translation transparent involves the translator's contribution to a fluent and easy-understanding translated text. And the concrete requirements include: using contemporary terms, keeping the coherence of the syntax, assuring a certain definite meaning. Fluent translation strategy effaces the fact of under what condition is the translator doing the translation work, including the translator's intervention to the original. The more transparent the translation is, the more invisible is the existence of the translator, and the more visible are the author and the meaning of the source text. As Venuti points out, this fluent translation strategy has taken a dominant position in English translation. In the past decades, critics have been praising this strategy to the most, criticizing the translation that is against the fluency criterion, even disregarding the diversity of the foreign texts.

Actually, domestication and foreignization have long been two translation approaches in translation history. The former refers to the translation strategy in which a transparent, fluent style is adopted in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for the target language readers, while the latter designates the type of translation in which a target text "deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreigness of the

original" (Bassnett, 1999). The roots of the terms can be traced back to the German philosopher Schleiermacher's argument made in 1813 that there are only two different methods of translation, " either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (Venuti, 1995).

Venuti first traced the history of domesticating translation in Anglo-American culture: believing that fluent translation has been a canon for English translation since the tenth century in Britain. According to the requirements, fluent translation should read like being written in the original language, i.e. the English language, instead of reading like a translation. This theory and its practice are seen through the translations of poetry and essays. Venuti points out that, this proposal of fluent translation takes language as a communication tool theoretically; and practically, it emphasizes straightaway for understanding, avoiding multiplicity and ambiguity. And language is considered as the means to express personal feelings, so translation is regarded as to restore the meaning expressed by the foreign writers. Just as Denham puts it, language is the coat of the ideas. Therefore, the function of domesticating translation is not to be effaced: this translation clears away the linguistic and cultural differences in the foreign texts, bringing forth the target language readers fluent and easy-understanding texts on the one hand; on the other hand, the purpose of this strategy enables the other culture easy to be understood, and this implies the danger of domesticating the foreign texts completely. From this standpoint, one may also say that translation plays the role of stabilizing the cultural norm of the target language. This is indeed the manifestation of cultural colonialism for Anglo-American cultures.

Venuti states plainly that his writing of *Translator's Invisibility* aims at resisting the traditional fluent translation: the translator is to be seen in the translation so as to resist and be against the norms of translation theory and practice especially in contemporary English-speaking nations. Thus Venuti first puts forward the theoretical basis of treating the translation as the translation and making it keep its own independency so as to reveal the mysterious veil of transparency. And Venuti takes this means as one of the various translation strategies.

The translation theory of Venuti is based on the views of deconstruction. He defines translation, from the standpoint of deconstruction, as a process of replacing the chain of

signified in the source text with the chain of signifiers in the target language under the premise of the translator's comprehension. Derrida has already made a detailed explanation about this: the meaning may be the effect produced by the infinite chain of interrelations and differences, so it is eternally differed and deferred and can never be the totality of the original. Therefore, any text, either the foreign or the translated text are derivative—all of them are composed by different linguistic and cultural materials. The meaning of the text is a plural and indeterminate relation, rather than an invariable and unified wholeness. Thus translation cannot be measured with the mathematical equivalence or one-to-one correspondence. Instead, according to the deconstruction theory, translation intends to seek for difference, and not for the sameness or similarity. From this point one may see that Venuti and Derrida have approximately the same understanding about the nature of translation.

Venuti also traced back to the history of foreignizing translation: this translation strategy "was first formulated in the German culture in the early nineteenth century by Friedrich Schleiermacher. It has recently been revived in the French cultural scene characterized by postmodern developments in philosophy, literary criticism, psychoanalysis, and social theory that have come to be known as 'poststructuralism'" (Venuti, 1995). Foreignizing translation retains the difference in the foreign texts, but destroying the canon of target language culture, since while being faithful to the original, the translation deviates the canon of the target language culture. Venuti takes foreignizing translation as a strategic cultural intervention that is especially needed in contemporary world situation:

> It is a strategic cultural intervention pitched against the hegemonic English-language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others. Foreignizing translation in English can be a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism, in the interests of democratic geopolitical relations. (Venuti, 1995).

Venuti criticizes the domesticating translation theory of Anglo-American translation schools represented by Eugine A. Nida: claiming that Nida intends to impose the restriction of transparent language in English on every foreign culture so as to meet the canon of target language culture. This means, according to Venuti's understanding, to conceal domestication in transparency by means of fluent translation strategy. This is a

mergence of foreign texts for the purpose of domestication, rather than for cultural exchanges. According to Venuti, the aim of advocating foreignizing translation and opposing domesticating translation is to develop a translation theory and practice, resisting the dominance of target cultural values so as to exhibit the linguistic and cultural differences of foreign texts. He claims that this translation strategy may be termed as resistance: it not only avoids the fluency of the translation, but also challenges the target language culture, since fluent translation is an alteration of foreign texts by the cultural ethnocentrism of the target language. The so-called resistance is to resist the cultural ethnocentrism of the target language.

