

**Translating South Africa's Transition:
Ivan Vladislavić's *Missing Persons* in French.**

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I, Giuditta Toniolo, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work, and has not been submitted, in part or in whole, at any other university or tertiary institution. All reference materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

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Abstract

This short dissertation is based on the comparative analysis of Ivan Vladislavić's short-story collection, *Missing Persons* (1989) and its French (Belgian) translation, *Portés Disparus* (1997). The thematic concerns of the source text – produced in South Africa at a time of “increasing socio-political upheaval and transition” (Wood 2001: 21) – add interest to such an investigation, providing insights into how South Africa's transition to democracy has been re-written for a Belgian Francophone audience.

In line with recent debates in the field of Translation Studies, the study addresses the central problem of cross-cultural transfer, by embracing two essentially systemic approaches to the study of translated literature: Descriptive Translation Studies (or DTS), and Polysystem Theory. In addition, Lambert and Van Gorp's “Hypothetical Scheme for Describing Translations” is used to investigate and explain the strategies adopted by the translators to transfer concepts that are culturally and historically specific to a transitional South Africa. The initial hypothesis to be tested is that, while *Portés Disparus* is mainly the product of strategies of ‘domestication’, it also displays traces of ‘foreignisation’, which suggest broadly ideological, rather than purely linguistic, motivations on the part of the translators.

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Glossary

CDA = Critical Discourse Analysis

DTS = Descriptive Translation Studies

ST = Source Text

TT = Target Text

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Research problem, aims and hypothesis

Ivan Vladislavić's South Africa is a fluid, unstable place of sudden inversions or dissolutions, startling fusions or metamorphoses and hilarious, fanciful or downright crazy inventions. [...] Vladislavić's fiction is set in the South Africa of the 1980s and 1990s, a shifting, changing period marked by increasing socio-political upheaval and transition.

Wood 2001: 21

The French translation of Ivan Vladislavić's first short-story cycle, *Missing Persons* (1989), was published in 1997 by the Belgian Editions Complexe, under the title *Portés Disparus*. In the light of Wood's statement above, which emphasises the author's engagement with the socio-political context of South Africa's transition to democracy, I wish to question the relevance of Vladislavić's short-story collection for a Francophone Belgian readership. Given that none of Vladislavić's books had been published in French prior to *Portés Disparus*, what reason did Editions Complexe have for commissioning the translation of this particular collection, which deals with what may appear to be the unsettling dislocations of a South African society in the throes of transition?

The fact that the French translation of *Missing Persons* was published in Belgium, in 1997, suggests that Vladislavić's concern with "questions of nationalism, [...] social change and historical memory" (Vladislavić and Warnes 2000: 273), provide a sounding board for Belgian readers, at a time when the country was emerging from its first few

years as a federally governed nation¹. An analysis of the socio-cultural contexts of South Africa (the source culture) and Belgium (the target culture) will, therefore, be necessary in order to “offer exhaustive descriptions and viable explanations” (Toury 1995: 29) of eventual cultural shifts. Consequently, in the course of this short dissertation, I shall interrogate the paradigmatic similarities between South Africa’s transition to democracy and Belgium’s transition to federal governance, in an attempt to show how these similarities are reflected in the translation strategies of the target text.

In addition, given the distinctly South African texture of Vladislavić’s writing, I wish to pose the question: what strategies do Jean-Pierre Richard and Julie Sibony (the translators) employ, in order to transfer culturally-specific references, such as:

Fontana, Rugantino’s, the United Building Society, Exclusive Books, the names of streets in Hillbrow, as well as the icons, the monument, the statues, the terrorists, the Prime Minister with his wagging finger, Tsafendas, Jan Smuts Airport.

(Leveson 1992: 30)

How are these strategies shaped by the dominant norms of translation in the target system? Of particular interest, in the light of my focus on cultural transfer, is the fact that both South Africa and Belgium are multicultural societies, where issues of cultural identity and of national unity vs. fragmentation are of particular relevance.

Taking these considerations into account, I must indicate that my mini-thesis is concerned with translation shifts as a function of cultural and broadly ideological, rather than purely linguistic, negotiation between the respective literary systems of South Africa

¹ In 1993, a radical reform to the Belgian Constitution officially separated the country into self-governing language areas: French-speaking in the South, Dutch-speaking in the North, German-speaking in the East, and the independent bilingual district of Brussels.

and Belgium. In an attempt to answer the research questions outlined above, I will carry out a comparative analysis of the source and target texts², seeking to identify, describe and contextualise the inevitable cultural shifts that occur in translation.

The issues outlined above suggest a double objective for this short dissertation. To start with, I aim to highlight the cultural implications of the translation of Vladislavić's short-story cycle into French. In order to achieve this, I will examine (in chapter three) the socio-cultural contexts of the source and target systems, focussing on the similarities between the two. Secondly, in the light of my focus on cultural transfer in translation, I will attempt to uncover (in chapter four) possible regularities in Richard and Sibony's translation choices, in order to determine their priorities in translating *Missing Persons* – e.g. was their aim to produce an 'adequate' translation of the ST, or did they focus on producing a TT that would be 'acceptable' from the point of view of the target culture?

My initial hypothesis, informed by the perceived paradigmatic affinities between the two countries, is that the strategies adopted in the transfer of cultural references display a 'dual loyalty' (Nord 1991), i.e. a loyalty to both target- and source-system norms. I suggest that, while Richard and Sibony's initial translation norm is influenced primarily by the objective of producing a text that is 'acceptable' in terms of the target readers' expectations, it is also shaped to a degree by the target readership's (and by the translators') empathy toward South Africa's socio-political transformation. In other words, *Portés Disparus* displays a general target orientation, with occasional traces of source orientation.

² I hereafter refer to the source text as ST and the target text as TT.

Of secondary importance, but also informing my initial hypothesis, is the assumption that Editions Complexe commissioned Richard and Sibony to translate *Missing Persons* due to various paradigmatic affinities between South Africa's transition to democracy and Belgium's transition to federal governance. In both countries, the transition ostensibly represented a move toward the equal treatment of the various cultural and linguistic groups, while in practice the socio-economic realities remained largely unchanged. Furthermore, both the Anglophone South African and the Francophone Belgian literary systems comprise the literary production of minority groups in 'major' global languages (English and French, respectively).

1.2 Choice of author and text

My decision to focus on the translation of Ivan Vladislavić's first short-story collection, *Missing Persons* (1989), is motivated by a number of considerations. Firstly, while a number of recent studies have examined the translation of South African literature for a foreign market, most of these have looked at translations of texts written in the mode of realism that characterised South African writing under apartheid³. The research gap concerning the translation of the postmodern fictions of the late 1980s and 1990s is evident. One reason for this is certainly the international fame of authors such as Alan Paton, Breyten Breytenbach, André Brink, Nadine Gordimer and J.M. Coetzee, whose works alone account for more than half of all South African literary texts translated into

³ See, for example, the following theses: Jarvis (2005) on Mphahlele (in German), Perabo (1994) on Gordimer (in French), Schulze (1994) on Tlali (in German), and James (1993) on Brink (in French).

French (Richard 2003). While the popularity abroad of South African protest writing is undisputed, a number of post-apartheid authors – for example, Zakes Mda, Sello Duiker and Ivan Vladislavić – are slowly penetrating Francophone markets, and enjoying growing readerships abroad, but are still under-researched in Translation Studies.

My decision to focus on the work of a transition writer is consequently motivated by a desire to contribute to the above-mentioned gap in South African research in the field of Translation Studies – i.e. concerning translations of postmodern works published in the dying years of apartheid. As I have explained above, while the resistance role of South African writers under apartheid has been widely explored in the fields of both literary and translation studies, the changing role of writers in the State of Emergency (1985-1990) – although widely debated in literary circles – has not benefited from similar attention in translation research⁴. Against the backdrop of Albie Sachs’s call for an end to definitions of culture as “a weapon of struggle” (Sachs 1990/1991: 117), Vladislavić challenges “realist assumptions of unfailing correspondence between word and world” (Helgesson 2004: 777). It is the departure from the mainstream norms of the realist mode within the South African literary system that provides an important motivation for my choice of author.

As concerns my choice of this particular work, it is motivated by two broad considerations. Firstly, *Missing Persons* – the first of Vladislavić’s works to be translated into French – tells the story of dislocated characters trying to find their way in a country

⁴ For evidence of this trend, refer to Kruger’s (2005) “South African Bibliography of Translation, Interpreting, Lexicography and Terminology”.

where “the signposts are frequently ambiguous, the intention elusive” (Wanneberg 1990: 82). This willingness to engage with the contradictions of a transitional South Africa (Nicholls 1999: 159) makes the collection a particularly interesting choice for a study of this nature. This is especially significant given the paradigmatic affinities between South Africa and Belgium, two multicultural societies on the brink of radical social and political transformation.

Secondly, my investigation into the translation of *Missing Persons* addresses another significant lacuna in translation research in South Africa, which, to date, has almost completely ignored the translation of short fiction⁵. Chapman’s (2006) argument that the short story is the literary form best suited to narrating plurality and disjointedness (2006: 145-160), coupled with the observation that, to date, only publishers in Belgium and Switzerland – both federally-governed multicultural societies – have brought out Vladislavić’s short stories in French⁶, suggests an interesting parallel between the fragmentation of multicultural societies and the fragmented nature of the short-story cycle.

1.3 Theoretical and methodological framework⁷

Most translation research conducted in South Africa in recent years has followed the Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) approach, which is characterized by a shift away

⁵ Kruger’s (2005) bibliography of translation research mentions only one project on the translation of South African short fiction in the last thirty years.

⁶ Since Editions Complexe’s publication of *Portés Disparus* (1997), the Swiss Editions Zoé has published the French translation of two of Vladislavić’s short-story cycles, namely: *Propaganda by Monuments and Other Stories* (1996/2005), and *The Exploded View* (2004/2006).

⁷ This is meant only as an introduction – in chapter two I will provide a more detailed discussion of the theoretical contributions to my mini-thesis.

from the linguistics-based translation theories of the 1960s and 1970s. DTS theorists such as Lambert, Lefevere and Toury have argued that the process of translation entails more than the mere transfer of a given text in source language *A* into an ‘equivalent’ text in target language *B*. Furthermore, Toury’s key assumption that “translations are facts of target cultures” (Toury 1995: 29) is particularly relevant to my research, given the emphasis on the selection criteria and translation norms involved in rendering *Missing Persons* for a Francophone Belgian readership.

DTS draws on the work of literary scholar Even-Zohar, who posits “translated literature as part of the cultural, literary and historical system of the TL [Target Language]” (Munday 2001: 108). In terms of Even-Zohar’s Polysystem Theory, semiotic phenomena such as culture and literature “should be regarded as systems rather than conglomerates of separate elements” (Even-Zohar 1979: 288) – i.e., the ST and TT are seen as “having cultural significance” (Toury 1978/2000: 198). In addition, both Polysystem Theory and DTS encourage investigation into the “principles of selection” (Toury 1978/2000: 192) of texts translated into a specific language, which will in turn permit me to draw meaningful conclusions about the literary and ideological norms existing within both the South African and the Belgian polysystem.

While most DTS approaches aim to observe and describe the type of relationship that exists between the ST and TT, they do not provide the practical ‘tools’ for comparative analysis. For this purpose I turn to Lambert & Van Gorp’s “Hypothetical Scheme for Describing Translations” (in Hermans 1985). This method brings to the fore the main theoretical concerns of DTS and Polysystem Theory, by comparing the texts on four

levels: (1) preliminary (the presence or absence of metatexts); (2) macro-structural (divisions in the text, the way the stories are ordered in the collection); (3) micro-textual (identifying shifts on the syntactic, stylistic and lexical levels); and (4) systemic (drawing conclusions about the relations between system and text)⁸.

While DTS remains the principal theoretical framework of this study, I also make use of a number of theories outside the field of Translation Studies. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), for example, supports Toury's belief in the importance of social context in Translation Studies. In terms of CDA, "language use [is] a form of social practice" (Fairclough 1992: 63) that reflects (and affects) the power-hierarchies in society. In the light of the thematic concerns of *Missing Persons*, Fairclough's discussion of social change as "constituted by changing discursive practices" (Fairclough 1995: 5) serves as a useful theoretical platform for discussing both the profound social and cultural changes that shaped South Africa in the late 1980s, and Vladislavić's "highly individual, idiosyncratic, elusive" story-telling (Young 1999: 22).

Furthermore, given that "every comparison is partial only" (Toury 1995: 79), I shall make use of Fairclough's classification of social and ideological references in texts, in order to select ST and TT segments. I will therefore be able to focus on ST/TT extracts containing references to: socially determined activities, subjects and the relations between subjects, the material world, and forms of consciousness (Fairclough 2005; 2003; 2001).

⁸ See *Appendix A*.

In addition, I shall draw upon a second theoretical approach outside the field of Translation Studies: Fillmore's Scenes-and-Frames Semantics, which serves to emphasise "the continuities between language and experience" (Petruck 1996: 1). In Fillmore's terms, a 'frame' is a purely "linguistic entity" (Petruck 1996: 1) – i.e. the words selected by the author of the text – and a 'scene' is a "cognitive, conceptual, or experiential entity" (Petruck 1996: 1) – i.e. the mental image evoked by the (culturally competent) reader through interaction with the frame. The suggested distinction between linguistic 'frames' and cognitive 'scenes' is a useful one, which affords me a solid analytical framework within which to discuss different levels of shifts between the ST and the TT.

Lastly, I will make use of Baker's (1992) taxonomy of translation strategies to describe different types of non-equivalence 'at word-level' and 'above word-level'. I will borrow from Baker's discussion in order to focus on how the French translators deal with specific problems of cultural 'untranslatability'.

1.4 Organisation of the study

In accordance with Kruger and Wallmach's (1997) article on conducting translation research in South Africa, in this first chapter I have delimited the research problem, outlining both the aims and the hypothesis to be tested. Moreover, I have motivated my choice of corpus, and outlined the theoretical and methodological framework of my mini-thesis.

In the chapter two I will expand upon the theoretical framework of the study, presenting the main arguments that have shaped recent debates in Translation Studies. I will pay particular attention to the relevance of the ‘cultural studies paradigm’ in the context of the literature of transition in South Africa.

In chapter three, I will present the necessary cultural background for the comparative analysis, by describing the source system (South Africa in the late 1980s) and the target system (Belgium in the 1990s). In the section on the source system, I will examine the literary and cultural contexts of Vladislavić’s work, with particular attention to literary production in South Africa’s transition period. I will also focus on the role of the short-story genre and of the short-story cycle in the South African literary system. The second part of this chapter will look at the target system; in this section I will explore the paradigmatic links between the South African and Belgian cultural polysystems by investigating the importance of social context in the translation of Vladislavić’s work.

Chapter four, the comparative analysis between ST and TT, forms the main part of my study, and provides further illustration of, and motivation for, my methodological approach. In this chapter I will compare the two texts on three levels, in accordance with Lambert and Van Gorp’s above-mentioned scheme: preliminary, macro-structural, and micro-textual (where I will provide numerous examples of the translation shifts and strategies employed by the translators).

In the final chapter (chapter five), I will consider my initial hypothesis in the light of the findings of chapters three and four. I will then venture to draw some ideological

conclusions based on the answers to the key questions initially set out in the introduction to chapter one.

1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have identified the central research problem of cultural transfer in translation, and I have highlighted the particular relevance of my thesis in the context of a multilingual, post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, I have provided an introductory overview of my theoretical and methodological framework, and I have supported my choice of author and text, by highlighting the gap in Translation Studies research on the short-story genre and on the works of post-resistance South African authors.

CHAPTER TWO

Theoretical framework: reflections on recent trends in Translation Studies

This chapter offers a critical reflection on the field of Translation Studies, focusing on key areas of debate. Given “the broad spectrum of theories and research methodologies” (Venuti 2000: 1), and considering the scope of this short dissertation, I do not claim to present a complete account of the academic debates on translation, but simply to contextualise the cultural – rather than purely linguistic – focus of this research project. In order to do so, I begin by outlining the paradigmatic shift from equivalence-based theories to systemic and descriptive approaches (2.1). I then move on to discuss the theoretical framework of the present thesis (2.2) and, in the final section (2.3), I present the conceptual contributions of discourse analysis for my research.

2.1 Key developments: from prescriptive to descriptive approaches

In 1997, translation theorist Lawrence Venuti declared that “the growth of the discipline called ‘translation studies’ [is] a success story of the 1980s” (1997: 360), citing its evolution from a purely linguistics-based area of enquiry in the 1960s, to a discipline in its own right by the 1990s. However, despite the exponential growth of the discipline, there is still little consensus (even in academic circles) with regards to the nature and function of translation in society (Dimitriu and Mann 2007: 25). What follows is an attempt to illustrate the origins of this apparent contradiction, by charting the emergence

of Translation Studies and critically discussing the changes in theoretical perspectives that have shaped the discipline as it is today.

One way to answer the question of what Translation Studies aims to achieve is to look at how translations are defined at different points in history. In an article dealing with metaphors of translation, Wallmach stresses that “going as far back as Cicero, [traditional translation metaphors] tend to illustrate the inferiority of a translation in relation to the original” (2000: 245). This tradition shaped the view of translation as a second-rate activity, and for centuries the study of translations served to demonstrate the “original’s outstanding qualities, by highlighting the errors and inadequacies of any number of translations of it” (Hermans 1985: 8).

In the 1940s, structural linguistics and communication theory were introduced into the study of translation (Bassnett 1991: 40), thereby freeing it “from the traditional dichotomy of ‘faithful’ or ‘free’”, based on which translated texts had previously been assessed (Snell-Hornby 1995: 15). Unlike earlier approaches, linguistics-based studies were concerned with the process of translation, which they viewed as a series of decisions aiming to preserve a relationship of equivalence with the source text.

For years, the term ‘equivalence’ was “considered essential in any definition of translation” (Snell-Hornby 1995: 15), and equivalence between source text (ST) and target text (TT) could be achieved on different levels, depending on the text type. However, the meaning of the term equivalence remained vague, and numerous attempts were made “to qualify and classify it, leading to what can only be described as an

explosive proliferation of equivalence types” (Snell-Hornby 1995: 18). This served to highlight one of the principal shortcomings of this approach: the inability of translation scholars to agree on the type of equivalence that constitutes ‘real’ equivalence⁹.

By the early 1980s, translation scholars such as Gideon Toury, José Lambert, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere “attempted to break the deadlock in which the study of literary translation found itself” (Hermans 1985: 10) by rejecting the myopic views of equivalence-based theories, and replacing them with a more “panoramic view” of translations as texts existing independently of the original text, in their own cultural and social context (Snell-Hornby 1995: 25). A translation was defined as “any target-language utterance, which is presented or regarded as such within the target culture, on whatever grounds” (Toury 1985: 20). In the light of this new definition, the study of translation could no longer limit itself to the study of equivalence at word or sentence level, because translations were recognised as texts existing independently of the original text, in their own cultural and social context (Snell-Hornby 1995: 25).

The “cult of the original” (Brantley and Luzzi 2003: 233) that had characterised early theories of translation was replaced by a broader notion of translation, defined in terms of the cultural and literary expectations of a given community. In an attempt to deal with the new concerns of translation research, a new theoretical approach emerged. While it integrates many points of entry, this new paradigm is essentially characterised by a

⁹ Nida was one of the first to formulate typologies of equivalence, differentiating between formal equivalence – privileging the ‘form’ of the source text – and dynamic/functional equivalence – “developed to ensure that the message of the Bible would be ‘faithfully’ translated into other cultures” (Lefevere 1992: 8). Other types of equivalence are House’s “overt” and “covert” equivalence (see House 1977), and Newmark’s “communicative” and “semantic” equivalence (see Newmark 1977).

theoretical move away from prescriptive, equivalence-based theories, favouring a descriptive and interdisciplinary approach to the study of translations in their contexts. For my purposes, I will refer to this theoretical approach by the name of Descriptive Translation Studies (or DTS), a title that emphasises its departure from the prescriptive models of linguistics-based theories of translation¹⁰.