However, just as Venuti puts it that the resistant translation strategy does not apply to the technological translation, the chief purpose of which is for communication. The translator and the readers of the translations are to pond over the alterations of the foreign texts caused by ethnocentrism so that they are to recognize the linguistic and cultural differences while translating and reading the translations. Meanwhile Venuti points out that not every foreign culture is valuable. What he intends to emphasize is that the foreign texts should be respected in the foreignizing translation so that the cultural canon of the target language culture is to be broken. He intends to develop a theoretical, critical and textual method by way of advocating foreignizing translation, and henceforth to treat translation as the locus of study and the site for exhibiting difference rather than the currently prevalence of seeking for the sameness.

Venuti also traces back to the impact of foreignizing translation in German and Anglo-American cultures. In Britain, Newman also advocates the retaining of the difference of foreign texts in translation, opposing the domesticating translation that takes the dominating position in British culture. William Morris, the British translator was another advocator of foreignizing translation. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the rise of modernism in the culture of Anglo-American literature brought a decisive challenge to the dominating transparency in Engllish translation. The literature practice of this period was characterized with the emergence of the avoidance of fluent translation strategy. The concrete performance was seen in the translation of poems, and particularly was the foreignizing inclination in the creation of poems. The translating activity turned out to be the main practice of modernist poetics, and the purpose of which was to make the classic and foreign poems serve for the cultural movement of modernism in English.

The premise for foreignizing translation is to recognize the cultural differences, and communication is complicated due to the cultural differences of inter-language communities and intra-language communities. The application of resistance strategy in translation creates a strangeness and remoteness in the target language culture, and the purpose of which is to liberate the translator and the translation readers out of the cultural restraint that originally dominated their reading and writing. The resistance strategy is to resist against the hegemony of transparent translation in English culture. This resistance is from the inside of the target language and disintegrates the target language, putting the status of central culture into question. If this strategy brings the translation readers the feeling of strangeness, then foreign texts may get the temporary liberation in the target language culture. And when the translation readers figure out the cultural difference in the target language, it is the time for the foreign texts to obtain their permanent liberation.

For Venuti, translation is a process for similarities between languages and cultures, only because the translator constantly confronts dissimilarities. It can never and should never aim to remove these dissimilarities entirely. A translated text should be the site where different cultures emerge, where the readers get a glimpse of the cultural other. The translation strategy of resistance is founded on the aesthetic basis of discontinuity, since discontinuity retains the difference and strangeness to the best. He reminds the readers to give attention to the gain and loss in the translating process and the gap that cannot be bridged between cultures. On the contrary, domesticating translation requires the translator to give his sympathy to the foreign writers and the translation transparent and fluent. This is indeed a kind of cultural narcissism. This fluent strategy is a sort of self-identity, which seeks for oneness and for the identical culture with the target culture in the foreign texts. But the self-identity is always wrong, since the difference between the two cultures cannot be reduced. According to Venuti, the mistake of fluent translation erases the difference in the process of translation. Hence Venuti appeals: at the present, transparent translation still dominates Anglo-American cultures, and fluent translation is still the target for English translators, so it is of much more necessity for us to think over our translation principles and strategies.

The foreignizing translation represents the ideology of independence by depositing the difference in the foreign cultures; and it pursues cultural diversity, foregrounds the linguistic and cultural differences of the source language text and transforms the hierarchy

of cultural values in the target language. The foreign texts may also be used to serve for the domestic politics and culture by means of resistance translation. But its dominant value of resistance functions to question and change, and even break the domestic cultural canon. This challenge is of much significance to Anglo-American cultures.

## 4.4   Summary

Deconstruction is a critique intending to dismantle structures. And it is a thought of skepticism against tradition, rationality, and authority. It features in deconstructing the structure, collapsing the system, eliminating the center, rejecting the essence. Seeking for the breakthrough from the inside of structure and finding out its illogical factors, it breaks the closeness of the structure and enables it to open toward every possibility, combining the outside factors with the inside ones automatically and advocating a multi-analysis toward the problems. Thus the school of deconstruction breaks the closeness of translatology under the structural model. Contrary to the model of structuralism, this school does not restrict translatology within the sphere of linguistics and it no longer regards language as something unchangeable supposed by the syntax and the semantic regularity. It brings into the sphere of translation study the factors excluded outside the structure, including the subject — the author and the translator, context, the object—the readers, and the transmitting channel.   Deconstructionists emphasize the instability of text meaning and claim there may be or may not be the rule of fidelity. They insist on a relation of continuity and innovation between the original and the translation. In the eyes of the deconstructionists, the translator holds an equal status with the writer. Concretely speaking, the deconstructive translation strategy challenges the traditional translation views in the following three aspects:

Firstly, deconstruction challenges the rule of fidelity supposed by traditional translation theories. Deconstruction decentralizes structuralism, denying the ultimate meaning of the text, which means a fatal blow to the traditional translation theories, since either in the Occident or in the Orient, fidelity has been taken as the criterion for translation. According to traditional translation theories, the translation should copy the meaning of the original completely. But deconstruction dismantles the center of the text,

making the meaning of which wander about with no stability, which fundamentally shakes the basis of the rule of fidelity. Now that the meaning of the text is disseminated in the inter-textuality and the game of the wordplay, there can be no fidelity, accuracy and equivalence. Thus the translation can never be loyal to the original.

Secondly, deconstruction challenges the authority of the writer supposed by traditional translation theories. According to traditional translation views, the writer is regarded as the highest authority dominating the meaning of the text. The writer, as the creative subject of the text, may manipulate the ideas and language as he likes it, but the translator does not enjoy such a privilege. The translator must accurately transmit the meaning expressed by the writer, without additions or deletions, letting alone alteration. However, the authority of the writer is questioned and challenged by the deconstructionists. Deconstruction tries to expel and dismantle the role of the writer in the literary activity, attempting to drive him out of the text. According to deconstruction ideas, the meaning of the text is not intrinsic in itself but the product of the reading process when the reader interacts with the text. Deconstruction denies the permanent unchangeable absolute meaning and the sole interpretation of the text. With the death of the writer, the reader is assigned the unprecedented right of interpreting. And as the first reader of the foreign text, the translator is also given the unprecedented right of self-determination, with no more necessity to seek for the original intention of the writer and to live in the shadow of the writer. In the light of deconstruction thought, both the role and the status of the translator have experienced great revolution: The translator, like the writer, comes to be the subject of creation, being on the equal footing with the latter and obtaining the authority of himself.

Thirdly, deconstruction challenges the binary oppositions of writer/translator and the original/the translation supposed by the traditional translation theories. Derrida does not recognize the static opposite polarization. Instead, he advocates a new logic, i.e. the "supplementary logic", opposing the binary opposite logic in the traditional Western philosophy. The writer and translator, the original and the translation have been sharing a binary opposition relation in the traditional translation theories. The relation between the writer and translator has been compared to that of master and servant all the time; and the

relation between the original and the translation has been that of model and duplication. However, under the challenge of deconstruction, the binary oppositions supposed by the traditional translation theories are dismantled. According to the text theory of deconstruction, all the texts share inter-textuality, the notion of which not only destroys the illusion of literary original creation completely, but also overthrows the authority of the writer. Accordingly, there is no more distinction between the writer and translator, no more differentiation between the original and the translation.

# Chapter Five

# Dialectical Analyses of Deconstruction Translation Strategies

Since deconstruction is a highly philosophical thought, and the translation views based on which do not aim at the discussion of the micro-skills and methods, instead the real purpose for most of the philosophers is to alter people's worldviews by way of their investigations into language and philosophy, a strategic macro-analysis toward it is of particular significance. In the following, this dissertation will attempt to give deconstruction and some of its translation views analyses from the perspective of dialectical materialism of Karl Marx with the sincere expectation that my brick will attract some jades.

## 5.1  Adherence to the Dialectical Negation View

According to the negation view of Karl Marx's dialectical materialism, the world is in a continuous process of moving, changing and developing, and nothing is absolute and eternal. The dialectical negation view consists of two implications: on the one hand, negation is the essential tache for the development. The development of anything is fundamentally the death of the old thing and the birth of the new one, which means a fundamental alteration in its essentiality. Because every present existence is produced under certain historical conditions, it has its reasons to exist for its relying historical environments; but with the time's going on and the alteration of the conditions, the reasons for its existence gradually die out and they may turn out to be some negative factors blocking its development. Only by means of negation the thing may continue to develop forward with the new thing replacing the old one. On the other hand, the negation is the tache for the connection. The birth of nothing can be without foundation. It is produced out of the inside of the old thing, thus it is not an utter negation to the latter.

Instead, it must take in and reconstruct the positive elements within the old thing and push them to a new phase. (Karl Marx, 1965).

The dialectical negation view is the unity of connection and development, which means both to overcome and to retain, both to develop the useful and discard the useless. The new things should get rid of the negative and stale elements in the old ones, retaining the positive and rational elements. Not only so, the positive and rational elements should also be reconstructed and carried forward so as to be adaptable for the development. Only so, the things may develop from the lower to the higher phase. This view of dialectical negation requires our scientific analysis toward everything, that is, both to transform and to inherit. On the one hand, we must take a firm resistance against the negative and the punk in the old things; and on the other hand, we should try to take in everything valuable and rebuild them. We must follow the rule of removing the draff and adopting the essence and carry through the principle of getting rid of the stale and bringing forth the fresh. At the same time, we must fight against the two wrong thoughts of affirming everything and denying everything, since affirming everything means to deny the development of the things and denying everything means to dissever the historical connection between the old and new things. Not everything of the cultural heritage is fecal and should be discarded. Therefore, the attitude of scientific analysis should be taken toward science and culture. Sheding the light of dialectical negation to the translation strategies of deconstruction, we may get the following enlightenments:

### 5.1.1 Developing the Useful and Discarding the Useless—from Structuralism to Deconstruction

The thought of deconstruction itself is the outcome of both developing and discarding the structuralism at the moment of French formalism's downfall. Deconstruction is neither a method nor an analysis; it also does not mean to demolish but is a strategy. The ideas of Derrida represent French radical anti-traditional inclinations, so they get many censures and blows. Derrida is the first person who holds the attitude of reservation toward structuralism. He engages in pushing the structuralism forward. His work in structuralism corresponds with the ideas of Russian formalism and Prague school: they all pursue the "symbiosis" of poems and philosophy. This is the tradition of structuralism. The root of Heiddger is deeply concealed in the deconstructing work of Derrida. Thus the

deconstruction of Derrida is a tactic, which belongs to anti-structuralism and structuralism as well. His deconstruction practice aims at the thought of sameness —He believes that there has never been the sameness but the difference in the original words. But there has no contradiction and opposition except for repetitions and delay of meanings in the original words either.