The 1980s heralded significant paradigmatic shifts in the study of translations, which were no longer viewed as taking place “in a vacuum in which two languages meet, but rather in the context of all the traditions of the two literatures” (Lefevere 1992: 6). This focus on translations within their literary and cultural context implies an interdisciplinary approach to scholarly research, borrowing concepts from “traditional academic disciplines, such as linguistics, literary criticism, philosophy or anthropology” (Venuti 2000: 1).

2.2 *Systemic and descriptive approaches: relevance today*

2.2.1 Polysystem Theory

Arguably the most important contribution of Even-Zohar’s theoretical approach to the study of translated literature in general, and to the present thesis in particular, is that it directs Translation Studies toward the study of literary production “within its different contexts” (Munday 2001: 111).

¹⁰ Hermans (1999: 7) points out that this approach has been referred to by many labels, depending on the aspect the researcher wishes to emphasise, e.g.: the ‘empirical’ approach (with emphasis on “the observable aspects of translation”); the ‘target-oriented’ approach (focusing on the conceptual shift from ‘source-orientation’); the ‘systemic’ approach (after Even-Zohar’s contribution); the ‘manipulation group’ approach (after Hermans’ seminal anthology: *The Manipulation of Literature* (1985)).

Central to Polysystem Theory is Even-Zohar's understanding of literature as "a multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are interdependent" (Even-Zohar 1979: 290). By conceptualising different literary genres as systems within a larger polysystem, Even-Zohar encourages the study of translated literature as a system in its own right, intersecting with surrounding "cultural and literary systems" (Munday 2001: 111).

Polysystem Theory recognises that translated literature is influenced by the larger target polysystem in two ways: (1) in the way source texts are "selected by the target literature" and; (2) in the way the target system conditions the translator to "adopt specific norms, behaviours, and policies" (Even-Zohar 1978/2000: 193). Hence, this approach opens up two large areas of enquiry: (1) the identification of the principles of selection of the texts to be translated, and (2) the detection and rationalisation of translation shifts in terms of the strategies adopted. (The latter point is expanded upon by Toury in his Descriptive Translation Studies paradigm, which I explore in some depth in section 2.2.2)

Even-Zohar differentiates between "the polysystems of larger, older cultures, such as Anglo-American or French" and those of "younger or smaller nations, such as Israel and the Low Countries" (Gentzler 2001: 116). In the former, translated literature is seldom canonised, and exerts "no major influence over the central system and even becomes a conservative element, preserving conventional forms and conforming to the literary

norms of the target system” (Munday 2001: 110). In such situations, translated literature is influenced by the dominant canon, and translators tend to produce ‘target-oriented’ translations, i.e. ones that are likely to be accepted within the target literary and cultural system.

Although the above situation applies to most literary systems, in smaller, less influential, or younger national literatures, translated literature often acts as an agent of innovation, and introduces new features into the target system – ranging from poetic language and compositional patterns, to new models of reality (Even-Zohar 1978/2000: 193-4)¹¹. In such cases, translators “tend to [...] closely reproduce the original text's forms and textual relations” (Gentzler 2001: 118), resulting in source-oriented translations. There is, therefore, a direct link between the position of translated literature in the polysystem and the translation strategies adopted.

While Even-Zohar’s work produced important advances for Translation Studies, Polysystem Theory is not unproblematic. One major source of criticism is Even-Zohar’s differentiation between large, established literatures and smaller, more unstable ones. Hermans argues that Even-Zohar’s discrimination is not objective, as it does not provide the necessary criteria “to ascertain such things as the youth or strength of a culture or the presence of a ‘vacuum’ in it” (Hermans 1999: 109). Gentzler links the apparent bias in Even-Zohar’s model to a “tendency to propose universals based on very little evidence” (Gentzler 2001: 120). According to Gentzler, most of Even-

¹¹ Even-Zohar’s position on the role of translation in ‘smaller nations’ will be applied to my own research dealing with the literary system of Belgium, which may be regarded as ‘less influential’ than, say, the literary system of France. See 5.1.

Zohar's conclusions about the functioning of the literary polysystem are "drawn from a very unique and specific situation"¹² and applied as universal principles to other systems (2001: 122).

A further shortcoming of Polysystem Theory is that it lacks the practical tools to describe actual situations and, therefore, tends to focus on the "abstract model, rather than the 'real-life' constraints placed on texts and translations" (Munday 2001: 111). Literary texts are consequently described in terms of binary oppositions, which not only oversimplify the complexity of intra-systemic relations, but – because texts are only described with the benefit of hindsight – tend to support the "researcher's self-fulfilling prophecy" (Hermans 1999: 111). In addition, Even-Zohar's work posits the literary system itself as an agent of literary change, motivated by a "constant urge to replace the familiar with the unfamiliar; the traditional with the innovative" (Hermans 1999: 104); in so doing, the agency of authors, translators and readers is largely bypassed.

Despite these shortcomings, Polysystem Theory is credited with moving Translation Studies away from linguistics-based approaches, in favour of the study of translation as embedded in a particular cultural context. Furthermore, the continued use of Even-Zohar's work in current translation research testifies to the significance of its contribution, not only to Translation Studies, "but to literary theory as well, as it demonstrates the importance of translation within the larger context of literary studies specifically and in the evolution of culture in general" (Gentzler 2001: 120).

¹² The bulk of Even-Zohar's research is based on Hebrew literature of the 1950s and 1960s.

In addition, Polysystem Theory encourages researchers to “observe and appreciate the role of dynamic tensions which operate within a culture” (Even-Zohar 1979: 295), thereby adding a useful dimension to research projects dealing with translation in multilingual societies. Consequently, the study of literary systems is not reduced to the study of the literature of the official or dominant language, but needs to consider possible interferences from the literary and cultural systems of other language-groups within the same polysystem. This point is particularly useful in the light of the present mini-thesis, dealing with translation in the multilingual, socially and culturally fragmented Belgian society¹³.

2.2.2 Toury and Descriptive Translation Studies¹⁴

In his influential *Descriptive Translation Studies – And Beyond* (1995), Toury calls for an empirical approach to the investigation of translation phenomena, in order to describe and explain eventual shifts in the TT. Toury recognises the need to develop a systematic approach to Translation Studies, “proceeding from clear assumptions and armed with a methodology and research techniques made as explicit as possible” (Toury 1995: 3).

The first basic assumption of DTS is that translations are “facts of a ‘target’ culture” (Toury 1995: 23). Building on Even-Zohar’s notion that the target literature selects the STs to be translated according to identifiable principles of selection, Toury states that

¹³ See 3.2.1 for a discussion of the Belgian polysystem.

¹⁴ While I am aware that Toury is not the only theorist to have contributed to the DTS approach, due to the space and time constraints of this short dissertation, in this subsection I focus mainly on Toury’s contributions to DTS.

translations occupy “a position in the social and literary systems of the target culture”, and that this position “determines the translation strategies that are employed” (Munday 2001: 112).

A second important premise of DTS is what can best be described as a functional-relational concept of equivalence. Toury states that any empirical (i.e. descriptive) study of translation must proceed from “the assumption that equivalence *does exist* between an assumed translation and its assumed source” (Toury 1995: 86; my emphasis); the term ‘equivalence’ is thus used to describe the relationship between the ST and the TT, rather than prescribe what it should be. Given that “translators performing under different conditions (e.g., translating texts of different kinds, and/or for different audiences) often adopt different strategies, and ultimately come up with markedly different products” (Toury 1995: 54), it follows that the type of equivalence between the ST and the TT depends on the position of translation within the target culture.

The third key standpoint of DTS builds on the definition of equivalence as functional-relational. Toury declares that “the (type and extent of) equivalence manifested by actual translations” (Toury 1995: 61) is a function of specific norms of behaviour, which determine the translation strategies adopted in the TT. Consequently, the process of translation involves a degree of negotiation between the demands which “derive from [the translator’s] reading of the ST, and certain preferences and expectations which [...] exist in the audience” (Hermans 1999: 74). These ‘preferences and expectations’

effectively amount to “performance instructions” for translators, and are known in DTS as translation norms (Toury 1995: 53).

In function of the position held by translated literature within the target culture, translation norms may have more or less influence on the TT (Toury 1995: 61). Any given translation may therefore be either an ‘adequate’ rendering of the ST, or it may subscribe “to usage in the receptor culture” and tend towards ‘acceptability’ (Hermans 1999: 76). While no TT may be said to be completely ‘adequate’ or completely ‘acceptable’, determining the overall orientation of the TT – i.e. the translator’s ‘initial norm’ – is an important objective of DTS (Toury 1995: 56-57) ¹⁵.

Toury differentiates between further types of norms, namely ‘preliminary’ and ‘operational’. Preliminary norms are linked to Even-Zohar’s ‘principles of selection’, and influence the translation policy of a given target culture, by effectively guiding the selection of texts “for translation in a specific language” (Munday 2001: 114). Operational norms refer to those norms that direct the decisions made during the actual process of translation; they are divided into (a) ‘matricial norms’, which refer to the ‘completeness’ of translation, and determine whether “all or part of the source text [is translated], division into chapters, [...] paragraphs and the like”; and (b) ‘textual-linguistic norms’, which direct “the detail of sentence construction, word-choice, the use of italics or capitals for emphasis” (Hermans 1999: 76).

¹⁵ While terms such as ‘acceptability’ and ‘adequacy’ are central to Toury’s conception of equivalence, Not only are these concepts “hopelessly confusing”, but they are also essentially evaluative, and therefore appear to undermine the descriptive nature of DTS (Hermans 1999: 77). For this reason, I prefer to describe the initial norm as ‘source oriented’ or ‘target oriented’.

Based on these three premises (that translations are facts of the target culture, that equivalence is functional-relational, and that the initial norm is determined by the interplay of ST considerations and target-culture norms), Toury develops a simple methodology, which incorporates both the description of the translation product and the contextualisation of translation strategies:

- *Step one:* The researcher situates “the [translated] text within the target-culture system, [by] looking at its acceptability [i.e. target-orientation]” (Munday 2002: 77)¹⁶.
- *Step two:* Having hypothesised the orientation of the assumed translation (i.e. the initial norm), the researcher proceeds to “compare the source text and the target text for shifts, identifying relationships between ‘coupled pairs’ of ST and TT segments” (Munday 2002: 77)¹⁷. Toury stresses that because “every comparison is partial only”, the researcher must select specific segments of the TT to be compared in terms of identifiable translation problems in the ST and solutions in the TT (Toury 1995: 79).
- *Step three:* Once the ST has been mapped onto the TT, the researcher attempts to formulate “generalisations about the underlying concept of translation” for the given ST and TT pair (Munday 2002: 77).

¹⁶ Subsection 3.2.4 deals with the situation of *Portés Disparus* in the Francophone system.

¹⁷ Toury develops the concept of ‘tertium comparationis’ (TC), or “ideal adequate translation” (Lefevere 1992: 10), as “an objective yardstick that makes possible meaningful comparison between the original and the translation”. However, the concept of TC has been largely criticised in recent years on the grounds of being little more than a construct “that claims objectivity while reflecting the scholar’s own insights” (Lefevere 1992: 10). In 2.3.1, I discuss alternative criteria for the selection of ST-TT coupled pairs.

Despite the significant advances provided by DTS, this approach is not unproblematic. Due to Toury's reliance on Even-Zohar's work, DTS shares the shortcomings of Polysystem Theory; namely a tendency to overgeneralise based on relatively small case-studies, and an (unrealistic) aspiration to objective empirical enquiry (Munday 2001: 117). Hermans argues that the reconstruction of translation norms is necessarily indirect and mediated, and that the claim that translation norms can be reconstructed by describing the translation product is consequently flawed. The mere fact that the researcher must decide which sections of the ST and TT to compare (step two of Toury's methodology) is controversial, as "linguistic translation theory is far from reaching a consensus" as to how these segments should be selected (Munday 2001: 112).

In the light of Toury's central tenet that translation is essentially "a socio-cultural activity" within the target system, the reduction of the initial norm to a choice between source and target orientation seems simplistic (Hermans 1999: 77). Similarly, the idea that the literary norms of the target system direct the translator's activity is based on the somewhat naive assumption that translators "mechanically respond to [the] nods and winks" of the target cultural and literary system (Hermans 1999: 80). This causes DTS to overlook both the translator's own intentionality and relevant "ideological and political factors such as the status of the ST in its own culture" (Munday 2001: 117).

Despite these shortcomings, most studies conducted in South Africa (and elsewhere) continue to rely on DTS¹⁸. There have, of course, been some significant theoretical

¹⁸ For example: Young 2006; Jarvis 2005; Ndlovu 1997; Perabo 1994; Schulze 1994; James 1993. Refer to Kruger's (2005) bibliography for more.

developments in the field of Translation Studies since the 1980s, but these tend to build on concepts initially put forward by Toury¹⁹. In a recent publication entitled *Contemporary Translation Theories*, Gentzler states that Translation Studies today owes its focus on “socio-literary norms” to Toury’s theoretical approach (Gentzler 2001: 131). In addition, thanks to DTS, it is generally accepted today that “literary tendencies within the target cultural system” are involved in the process of translating any given text (Gentzler 2001: 131).

Having assessed the relevance of both Even-Zohar’s and Toury’s work, and bearing in mind the shortcomings of systemic and descriptive approaches, the following section proposes a replicable template to “facilitate the process (suggested by Toury) of deducing the decisions made during translating and the translation ‘norms’ that were in operation” (Munday 2002: 78).

2.2.3 Lambert and Van Gorp’s scheme for translation description

Since the rise of DTS in the 1980s, numerous attempts have been made to provide a viable methodology for the descriptive study of translations in their socio-cultural contexts²⁰. Given the scope and the time constraints of this short dissertation, in this subsection I shall examine Lambert and Van Gorp’s (1985) model, which I will apply to the intra-systemic analysis (in chapter three) and to the comparative analysis of source and target texts (in chapter four).

¹⁹ Examples of recent developments in DTS include Lefevere’s examination of translation as ‘rewriting’ (1992a), and Venuti’s discussion of the visibility and invisibility of the translator (1995; 1998).

²⁰ Two examples are Nord’s (1991) textual analysis model, and Lambert and Van Gorp’s (1985) descriptive repertoire of features approach. While no single model is unproblematic, Hermans suggests that the limitations of these methods “should help us appreciate the difficulty of the task” (1999: 55).

Drawing on both Polysystem Theory and DTS, Lambert and Van Gorp's model deals with the "functionally relevant aspects of a given translational activity in its historical context" (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 45). These aspects, as listed by Lambert and Van Gorp, may be grouped into three categories: (1) the ST and TT *authors* (their position within their respective literary systems and their 'intentions' in producing their respective texts); (2) the relation between source and target *texts* (situating them within their respective literary systems, and comparing them for shifts); (3) the relations between ST and TT *readers*, situating each group within its respective system (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 44).

In order to gain insights into Toury's translation norms – namely preliminary, initial, and operational norms (as discussed in 2.2) – Lambert and Van Gorp's scheme is divided into four levels of analysis (see Appendix A), which suggest a movement "from the immediate context and paratexts of a given translation [...] to textual macro-structures and on to micro-structures, before working up again [...] to the wider sociocultural context" (Hermans 1999: 66)²¹.

- 1) *Preliminary data*: The researcher analyses the data on the title page (the presence or absence of genre indications, the author's and the translator's name, etc.), and the information presented in eventual metatexts, i.e. in the preface and footnotes, etc.

²¹ A similar progression is suggested by Munday (2002), who identifies the need to follow three areas of analysis: (1) locating the ST and the TT "within [their] own cultural system"; (2) producing a "linguistic profile of the ST [...] following an extensive yet flexible 'repertoire of features' approach" and comparing this to "the corresponding profile for the TT"; (3) identifying shifts and attempting to "gauge their impact on the cultural level" (Munday 2002: 78).

(Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 52). The data gathered leads to hypotheses regarding the “overall translation strategy” (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 48), i.e. Toury’s initial translation norm discussed in 2.2.

- 2) *Macro level*: This entails examining text divisions – e.g. the titles and the order of the stories in each collection – and the relation between types of narrative, including the internal narrative structure (Lambert and Van Gorp, 1985: 52). These macro-structural findings relate to Toury’s matricial norms, as defined in 2.2, and should lead to further hypotheses regarding the micro-level analysis i.e. identifying textual-linguistic shifts between ST and TT.
- 3) *Micro level*: The researcher identifies shifts on the level of word-selection; speech reproduction; narrative, authorial perspective and point of view, etc. (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 52). These findings pertain to Toury’s textual-linguistic norms.
- 4) *Systemic context*: The researcher contrasts macro- and micro-level findings, and reflects on inter-systemic and intertextual relations (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 53), in order to formulate generalisations regarding the translation norms in the target polysystem. The researcher is thus able to “account for the findings [of the first three steps] and place them in a broader context” (Hermans 1999: 68).

While Lambert and Van Gorp’s model follows the logic of systemic and descriptive approaches, it improves on Toury’s methodology in two significant ways. Firstly, it allows the comparison of originals and their translations in relation to their respective systemic contexts, thereby reversing the strict target orientation characteristic of DTS. Secondly, the proposed model allows the researcher to explain the shifts between ST and

TT in terms of factors other than purely linguistic ones, in a replicable (and hence more objective) manner by avoiding “superficial and intuitive commentaries and ‘a priori judgements and convictions’” (Munday 2001: 121).

Like other systemic approaches, Lambert and Van Gorp’s model has been criticised for its enquiry along “tidy divisions and clean patterns” (Hermans 1999: 68). Lambert and Van Gorp themselves acknowledge that their “attempt to build a synthetic commentary may well appear utopian, since it is impossible to summarise all relationships involved in the activity of translation” (1985: 47), and Hermans adds that, in many ways, “oversimplification is inevitable at this level of generality” (1999: 68). While Lambert and Van Gorp’s model may appear simultaneously ambitious and simplistic in its scope, it is not intended as a blueprint, but rather as a suggestion of possible lines of enquiry.

In this sense, the model’s flexibility represents both its strength and its weakness. On the one hand, it allows the researcher to reinterpret the scheme “in terms of specific priorities” set for each particular case-study (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 45). On the other hand, the selection of text segments to be compared is left up to the researcher’s discretion, thereby undermining the model’s replicability (Hermans 1999: 66).

Today, a large number of South African researchers continue to use Lambert and Van Gorp’s repertoire of features approach²², as it remains the preferred answer to the need

²² Among others, Young (2006), Jarvis (2005), Perabo (1994) and James (1993) adopted Lambert and Van Gorp’s scheme.

for a “*specific, systematic, and replicable* [...] analysis of ST-TT pairs” within their respective socio-cultural context (Munday 2002: 78; emphasis in original).

2.3 Socio-cultural implications: conceptual tools

In the previous subsection, I have discussed the merits and shortcomings of systemic approaches to the descriptive study of translations. While Even-Zohar, Toury, Lambert and Van Gorp provide a sound theoretical framework for the present thesis, they do not offer the tools of implementation needed to link eventual shifts between ST and TT to the target systemic context (as discussed above). In the following subsections I will illustrate the contributions of three relevant and cognate approaches: Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (2.3.1); Fillmore’s ‘Scenes-and-Frames’ Semantics (2.3.2); and Baker’s taxonomy for the description of translation problems (2.3.3).