The development and growth of deconstruction is based on its dialectical negation to structuralism, which means both to inherit and to separate. Although being widely divergent in their theories and propositions, both structuralism and deconstruction highlight the linguistic dominating position in the texts from their own standpoints, neglecting the subject. Getting the benefit from Saussure, structuralism attempts to explore the stable deep structure, i.e. langue hidden inside the works by way of investigating various literary works, i.e. parole. Deconstruction deconstructs the texts from the point of view of etymology and rhetoric, revealing the self-contradiction of the texts and the instability of language. Thus structuralism and deconstruction share their common place in the linguistic theory. Furthermore, deconstruction also gets the benefit from Saussure, who cuts off history and makes a synchronic study on languages: dividing the symbols into the signifier and the signified, emphasizing the decisive function of the signifier; the relation between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary; there is only difference and no positive item within the linguistic system; the meaning is the result of difference among symbols; studying language by way of suspending the reality. All these opinions and methods praised highly and followed by structuralism are taken in and are treated as the starting point by deconstruction.

As mentioned above, deconstruction is also called post-structuralism. The prefix of "post" itself means that deconstruction is developed from the structuralism. The difference between structuralism and deconstruction is first shown on their attitude toward language. Although both of them acknowledge that languages precede human beings, but structuralists regard language as a self-sufficient stable structure, within which the signifier and the signified share the one-to-one correspondence like the two sides of a coin, and regarding particular meanings as deriving from particular structures. However, for deconstructionists: the language is no longer a stable structure with clear boundaries but is like a boundless net, within which various elements keep exchanging and communicating, resulting in indefinite meaning; every element penetrates into each other with the other

ones; the meaning is but the by-product of the movement of differences with no possibility to realize the ultimate meaning.

Secondly, structuralism and deconstruction share different philosophical foundations. "The spiritual language" is the theoretical foundation of structuralism: since the nineteenth century, the human beings have commonly come to recognize the oneness of the human psychology—Every nation, in spite of the various cultural traditions, shares a universal thinking structure. Levi-Straules takes all the cultural phenomenon of the human beings as having the possible common "unconscious basis" due to the kinship and similarities of the linguistic structures. Todorov also believes in the common experience basis among the human beings, which determines the languages and all the information systems. He claims that not only all the languages, but also all the indicating systems have the same grammar, which is the same with the structure of the world itself. This transcendental "unconscious structure" or "universal grammar" is the starting point and pursuing goal for the structuralism. And this transcendental structure exists just in the human brains. Contrary to the structuralism that yells for the oneness, the deconstruction endeavors to search for the original difference. Although the deconstruction also acknowledges that the language is the dominator of the human beings, controlling the thinking behavior of the human beings, this function of the languages depends on the movement of differences among the symbols, since no language has only one symbol; in other words, there is no single symbol language. It is just by means of criticizing the movement of the differences that deconstruction breaks the illusion of one-to-one correspondence between the signifier and the signified supported by structuralism, making the two opposite parties in the binary oppositions mutually transform and bring them to the equal status.

Deconstruction disapproves structuralism in its pursuit of objectivity and scientificity. Structuralism insists on the objectivity and scientificity in literary studies, while deconstruction attempts to prove the absurdity of the objectivity and scientificity, pursuing the game of wordplay. The development of linguistic science and especially the publication of *The General Linguistics* by Saussure offer the sound theoretical basis for the development of literary theories. The structural literary theories come into existence. Structuralism supposes that literature, like the other branch of sciences, has its own operating mechanism, i.e. the system. Thus the rational, scientific, and objective analysis may be carried out on it, abandoning the subjective disturbances. The linguistic features of

human cultures encourage structuralism to search for the deep structures of literature by way of the weapon of linguistic science. However, deconstruction abandons the scientificity and objectivity in literary studies, believing that there can be no scientific, objective, and accurate explanations at all. Reading is not to distinguish and confirm the meanings, but to impose the interpretations of the readers into the text that has no definite meaning, so any study or explanation is subjective. Derrida believes that any self-claiming scientific theory must be of phonocentrism (one sort of logocentrism): scientific theory considers that it reflects a never variable object, but all the languages, including those being used to criticize and those we speak, have the otherness, thus instable and not be able to reflect a stable object.

In the theory of texts, structuralism treats the text as static, while deconstruction considers the text as dynamic. Studying the literary works as stable and static objects, structuralism aims at revealing the stable deep structure hidden in the numerous and complicated literary works by way of linguistic model so as to guide the creation and interpretation of literary works. Roland Barthes, the representative of deconstruction offers fierce criticism toward the macro study of structuralism, believing that the pursuit for the single structure is fruitless, since this will not exhibit any difference. According to Barthes, the study focus should be shifted to the otherness, the dynamic features and the openness of the texts. He declares that the text is not a stable object for the analysis, but the world of endless signifiers. For him, reading is to find out the multiplicity of the meaning that cannot be simplified in the text, and the creation of works is a practice rather than a duplication of the stable structure.

From the above analysis it is clear to see that the development and growth of deconstruction depend on its criticism and inherit of the ideas of structuralism. There is no utter criticism and no complete inherit, thus it is in correspondence with the dialectical negation view of materialism. For the same reason, we should adhere to the dialectical negation view while studying the translation strategy of deconstruction.

### 5.1.2 Applying Dialectical Negation View into Deconstruction Translation Strategies

While studying the translation views of deconstruction, we should pay attention to both of the active side and the negative side, thus applying the dialectical negation view of

Marx's materialism, developing the useful and discarding the useless.

Deconstruction tends to question and deconstruct the structure, denying the structural stability and the conformity of meanings, advocating the openness of the text and the otherness of textual meaning; rejecting the existence of center and the search for the intrinsic essence from the deep inside of things; opposing logocentrism and abstract universality. Deconstruction does not just stay at "the presence" of reality but goes beyond it. Meanwhile it does not go so far as to the abstract eternality and universality like the structuralism does, instead it goes to "the absent" reality behind "the present". This thought regards that both the present and the absent things are of the same reality rather than abstract eternality or essence. Accordingly it arouses great storm in the translation field, since it challenges many traditional notions and brings forth a multi-dimensional study method for translation studies, replacing the single pattern of structural linguistics. It breaks some traditional translation views: not pursuing the Utopian fidelity; no longer regarding the meaning only as being pre-established by the linguistic symbols but as the resultant of conversation; the text is no longer treated as being closed but open and it is open to all the possible interpretations. In the following we will first discuss the enlightenments that deconstruction translation strategies give us, and then the points that should be criticized will be explored in the immediately following section:

The first and most important enlightenment we may take in from the deconstruction strategy is that it enables us to think about the essence of translation from a new standpoint. The deconstruction makes us to ponder more upon the linguistic essence, the relation between specific languages and their meanings shown in the translation process, and the issue concerned with the relation between the original and the translation. And especially it makes us to think about, in a more accessible attitude, the issue of translatability and untransaltability. The issue of linguistic essence and meanings may ultimately be revealed by way of deep study on the phenomenon of translation, since translation may exhibit the otherness and supplementarity between the languages. Thus we should pay more attention to the study of translation itself, including not only the transforming of the meanings, the related translation principles, models, methods and process, but also attention to the issue of languages.

Secondly, we may get a clearer understanding of the function and status of translation through this strategy. The deconstruction translation strategy tells us that    translation is

the afterlife of the original and that there is no original if there is no translation. At the same time, both of the original and the translation are regarded as the fragments of "pure language" and the translation is but a new text different from the original, which means that they share the equal status. Accordingly the status of the translator and the translation is notably increased to an unprecedented high position.

The third inspiration we may get from the deconstruction translation strategy is its thinking mode in dealing with the problems. This is a phenomenological mode rather than the logic-mathematics thinking mode of the structuralism. Both of the two thinking modes are transcendences but in different forms. The transcendence of the logic-mathematics mode is vertical: it transcends from the present things to their kernel or essence for the abstract oneness, universality, for the eternality and immutability. This is the transcendence from the sensibility to the rationality, i.e. for the "eternal presence" or " pure presence". While the mode of phenomenology is a horizontal transcendence: It also transcends from the present things but not for the deeply concealed kernel or essence, since it does not think that everything has an invariable essence. Instead it regards the phenomenon as the essence, so it transcends to the non-present, i.e. the absent things. It ponders on things by means of imagination and association, instead of through the abstract and inductive means. This way it makes the present and the absent integrate and colligate so as to form the wholeness. It regards the absent also as the realistic things rather than the abstract notions or logical relations. The thinking mode of imagination and association is more applicable to the humanities. This mode relieves us from the restriction of the abstract thinking of the logic-mathematics, activating our ability of imagination and association. Although translatology is an all-round subject, it is mainly the colligation of humanities and social sciences. Many texts for translation are works of art full of poetic implications, the aesthetic significance of which is just concealed in the endless absence. The producing of meaning in reading and the re-creation in translation are inseparable with the horizontal transcendence of imagination and association.

The openness of thought is also what we should learn from deconstruction. The multidimensional thinking style is one of the essences of the post-modernism. Everything in the world is complicated and is influenced by many factors. Translation activity is also concerned with many factors such as the subjects (including the writer and translator), the information quality, the transmitting channel, the receptor, the degree of variance between

two languages, etc. And the change of one factor usually influences the whole activity. The translation activity is also concerned with quite broad knowledge spheres, being highly synthetical, thus the thought of openness is of much more significance. Deconstruction endeavors to criticize some old rationality so as to find out the errors and weaknesses. Thus a person engaged in the scientific work should keep open-minded, not being restricted by the old traditions, old rationality and those seem to be rational. There is no absolute truth, and nobody may confirm that a certain theory is the truth, since they are of non-confirmative natures. Furthermore, the thinking mode of openness is also the precondition of multi-dimensionality. No openness, no multi-dimensionality. The translation process is also concerned with numerous factors including, different translators and various cultural traditions, different readers of the translation, transmitting methods and channels. The so-called rational and scientific linguistic research model excludes too many factors, focusing only on the semantic-syntactic relation, thus it is quite irrational indeed. When any one of the above-mentioned factors is highlighted, there will be correspondence variation in the other factors, and this will lead to various translations. Therefore, in such an activity, the open thinking mode and the multi-dimensional thinking style are of extreme significance. And certainly, while bring forth some enlightenments for the scientific studies, deconstruction and the related translation strategies also contain some negative impacts, which will be discussed in the following section.