2.3.1 Fairclough and Critical Discourse Analysis

As Munday remarks, the 1990s saw an increase in the use of discourse analysis to facilitate Translation Studies research (2001: 89). In particular, Fairclough’s contribution to Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) emphasises the link between text, discourse and society, thereby reinforcing the view of translation as a socially motivated activity, and providing useful concepts for all levels of analysis following Lambert and Van Gorp’s model (as discussed in 2.3).

CDA is concerned with “language-use as a form of social practice” (Fairclough 1992: 63) and with the “the dialectical relationship between discourse [...] and other elements of

social practice” (Fairclough 2001: 231). Consequently, texts are seen as shaped “by the causal powers of social structures (including languages) and social practices” (Fairclough 2003: 38). Although not expressly linked, Fairclough’s understanding of texts has affinities with Even-Zohar’s understanding of the literary polysystem, and will facilitate my conclusions regarding the literary and cultural polysystem of the TT.

As Fairclough illustrates, discourse (i.e. language-use) serves to simultaneously

[r]epresent aspects of the world (the physical world, the social world, the mental world); enact social relations between participants in social events and the attitudes, desires and values of participants; and coherently and cohesively connect parts of texts together, and connect texts with their situational contexts.
(Fairclough 2003: 26-7)

Texts are viewed as articulations of “the dialectical relationship between discourse [...] and other elements of social practices” (Fairclough 2003: 205), which Fairclough outlines as follows: (1) socially determined activities; (2) social relations between subjects; (3) the material world; and (4) knowledge, beliefs and values (Fairclough 2005: 77; 2003: 205; and 2001: 231)²³.

These socially relevant categories will prove to be particularly useful in the light of DTS’s failure to provide replicable criteria for the selection of culturally-relevant text segments (highlighted in 2.2 and 2.3). I will therefore make use of Fairclough’s social elements of discourse to inform my selection of ST-TT segments for comparison (see 4.4). This will allow me to “incorporate elements of ‘context’ into the analysis of texts,

²³ Fairclough admits that there is “room for argument about what the [social] elements [of discourse] are” (2005: 77); the list I provide is therefore not fixed, but rather includes all the recurrent social elements mentioned by Fairclough in the sources cited.

[in order] to show the relationship between occasional events [i.e. texts] and more durable social practices” (Fairclough 2005: 79).

Another important contribution of CDA is that it introduces the concept of ‘social agent’ as one of the factors that influence the production of texts – together with ‘social structures’ and ‘social practices’ (Fairclough 2003: 38). Fairclough argues that social agents – e.g. translators – are not entirely bound by the practices prescribed by the literary system, but are free to rework “social structures [...] and practices [...] to create (potentially novel) texts out of them” (2005: 78). This point adds an important dimension to the concerns of Polysystem Theory and DTS, both of which do not account for the translator’s intentionality (as I have shown in 2.2.1 and 2.2.2).

Finally, Fairclough’s concern with texts as expressions of ideological and social change (1995: 5) is of particular relevance in the light of my focus on the translation of Vladislavić’s first short-story collection, published in South Africa during the transition to democracy. In a recent article dealing with the main theoretical features and methodological applications of CDA, Fairclough observes that the term ‘transition’ alerts one to a type of discourse associated with “particular interested representations and imaginaries of change, whose epistemological and practical value may be difficult to unravel from their rhetorical [and hence ideological] value” (Fairclough 2005: 81). Not only does this definition draw attention to the ideological focus of the present thesis, but it also highlights the need to select ideologically and culturally relevant text segments, in

order to investigate the way South Africa's transition as represented in *Missing Persons*, is rewritten by the French translators.

2.3.2 Fillmore and Scenes-and-Frames Semantics

Along with Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, a consideration of Fillmore's Scenes-and-Frames Semantics will allow me to incorporate "social context [...] into the description of the nature of language" (Rojo Lopez 2005: 35) in the French translation of Vladislavić's *Missing Persons*.

In order to illustrate the usefulness of Scenes-and-Frames Semantics for studies like the present one, it is necessary to define the key concepts of this particular branch of semantics. Fillmore's approach is of particular interest, as it aims to explain the process of text interpretation in terms of the mutual activation of linguistic 'frames' and mental 'scenes' (Fillmore 1977: 63). Fillmore defines a 'frame' as "any system of linguistic choices – the easiest case being collections of words, but also including choices of grammatical rules or grammatical categories" (Fillmore 1977: 63), while a 'scene' is defined as the "image or scene or picture of the world that gets created and filled out between the beginning and the end of the text-interpretation experience" (Fillmore 1977: 61).

Snell-Hornby (1995) argues that concepts from Scenes-and-Frames Semantics provide a useful explanation of translation as "a complex act of communication, in which the [ST] author, the reader as translator, and translator as [TT] author and the [TT] reader interact"

(1995: 81). Consequently, the process of translation may be explained as comprising three key steps:

- 1) The translator (as ST reader) approaches a text, “produced by an author who drew from his [sic] own repertoire of partly prototypical scenes” to select the linguistic frames of the text (Snell-Hornby 1995: 81).
- 2) The translator (as ST interpreter) evokes a “repertoire [of scenes] depending on his [sic] own level of experience and his [sic] internalised knowledge” of the frame of the text (Snell-Hornby 1995: 81).
- 3) The translator (as TT author) “must now find suitable [target-language] frames; this involves a constant process of decision-making whereby he [sic] depends entirely on his [sic] proficiency in the target language” (Snell-Hornby 1995: 81).

In other words, this explanation of the process of translation facilitates Lambert and Van Gorp’s micro-level analysis by explaining how “an image or scene or picture of the world [...] gets created and filled out between the beginning and the end of the text-interpretation experience” (Fillmore 1977: 61). In its applications to Translation Studies in general, and to the present thesis in particular, Fillmore’s concern with the cognitive process of text-interpretation will allow me to focus on an aspect of the translation process neglected by Even-Zohar and Toury: “the process of understanding [a text], of relating [it] to a situation and sociocultural background and to one’s own experience” (Snell-Hornby 1995: 81).

As I have argued, in order for the micro-textual comparison of ST and TT to offer insights beyond the purely linguistic, it must involve an explanation of the process of meaning-making. Fillmore's text processing may, therefore, help DTS scholars in their research. While DTS looks almost exclusively at the translation-product, ignoring the process of translation, Fillmore's approach would foreground the key role played by the translator (as ST reader and TT author), in activating specific scenes and linguistic frames (Fillmore 1977: 66). Scenes-and-Frames Semantics thus allows me to consider the transfer of socially, culturally, and ideologically-entrenched 'meaning' from one text to another.

2.3.3 Baker's taxonomy of translation strategies

The final interdisciplinary contribution to this thesis, in terms of research methodology, is taken from Mona Baker's influential translation coursebook, *In Other Words* (1992). While Baker's work is intended primarily as a translator-training coursebook, and is both linguistics-based and prescriptive, my interest is in her strategies for dealing with non-equivalence at word-level and above word-level. In what follows I list Baker's taxonomy of translation strategies, which will help me to explain eventual shifts identified during the micro-level analysis of the translated texts (in keeping with Lambert and Van Gorp's model discussed in 2.3).

Baker suggests a number of possible translation strategies used by 'professional translators' for dealing with non-equivalence at word-level (Baker 1992: 27-40). This type of translation difficulty occurs in situations where "the target language has no direct

equivalent for a word which occurs in a source text” (Baker 1992: 20)²⁴. In these instances, translators may choose from a number of strategies, such as: translation by a more general word, translation by a more neutral/less expressive word, translation by cultural substitution, translation using a loan word (with or without an explanation), and translation by paraphrase (Baker 1992: 26-40).

The second type of non-equivalence – above word-level – occurs when the meaning of a word “depends on what other words it occurs with” (Baker 1992: 63). Baker explains that collocations such as idioms and fixed expressions “carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components”, but are derived from usage and social context (1992: 63). Due to their cultural specificity, these formulations often have no equivalent in the target culture, or may be used differently in the target language (Baker 1992: 69). Baker lists a number of strategies for dealing with such problems: translation using an idiom of similar meaning and form, translation using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, and translation by paraphrase (1992: 72-77).

While Baker’s approach has been criticised for supporting a “fluent and ‘domesticating’ translation strategy” (Munday 2001: 102), her taxonomy remains a useful tool to facilitate the description of translation shifts.

²⁴ Word-level translation problems include ‘culture-specific concepts’, differences in ‘physical or interpersonal perspective’, differences in ‘expressive meaning’, and the use of loan-words in the source text (Baker 1992: 21-26).

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have established the theoretical framework for the present thesis, by outlining the emergence of Descriptive Translation Studies and highlighting the current relevance of systemic and descriptive approaches to the study of translation. Aware of the limitations of the methodological applications of DTS, I have also drawn on cognate disciplines from outside the field of Translation Studies, to find the necessary conceptual ‘tools’ for the practical implementation of the theories outlined here. I will now move on to examine the source and target systems.

CHAPTER THREE

Literary and Ideological Contexts: the Source and Target Systems

As outlined in 2.2, DTS (Descriptive Translation Studies) invites the researcher to approach texts “in terms of functions, connections and interrelations” (Hermans 1999: 32) within and between literary and socio-cultural systems. This invitation is reflected in Lambert and Van Gorp’s scheme for translation comparison, which analyses translations as “essentially the result of selection strategies from and within communication systems” (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 46). Their scheme, upon which my methodology is based, prescribes the study of both inter-systemic relations – i.e. “*between* the literary systems of the target and source cultures” – and intra-systemic relations – i.e. *within* literary and socio-cultural systems (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 44; my emphasis)²⁵. In this chapter, I aim to consider intra-systemic relations, and I will deal with inter-systemic relations in chapter four.

In the following consideration of the relations between the socio-literary contexts of South Africa and Belgium and their respective authors, texts and readers, I aim to bring to the fore the reasons why, in 1997, the Belgian publisher, Editions Complexe, chose to

²⁵ Lambert and Van Gorp list a number of intra-systemic relations “which can play a part in the production and shaping of actual translations” (1985: 45); however they leave it up to the researcher to decide which relations are relevant to the particular case study. I here focus on three broad types of relations: the “situation of the author in respect of other authors, in both systems” i.e. the literary production of the system; the “situation of both the original and the translation as texts in respect of other texts”; and their “reception in the source and target systems” (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 44).

translate and publish Vladislavić's first short-story collection. Moreover, a study of South African and Belgian intra-systemic relations, respectively, will allow me to understand and explain, in the final chapter of this short dissertation, the influence of both systemic contexts on the operational norms of translation i.e. those that direct the decisions made during the process of translation.

I begin the chapter with a brief overview of the literary and socio-cultural context from which *Missing Persons* emerged (3.1.1), focussing then on three specific aspects of the South African literary landscape: Vladislavić's position in relation to other authors (3.1.2); the nature and reception of the short story and the short-story cycle (3.1.3); and the reception of the ST (3.1.4).

In the second part of the chapter, I provide a brief overview of the literary and social context of Belgium (3.2.1). In the light of Fairclough's call to consider the agency of social actors in the production of texts (as discussed in 2.3.1), I then present the background to the translators' literary activities, attempting to bring to the fore their translation priorities (3.2.2). I then discuss the position of the short-story genre (3.2.3) and of *Portés Disparus* (3.2.4) in the French polysystem, in an attempt to highlight the reasons for the selection of *Missing Persons* by Editions Complexe.

3.1 The Source System

3.1.1 Socio-literary context: South Africa's transition

The task of delimiting the exact duration of South Africa's transition is not an easy one, and is, in a way, beyond the scope of my short dissertation. One could argue, for instance, that the transition to democracy began in the 1970s with the rise of Black Consciousness, and ended in 1990, with the unbanning anti-apartheid movements. Similarly, others may say that in 2008, South Africa's transition to a non-racial society is not yet over, and that the imbalances of the past are yet to be redressed. While these (and many other) perspectives may be justified, for my purpose it makes sense to focus on the period starting with the declaration of the first State of Emergency in 1985 and ending with the first democratic elections in 1994, as these years broadly cover the context of production and reception of *Missing Persons*. While the 1980s were a time of intensified civil unrest and violent resistance to the dehumanising policies of the apartheid state, in many respects the declaration of the State of Emergency “represented a desperate attempt [on the government's part] to retain control of a situation that was moving beyond its grasp” (Wood 2001: 35).

In line with the central premise of Polysystem Theory – according to which literary production is intrinsically linked to social context (Even-Zohar 1979: 290), Masilela argues that literature “embodies within its mode the social experiences and the imaginative historical sensibilities of a particular moment” (cited in Voss 1992: 5). A similar sentiment is expressed by Fairclough (2005a), who defines ‘transition’ in terms of the discursive strategies that “link narratives of the past and present to imaginaries for the

future” (Fairclough 2005a: 37). Adopting a similar outlook, Hemer states that in “looking back and looking forward simultaneously, reinterpreting the past and forecasting the future” (2007: 1), literature in transitional societies takes on the role of interrogating cultural identity and historical representation.

Reflecting the general mood of the 1980s, literary production during South Africa’s transition to democracy was characterised by a feeling of anxiety over the public role of the intellectual and writer²⁶. If under apartheid the writer’s role was, for the most part, defined by a pressing need to “confront the reader with faithful representations of the estranging enormities of the apartheid state” (Diala 2002: 60), starting with the State of Emergency in the mid 1980s, things began to change. As the country moved toward democracy, writers began to feel the absence of those ‘dependable obstacles’ that had previously been the signal-themes of South African writing (Nixon 1996) – e.g. racial oppression and segregation, human injustices and suffering, etc.

Whereas previously the role of literature “as meaningful socio-political action” (Van Wyk Smith 1991: 91) made critical realism the preferred mode of expression (and the novel its favoured form), toward the end of apartheid a number of writers shifted their focus away from protest narratives, and towards the “discontinuities, the indeterminacies, and the provisionalities of a [new] discursive mode” (Van Wyk Smith 1991: 93). Increasingly, authors like Brink, Coetzee and Gordimer turned to “the metafictional

²⁶ In this light, numerous critics draw parallels between South Africa and the ex-communist bloc. Popescu, for example, provides an interesting analysis of Vladislavić’s short story “Propaganda by Monuments” (1996), based on “imagining Eastern Europe and the former colonial world within the same intellectual paradigm” (Popescu 2003: 417). For a similar discussion see also Nixon 1996.

strategies of postmodernism”, in an attempt to examine “the [problematic] relationship between self, world and text” (Van Wyk Smith 1991: 92).

3.1.2 Vladislavić’s position in the source literary system

Warnes has argued that Ivan Vladislavić’s corpus of fiction – which includes three collections of short stories and two novels²⁷ – can, be “fruitfully investigated in the context of the political, cultural, and historical milieu in which it was written and with which it is in dialogue” (Warnes 2000: 69). The author himself has been described as “one of the most interesting writers to emerge from the transitional period” (Graham 2007: 72), and his work, with its “destabilised narratives, intertextual inversions, [and] formal innovation” (Thurman 2007: 73), is certainly one of the first articulations of the new impetus in South African writing of the late 1980s.

Vladislavić’s unique writing style, influenced by “a particular sensitivity to [...] the connections between words” and “the intricate details of language” (Vladislavić and Warnes 2000: 278), represents a clear move away from the documentary-style writing of the apartheid era (Barbancey and Vladislavić 1998). The author’s willingness to engage with issues of ‘semantic multivalence’ is in stark contrast with the grand ideals of resistance narratives; through his postmodern fictions, Vladislavić demonstrates that “none of the meanings that surround us are singular or permanent, and that they are always, in one way or another, open to contestation and reinterpretation” (Warnes 2000: 84).

²⁷ *Missing Persons* (1989), *The Folly* (1993), *Propaganda by Monuments and Other Stories* (1996), *The Restless Supermarket* (2001), and *The Exploded View* (2004).

Despite Vladislavić's "deeply playful" writing style, "influenced by a sense of unbridled glee in imaginative possibilities" (Wood 2001: 22), Warnes remarks that the author's "embrace of the politics of postmodernism does not take place at the expense of his desire to engage with society in his fictions" (Warnes 2000: 84). Others have commented on the "dramatic nature of the socio-political context with which [Vladislavić] engages, and the fact that [his fiction] deals with recognisable South African historical figures and events has led [them] to ascribe [it] highly specific socio-political purposes" (Wood 2001: 21).

Vladislavić's writing is known for its recurrent themes and imagery, which provide an insistent link to the socio-political context of transition. One such theme, for instance – found in the author's repetitive, almost obsessive use of the imagery of the monument, the museum, the statue – is the "disorientation and historical amnesia that characterise post-apartheid life and culture" (Graham 2007: 73-4). Another feature of Vladislavić's writing – his "delight in *things* – individual items, collections, miscellanea – their contours, shapes, colours and weights, their physical qualities, their quiddity" (Thurman 2007: 74) – has been linked to his critical stance toward "the exceptionally high visibility of commercialism and consumerism in South Africa" (Helgesson 2004: 785).

3.1.3 The short story genre

In a discussion on the short story in South Africa, Chapman (2006) remarks that had South Africa's two Nobel Prize laureates for literature – Gordimer and Coetzee –

produced mainly short fiction instead of novels, their achievements would not have been recognised by the Swedish Academy (Chapman 2006: 145-6). This observation is supported by the fact that the art of the short story has traditionally been “underrated, even ignored, by professional and academic critics, publishers, [...] and by general readers” (Gullason 1976: 13). Through frequent comparisons with the novel, the short-story form has suffered much criticism regarding its “very simple [...], even nonexistent” plots, “non-ideological characters, of whom we get foreshortened and tangential glimpses”, and a “psychology in function of facts, not ideas” (Moravia 1976: 150-1).

Some argue that the ‘problem’ with the short story lies in its generally “plotless, fragmentary, and amorphous” narrative structure (Bader 1976: 109). Unlike the novel – where the reader usually is guided carefully through beginnings, middles, and ends – the story “may end before the reader really warms up to it” (Gullason 1976: 23). In this view, the unpopularity of the short story appears to be a function of the fact that it challenges “its audience to ‘complete’ suggestion” (Chapman 2006: 150), requiring active engagement, rather than passive assimilation.

Given the global disregard for this literary form, it may, therefore, be surprising that “far more people in South Africa are likely to read an anthology of short stories than a novel” (Chapman 2006: 147). However, the popularity of the form in this country has been linked to the story’s ability to reflect “the abnormal condition, including [...] social and cultural heterogeneity” (Chapman 2006: 149). In other words, whereas the novel’s engagement with grand ideological themes (Moravia 1976: 149) makes it best suited for

middle-class reading expectations, the short story is “constructed on the basis of contradiction or incongruity” (May 2002: 116) and finds consonance with the dislocations of South Africa’s transition. Furthermore, Lukács’s discussion of the medium’s aptitude for narrating “the absurdity of life” (May 2002: 116) highlights a second point of resonance between this literary form and the socio-cultural conditions of post-apartheid South Africa. The story’s brevity – at times criticised for not affording enough space to character development – is ironically also “closely related to a sense of loneliness and alienation” (May 2002: 117) that has been associated with the hapless, uncomfortable characters of Vladislavić’s *Missing Persons*.

In conclusion, whereas under apartheid “the big narrative of the novel perhaps was the most appropriate response to the national question” (Chapman 2006: 147), the discourse of democracy “clears the space for a plurality of languages and a plurality of minds” and requires a narrative to voice “many stories, rather than one story about life and history” (Degenaar 1992: 11; 13). Furthermore, the short-story cycle’s unique ability to “represent not only the impulse in any society or community towards association and cohesion, but also the opposing impulse toward dissociation and estrangement” (Marais 1992: 43), make it a particularly useful form for capturing “the alienation, dislocation and fragmentation [of] contemporary South African experience” (Marais 1992: 45).