### 5.1.3 Insisting on the View of from Negation to Negation

According to the dialectical negation view of materialism, the development of things cannot be accomplished within one negation. It is a process from the phase of affirmation to that of negation, and then to the phase of negation's negation, experiencing two dialectical negations and three phases of periodicity movement in the fashion of spiral type ascending and waveform advancing. This is the law of negation's negation, which indicates that the developing process of everything is the unification of advance and flections. This movement process is shown to be the self-development and self-perfection of the things in the content; and is exhibited as the spiral type ascending and waveform advancing in its form. The contradiction movement of things accomplishes one circle after three phases and two negations. And either of the two negations is a dialectical one, i.e. the developing of the useful and discarding of the useless. And each negation pushes the

things to a higher level of development. The periodicity movement of the things is not the simple circulation going round and round; and the repetition in the developing process does not mean to return to the original starting point, but to a higher level of developing so as to produce the new things.

In the above analysis, we have already had a detailed discussion of the negation of deconstruction to structuralism and its philosophical basis: as a radical betrayer to the tradition, Derrida overthrows the Western metaphysics of the presence, giving the traditional ontology, logocentrism, and phonocentrism fierce and profound attacks, and advocating a new thinking mode on this basis. He shakes some familiar notions, including his questioning and attacking the notions of absolute truth and object truth. Thus deconstruction is first of all its negation to the tradition, and this is the first step of the development. But as mentioned above, deconstruction is not the purpose. Instead the ultimate pursuit should be reconstruction after deconstruction. For its further development and accomplishment, a dialectical analysis toward it is of particular significance, which involves not only the praise to it, but also the critique and negation to it.

The second negation should be given to the theory of deconstruction and its translation strategy.   Deconstruction theory is short of argumentations and sometimes it seems to be self-contradictory. The deconstruction translation view represented by Derrida declares the death of the writer and the original, which means the negation to the authority of the writer and the creativity of the original text. It is to be confessed that although the translation contains the creativity components, they are based on the original. To erase the distinction between the original and the translation means to erase translation itself, since the version cannot be the castle in the air.

With the purpose of breaking the old thinking mode, deconstruction completely destroys the determination and stability of meanings of the original texts, overemphasizing the relativity and non-fixity. Although it reaches the aim of destroying the old and establishing the new, Derrida questions the existence of meanings, rejecting the possibility of transmitting the meanings and querying whether the meanings may be confirmed all along. This may lead to the inclination of nihilism in the extreme cases: to a text, different readers, including the translators, may have various interpretations, and this may result in the loss of impersonal and valid standard for the translator's interpretation and the measure to the translation. And this may provide the excuse for various misinterpretations

and free translations far from the subject. This nihilism inclination may easily lead to the extremely random interpretations about the text, leading to the connection of complete negation to the writer and the negation to the source of things so as to negate the existence of the text meaning. Although these are just some possible inclinations, the cautions must be given to the scholars for the thorough investigation and the advancing of deconstruction.

The deconstruction translation strategies of Walter Benjamin and Paul de Man also have some limitations and negative points. Their argumentation of no similarity between the original and the translation goes to the extreme. Although they intend to make clear the relation between the languages, this argumentation may have negative impact on the translation practice. In addition, influenced by the mentalism linguistic view, Benjamin melts the mysterious intuitionism and aesthetic view into the translation theories. He turns some traits of the God, including the unknowability to the God, into the linguistic traits, and this leads to certain untranslatability and the mysticism in translation. These are the issues for us to recognize and the problems for us to avoid in translation studies.

Furthermore, deconstruction is a thought in a general sense without unified theoretical frame. While utterly negating rationality and overemphasizing the subjective ideologies, or simply abandoning the subjectivity, deconstruction makes the linguistic symbols play in endless word game so much so that the meanings are permanently deferred. While criticizing the decidability and clarity of the meanings supposed by structuralism, deconstruction even eliminates the linguistic laws completely, turning the activity of meaning interpretation into an infinite circulation and eternal derivations. And this produces some negative impacts on translation studies: some scholars closely guard against the linguistic laws and the restrictions of the texts in translation. We learn from deconstruction in order to break up the central status of the original text, but not to throw away its text. We overthrow the control of scientism over the humanities but not for neglecting the linguistic laws. We regard translating activity as a process to produce various interpretations, but not any random interpretation is acceptable. The original text is an open system does not mean it is not a system at all. Therefore, in order to resist the negative impacts on translation studies from deconstruction, a dialectical analysis to it is important: after the dialectical negation, there is the possibility for reconstructing the new valid and rational translation systems.

## 5.2   Absolute Variations and Relative Stability—Another Dialectical Approach to Deconstruction Translation Strategy

According to dialectical materialism, there is no substance that is not moving, which indicates that the movement is universal, eternal, and unconditional, hence it is absolute. While confirming the absoluteness of the movement, dialectical materialism does not deny that there also exists certain static state and stable form. But there is no absolute quiescency and absolute stability, since the quiescency and stability of the substance is temporary and conditional, thus relative. Dialectical materialism regards the development of anything as the unification of absolute movement and relative quiescency. The relation of movement and quiescency exhibits mainly in: the former is absolute and the latter is relative, and they mutually penetrate into each other—with the movement in the quiescency and vice versa. The quiescency is a special state for the movement, a state when the substance is of relative balance and stability. When the substance is still in the stage of quantitative change, the substance presents a relative static state.

The acceptability of relative quiescency is the precondition for us to grasp the movement and to understand the quality of things, since relative quienscency is the measurement for the movement and the fundamental condition for the substance to differentiate into its varieties and for the existence and development of the substance. To deny the absolute movement of things will lead to the static view of metaphysics; while to deny the relative quiescency of things will result in relativism and sophism.

According to general semiotics, the signifier (linguistic signs or symbols) has no meaning. There exists no natural logical relation between the signifier and the signified (the concrete substance and abstract concepts). As mentioned above, the relative fixed relationship between them exists on account of the official determination and the convention of a certain speech community. Thus the meaning determination of a certain linguistic sign is influenced by the convention of the speech community, by the context situation while the speech act is taking place, as well as by the speechmaker. But the meaning location is not influenced by the likes and dislikes of the translator.

It is to be confessed that the unitary correspondence between the signifier and the signified keeps changing on account of the variation of historical background, context situation, and cultural factors. For instance, the semantic scope may keep widening or

narrowing due to the occurrence of polysemy –the same linguistic symbol may refer to more than one concept or thing, and the function of association, analogy, abstraction and concretization. At the times of Shakespeare, the word "deer" referred to animals in general instead of the animal deer; one word of the Hopi people refers to insect, aeroplane and pilot together; the Chinese character "shan" refers both to mountain and hill in English. So with the variation and development of linguistics, the one-to-one correspondence between the signifier and the signified remains no longer stable. This results in the lexical ambiguity and structural ambiguity, which brings us difficulty to interpret the intended meaning of the speaker or the writer. Thus the precise determination of the linguistic meaning also involves some extra-linguistic factors, which are variables, such as the historical background, context situation, and cultural factors, etc.

However, deconstruction exaggerates the speed of linguistic variation, denying the relative stability of linguistic signs. According to the deconstruction idea, not only the correspondence has changed, but also the signs cannot express the meaning. Derrida believes that while looking for meaning through linguistic signs, what one gets is nothing but the signifiers of the signifiers and the explanations of explanations. Take the word "tree" as an example. It is commonly defined as a plant, while the plant needs the explanation of some other words. From this Derrida concludes that a sign is restricted by some other signs in space. It cannot be separated from the other different signs, and the meaning of it also depends on the other signs and so it is not determinable. (Liao Qiyi, 2001).

It is indeed the case that a linguistic sign in any linguistic system is of its own particular implications, the semantic and stylistic features of which cannot be replaced exactly by another sign. According to the principles of linguistics, no two synonyms in the world are exactly identical. But this does not mean that the semantic and stylistic features of the linguistic signs cannot be exactly described. If that is the case, how can there be the sayings of "Be absolutely lifelike" and "Reach the acme of perfection"? Just as the great German philosopher and linguist Vo Humboldt says, any thing in any language of any trace—from the most primitive to the most advanced in human culture can be expressed by way of language. The gift for human beings to master languages is universal, and any language contains some mechanisms for its users to understand the other languages. That is, any language, including those commonly regarded most primitive language has some

multi-dimensionally developing potential of expression. This linguistic potential ensures the language users to express everything outside of the language itself, including those situations beyond their own social and cultural experiences (Wilss, 2001). This indicates that translation between diverse languages is possible.

Take the above -mentioned word "tree" as an example. Strictly speaking, tree and plant are not synonyms, since the relation between the two words are of hyponymy. "Plant" is the superordinate of the "tree". Thus to explain "tree" as "plant" seems too vague. Some further explanations like "a woody perennial plant", and with " a main stem or trunk growing to a considerable height" are required. This way we can grasp the precise concept of "tree" and its whole semantic features. These explanations do not stand for the idea of Derrida that the meaning is always fleeting and cannot be grasped. On the other hand, as a translator, we must first understand all the information encoded in the source language. Then we are to encode the information precisely into the target language. The above analysis does not only show that translation is possible, but also in the translation process, a more proper and appropriate equivalent in the target language for a linguistic symbol than the synonym in the source language can be found due to the two different linguistic systems. For example, in the translation of "wo xi huan zhi shu" for the English expression "I like planting trees", the Chinese equivalent "shu" for "tree' is a much more precise word for its English superordinate "plant".

The above analysis proves to this point that the movement and change are absolute, but relative quiescency also exists, which ensures the grasp of the substance. Languages keep changing and developing, so do the lexical meanings and sentence structures. However, the temporal meaning of the original text can be grasped and interpreted. Synchronic linguistics, one important way of linguistic studies reveals the particular situation of a certain language and its relation with the other languages at a certain period of time. By way of this study, all the linguistic factors involved in the original text and the cultural impact on the languages are revealed. Therefore we can reproduce effectively the temporal intention and attitude the writer tried to convey at the historical moment when he was writing.