3.1.4 Reception of *Missing Persons*

Since the publication of *Missing Persons*, in 1989, critics in South Africa have hailed the work as “representing a significant new orientation in South African short fiction”

(Marais 1992: 41). Making reference to Albie Sachs's (1990/1991) call for the end of definitions of culture as a weapon of (socio-political) struggle, Murray (1991) suggests that *Missing Persons* may be "the 'missing link' of magic realism [...] found wanting in South African literature' at the time (1991: 190). Similar sentiments are expressed by Brown in an early review of the book, where the critic voices her appreciation for Vladislavić's ability to distance himself from "the shrill rhetoric of the 'struggle-steeped' [and to] evaluate the bizarre in reflecting the barbarous" (Brown 1990: 127).

It is the collection's capacity to highlight the 'bizarre', which sets it apart from other short fiction produced up to the late 1980s. In *Missing Persons*, Vladislavić recreates a South Africa that is "a fluid, unstable place of sudden inversions or dissolutions, startling fusions or metamorphoses and hilarious, fanciful or downright crazy inventions" (Wood 2001: 21). The "author's highly individualistic imagination" (Leveson 1992: 30), visible throughout the collection, confirms Cornwell's view that under apartheid "what writers have wanted to write has been determined by the discursive possibilities of a particular historical moment" (1991: 14).

Sue Marais (1992) further comments on Vladislavić's exploitation of the short-story cycle's "inherently dualistic tendencies" (1992: 55) in such a way as to challenge "the 'fiction' of a collective sense of community and identity, or a shared history and destiny, in South Africa" (1992: 46). While the fact that each story may be read as an independent unit mirrors the fragmentation and dislocation of South African society after apartheid, the collection also suggests a peculiar kind of unity, reinforced by recurrent images (the

monument, the movement of hands, the funeral), recognisable characters (the child-narrator, the Prime Minister, the crazy grandmother), and “repetition-with-variation of motifs, metaphors, themes, and phrases” (Marais 1992: 42).

The main themes of Vladislavić’s short-story collection – “nationalism [...] social change and historical memory” (Vladislavić and Warnes 2000: 273) – reflect the discomforts of South Africa’s transition to democracy. The recurrent image of the monument²⁸, for example, is a reminder of the apartheid regime’s futile attempts to construct and control both cultural identity and historical memory. Similarly, “the dislocated and alienated experiences of the characters in the stories [...] negate this sense of a shared history and destiny, and expose the fractured reality constructed by the architects of apartheid” (Marais 1992: 54).

3.2 The target system

3.2.1 Socio-literary context: a ‘minority’ literature in a ‘major’ language

In 3.1.1, I presented the argument that literature, culture, and society, are in constant dialogue with one another, thereby establishing the link between social change and literary production in a given polysystem. In the light of this argument, I begin this examination of the Belgian literary context by speaking briefly of the social changes that characterised the mid 1990s. I will then turn to a discussion of the country’s literary

²⁸ Allusions to monuments and statues occur in “The Prime Minister is Dead”, “Movements”, “We Came to the Monument”.

production and conclude with an examination of the position of translation in the polysystem.

Portés Disparus was published in Belgium in 1997, i.e. four years after radical reforms to the country's constitution changed its governance from a constitutional monarchy to a federal state. As radical as this move may appear, it was, in fact, the culmination of a "long tradition of conflict and antagonism" (Beheydt 1995: 48) between French-speaking Walloon in the South and the Dutch-speaking Flanders in the North²⁹. The origins of this antipathy may be traced to the fact that until the 1960s French was the official language of Belgium, with Dutch – the language spoken in the North – reduced to the status of 'dialect'. The unequal situation is further aggravated by the fact in recent years the French-speaking (agrarian) South has become increasingly dependent on the economic support of the Dutch-speaking (industrialised) North. The effects of the long-standing linguistic and cultural strife did not end with the country's federalisation. In the year 2008, Belgium's inability to conceive of a unitary national identity has caused the growth of Flemish nationalist sentiment, compounded by an intensified separatist impulse (*The Financial Times*, 17th July 2008). It is thus apparent that in Belgium, issues of linguistic and cultural identity go beyond the purely academic realm, but are linked to a long history of conflict. In this light, I aim to explore the literary production of Francophone Belgium, in an attempt to uncover eventual similarities between the South African and the Belgian paradigms.

²⁹ Belgium is a trilingual country, with Dutch, French and German as the official languages. German, however, is spoken by a much smaller group, and is not involved in the linguistic conflict that has affected the other two official languages.

In October 2001, a conference was held in Liège (Belgium), with the objective of discussing the literatures of French-speaking minority groups in the context of multilingual societies³⁰. Immediately, a parallel between the South African (Anglophone) and Belgian (Francophone) literary systems becomes apparent. In both cases, for instance, the literature in question uses a language that is not the most widely spoken in the home system, but is a major global language with a colonial history. Gauvin observes that most ‘minority’ literatures in multilingual settings display a similar concern for “the way the relationship between languages and literatures is articulated in different contexts” (2001: 20; my translation³¹). This concern is also visible in the literary production of a transitional (and multilingual) South Africa, where Anglophone literature interrogates this problematic by addressing the relationship between linguistic, cultural and literary identity (see Van Wyk Smith 1991).

However, while minority Francophone and Anglophone literatures share some common ground, Klinkenberg remarks that, unlike other global languages (e.g. English), French continues to be under the linguistic authority of the old colonial power – a fact that is reflected in the central importance of Parisian publishers in the Francophone literary system (Klinkenberg 2001: 44). While this scenario may have applied to South African literary production in the first half of the twentieth century, since the late 1970s (at the very latest) – when writers became increasingly concerned with issues of national identity and historical memory – the local Anglophone literary system has enjoyed a relative autonomy from the norms of the British literary system.

³⁰ French title: *Littératures Mineures en Langue Majeure* (Bertrand and Gauvin 2001).

³¹ “[...] la manière dont s’articulent les rapports langues/littératures dans des contextes différents” (Gauvin 2001: 20).

The characteristics of minority Francophone literatures discussed at the Liège conference (2001) are clearly visible in the target literary system. Demoulin points out, for instance, that in order for Belgian writers to have success at home, their work must first be published and well-received in France (2001: 310). Similarly, Meylaerts comments that the Belgian situation makes it “extremely difficult for Francophone cultural agents to define their position with respect to France” (Meylaerts 1994: 237). Interestingly, this instability of Belgian literature is responsible for the centrality of translated literature in the Belgian literary system, where translations are increasingly seen as a means to construct a legitimate Walloon (i.e. Francophone) identity “by increasing cultural and literary contacts” (Meylaerts 1994: 250) and, consequently, the repertoire of that literature. Given this ‘minority’ status of Belgian literature, and in the light of Even-Zohar’s explanation of literary interference in smaller polysystems (discussed in 2.2.1), one might, therefore, expect Belgian translation to perform an innovatory role (Even-Zohar 1978/2000: 193-4).

However, given the dominance of the Parisian literary system over the Francophone Belgian system, the translation norms of the ‘minor’ system are likely to be influenced by those of its larger neighbour. In this light it is useful to consider briefly the position of translation in France. In a discussion on literary translation into French, Wuilmart (2006) remarks that “French is a particularly narcissistic language”, which usually prefers to neutralise the presence of the ‘other’ in translated texts (2006: 144; my translation³²). In the French system, therefore, translated literature is mostly regarded as being of

³² “[...] le français est une langue particulièrement narcissique [...]” (Wuilmart 2006: 144)

secondary importance, and translators are encouraged to avoid source orientation, by smoothing out “the foreign text in order to [...] make it easily digestible” (Wuilmart 2006: 144; my translation³³). These observations suggest that while translation holds an important position within the Belgian polysystem, the authority of the French polysystem would ensure that Belgian translation norms are also motivated by a strong target-orientation.

3.2.2 The translators’ position in the target literary system

Vladislavić’s *Missing Persons* was translated by Jean-Pierre Richard and Julie Sibony and published, in 1997, by the Belgian publishing house, Editions Complexe. In the light of Hermans’ suggestion that translators do not “mechanically respond to [the] nods and winks” of the target system (Hermans 1999: 80), and due to Fairclough’s insistence on the intentionality of social agents (Fairclough 2003: 38)³⁴, it is necessary to devote some time to the translators themselves. In this subsection I, therefore, attempt to uncover the impact of the translators’ intentionality and agency in terms of the strategies employed in the TT.

Portés Disparus (1997) is the result of the collaboration between Jean-Pierre Richard, a professor of literary translation at the University of Paris 7, and Julie Sibony, a graduate of the same university programme. In a recent discussion on the situation of French literary translation, Richard speaks of Sibony (among others), as part of a group of young, professionally-trained translators making their mark in the French literary

³³ “Niveler le texte étranger pour [...] le rendre digeste” (Wuilmart 2006: 144).

³⁴ I have discussed these positions in 2.2.2 and 2.3.1.

landscape of the 1990s (Richard 2005: 21). In 1997, however, Sibony was still relatively inexperienced in professional translation, and the TT was her first published translation; as a result, her influence on the translation decisions that shaped *Portés Disparus*, is likely to have been less important than that of Richard³⁵.

Richard's list of translated literary works immediately reveals an interest in African and specifically South African literature³⁶. His (South) African translations include works by a number of black protest authors – including Alex La Guma, Miriam Tlali, Njabulo Ndebele, Mandla Langa, and Sello Duiker – a somewhat unusual résumé in the context of a French literary system that Richard describes as 'allergic' to politically-engaged writing (2005: 20). One explanation for the translator's unusual choice of authors – given the preliminary norms of the French system – could be the translator's active involvement in the French Anti-Apartheid Movement (Mouvement Anti-Apartheid français) of the 1980s.

In a 2005 interview with the literary journal *Africultures*, Richard comments on the recent call for the 'Africanisation of discourse' in the translation of African literature. While Richard admits that translations produced in the 1980s tended to "render [the TT] banal, to flatten it, to normalise it", he insists that his own translation strategies have evolved, motivated by an increased awareness of "the relation between the original text and its

³⁵ In an e-mail communication dated 18 July 2008, Sibony confirmed that *Portés Disparus* was her first published translation, and that it was, in fact, Richard who made the general translation choices.

³⁶ Richard's biographical blurb on the online journal *Africultures*, stresses his predilection for African literature. See www.africultures.com/index.asp?menu=affiche_redacteur&no=5084

own [source] readership” (Richard and Tervonen 2003; my translation³⁷). Richard’s comment on the ‘Africanisation’ of discourse in translation is of particular interest in the light of my initial hypothesis – i.e. regarding the overall target orientation of *Portés Disparus*, with traces of source orientation. Richard argues that while the translator’s objective is to ensure that the TT’s imagery functions well in the reader’s imagination, he suggests that it is also important to introduce “the foreign element into the [target] language”, in order to ‘disconcert’ and ‘disorientate’ the reader (Richard and Tervonen 2003; my translation³⁸).

3.2.3 The short story in French

French criticism of the short-story genre echoes the points raised by a number of South African scholars, as discussed in 3.1.3. Following a similar approach to those of Chapman (2006) and Marais (1992), Aubrit (2002) compares the short story with the novel, a more popular genre in French. Aubrit stresses the story’s ability to refer the reader back to the world and to his/her own process of meaning-making: the novel “makes us forget reality around us, [while] the short story refers us back to it” (Aubrit 2002: 151; my translation³⁹). Like their South African counterparts, French literary scholars describe the short-story genre as characterised by its ability to “influence its reader in an immediate and intense manner” (Grojnowski 2000: xi-xii; my translation⁴⁰).

³⁷ “[...] la tentation de banaliser, d’aplatir, de normaliser.” ; “[...] le rapport du texte original à son public à lui, à son lectorat” (Richard and Tervonen 2003).

³⁸ “On introduit ‘l’étranger dans la langue [...]. On essaie de dérouter le lecteur, de le dépayser.” (Richard and Tervonen 2003).

³⁹ “[...] le roman nous fait oublier la réalité autour de nous, quand la nouvelle nous y renvoie [...].” (Aubrit 2002 : 151).

⁴⁰ “[...] la nouvelle vise à influencer sur son lecteur de manière immédiate et intense [...].” (Grojnowski 2000 : xi)

However, while the short story's intensity and immediacy have made it popular in Africa, in French, the genre has been largely disregarded (Richard 2005: 16). It is, therefore, interesting to remark that while French publishers continue to avoid the short story and the short-story collection (both in translation and in the original), the Belgian Editions Complexe, has carved out a niche market defined by a common interest in the story and in 'story-telling' (both historical and personal)⁴¹.

In terms of the translation of South African short stories, it is only with the intensified militancy of anti-apartheid movements in the 1980s – which coincided with the end of De Gaulle's government in France – that a number of literary magazines turned their attention to South African short stories (Richard 2003). Suddenly, French readers were exposed to a variety of South African short fictions, through politically engaged publications like *Apartheid Non!* (the mouthpiece of the French Anti-Apartheid Movement), but also through journals dedicated to African literature, e.g. *L'Afrique Littéraire*, *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, *Le Serpent à Plumes*, and *Revue Noire*, who, in 1993, published Richard's first translation of Vladislavić's short story "Hotel Flashback". This interest in South African short fiction reached its climax in the early 1990s, when the release of Nelson Mandela from prison and the country's first democratic elections brought to a natural end the French anti-apartheid movements (Richard 2003).

In this climate of international elation at the end of apartheid's oppressive regime, medium-sized publishers, like the Belgian Editions Complexe, took the place of the literary magazines of the 1980s. Specifically, Editions Complexe published a number of

⁴¹ Refer to the website of Editions Complexe.

South African short stories as part of a series entitled ‘L’Heure Furtive’⁴²; a series dedicated to short stories that deal with the fragmentation of identity in a rapidly globalising world (see Editions Complexe online). In 1992, ‘L’Heure Furtive’ published Richard’s translation of Njabulo Ndebele’s short-story cycle, *Fools and Other Stories* (1983); the following year, Ndebele’s short story “Uncle”/”Mon Oncle” appeared separately with an extensive introduction by the translator; and finally, in 1997, the translation of Vladislavić’s *Missing Persons* was published.

3.2.4 Reception of *Portés Disparus*

In the years following the publication of *Portés Disparus*, various French reviewers expressed appreciation of Vladislavić’s willingness to question the mode of critical realism that had characterised South African translations into French. Chanda (2005), for example, positions Vladislavić as part of a new generation of South African authors – including Achmat Dangor, Zakes Mda and Zoë Wicomb – whose ability to avoid ‘predictable themes’ sets them apart from their predecessors. In a 1998 review on *Africultures*, Briand describes the collection as “oscillating between directness and obliqueness” (Briand 1998; my translation⁴³) and compares its imagery to the sketches of Plantu, a famous French cartoon artist known for his ability to mix the real and the grotesque. Along similar lines, a review published by *Jeune Afrique* (in Editions Complexe online) describes Vladislavić’s imaginative use of language as reminiscent of Kafka.

⁴² Literally translated as “the fleeting moment” (my translation).

⁴³ “Les délires écrits de Vladislavić oscillent entre le direct et l’oblique” (Briand 1998).

Reflecting the positive reception of the collection, French academic Richard Samin (2001) hails Vladislavić's *Missing Persons* as the first South African collection to depart from the tradition of critical realism that had characterised 'white' short-story writing, from Pauline Smith to Nadine Gordimer (Samin 2001: 208). In Vladislavić's stories, the "world loses its consistency, it disintegrates, it transforms and teeters on the edge of absurdity" (Samin 2001: 210; my translation⁴⁴). According to Samin, the very structure of Vladislavić's short-story cycle contains a metaphor of the fragmentation of South African society, while the stories invite the reader to question the process of meaning-making as well as the function of literature in society (Samin 2001: 217).

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed the literary and socio-cultural systems of South Africa and Belgium – two systems separated not only by a considerable physical distance, but also by different historical and cultural contexts. Despite the vast differences, however, I have discovered some unexpected parallels between South Africa and Belgium. Both literary systems, for example, display a self-reflective concern for the relationship between literature, language and (cultural) identity, which may account for the selection of the ST.

In addition, my investigation into the position of translated literature in Francophone Belgium has revealed a dual and somewhat paradoxical impulse in the Francophone literature of Belgium. On the one hand, the Belgian system uses the medium of

⁴⁴ Dans les nouvelles de Vladislavić, "le monde perd de sa consistance, se délite, se métamorphose et bascule dans l'absurde" (Samin 2001 : 210).

translation to integrate new literary features and themes into its 'minority literature'; on the other hand, this impulse is counterbalanced by the influence of the dominant neighbouring French system, which does not tolerate source-orientation. It will be interesting to contrast this situation with the actual shifts between ST and TT (analysed in chapter four), in order to test the initial hypothesis: target orientation with traces of source orientation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Comparative analysis of *Missing Persons* and *Portés Disparus*

In chapters one and two, I established the theoretical orientation of the present study, which is broadly based on Toury's Descriptive Translation Studies, or DTS. As illustrated in 2.2.2, DTS is founded on three key assumptions: that translations are “facts” of a ‘target’ culture” (Toury 1995: 23); that “equivalence does exist between an assumed translation and its assumed source” (Toury 1995: 86); and that the type of equivalence (i.e. target- or source-orientation) depends on a process of negotiation between the demands “which derive from reading the ST, and certain preferences and expectations which [...] exist in the audience” (Hermans 1999: 74). In the light of these assumptions, Toury develops a simple research methodology that aims to describe the translation product and contextualise the translation strategies (Munday 2002: 77).

While my objectives – to describe and contextualise culturally relevant translation shifts – are informed by DTS, Toury's methodology does not provide the necessary guidelines regarding “how translations are to be analysed” (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 42). For this reason, the following comparative analysis will follow the guidelines provided by Lambert and Van Gorp's ‘repertory of features’ approach (Munday 2002: 77), which “contains the basic parameters of translational phenomena, as presented by Itamar Even-

Zohar and Gideon Toury” (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 43). I begin this chapter with a brief summary of the research methodology.

4.1 Summary of research methodology

As discussed in 2.2.3, Lambert and Van Gorp’s methodological framework allows researchers to determine whether the strategies used to deal with translation difficulties in a particular translation are predominantly source-text oriented or target-culture oriented, in order to come to some conclusions regarding “the exact relations between the literary systems of the target and source cultures” (1985: 44). Lambert and Van Gorp list a number of relations which may be worthy of study (1985: 44):

- Intra-systemic relations⁴⁵ – e.g. the position of the ST author in relation to other authors in the source system, and the position of the translator(s) in relation to other authors/translators in the target system; the relations between the ST and other texts within the source literary system, and between the TT and other texts within the target system; the reception of the ST and the TT in the source and target system, respectively; the position of the reader within each system.
- Inter-systemic relations – e.g. the relations between ST author and TT translator; between the ST and the TT; between the readers of both texts.

Given that chapter three dealt with intra-systemic relations, the present chapter will focus on inter-systemic relations, by conducting a comparative analysis between the ST and the

⁴⁵ See chapter three.

TT, which provides “the most explicit information about the relations between the source and target systems” (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 47).

While Lambert and Van Gorp’s model answers Munday’s call for a replicable and systematic approach to conducting descriptive translation research (2002: 76-90), it remains “no more than a heuristic tool”, and provides “a comprehensive set of *questions* [...] rather than a series of theses” (Lambert and Van Gorp, 1985: 45; emphasis in original). In the light of this fact, the comparative analysis which follows makes use of three key interdisciplinary approaches, which will assist me in the formulation of conclusions regarding inter-systemic relations. These approaches are: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Scenes-and-Frames Semantics, and Baker’s taxonomy of translation strategies.

As illustrated in 2.3.1, Fairclough’s discussion of language-use as discourse provides a useful platform for the analysis of “texts, meanings and interpretations” (2003: 10). Fairclough explains that texts are shaped “by the causal powers of social structures (including languages) and social practices” (Fairclough 2003: 38); he divides such social practices into a number of categories, which can be summarised as follows: (1) social activities, (2) subjects and the relations between subjects, (3) the material world, and (4) knowledge, values and beliefs (Fairclough 2005: 77; 2003: 25; 2001: 231). Given the shortcomings of Lambert and Van Gorp’s model when “dealing with large amounts of text” (Munday 2002: 77), I will use Fairclough’s categories of social practices as criteria for selecting ideologically and culturally significant text-segments.

I will make use of Fillmore's Scenes-and-Frames Semantics to facilitate my explanation of the translation process in terms of two crucial steps: interpretation and reformulation (see 2.3.2). First, the translator (as ST reader) approaches a linguistic 'frame', which, depending on the translator's "own level of experience and [...] internalised knowledge" (Snell-Hornby 1995: 81), evokes a range of mental 'scenes'; then, the translator (as TT author) selects a suitable target language 'frame' with which to express the scenes evoked by the ST. My task as researcher will be to compare the cognitive scenes evoked by the ST with those evoked by the TT⁴⁶, and finally to formulate conclusions based on eventual cultural and ideological shifts, regarding the source- or target- orientation of the TT.

Finally, Baker's taxonomy of translation difficulties and strategies (discussed in 2.3.3) will provide the necessary technical vocabulary to describe the translation difficulties and strategies used by Richard and Sibony.

4.2. Comparative analysis of preliminary data

In their seminal article "On Describing Translations", Lambert and Van Gorp provide a "Synthetic Scheme for Translation Description" that aims to consider "all functionally relevant aspects of a given translational activity in its historical context" (1985: 45). The present section corresponds to the first step of Lambert and Van Gorp's scheme, which focuses on comparing the data appearing on the cover and footnotes of the ST and TT, respectively. Lambert and Van Gorp suggest that by examining the presence (or

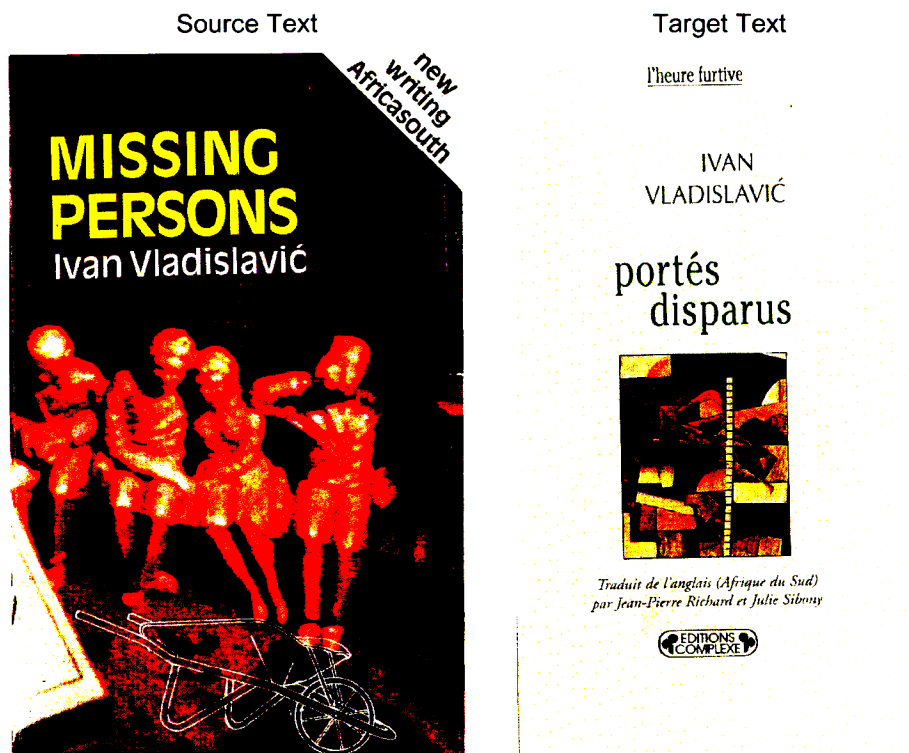
⁴⁶ For this I must draw on my own cultural and linguistic competence in South African English and French.

omission) of genre information, the author's and the translator's name, as well as the presence (or omission) of metatext on the cover, in the preface and in the footnotes, the researcher is able to formulate a hypothesis regarding the general orientation of the translation (1985: 52).

4.2.1 Front cover

The cover of a book represents how the book is 'sold' to a particular readership, and thus establishes that readership's literary and broadly ideological expectations. By examining the design and metatextual information on the cover of both ST and TT, I am able to determine what ideological, thematic and stylistic features of the ST are emphasised, in order to fulfil the expectations of "the reader within the respective system" (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 44). This comparison will also allow me to contrast authorial intention as reflected in each text, and finally to draw conclusions regarding the ideological orientation of the translation⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ While Lambert and Van Gorp (1985) assume a direct correlation between the publisher's and the author's intentionality, the design and wording on the front (and back) cover is more often than not a function of the publisher's marketing choices, rather than an expression of the author's vision. While this issue deserves further discussion, given the scope of this mini-thesis, I take it that the cover of *Missing Persons* is in line with Vladislavić's intentions, and that the cover of *Portés Disparus* was informed by the translators' interpretation of the ST.



4.2.1.1 Source text

The title, MISSING PERSONS, in bright, electric green letters, dominates the upper half of the page, and immediately attracts the reader's eye. Just below the title, the author's name appears in smaller, white letters, while the name of the collection, "AfricaSouth New Writing", is displayed in the top right-hand corner. The layout of the cover page emphasises the title and reflects a sense of unease that characterises the collection as a whole. Vladislavić's name is also emphasised – presumably, to attract a particular readership that would be familiar with the author's role as assistant editor of the literary magazine *Staffrider*.

The cover illustration represents specific elements of a photograph – entitled “The Waiting Room” – which Vladislavić describes in detail in the story entitled “A Science of Fragments” (85):

A looming matchbox. [...] Mulberry leaves as tall as trees, uprooted. [...] Silkworm droppings. [...] Electric flex. [...] Five plastic people on a bench (from l. to r.):

The watcher
holds an object in his lap and looks into it, rather than at it: a book, a crystal ball, a mirror, a reliquary.

The lovers,
man and woman, their heads resting together, their hands meshed, inanimate. Her eyes are closed. Or perhaps they are simply lowered to look at his hand.

The listener
holds an object to his ear: a telephone, a shell, a bloody rag.

The other man,
the dark one, cut off by the edge of the photograph, in shadow, his head down, his hands hidden. Below the brim of his hat a face without features.

The cover illustration provides a fragmented and disconcerting narrative, and it is not until the eighth story in the collection that the ST reader is able to make sense of it.

In “A Science of Fragments”, the narrator buys the photograph at an art exhibition. Being a work of art, the photograph opens many possible readings; however, for the narrator, it represents just a “cardboard box full of chaos and decay” (85). This highlights Vladislavić’s thematic concern with the fragmentation of identity that characterised South Africa’s transition to democracy. At the beginning of “A Science of Fragments”, a quotation from Lionel Abrahams provides the interpretive key to the ST cover and to the collection as a whole (83):

Fragments neither close
nor open meaning:
they may mean anything except
wholeness, except certainty.

Given the explicit link to “A Science of Fragments”, it is apparent that the ST cover aims to emphasise the fragmentation of experience as one of the key thematic concerns of Missing Persons.

4.2.1.2 Target text

The predominant element on the TT cover page is the illustration – a detail of an abstract portrait by Kasimir Malevich – which, in keeping with the theme of fragmentation of experience, consists of a number of colourful segments of various shapes and sizes, communicating a sense of chaos and confusion. One object stands out in the chaos: a long, thin rectangle with equally-spaced segments, resembling a ruler – a comment, perhaps, on the use of art to impose order upon the chaos of human experience.

The reader’s eye is then drawn to the title of the book, appearing above the illustration, in bold green letters: *Portés Disparus*. Like the title of the ST, the French title evokes an uneasy feeling of absence. The reader’s eye is then drawn upward, to the author’s name, in thin capital letters, and to the title of the series in smaller font, underlined: ‘l’heure furtive’.

The reader’s gaze then turns downwards, to the publisher’s logo in thick black letters at the bottom of the page, and finally returns to just below the illustration where – in small, italicised font – there is an indication of the country and language of the original, and the names of the translators: “*Traduit de l’anglais (Afrique du Sud) par Jean-Pierre Richard*

et Julie Sibony”⁴⁸. This metatextual note serves two purposes; on the one hand it is an indication of the target culture’s regard for the translator’s art; on the other, the reference to South Africa sets up a number of expectations linked to the social and political backdrop of South Africa in the 1980s.

4.2.2 Back cover and other metatextual information

Metatexts represent a direct form of communication between the ST author (and publisher) and the ST reader, the translator (and target culture publisher) and the TT reader; metatexts are, therefore, a particularly useful source of information about both intra-systemic and inter-systemic relations. I begin this discussion by analysing the metatextual information on the ST back cover, front and back cover-flaps. I then move on to look at the metatexts of the TT: i.e. back cover and footnotes.

4.2.2.1 Source text

The back cover of *Missing Persons* contains a sepia-coloured photograph of a young Ivan Vladislavić and, immediately beneath it, a short review of the “first collection by a striking new South African writer” (back matter). The reviewer describes Vladislavić’s short-story writing as “a monument to the transitory”, where the “uncertainties of our times are explored with a mordant humour and incisive wit” (back matter). The reviewer mentions Vladislavić’s thematic concern with the written form and with the function of story-telling “in the vigorous language of a turbulent South Africa” (back matter). On the

⁴⁸ “Translated from the English (South Africa) by Jean-Pierre Richard and Julie Sibony” [my translation].

front cover-flap, Ivan Vladislavić's biographical information is mentioned, with emphasis on his editorial work and his position on *Staffrider*.

4.2.2.2 Target text

The back-cover of *Portés Disparus* displays the author's name in large letters on the top of the page, with the title of the collection immediately below it. The text on the back-cover establishes the South African context of the story collection, by providing a definition of apartheid as aiming "to separate, to compartmentalise, to lock everyone into artificial categories, impervious to the existence of others" (back-matter; my translation⁴⁹). While the reviewer initially emphasises the South African context of the stories, in the second paragraph, s/he stresses the universal relevance of Vladislavić's concerns: "what if the situation in South Africa was the new human condition? Isn't contemporary man [sic], irrespective of where he [sic] lives, a victim of a sort of apartheid, or in danger of becoming one?" (back-matter; my translation)⁵⁰. Vladislavić's writing-style is described as 'African surrealism', and a quotation from André Brink depicts the author as "one of the most imaginative spirits of contemporary South African literature" (back-matter; my translation)⁵¹. Finally, Vladislavić's date of birth is mentioned, together with the 1991 awarding of the Olive Schreiner prize to *Missing Persons*.

⁴⁹ "Par définition l'apartheid vise à séparer, à cloisonner, à enfermer chacun dans une catégorie artificielle et étanche aux autres" (TT back matter).

⁵⁰ "[...] et si la situation de l'homme en Afrique du Sud était la nouvelle condition humaine?" (TT back matter).

⁵¹ "André Brink a dit de lui: 'L'un des esprits les plus imaginatifs de la littérature sud-africaine contemporaine'" (TT back matter).

Most of the footnotes in *Portés Disparus* provide information about Afrikaans terms that have been retained in the TT. A number of ST loan words and phrases in Afrikaans are retained and italicised in the body of the TT, and a footnote is added at the bottom of the page, providing a brief explanation that usually indicates the Afrikaans origins of the term and provides simple definitions. This use of footnotes serves effectively to isolate Afrikaans words from the body of the text, in this way interrupting the flow of the narrative, while also providing information about the source culture.

4.2.3 Hypothesis based on considerations of preliminary data

Lambert and Van Gorp state that an analysis of preliminary data – such as the one conducted above – “should lead to hypotheses for further analysis on both the macro-structural and micro-structural level” (1985: 52). The assumption is that the strategy employed at the preliminary level is a function of the general translation strategy employed at macro and micro level. A number of conclusions, regarding the general translation strategy of *Portés Disparus*, can be drawn from the comparison of the cover pages and metatexts of the ST and TT.

On the one hand, the fact that Richard and Sibony’s names appear on the front cover indicates the target culture’s respect for the translator’s art. Also, Richard’s reputation as translator of African (and South African) short fiction is likely to set up expectations of a fluent translation that reads naturally in French – according to dominant prescriptions of what makes a ‘good’ translation. On the other hand, the cover illustration reflects an emphasis on Vladislavić’s theme of the fragmentation of identity in a transitional South

Africa. In addition, the fact that the South African origins of the collection are mentioned on both the front- and back-cover, and that Afrikaans words are emphasised by the use of footnotes in the text, reflects an interest in preserving traces of foreignisation in the TT.

My hypothesis at this stage therefore, is that, while the translation strategies will most likely be target-oriented – producing ‘acceptable’ syntax and imagery – the translators will tend to highlight those cultural characteristics in the text that allude to “a South African society fragmented by forty years of apartheid” (TT back matter; my translation⁵²).

4.3 Comparative analysis of macro-structural data

While Lambert and Van Gorp provide detailed questions pertaining to each level of analysis, they are aware of the fact that “it is impossible to summarise all relationships involved in the activity of translation”, and state that part of the researcher’s task is to “establish priorities” (1985: 47) with regards to the relations to be analysed. Given the short-story form of the ST, in this section I will focus on the order and titles of the short stories in *Missing Persons* and *Portés Disparus*, respectively.

4.3.1 Source Text

Missing Persons comprises eleven short stories, six of which are further divided into subsections. While each story can be read independently of the others⁵³, *Missing Persons*

⁵² “[...] une société sud-africaine fragmentée par quarante ans d’apartheid” (TT back matter).

⁵³ The fact that a number of stories were initially published in a number of literary magazines supports this point.

is held together by shared themes and imagery. The image of the monument, for example, is introduced in “The Prime Minister is Dead” – where an entire suburb is turned into a mausoleum in honour of a dead Prime Minister – and is further echoed in “We Came to the Monument”, where a group of war refugees move into a monument built by their forefathers. Similarly, the fragmentation of identity – whether through the break-down of relations or through the break-down of social structures – is the leitmotif that holds the collection together.

The theme of fragmentation is amplified by the use of subsections in almost half of the stories in the collection. Vladislavić uses three types of subsections within his stories: some are divided into separate episodes, with titles reflecting key events in the narrative⁵⁴; others are divided into numbered subsections⁵⁵; and one story – “Journal of a Wall” – comprises eleven journal entries, each marked by a successive date.

4.3.2 Target Text

The stories in *Portés Disparus* follow the order of the stories in *Missing Persons*, and retain the subdivisions within the stories mentioned above. However, some shifts are noticeable on the level of layout and typography. Whereas, in the ST, a contents page is provided at the front of the book, in the TT it appears at the back, in keeping with the expectations of the target readership. Furthermore, whereas in the ST the story titles and subtitles are indicated by the use of bold font, in the TT, they are indicated by the use of italics. Once again, this is a function of target-culture norms.

⁵⁴ Namely: “The Prime Minister is Dead”, “Sightseeing”, and “A Science of Fragments”.

⁵⁵ For example: “Movements” and “Tsafendas’s Diary”.

4.3.3 Hypothesis based on macro-structural considerations

The fact that the typography and layout of the contents page are changed to suit target culture expectations supports the hypothesis that the translators are first and foremost concerned with meeting the expectations of the target culture. However, the macro structure of the ST – which is a function of the theme of fragmentation and social breakdown – is unchanged, thereby indicating Richard and Sibony's desire to retain those elements of *Missing Persons* that reflect the instability of South African society and identity in the 1980s. In other words, Richard and Sibony's micro-textual translation strategies are likely to be broadly target-oriented, with 'pockets' of foreignisation, as in the case of specific elements of South African culture.

4.4 Comparative analysis at micro level

This section represents the third step in Lambert and Van Gorp's "Synthetic Scheme for Describing Translations" (1985). My aim here is to rework previous hypotheses, based on "a renewed confrontation [between] macro-structural strategies" (identified in the previous section) and "shifts on phonic, graphic, micro-syntactic, lexico-semantic, stylistic, elocutionary, and modal levels" (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 52). I shall use Fairclough's categories of socially-determined practices as ideologically-relevant criteria of selection⁵⁶, along the lines of:

4.4.1 socially-determined activities;

⁵⁶ While Fairclough constantly returns to the task of providing categories of social practices linked to discourse in texts, his categories are not fixed (Fairclough 2005: 77; 2003: 205; and 2001: 231). What I present here is a summary of the categories that recur in the works cited above. The subcategories are partly taken from Fairclough's work, and partly a function of the cultural references in Vladislavić's *Missing Persons*. See 2.3.1 for a detailed discussion of Fairclough's categories of social practices.

- 4.4.2 subjects and relations between subjects – e.g. personal names (4.4.2.1)
and forms of address in direct speech (4.4.2.2);
- 4.4.3 the material world – e.g. time and space (4.4.3.1), objects and
instruments (4.4.3.2); and
- 4.4.4 knowledge, beliefs and values.

In addition, my explanation of the translation shifts in *Portés Disparus* is informed by Fillmore’s concept of ‘linguistic frames’ and ‘cognitive scenes’, and by Baker’s taxonomy of translation strategies (as outlined in 2.3.2 and 2.3.3, respectively).

Note: In the interest of clarity, I provide my own back-translation of the target text extracts (TT). I also use a bold font to highlight the shifts discussed in each example. In cases where the effect of the TT linguistic frame is relevant to the overall stylistic and thematic effect of the TT, I provide a literal (lit.) back-translation of the linguistic frame in square brackets.

4.4.1 Socially-determined activities

Fairclough argues that “the representation [...] of social practices constitutes discourses, [and] differently positioned social actors ‘see’ and represent social life in different ways” (2003: 206). In the light of this argument, it is possible to view socially-determined activities as culture-specific and hence of particular relevance for the present enquiry, as their representation in the source text may give rise to various problems of non-equivalence at word-level (see Baker 1992: 20-1).

Example 1: social drinking

The following example is taken from the ST story entitled “The Terminal Bar”. The story takes place in the ‘transit lounge’ of an airport – a place supposedly of transition and change. However, the characters in the story are not passing through, but appear trapped in this transient setting, cut off from the rest of the world and from the passing of time. The story, narrated by the owner of the bar, is made up of chronologically-disjointed accounts revolving around the drunken clientele’s paranoid attempts to protect the ‘Terminal Bar’ from terrorist attacks. The words “another night” act as the refrain of the story, indicating, with each repetition, the injection of an intersecting narrative into the story.

ST	TT	Back-translation
Another night in the Terminal Bar, in the Transit Lounge. Another kick-out time, another unhappy hour . It is always closing time here in the Terminal Bar, but no-one leaves. (105)	Encore un soir au Bar du Terminal, dans la Salle de Transit. Encore l’heure de vider tout le monde, encore un sale moment . C’est toujours l’heure de fermeture ici au Bar du Terminal, mais personne ne part. (125)	Another evening at the Terminal Bar, in the Transit Lounge. Time again to chase everyone out, another disagreeable moment [lit: dirty moment]. It is always closing time here at the Terminal Bar, but no-one leaves.

The above example illustrates the translators’ strategy for dealing with a fixed expression “used in the ST, in both its literal and idiomatic senses” (Baker 1992: 69). In a discussion on the interpretation of fixed expressions, Baker highlights the importance of understanding “all the aspects of the experience [...] associated with the typical context in which the expression is used” (1992: 64); it is important, therefore, to explain the link

between the ST linguistic frame ‘unhappy hour’, and the context in which it is used (i.e. the social activity to which it is linked).