## 5.3   Practice Is the Only Standard for the Truth

In 1845, Karl Marx put forward the issue of truth testing when he was founding the new world view: Whether the thinking of human beings bears the nature of objective truth is not an issue of theory but the issue of practice. The truth nature of thinking, i.e. the practicality and power of thinking, or the temporality of the thinking should be tested in practice. The dispute about whether the thinking deviated from practice bears practicality is a pure issue of Scholasticism. This indicates clearly that whether a theory reflects the objective fact precisely or whether it is a truth has to be tested by way of social practice. The practice standard is a basic principle and the fundamental quality of Marxism epistemology.

The practice is not only the standard to test the truth, but it is also the sole standard. The truth of materialism is objective. It is the proper reflection of thinking to the objective world and its laws. Thus we should not seek for the standard of truth testing in the subjective domain or the domain of theories. The thinking and theories cannot be the standard to test whether they are in accordance with the facts themselves. The social practice of human beings is the activity of reconstructing the objective world. It consists the quality of relating the thinking to the objective world. Therefore, it is just this activity and only this activity that may fulfill the task of testing truth. Numerous facts in the history of science have fully proved the correctness of this view.

The deconstruction school is zealous about the exploration of theories, but neglecting the instructions of theory to practice. They have provided few concrete translation models, translation methods and skills after the abstract theory elucidations. And there is very little investigation into the concrete translation process. There is always a long way to go from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom. Whether the theory of deconstruction is of the truth nature has to be tested by the future numerous practices.

# Chapter Six

# Conclusion and Implications

## 6.1  Conclusion of This Study

The Traditional translation view regards translation activity as the conversion between linguistic symbols, emphasizing the central status of the original text, and pursuing the consistency between the translation and the original text. Deconstruction dismantles the traditional close system of monism, and destroys the original consistency, determinacy and regularity, emphasizing pluralism, indeterminacy and irrationality, and highlighting the freedom of the subject. Thus it is an active destroying to traditional rationality. Deconstruction translation theory acknowledges the significance of the status of the translator in theory, releasing the translator from the restriction of the traditional equivalent view. The translation is no longer treated as the accessory of the original and the translator is no longer restricted by the original. Instead he dares to make the creative translation on the original, enabling him to bring his subjectivity into full play. Thus deconstruction theory endows translation practice with more creativity and the translator more freedom.

Deconstruction comes into being by way of criticizing the traditional Western philosophical notions such as the Western "metaphysics of presence", logocentrism, pholocentrism, binary oppositions, etc. Thus it stands on the level of philosophy. There would be no thorough and profound understanding about it without the philosophical analysis. This dissertation has made some attempts to analyze some of the key views of the deconstruction theory and its related translation strategy. Anyway, this is just the first step in this sphere of investigation, so it seems unavoidably superficial. Thus the author sincerely hopes that this dissertation will serve the function of throwing out a brick to attract a jade.

## 6.2    Enlightenments of Deconstruction Translation Strategy to Chinese Translation Studies

Most of the deconstructionists are post-modern philosophers. And they are all rich in the creative abilities. Their negation and suspicion are just the preconditions for the creative abilities, and the nature of deconstructing and destroying are just the prelude and proem for the re-creations. Thus our study on them should not stay at the surface. But many of the Chinese scholars of translatology have performed to be superficial in this aspect of study in the past. For instance, they start to discuss the translation views of the deconstructionists while being still short of understanding about their thinking. In the past ten years or so, almost all the translation views of Heiddger, Derrida, Nietzsche, and Benjamin have been discussed. But these discussions seem to be lack of consistency and profundity. This is the result of the fickle style of study--being eager for quick success and instant benefit, which will go against the construction of translatology due to being lack of the in-depth study in translation.

The Western translation theorists question the translation theories of structuralism from every possible aspect by way of the thinking mode of openness, finding out the rips of the translation theories of the structural linguistic views so that they have opened up the multidimensional study avenues and have founded various schools of translatology. At the present, we are still short of the research in this aspect: once we get to touch a certain theory, we regard it as the only correct theory. And this is just the performance of being lack of the open thinking.

Deconstruction has provided us with a self-reflection thinking method, revealing those things long forgotten by human cognitive activities. Philosophically speaking, it offers a fresh worldview. Thus it is of apparent progressive functions. It is safe to say that without this thinking way, we shall not be able to walk out of the closeness of structure and systems. It is of special significance for us to possess this thinking method so as to open up the multi-dimensional and open study direction, and to develop the study of translatology and finally to establish the science of translatology. But deconstruction is not the ultimate purpose for our cognition. It has not brought us with the ultimate truth. It is even not a complete thinking system itself. It is but a method of questioning and self-reflection, and a dismantling literature style. We should learn, first of all, this method and

understand this style so as to open up our train of thoughts, walking out of the restriction of traditional thinking mode and surveying our mastered theories from a new standpoint, analyzing the quite familiar notions to see whether there are some unreasonable points so as to develop them. Thus we should only treat deconstruction as a thinking method and the weapon for breaking the monism, treating it as the necessary process rather than the aim or result. It is the same for the study of translation: deconstruction is not the purpose, and the purpose is the reconstruction after being deconstructed.

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# 解构主义与翻译探索——辩证唯物主义视角

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