The scene evoked by the expression “unhappy hour” depends on the translator’s knowledge (as ST reader) of the fixed expression ‘happy hour’. The expression ‘happy hour’ is linked to a specific cultural situation – ‘social drinking’ – and refers to a specific time at a bar, during which drinks are cheaper than usual. Baker argues that such ‘situation-specific’ fixed expressions “encapsulate all the stereotyped aspects of experience and therefore perform a stabilising function” (1992: 64). Consequently, the fact that Vladislavić reverses the fixed expression by changing it to ‘un-happy hour’ performs a destabilising function – in keeping with the stylistic and thematic refrain of the fragmentation of identity in post-apartheid South Africa. “Unhappy hour” is thus used in both its literal sense – to mean an unhappy moment – and in its idiomatic sense – as the opposite of ‘happy hour’, to represent the end of a familiar social situation.

The French idiomatic expression used in the TT has a similar literal frame – i.e. an unhappy, unpleasant experience – but it loses the reference to the situation-specific idiom in the ST (‘happy hour’), thereby losing the reference to the South African practice of ‘social drinking’.

Example 2: traditions and folklore

The following extract is taken from the story “Journal of a Wall”, which, as the title indicates, takes the form of a series of journal entries. In the first four entries, the

unnamed narrator meticulously charts the building of a wall around his neighbour's property. The narrator's obsession with recording the event "brick for word, word for brick" (34) is linked to his desire to "be more than an observer" (23) – to impart meaning. The fact that the narrator remains unnamed, combined with his fixation with documenting the smallest detail, parodies the realist style of engaged writing in apartheid South Africa.

In the last few journal entries – from which the following extract is taken – the narrator is disappointed to discover that the only purpose of "that ridiculous wall" (42) was to keep the neighbours' world separate from the outside world, with its "unrest and rioting and burning" (41). The following extract serves to illustrate a translation strategy frequently used by Richard and Sibony in dealing with Afrikaans loan-words in the ST.

ST	TT	Back-translation
I sat down on the surviving chair and thought about it more carefully. They were such perverse people. What were they planning to do behind that ridiculous wall? Volkspeler? Nude braaivleises? Secret nocturnal rituals accessible only to people in helicopters? (42)	Je m'assis dans le fauteuil rescapé et y réfléchis plus attentivement. Ces gens-là étaient vraiment tordus ! Qu'avaient-ils l'intention de faire derrière ce mur ridicule? Des <i>volkspele</i> *? Des <i>braaivleises</i> nudistes? Des rites nocturnes secrets uniquement accessibles par hélicoptère ? (53)	I sat down in the rescued armchair and reflected upon it more attentively. These people were really twisted! What did they intend to do behind that ridiculous wall? Volkspeler? Nudist braaivleises? Nocturnal secret rites only accessible by helicopter?
	* Termes afrikaans. <i>Volkspeler</i> : danses folkloriques d'Afrique du Sud. <i>Braaivleis</i> : pique-nique au cours duquel on mange de la viande grillée au barbecue. (N.d.T.)	[Footnote:] Afrikaans terms. <i>Volkspeler</i> : folkloristic dances of South Africa. <i>Braaivleis</i> : picnic during which one eats meat grilled on the barbecue. (Translator's note.)

The use of the Afrikaans loan words in the ST (in bold) sets up a distance between the English-speaking narrator and his Afrikaans neighbours, thereby amplifying the humorous effect of the narrator's outburst. Enraged by the Groenewalds' distant attitude, the narrator makes fun of them by imagining that they might be using the wall as a screen behind which to subvert Afrikaans traditions such as folkloristic dances and the week-end *braai*. It is interesting to note that the Afrikaans loan word 'braaivleis' is Anglicised in the ST by the use of the English plural suffix '—es', which serves to corrupt the Afrikaans tradition, setting up an even greater distance between the (presumably English) narrator and his Afrikaans neighbours.

The use of a "loan word plus explanation" in the form of a footnote (Baker 1992: 35) reveals two simultaneous concerns on the translators' part. By retaining the Afrikaans in the TT, Richard and Sibony automatically attach 'cultural value' to the loan words, which are made to stand out by italicising the font. An element of 'foreignness' is thereby inserted into the translated text, drawing the readers' attention to the cultural distance between themselves and the source culture, and so effectively reminding them that what they are facing is, in fact, a translation. The distance set up in the ST between the English narrator and his Afrikaans neighbours, is replaced, in the TT, by the distance between a Francophone Belgian readership and the foreign South African (sub)culture.

While the above consideration may be interpreted as a source-text oriented strategy, Richard and Sibony's use of a footnote to explain the Afrikaans words retained in the TT,

reveals a certain concern for target-culture accessibility. As already mentioned, by preserving the loan words, Richard and Sibony ‘foreignise’ the TT – by “transferring the nuances or local aspect” of the source culture (Young 2006: 103) – while, by explaining the Afrikaans loan terms in the footnote, they bring the source culture closer to the target readers. This strategy is particularly interesting because it illustrates what Nord defines as the translator’s dual loyalty to the “source text as well as to the target text situation” (1991: 29), and also because it reveals Richard and Sibony’s concern for the target reader’s expectations⁵⁷.

4.4.2 Subjects and relations between subjects

The role of subjects, and the way relations between them are signified, constitutes a significant cultural aspect to be considered in the present analysis. Fairclough recognises that the manner in which ‘social actors’ are represented “involves a number of socially significant choices” (2003: 155), while the textual representation of social relations reveals a number of ideological assumptions about social difference and social identity (2003: 40). To facilitate the selection of relevant text segments, I have identified two subcategories of representation of social relations between subjects in *Missing Persons*: personal names (4.4.2.1), and forms of address in direct speech (4.4.2.2).

⁵⁷ Another good example of this strategy is found in the short-story “Sightseeing” / “Tourisme”. In the TT, the Afrikaans term ‘voortrekker’ is retained and explained in a footnote: [back-translation] “Afrikaans term designating the pioneers who left the Cape colony to inhabit the north-east territory of South Africa during the Great Trek (1834-1852)” (TT: 26).

4.4.2.1 Personal names

The following examples illustrate the transfer of personal names in *Portés Disparus*. Lefevere argues that personal names do more than “name characters in a poem, story, novel or play, [but] also [serve] to describe those characters” (1992: 39). In other words, personal names – especially nicknames – “provide valuable information with regards to personality traits, age, social class, language and social position or status” (Young 2006: 94), while the way names are transferred in the TT offers important information regarding the over-all orientation of the translation.

In *Missing Persons*, the use of personal names is relatively restricted, with five of the twelve stories referring to characters exclusively in terms of social category or by the use of personal pronouns. The following examples are of particular cultural relevance, and illustrate a certain target-orientation in Richard and Sibony’s translation strategies.

Example 1: ‘culturally-loaded’ names

The following example is taken from “The Prime Minister is Dead” – a story about the assassination of a South African Prime Minister, seen through the eyes of a ten-year-old narrator⁵⁸. Lazarus, the gardener, plays a minor part in the story; his presence however, reinforces the social inequalities that permeated South African society under apartheid. Significantly, while the other characters are identified in terms of their relation to the narrator – “Granny”, “Grandfather”, “my father” and “my mother” – the use of Lazarus’ proper name distances him from the (white) narrator and his family.

⁵⁸ The reference is to Hendrik Verwoerd’s assassination in 1966; a theme which recurs in two other stories: “The Box” and “Tsafendas’s Diary”

ST	TT	Back-translation
When the Prime Minister died he left us a compost heap, on which practically anything would grow. Mealies grew there once, all by themselves. Granny speculated that Lazarus , who sometimes worked in the garden, must have thrown away the sweetcorn that she'd given him for lunch. (3)	Quand le Premier ministre est mort, il nous a laissé un tas de compost, sur lequel pousserait presque n'importe quoi. Du maïs y est apparu une fois, spontanément. Mamie a supposé que Lazare , qui travaillait parfois au jardin, avait jeté les grains qu'elle lui avait donnés pour le déjeuner. (9)	When the Prime Minister died, he left us a compost heap, on which almost anything would grow. Maize appeared there once, spontaneously. Granny [Mamie] guessed that Lazarus [Lazare], who sometimes worked in the garden, had thrown away the grains she had given him for lunch.

The use of the gardener's first name in the ST is significant for two reasons. Firstly, the fact that the child-narrator addresses a grown man by his first name is indicative of the social hierarchy separating 'servants' from 'masters', and of the 'petty racism' in many South African households at the time. Secondly, as a result of South Africa's colonial tradition of imposing Christian names on Africans (Ngubane 2000: 2), the name Lazarus (of Biblical origin) is associated with a black person. The use of the gardener's first name in the ST, therefore, serves to illustrate the link between race and social standing in South Africa at the time.

In the TT, the name is domesticated, retaining the Biblical reference, but not the culturally-derived mental scene of the name belonging to a black person. While the race connotation is lost, the man's perceived social inferiority is reinforced by the translation of "the **sweetcorn** that she'd given him for lunch" as "les **grains** qu'elle lui avait donnés pour le déjeuner" [back-translation: the grains that she had given him for lunch]. The French word 'grain', in addition to its literal meaning (or frame) of a 'grain' or 'cereal', is commonly used in its figurative sense (or mental scene) to indicate a very small quantity

of something⁵⁹. Hence, while the TT loses the connotation of the name ‘Lazarus’ as belonging to an African man, the gardener’s perceived inferiority in the context of apartheid South Africa is counterbalanced by an added mental scene in the TT.

Example 2: nicknames

The following example is from “The Terminal Bar”, and is an illustration of how character names provide valuable information regarding both social identity and personal identity⁶⁰. In the extract below, Boshoff – one of the central characters in the story – confronts a mob of angry women seeking to avenge the murder of “Mrs Boshoff” (his wife), and Little Bossies (his daughter) (115).

ST	TT	Back-translation
In any event, Boshoff’s middle name is trouble (he always says so). He steps forward: ‘ Ek is Bossies. ’ [...] ‘ Ek is Bossies, ’ he says, and rips open the front of his shirt. (117)	De toute façon, Boshoff est toujours synonyme de problèmes (c’est ce qu’il répète sans cesse). Il s’avance d’un pas: « C’est moi Bossies! » [...] « C’est moi Bossies! », dit-il, en déchirant sa chemise sur son torse. (136)	In any case, Boshoff is always synonymous with problems (that’s what he repeats constantly). He takes a step forward: “ I am Bossies! [lit.: It’s me Bossies]”. “ I am Bossies! ” he says, tearing his shirt on his chest.

In the ST, Boshoff’s exclamation in Afrikaans “Ek is Bossies” reveals both his social and personal identity. The fact that the sentence is uttered in Afrikaans provides the ST reader with clues as to the character’s cultural and linguistic identity, i.e. he is an Afrikaans male. Furthermore, the use of Afrikaans serves to alert the ST reader to an important

⁵⁹ For example ‘il n’a pas un **grain** de bon sens’ is translated idiomatically as ‘he hasn’t got a **scrap** of common sense’ (*Nouveau Petit Robert Dictionnaire de la Langue Française*, 1995).

⁶⁰ Fairclough makes a distinction between social identity and personal identity. The former is acquired through socialisation as a result of one’s birth, and ‘social role’; the latter is a result of “‘social roles’ being personally invested and inflected” (Fairclough 2003: 223).

reading of Boshoff's nickname: Bossies. In Afrikaans, the word 'bossies' is a derivative of the slang term 'bosbevok', meaning "traumatised or crazed, especially as a result of the stress of military action" (*South African Concise Oxford Dictionary* 2007: 132). This interpretation of Boshoff's nickname, coupled with the fact that ST readers are told that his "middle name is trouble" (117) contributes to developing the character's personal identity as someone who is both violent and unpredictable.

Unlike other instances in the TT where Afrikaans words and expressions are retained and explained by the use of a footnote⁶¹, Richard and Sibony translate the phrase "Ek is Bossies" into French, thereby preserving the 'naturalness' of the text (Baker 1992: 56). In this process they lose the complex scene evoked by the use of Afrikaans, a scene linked to the character's personal and socio-cultural identity. However, in the TT, the syntax of the French statement "C'est **moi** Bossies" emphasises the man's responsibility in the murder of his wife and daughter by stressing the subject – i.e. "I am Bossies". Thus, while Richard and Sibony's translation of the Afrikaans phrase undermines the character's socio-cultural and personal identity, the syntax of the French statement has the effect of highlighting Boshoff's guilt and arrogant refusal to repent.

4.4.2.2. Forms of address in direct speech

Fairclough argues that the analysis of dialogue in a given text may reveal "inequalities which can be attributed to social relations between participants" (Fairclough 2003: 78). In a recent post-graduate research project on the transfer of South African culture in German

⁶¹ For further examples of this particular translation strategy, see 4.4.1, e.g. 2; 4.4.2.2, e.g. 1; and 4.4.3.2, e.g. 1.

translation, Jarvis (2005) supports this view by devoting a large part of her micro-level analysis to the study of culturally-motivated shifts in dialogue. Jarvis argues that “prejudices and power relations are most evident in the ST” during spoken exchanges, and that an analysis of such shifts “allows for ideological, rather than purely linguistic, conclusions” (2005: 88).

The following example is selected with such ideological considerations in mind, and illustrates the translation strategies used by Richard and Sibony to deal with the social inequalities made apparent by spoken interactions between subjects.

Example 1: the language of authority

The text segment below is taken from “Flashback Hotel *TYYY”, where an unnamed narrator describes the incongruous events leading up to, and following, a ‘BOMB BLAST IN CITY HOTEL’ (12). The flashing images of newspaper headlines and news reports, and the description of “dead waiters [...] piled up in the hole like stepping-stones” (12), are an obvious historical reference to the events of the late 1980s, when a series of terrorist attacks claimed the lives of numerous ‘innocent’ victims. While the narrator’s culpability in the bombing is not explicit, the fact that his identity seems to be constantly shifting, and that he is hiding from the authorities, makes the reader wonder: “[i]f he’s innocent, why’s he running away?” (13).

ST	TT	Back-translation
Just then a policeman carrying a stack of raffle forms appeared. Hello hello hello. ^a Wat	Au même instant est apparu un agent de police qui portait une pile de billets de loterie.	At the same moment a police agent appeared who was carrying a pile of lottery tickets.

maak julle daar?* ^b I ran back into the hotel. The fat man said to the policeman: If he's innocent why's he running away? (13)	Bonjour tout le monde. ^a <i>Wat maak julle daar ?*</i> ^b Je suis rentré en courant à l'intérieur de l'hôtel. Le gros a dit au policier : S'il est innocent, pourquoi se sauve-t-il ?	Good day every one. <i>Wat maak julle daar?</i> I ran back into the hotel. The fat man said to the policeman: If he's innocent, why is he running away?
	* « Que faites-vous ici ? », en afrikaans. (N.d.T.) (20)	[Footnote:] “What are you doing here?” in Afrikaans. (Translator's note.)

Shift a:

The social interaction illustrated above – between a person in a position of authority and members of the public – is typically characterised by a ‘tenor of discourse’⁶² that reinforces the social distance between the participants. While such interactions typically involve a degree of formality, the policeman’s apparently informal greeting in the ST achieves the effect of distancing the policeman from the narrator, by the use of a condescending tone. The ST greeting is thus associated with the patronising rhetoric of apartheid.

Richard and Sibony’s translation of the policeman’s greeting as “Bonjour tout le monde” [Good day everyone] involves a shift in the tenor of discourse, “to suit the expectations of the target reader” (Baker 1992: 16). While the TT greeting appears to be more formal than the ST greeting, given the expectations of a Francophone target readership, it retains a degree of informality which is atypical of such exchanges, but not unacceptable. Consequently, by translating the ST greeting with a culturally suitable equivalent, the translators appear motivated by the desire to produce a fluent and acceptable translation

⁶² Baker uses ‘tenor of discourse’ to indicate that language-choice is linked to the expected “relationships between the people taking part in the discourse” (Baker 1992: 16).

of ST features. Given the culturally specific associations linked to the patronising tone of the ST greeting, the reference to the rhetoric of apartheid is lost in the TT.

Shift *b*:

As illustrated above, the policeman's patronising attitude in the ST serves to distance the narrator from the policeman – and the regime he represents. Similarly, the question “Wat maak julle daar?” [what are you doing there] serves to further distance the narrator from the policeman by aligning the latter with the political ideology of apartheid – represented in a number of Vladislavić's stories by the use of Afrikaans. The narrator's own fragmented (English) narrative in the story cannot stand up to the grand-narrative of apartheid, and the narrator refuses to engage in the exchange by “running away” (13). This refusal to engage in the interaction is interpreted as an admission of guilt.

The translators transfer the policeman's question directly, and explain its meaning and Afrikaans origin in a footnote. The fact that the entire Afrikaans phrase is retained indicates the translators' intention to stress the ideological distance between the target reader and the apartheid government of South Africa. While the ST reader understands the policeman's question, and is familiar with life under apartheid, the TT reader is faced with an incomprehensible phrase, which serves to defamiliarise the ideology of apartheid. This strategy reflects the translator's desire to preserve a ‘distance’ between normality and apartheid, and is indicative of Richard's political stance, as discussed in 3.2.2.

Example 2: ‘sociolect’⁶³

This example is taken from “The Box”. In this story, the television set is the only link between the mundane existence of white suburbia, and the civil unrest and ‘bloody revolution’ threatening to overturn the apartheid regime. Quentin – simultaneously both protagonist and antagonist – pulls a ‘Prime Minister’ out of the television set, and keeps him in a hamster’s cage. The following extract is taken from a conversation between the literally belittled Prime Minister and his ‘kidnapper’.

ST	TT	Back-translation
<p>‘Ladies and gentlemen. You see before you a man who was once a proud leader –’</p> <p>‘You’re not half the man you used to be ^a,’</p> <p>Quentin put in.</p> <p>The Prime Minister looked gravely at the toe of his shoe, then began again:</p> <p>‘Ladies and gentlemen. My friend’s manner may be insulting, but there is a measure of truth in his words.^b I stand before you alone, humiliated –’</p> <p>‘Belittled,’ Quentin said. (53)</p>	<p>« Mesdames et messieurs, vous avez devant vous un homme qui fut autrefois un fier dirigeant...</p> <p>– Vous n’arrivez pas à la cheville de l’homme que vous avez été ^a,», glissa Quentin.</p> <p>Le Premier ministre regarda gravement le bout de sa chaussure, puis reprit :</p> <p>« Mesdames et messieurs, pour injurieuses que puissent paraître les manières de mon ami, ses propos ne sont pas entièrement dénués de vérité.^b Je me tiens devant vous, seul, humilié...</p> <p>– Diminué », ajouta Quentin. (66-7)</p>	<p>“Ladies and gentlemen, you have before you a man who was once a proud leader...</p> <p>- You don’t reach the ankle of the man you were”, slipped in Quentin.</p> <p>The Prime Minister looked at the end of his shoe gravely, then began again: “Ladies and gentlemen, although my friend’s manners may seem abusive, his remarks are not entirely untrue [lit: stripped of truth]. I stand before you, alone, humiliated...</p> <p>- Diminished”, added Quentin.</p>

I have highlighted two shifts in the passage above. The first (*a*) involves a marked shift in linguistic frame, while the second (*b*) involves a more subtle rhetorical change at the

⁶³ Lefevere speaks of ‘sociolect’ as a particular register used to identify “members of the same social group” (1992: 64).

level of word-choice and syntax, which affects the register of the TT expression. Both shifts are culturally motivated, and reveal a degree of target-orientation in Richard and Sibony's translation strategies.

Shift *a*:

Quentin's statement "you're not half the man you used to be", evokes both an idiomatic meaning, linked to the Prime Minister's loss of social status, and a more unusual literal meaning: the Prime Minister is "just six inches tall" (ST: 45). This unusual combination of figurative and literal meaning is retained in the TT by the use of an "idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form" (Baker 1992: 72). This association of the idiom's figurative meaning (or evoked scene) and literal form (or frame) gives rise to humour in both the ST and the TT. While this strategy is effective in transferring both the form and the meaning of the ST, Young argues that when one idiomatic expression is substituted for another, "one culture is being substituted for another" (2006: 124), and a certain target orientation is thus revealed.

Shift *b*:

The shift highlighted in *b* involves a more subtle change on the level of register, which fulfils target-culture expectations regarding the sophistication of political rhetoric. Baker argues that linguistic choices depend on the type of action that speakers perceive themselves to be involved in (1992: 16); in the light of this observation, the register adopted by the Prime Minister on the one hand, and Quentin on the other, reflects the ideological distance between the two. The Prime Minister's carefully-crafted formulas and long-winded rhetoric, parody the discourse of apartheid, whereas Quentin's

irreverent interruptions indicate his disregard of politics and speech-making. While the TT retains the ideological distance expressed by the Prime Minister's rhetoric and by Quentin's absolute disrespect of formalities, the Prime Minister's statement is lengthened, in keeping with the use of longer turns of phrase and low 'levels of commitment to truth'⁶⁴, typical of French political rhetoric. Once again, this strategy illustrates Richard and Sibony's concern for target-culture norms.

4.4.3 The material world

In a recent research project on the transfer of culture in translation, Young (2006) argues that – among other designations – the names of places and items should “form the basis for the study of the translation strategies” (2006: 94) as they “contribute towards thematic development and assist in the conveyance of culture” (2006: 97). Young's view is in line with the argument put forward by Newmark (1988) that certain cultural categories of words are most likely to give rise to translation difficulties; among these, Newmark lists the terminology of ‘ecology’ (i.e. words used to describe features of landscapes) and ‘material culture’ (e.g. food, clothes, architecture and transport) (1988: 96-7). Both Young's argument on the conveyance of culture through designations of place and objects, and Newmark's ‘cultural categories’ align themselves to a large extent with Fairclough's own categorisation⁶⁵, and support the analysis, in the next two subsections, of the shifts occurring in the transfer of elements of ‘time and space’ and of ‘objects and instruments’.

⁶⁴ See Fairclough on modality and ‘levels of commitment to truth’ (2003: 169-70).

⁶⁵ Fairclough's subcategories ‘time and place’ and ‘objects and instruments’ (see Fairclough 2005: 77 and 2001: 231) seem to echo Newmark's cultural categories of ‘ecology’ and the ‘material world’.

4.4.3.1 Time and space

Fairclough argues that “space and time are social constructs – they are differently constructed in different societies” – and that “change in their construction is part of social change” (2003: 151). In the light of these statements, the following examples will serve to illustrate how Richard and Sibony have dealt with the translation difficulties posed by context-specific constructions of space and time. Given Fairclough’s focus on social change, an investigation into eventual shifts in the depiction of time and space is expected to shed some light on the transfer of ideology between *Missing Persons* (1989) and *Portés Disparus* (1997).

Example 1: geographical names

The extract below is taken from “Sightseeing”, a story about a man who travels through rural South Africa in search of artistic inspiration. The ‘sightseer’ takes an almost voyeuristic pleasure in ‘poaching’ images of landscapes and people alike, taking “notes for metaphors” (ST: 18) and using his camera to turn “breakfast into Colonialism” (ST: 20). The following extract describes the encounter between the sightseer and a German tourist, whose travel stories echo the sightseer’s desire to encounter a different cultural reality and cause the sightseer to feel “ashamed of [his own] modest distances and dehydrated food” (ST: 21).

ST	TT	Back-translation
And [he] tells camp-fire tales of mozzies, pot-holes, bandits, women in St Lucia, Port St John’s ,	Et [il] raconte des histoires de feux de camp : des histoires de moustiques, de fondrières, de bandits, de	And [he] tells camp-fire stories: stories about mosquitoes, potholes, bandits, women in Sainte-

Hamburg, Dubrovnik, Tokyo. (20-1)	femmes à Sainte-Lucie , Port Saint John's , Hambourg, Dubrovnik, Tokyo. (27)	Lucie, Port Saint John's , Hamburg, Dubrovnik, Tokyo.
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There is little difference, in the German tourist's camp-fire tales of "mozzies, pot-holes, bandits, women" (ST: 20), between references to rural South Africa (St Lucia, Port St John's), Germany (Hamburg), Croatia (Dubrovnik) or Japan (Tokyo); the attraction of listing the names lies in the suggested confrontation between cultures. Just like the sightseer gathers images, the German tourist gathers stories of far-away places, whose names he displays like trophies.

In *Portés Disparus*, the translators replace the English names of the cities with their French equivalents, thereby making the text more phonetically accessible to the target reader. While Richard and Sibony have omitted to 'naturalise'⁶⁶ the South African place name of Port St John's (merely changing the abbreviation 'St' to 'Saint', in keeping with target-culture expectations), 'St Lucia' has been changed to a French version of the name. This retains fluency and fulfils the expectations of the target readers; however, it also involves a shift in the scene conveyed by the TT. While 'St Lucia' refers to a rural town in South Africa, 'Sainte-Lucie' evokes images of the homonymous Caribbean island, rather than the Zululand town of St Lucia. This shift is significant in terms of the construction of the German tourist's character, and reveals a tendency to 'exoticise' the TT.

⁶⁶ In Newmark's terms, 'naturalisation' occurs when the ST word is adapted "first to the normal pronunciation, then to the normal morphology" of the target language. e.g. Hamburg/Hambourg.

Example 2: urban design

The extract below – from “Journal of a Wall” – describes the main character’s inebriated state after drinking too much. Vladislavić plays with the expression ‘the room was spinning’ by personifying ‘the room’, which takes on a will of its own, as it tries “to twist itself free from the rest of the house, rip up its tap root, and ascend into the sky” (25). The ‘seasick’ narrator finds himself on the “raft of the floor, dragged by the currents of the sky this way and that” (26) until, from this vantage point, he observes the city “spread out below [him] like a map” (25):

ST	TT	Back-translation
The bricks began to peel away from the walls in squadrons and they flew down to my neighbour’s house and assembled themselves into barbecues and watchtowers^a and gazebos^b and rondawels^c and bomb shelters^d . (25-6)	Les briques commencèrent à se détacher des murs en escadrilles, et elles s’envolèrent chez mon voisin où elles s’assemblèrent en barbecues, miradors^a , belvédères^b , paillotes^c et abris antiatomiques^d . (34)	The bricks began to detach themselves from the walls in squadrons and flew to my neighbour’s house where the assembled themselves into barbecues, watchtowers , belvederes [panoramic view points], straw huts and atomic fallout shelters .

In a discussion on the ideological relevance of designations of time and space, Fairclough states that “aspects of the physical environment, such as urban design and the architectural design of buildings, are also at issue” (2003: 151). The way urban space is organised is linked to the way individuals interact with one another, and their surroundings, and is a factor of the social and historical context. Hence, in the ST, the description of the architectural features listed above reveals two simultaneous and contradictory impulses in the organisation of social life in South African suburbs. On the one hand, the abundance of garden-structures such as ‘barbecues’, ‘gazebos’ and

‘rondawels’ represents the importance of the garden as the place where white South Africans spend their leisure time. On the other hand, life in the suburbs is characterised by the presence of ‘watchtowers’ and ‘bomb shelters’, symbolic of white South Africa’s fear of the future in the 1980s, a period characterised by increasing “unrest in the townships” (24).

The shifts highlighted above illustrate the translators’ general strategy for dealing with the transfer of elements of South African culture into French. While in the ST, the references to architectural features contain a subtle allusion to the duality of life in suburbia, in the TT, the corresponding linguistic frames ‘defamiliarise’ the existence of white South Africans living in the suburbs.

Shift a:

The translation of ‘watchtower’ as ‘mirador’ reveals the translators’ conscious decision not to select the more neutral equivalent: ‘tour de guet’. While this strategy retains the mental scene (of a structure built for the purpose of surveying one’s surroundings), the word ‘mirador’ – which originates in 19th-century Spain⁶⁷ – has an ‘exotic’ pronunciation in French, which in turn suggests a degree of foreignisation of the ST.

Shift b:

The difficulty in translating the word ‘gazebo’ arises from the fact that French lacks a specific word to denote all the levels of meaning it evokes⁶⁸. While the TT term

⁶⁷ *Nouveau Petit Robert Dictionnaire de la Langue Française* (1995).

⁶⁸ A gazebo is “a small building, especially one in the garden of a house, which gives a wide view of the surrounding area” (*South African Concise Oxford Dictionary* 2002: 478).

‘belvédère’ evokes the image of a panoramic view point, it does not refer specifically to a structure in the garden of a private home. This is an example of “translation by a more general word” (Baker 1992: 26), and reflects the translators’ concern to preserve “only those distinctions in meaning which seem relevant to [the] particular environment” of the target culture (Baker 1992: 23).

Shift c:

The Afrikaans word ‘rondawel’ is replaced with the French ‘paillotte’. While both words denote a circular dwelling with a conical roof⁶⁹, the ST word contains a reference to South African culture that is lost in the TT. Furthermore, the word ‘paillotte’ adds a different level of meaning to the TT, linked to the word’s origin in French colonial Africa; the scene evoked in the TT is of a *rural* dwelling, and is somewhat discordant with the suburban setting of the ST story.

Shift d:

The translation of ‘bomb shelters’ as ‘abris antiatomiques’ [atomic fallout shelters] intensifies the fear felt by many white South Africans in the 1980s. Once again, Richard and Sibony could have selected a more neutral target-language equivalent – such as ‘abri souterrain’ [underground shelter] – and the fact that they did not do so indicates the translators’ intention to highlight the sense of alienation perceived by South African suburbanites in the 1980s⁷⁰.

⁶⁹ See *South African Concise Oxford Dictionary* (2002) and *Le Nouveau Petit Robert Dictionnaire de la Langue Française* (1995).

⁷⁰ While space limitations do not permit me to engage with further examples of shifts in the transfer of elements of urban design, a similar strategy is used by Richard and Sibony in the short story “The Prime

4.4.3.2 Objects and instruments

In a number of recent articles, Fairclough mentions ‘objects’ and ‘instruments’ as linked to socially-determined practices⁷¹, thereby emphasising the relevance of such categories in the construction of (context-specific) discourse. Young (2006) supports this view by arguing that the names given to “food, animals, clothing, cultural practices and items in a given society also provide a local quality, establishing these items as belonging to a culture other than one’s own” (2006: 97). The following examples illustrate the different strategies used by Richard and Sibony to deal with such items, by highlighting a number of ideologically relevant translation shifts.

Example 1: traditional weapons

This example is taken from “Sightseeing”. The main character – a white South African man – is travelling on a bus, surrounded by “characters demanding to be documented” (21). However, his “clean white curiosity” (19) sets up a barrier between him and the other passengers, and, despite being “proudly unwashed (seven days now)”, he discovers that “he is soapy fresh among these smells” (21). In the short extract below, the sightseer resists the impulse to record his experiences, suddenly aware that he is an outsider, and afraid of violent retribution.

ST	TT	Back-translation
But he takes no photographs. These people have kieries and	Mais il ne prend pas de photos. Ces gens-là usent de kieries et de sjamboks*	But he takes no photos. These people use kieries and sjamboks* against

Minister is Dead”, where they translate the word ‘monument’ (ST: 3) with the more specific term ‘mausolée’ (TT: 9), thereby intensifying the illocutionary power of the passage.

⁷¹ See Fairclough 2001: 231; 2005: 77.

sjamboks to use against the poacher. And his notebook is in the bottom of the suitcase. (21-2)	à l'encontre des braconniers. Et son bloc-notes est au fond de sa valise. (29)	poachers. And his notepad is at the bottom of his suitcase.
	* Termes afrikaans désignant des armes traditionnelles. <i>Kierie</i> : gourdin. <i>Sjambok</i> : fouet en cuir de rhinocéros ou d'hippopotame. (N.d.T.)	[Footnote] Afrikaans terms designating traditional weapons. <i>Kierie</i>: club. <i>Sjambok</i>: whip made of rhinoceros or hippopotamus leather.

The shift highlighted in this extract illustrates the difficulty that arises when the ST contains ‘foreign’ words, which gives rise to “the problem of double translation, or translation at one remove” (Lefevere 1992: 29). As Lefevere argues, loan words in the ST perform a specific illocutionary function – they add ‘local colour’ to the narrative⁷² – and “to translate them as if they were not foreign words in the original, may [...] detract from the complexity of the original” (1992: 29).

By leaving the loan words untranslated in the TT, the translators highlight the cultural value of these terms, and evoke a greater cultural distance than the one alluded to in the ST. It is interesting to note that as a rule, French is “much less tolerant of loan words” than other languages (Baker: 1992: 36), and that this strategy would thus appear particularly unusual for a target reader. However, by adding an explanation in the form of a footnote, the translators attempt to balance their apparent concern to highlight cultural difference, with the literary expectations of their target audience.⁷³

⁷² It is interesting to note that the subsection of ‘Sightseeing’, where the above passage is found is entitled “Local Colour”.

⁷³ A similar strategy is illustrated in 4.4.1, example 2.

Example 2: brand names

As indicated in 3.1.2, the commodification of culture in post-apartheid South Africa is one of the recurring themes of Vladislavić's short fiction. The stories collected in *Missing Persons* contain numerous references to brand names, which pose an interesting translation problem for Richard and Sibony. In Vladislavić's *Missing Persons*, brand names help to set the historical and geographical backdrop of the stories. While such names are likely to evoke familiar images for the South African reader, the Francophone Belgian readership of *Portés Disparus* is unlikely to link the South African brand names to any familiar context, and – if such words are retained with no explanation – they are likely to distance the target reader from the setting of the TT.

Richard and Sibony's strategies reveal two broad impulses: on the one hand, the desire to produce a fluent translation that reads naturally in French, and, on the other hand, the desire to retain traces of foreignisation. While the following examples serve to illustrate these two tendencies, I have noticed that the second strategy – translation using a loan word plus an explanation – is by far the most common when dealing with brand names.

(i) The brand name is replaced by a functional equivalent

The following example is taken from "Sightseeing" and illustrates Richard and Sibony's strategy of translating brand names by a 'functional equivalent', which – Newmark argues – "is the most accurate way of translating, i.e. deculturalising a cultural word" (1988: 83). While this strategy produces a fluent translation, Young points out that the

omission of culture-specific items in the TT “may affect the interpretation of the situation, the flow of events or the essential crux of the character” (Young 2006: 97).⁷⁴

ST	TT	Back-translation
This man is in league with coincidence. He has only come to see the sights but he is capable of turning the sea into an exercise in Royal Jelly or Cold Water Omo . (17)	Cet homme est de mèche avec le hasard. Il n’est là que pour faire du tourisme, mais il est capable de transformer la mer en glace à la menthe ou en eau de vaisselle . (23)	This man is in tune with chance. He is only there to go sightseeing, but he is capable of transforming the sea into mint-flavoured ice-cream or dish-water .

Vladislavić compares the sea with ‘Royal Jelly’ and ‘Cold Water Omo’, thereby evoking images of the sea as translucent (like jelly) and foamy (like the foam of washing-powder). In the TT, Richard and Sibony translate the brand names by functional equivalents that have little to do with the ST linguistic frames; there is no linguistic link between Royal Jelly and ‘mint-flavoured ice-cream’, or ‘Cold Water Omo’ and ‘dish-water’. The translation using functional equivalents evokes images that approximate the ST, through imagery that is not unfamiliar to the target reader – i.e. the sea in the TT is green (like mint ice-cream) and foamy (like dish-water).

While this strategy retains the mental scene evoked by the ST passage, the omission of typically South African brand names – associated in particular with the rural setting of ‘Sightseeing’ – dilutes the rich cultural backdrop of the story. This factor is of particular relevance, given Vladislavić’s reluctance to provide precise geographical markers to

⁷⁴ Another example of this strategy is taken from “Sightseeing”: “[...] bacon and eggs for a party of eight hot off the **Cadac**.” (ST: 20) / “[...] des oeufs au bacon pour huit, à peine retires du **camping-gaz**” (TT: 27).

construct the setting of the stories of *Missing Persons*⁷⁵. In the ST, the reader is not given the exact location of the story, but is able to recognise the story's setting as rural South Africa through clues such as the brand names highlighted in the extract above. These important indications of cultural setting are missing in the TT extract, which could, as a result, be set in any number of localities, not necessarily rural.

(ii) The brand name is retained

A second and more frequent strategy for the transfer of brand names is “translation using a loan word plus an explanation” (Baker 1992: 34). Baker argues that this strategy is particularly useful “in dealing with culture-specific items, modern concepts, and buzz words” (1992: 34)⁷⁶. While this strategy “shows respect for the SL country's culture” (Newmark 1988: 82), the extract below – taken from “Flashback Hotel” – highlights the inevitable shifts that result from its use.

ST	TT	Back-translation
Embroidery of Johnny Walker, Sealy Posturepedic, Toyota Corolla, Eno, Southern Suns. (11)	Brodés aux noms de Johnny Walker, Sealy Posturepedic, Toyota Corolla, Eno, Southern Suns. (17-8)	Embroidered with the names Johnny Walker, Sealy Posturepedic, Toyota Corolla, Eno, Southern Suns.

This extract is taken from a passage which makes use of poetic diction, alliteration and rhythm to set the surreal scene of the dining room of the Flashback Hotel. Given the disjointed narrative-style of “Flashback Hotel”, where nothing is certain and the

⁷⁵ Only three of the eleven stories in the collection refer to actual geographical names: “Sightseeing” (see 4.4.3.1), “Tsafendas's Diary”, and “When My hands Burst into Flames”.

⁷⁶ A similar strategy is used in “When My Hands Burst into Flames”: “the United Building Society (Hillbrow)” (99) becomes “**ma banque**, l'United Building Society à Hillbrow” (119); and in “Sightseeing”: “ProNutro” (19) become “**céréales ProNutro**” (26).

narrator's identity is constantly in question, the list of brand names provides the only stable and familiar frame of reference. The use of brand names as cultural referents is typical of Vladislavić's short fiction, where he deals with issues such as "the exceptionally high visibility of commercialism and consumerism in South Africa" (Helgesson 2004: 785).

By retaining the brand names, the translators preserve Vladislavić's commentary on the commodification of culture (which is a leitmotif throughout the collection). However, the mental scene evoked in the ST by the use of brand names is to an extent reversed; instead of serving as familiar referents, the brand names appear strange and out of place, further distancing the target reader from the foreign setting of the story⁷⁷.

4.4.4 Knowledge, beliefs and values

Baker argues that different societies "have different experiences of the world and different views on the way events and situations are organised or related to each other" (1992: 219). Hence, the knowledge, beliefs and values of one culture may diverge substantially from those of a different culture, and the translation of such culture-specific items is likely to give rise to problems of non-equivalence both 'at word-level' and 'above word-level' (Baker 1992). The following examples illustrate the strategies adopted by Richard and Sibony in dealing with the problems arising from the translation of culture-specific allusions and figurative language.

⁷⁷ While the brand names highlighted in this example (with the exception of Southern Suns) do exist in Francophone culture, only 'Toyota Corolla' is a familiar brand, while the others are only used within specifically industrial contexts.

Example 1: culture-specific allusions

This example is taken from the short story entitled “Tsafendas’s Diary”. The story’s child-narrator tells of his Granny’s fixation with the diary of Tsafendas, the man who murdered South African Prime Minister, Hendrik Verwoerd. The story is divided into twenty-two parts, connected by Granny’s obsessive knitting, like a loosely tacked-together “meat-blanket” (92). The shift highlighted in the extract below illustrates the problem that arises when a cultural reference in the ST is culture-specific.

ST	TT	Literal back-translation
‘We must have Tsafendas’s Diary ,’ Granny says. ‘We are its rightful owners. It’s a shame to keep it locked up somewhere, away from the world.’ (91)	«Il nous faut le Journal de Tsafendas *, dit Mamie. Nous en sommes les propriétaires légaux. C’est une honte de le laisser enfermé quelque part, à l’écart du monde.» (109)	“We must have Tsafendas’s Diary , says Granny. We are its legal owners. It’s a shame to leave it locked up somewhere, away from the world.
	* Tsafendas assassina le Premier ministre sud-africain Hendrik Verwoerd en 1966. (N.d.T.)	[Footnote:] Tsafendas assassinated the South African Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd in 1966. (Translator’s note.)

In the ST, Vladislavić relies on his South African readership’s ability to recognise Tsafendas’s name and make the necessary associations with the assassination of Verwoerd – the so-called architect of apartheid. Baker argues that historical and cultural references – such as the ST allusion to Dimitri Tsafendas – only work if the readers possess the necessary cultural knowledge; without such knowledge, the reference is likely to “disrupt the continuity of the text and obscure the relevance of any statement associated with it” (Baker 1992: 230).

Aware of the fact that the Belgian readership is unlikely to be familiar with the reference to South African history, the translators provide the key historical information in a footnote. While the footnote does not replace the cultural knowledge of ST readers⁷⁸, it supplies information “essential for drawing inferences and for maintaining the coherence” of the text (Baker 1992: 230), thereby allowing the reader to contextualise later allusions to the murder of the Prime Minister.

Example 2: figurative language

Lefevere (1992) explains that figurative language makes connections between ideas “that do not normally belong together [...] in such a way as to increase the illocutionary power of a passage, preferably without overly straining the reader’s credulity or sense of propriety” (1992: 37). It is precisely this concern for the cultural acceptability of figurative language that makes it a common translation problem. The following extract is taken from “Journal of a Wall”, and contains two distinct examples of the strategies used by Richard and Sibony to deal with figurative language in the ST.

ST	TT	Back-translation
I finished the Scotch and went for a walk. Oh, I walked all over the place, staring into the blank faces of walls^a , peering into the blind eyes of windows, shouting	J’ai fini le scotch et je suis sorti prendre l’air. Oh, j’ai marché, marché! Je dévisageais les faciès nus des murs^a , scrutais les yeux aveugles des fenêtres, criais des	I finished the Scotch and went out for some air. Oh, I walked and walked! I stared at the naked features of the walls , peered into the blind eyes of the windows, shouted

⁷⁸ The character of Dimitri Tsafendas has captured the imagination of the South African public, and a number of books, as well as one play and one film have appeared on the life of a man whose actions are hailed by some as ‘heroic’, and by others as the product of a sick mind. The controversy over Tsafendas’s crime is an important referent for Vladislavić’s story, which reflects a similar ambivalence with regards to the man.

obscenities into the leafy ears of hedges. I made the dogs bark. I rattled gates and banged on doors. I put the fear of the devil^b into the whole suburb. (32)	obscénités dans les oreilles feuillues des haies. J’ai fait aboyer les chiens. J’ai secoué les portails et tambouriné aux portes. J’ai semé la panique^b dans tout le quartier. (41)	obscenities into the leafy ears of the hedges. I made the dogs bark. I shook the gates and drummed against the doors. I spread panic in the entire neighbourhood.
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Shift *a*

In the ST, the suburban houses are personified: not only do they have “blank faces”, but also “blind eyes” and “leafy ears” (32). Young (2006) argues that personification is a function of the “[b]iases, beliefs, associations and norms of the source author and culture [and] should be interpreted according to the significance placed upon that relevant item in the source culture, and the effect thereof” (Young 2006: 99). In the light of this argument, Vladislavić’s personification of the suburban landscape can be seen to intensify the narrator’s frustration at the distance – both physical and ideological – that separates the white suburbs from the “unrest and death” (32) in the townships.

In the TT, the houses have ‘features’, rather than faces, which amounts to a dilution of the illocutionary power of the personification, as the French word ‘faciés’ [features] collocates both with human subjects and with architectural structures. Furthermore, while the ST houses have ‘blank’ faces, and are distant and cold – in keeping with Vladislavić’s critical attitude toward white suburbia – in the TT they are ‘naked’ and vulnerable, evoking a sympathetic attitude rather than a critical one. In conclusion, while the personification is retained, the mental scene evoked is significantly altered.

Shift *b*

Here, Vladislavić uses a fixed figure of speech whose meaning “cannot be deduced from [its] individual components” (Baker 1992: 63), but is linked to the reader’s cultural competence and knowledge of context and usage. In the ST, the use of the idiomatic expression, “I put the fear of the devil into the whole suburb” (32), is linked to a specific cultural backdrop, and “conjures up in the mind of the reader [...] all the aspects of experience which are associated with the typical contexts in which the expression is used” (Baker 1992: 64). In other words, the South African idiom links the short story to the South African socio-political context of the late 1980s.

By replacing the South African idiom with a French one (of different form) the translators are effectively replacing one context-specific experience for another one. While the TT scene is similar to the ST scene, the French “semer la panique” (to spread panic) lacks the cultural specificity of the English equivalent. This strategy suggests a marked target orientation.

4.4.5 Hypothesis based on micro-structural strategies

My aim in this subsection is to test the hypotheses formulated in 4.2.3 and 4.3.3 against the translation strategies discovered at micro level, in order to formulate one final hypothesis (in 5.1) regarding the orientation of Richard and Sibony’s translation.

For each of Fairclough’s categories of social practices, a number of examples were chosen to illustrate the effect of translation shifts. My analysis has proceeded from the description of the translation shift – using Fillmore’s Scenes-and-Frames Semantics – to

an explanation of the strategy adopted by the TT translators, using Baker's taxonomy of translation strategies. Most of the shifts illustrated in this manner have revealed target-oriented strategies of translation – for instance: the use of more general/less expressive words⁷⁹, the use of cultural equivalents⁸⁰, and the substitution of source-language idioms for idioms of similar meaning but dissimilar form⁸¹.

While, in general, the translation decisions seem motivated by the translators' target orientation, a significant number of shifts have revealed a further intention to retain certain elements of the source culture. More specifically, the translators retain Afrikaans terms or phrases – pertaining to traditions and folklore⁸², the language of authority⁸³, weapons⁸⁴, and culture-specific allusions⁸⁵ – and explain them in a footnote at the end of the page. The fact that this strategy is mostly used when dealing with Afrikaans loan terms supports my hypothesis, that the 'foreignness' of Afrikaans culture, and by association of apartheid ideology is emphasised in *Portés Disparus*. While, in the ST, the use of Afrikaans evokes a certain distance between the Anglophone narrator and apartheid culture symbolically associated with Afrikaans, the Afrikaans words remain familiar to the ST reader. In the TT, however, the italicised Afrikaans loan words have the effect of amplifying the distance between the target readers and the ideology of apartheid, which is no longer familiar, but foreign and alienating. My position is, therefore, that this strategy reveals a degree of source orientation, linked to the

⁷⁹ See 4.4.3.1 (e.g. 2b), 4.4.2.1 (e.g. 1 and 2), 4.4.2.2 (e.g. 1a), and 4.4.4 (e.g. 2a).

⁸⁰ See: 4.4.2.2 (e.g. 2b), 4.4.3.1 (e.g. 1, 2a, 2c, 2d), and 4.4.3.2 (e.g. 2i)

⁸¹ See 4.4.1 (e.g. 1), 4.4.2.2 (e.g. 2a), and 4.4.4 (e.g. 2b).

⁸² See 4.4.1 (e.g. 2).

⁸³ See 4.4.2.2 (e.g. 1).

⁸⁴ See 4.4.3.2 (e.g. 1).

⁸⁵ See 4.4.4 (e.g. 1).

representation of the ideologically, culturally, and geographically removed context of apartheid South Africa.

The comparative analysis also illustrates a third type of shift, which occurred in the translation of personal names (4.4.2.1, e.g. 1 and 2). Here, the translators counterbalance the ‘deculturalisation’ (or ‘naturalisation’) of one cultural item, by adopting a more expressive substitute for another, more neutral ST item.

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the micro-level strategies summarised in 4.4.5 above illustrate a degree of cultural negotiation between the demands of the target culture, and an interest in the cultural specificity of the ST. In other words, Richard and Sibony’s micro-level translation strategies reveal a ‘dual loyalty’ to target and source cultures (Nord 1991: 29), and support my conclusions in 4.2.3 and 4.3.3 regarding general target-culture orientation, with a concern for the foreignisation of specific cultural items. Possible ideological explanations for such translation strategies will be suggested in chapter five, where the findings of the comparative analysis will be confronted with broader systemic considerations raised in chapter three.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

In chapter one, I introduced the central research problem, the aims, and the initial hypothesis that informed the questions I have sought to address in my short dissertation. In this last chapter, my objective is to test the validity of the initial hypothesis, by reconciling the findings of the comparative analysis at the preliminary, macro-structural and micro-textual levels. In addition, I wish to provide an evaluation of the contributions and limitations of my research, in an attempt to suggest areas for further study in the field of cultural transfer in literary translation.

5.1 Systemic context

In the final step of their scheme for the systematic description of translations, Lambert and Van Gorp (1985) shift their focus from ‘description’ to ‘explanation’, by suggesting that, at this point, “the tentative hypotheses which guided the analyses [i.e. preliminary, macro-structural, and micro-textual] are pulled together into a coherent case to account for the findings and place them in a broader context” (Hermans 1999: 68). With this objective in mind – and taking into account Lambert and Van Gorp’s suggestions for the description of the ‘systemic context’ (see Appendix A) – in this section, I provide a synthetic summary of my findings, linking them to the broader source and target contexts (as outlined in chapter three). My aim, in other words, is to draw broadly ideological – rather than purely linguistic – conclusions, based on a confrontation of the translation

strategies observed at various levels, in such a way as to test my initial hypothesis regarding the orientation of *Portés Disparus*.

5.1.1 Summary of preliminary and macro-level findings

Upon the examination of the preliminary data, I discovered a degree of negotiation between the priorities of target orientation and those of source orientation. For instance, I observed that the TT front cover immediately informs the reader of the fact that *Portés Disparus* is the translation of a South African English work. This remark, coupled with the choice of cover illustration – which echoes the ST themes of dislocation and fragmentation of experience – indicates a degree of empathy with the ST and a willingness to bring the reader over to the foreign culture. In other words, the preliminary findings reveal a measure of concern for the source culture’s ideological landscape, which, I believe, is motivated by the paradigmatic socio-cultural affinities between transitional South Africa and federal Belgium.

While the fact that the text is immediately identified as a translation indicates the target readership’s willingness to encounter the foreign, it also suggests an appreciation for translation as a creative, rather than purely mimetic art. This assumption is supported by Wuilmart’s observation that translations into French are generally characterised by ‘smoothing out’ the “foreign text in order to [...] make it easily digestible” (Wuilmart 2006: 144; my translation⁸⁶). In addition, the occurrence of Richard and Sibony’s names immediately below the cover illustration elevates their role to that of co-authors. The

⁸⁶ «Niveler le texte étranger pour [...] le rendre digeste » (Wuilmart 2006 : 144).

translator's 'visibility'⁸⁷ in the target culture is therefore reflected in this invitation to appreciate the translators' skill in rendering a fluent, naturalised translation.

My assumption of a degree of source orientation within the overwhelming target orientation is supported by my macro-structural findings. At this stage of my analysis, I discovered that neither the order, nor the titles of the short stories has been changed in the TT. By preserving the structure of the collection, Richard and Sibony also conserve the overall jarring effect of *Missing Persons* – which, metaphorically, overturns “the ‘fiction’ of a collective sense of community or identity” in transitional and post-apartheid South Africa (Marais 1992: 46). In the light of my discussion on the vast cultural and linguistic divisions in contemporary Belgian society, I must assume that this choice was a conscious one, in line with certain paradigmatic similarities between the source and target systems⁸⁸.

However, despite this instance of loyalty to the ST, a number of shifts at the macro level suggest a broad target orientation. Richard and Sibony's respect for the literary norms and expectations of the Francophone Belgian system is suggested – among other things – by the appearance of the contents page at the back (not the front) of the book, and the use of typography in accordance with French literary expectations.

⁸⁷ Venuti first used the concept of the translator's 'visibility' vs. 'invisibility' in 1995. See bibliography for reference.

⁸⁸ As opposed to Richard and Sibony, in the French translation of Vladislavić's *Propaganda by Monuments and Other Stories* (1996/2005), Christian Surber opted to change the order of the stories radically, thereby altering the overall effect of the ST.

5.1.2 Summary of micro-level findings

According to Lambert and Van Gorp's model, the preliminary and macro-level comparative examinations of the ST and TT serve to anticipate the general orientation of the strategies at work on the micro-textual level. Based on this assumption, I have suggested that Richard and Sibony's operational strategies seem to be guided primarily by a respect for norms of fluency and 'naturalness', but that they are also informed, even if to a lesser extent, by a willingness to retain certain elements of the foreign text. In what follows I aim to tie my micro-level findings to considerations of the systemic contexts of both ST and TT, in an attempt to come to broadly ideological, rather than purely linguistic conclusions. I begin by summarising the effect of target-oriented strategies, and subsequently look at instances of source orientation.

Target orientation is by far the most common approach to the translation of South African cultural elements in *Portés Disparus*. Target-oriented shifts include instances where a ST idiomatic expression – associated with a typically South African context – is domesticated by the selection of a French idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form⁸⁹. Target-oriented shifts are also observed where cultural substitution is used to adapt a typically South African sociolect to the expectations of the target readership⁹⁰. Displaying a similar regard for the target culture's expectations, in one instance, Richard and Sibony also use a footnote to explain culture-specific allusions to a South African historical figure⁹¹.

⁸⁹ See 4.4.1, e.g. 1, 4.4.2.2, e.g. 2a, and 4.4.4, e.g. 2b, for examples of this strategy.

⁹⁰ See 4.4.2.2, e.g. 2, 4.4.3.1, e.g. 1 and 2.

⁹¹ See 4.4.4, example 1.

With regard to the translation of geographical names and cityscapes, the ST items are not only domesticated, but also replaced by TT terms with ‘exotic’ – but not specifically South African – connotations. Consequently, the Zululand town of ‘St Lucia’ becomes the Caribbean island of ‘Sainte-Lucie’; and elements of Johannesburg’s cityscape – namely ‘watchtowers’, ‘gazebos’, ‘rondawels’ and ‘bomb shelters’ – take on exotic connotations, becoming: ‘miradors’, ‘belvederes’, ‘straw huts’ and ‘atomic fallout shelters’. This strategy serves to present the target reader with a familiar variety of exoticism, thereby underlining the foreignness of the landscape evoked in the ST without frustrating the expectations of the target readers. A similar approach has been applied to the translation of personal names. In this regard, I have shown that Richard and Sibony tend to neutralise some culturally-specific connotations of the characters’ names, while still preserving a degree of foreignisation when highlighting other, more easily-grasped features, for the benefit of the target readership.

Most of the shifts observed are, therefore, target oriented; however, a number of micro-level shifts allow for TT foreignisation. With regard to the translation of Afrikaans terms and phrases, for example, Richard and Sibony select the strategy of “translation using a loan word plus an explanation” (Baker 1992: 34) in the form of a footnote⁹². This strategy gives rise to a number of interesting TT shifts, which confirm both Richard and Sibony’s willingness to make the TT more accessible for the target reader, and their desire to bring the reader over to the foreign culture. The fact that this translation strategy was applied

⁹² See, for example, extracts pertaining to: ‘traditions and folklore’ (4.4.2, e.g. 2); the ‘language of authority’ (4.4.2.1, e.g. 1, shift *b*); and ‘traditional weapons’ (4.4.3.2, e.g. 1).

almost exclusively to terms of Afrikaans origins⁹³ suggests a motivation that goes beyond the purely linguistic. Given my discussion on the translator's intentionality, and given Richard's involvement in the French anti-apartheid movement, I deduce that this particular strategy is motivated by the translator's critical stance toward the racist policies of apartheid, symbolically represented, in both ST and TT, by the use of Afrikaans.

A second, less common type of foreignisation strategy refers to brand names⁹⁴. Here, Richard and Sibony retain the ST term, while counterbalancing its unfamiliarity by adding a few explanatory words within the body of the text. Like the previous strategy, this one shows a degree of heightened respect for the source culture, while still displaying a concern for the target reader's expectations. One interesting effect of this strategy being applied to the transfer of South African brand names is that, instead of acting as referents to a familiar South African landscape, these terms appear strange and out-of-place in the TT. This common translation strategy only serves to amplify Vladislavić's critical stance toward "the exceptionally high visibility of commercialism and consumerism in South Africa" (Helgesson 2004: 785), and is a function of the translator's ideological position.

5.1.3 Final hypothesis

To summarise, the abundance of target-oriented shifts identified confirms the general norms of literary translation into French, which encourage translators to produce TTs that read naturally in the target language (Wuilmart 2006: 144). Moreover, Richard's admission that, until recently, most French translators of African fiction – including

⁹³ In the entire collection, only one footnote did not refer to the Afrikaans origin of the loan term – i.e. 4.4.4, e.g. 1.

⁹⁴ See 4.4.3.2 (e.g. 2ii).

himself – tended to ‘domesticate’ the TT (Richard and Tervonen 2003), serves as an explanation for the predominantly target-oriented strategies.

As regards the traces of foreignisation observed, I suggest that they are a function of both the paradigmatic affinities between the source and target systems, and of the subordinate position of the Belgian literary system in relation to the French (Parisian) system. In the light of Even-Zohar’s (1978/2000: 193-4) assertion that, in ‘smaller’ literary systems, translation often acts as an element of innovation, the latter observation may serve to explain the ‘pockets’ of source orientation observed up to this point. In other words, I assume that while the translation norms of the French literary system prescribe ‘domestication’, the Belgian literary system is typified by an interest in diversifying and foreignising its cultural and literary repertoire.

My initial hypothesis regarding the translation of Vladislavić’s *Missing Persons* into French is therefore confirmed. While the translators’ strategies prioritise the target orientation, their empathy toward the puzzling fragmentation and disorientation of South Africa’s political transition accounts for the foreignisation of certain source-culture terms. Specifically, while all three levels of analysis reveal a broad target orientation, I have found some evidence of source orientation as well – particularly with regard to Afrikaner identity and to Vladislavić’s criticism of the commodification of South African culture.

5.2 Contributions, limitations, and suggestions for further research

I began this short dissertation with a number of questions pertaining to the broader research problem of cultural transfer. Why did Editions Complexe choose to publish the French translation of *Missing Persons*? What, if any, are the paradigmatic affinities between the transitional South African context of the late 1980s, and Belgium's move to federal governance in the 1990s? How do the translation norms of the target culture affect the strategies employed to render culturally-specific references in the TT? In an attempt to answer these questions, I have adopted a Descriptive Translation Studies approach, as well as the methodology supplied by Lambert and Van Gorp's scheme for systematic translation comparison. I have also borrowed useful concepts from Critical Discourse Analysis, Scenes-and-Frames semantics, and Baker's taxonomy of translation strategies.

The systemic approach to the study of the shifts between *Missing Persons* and *Portés Disparus* has allowed me to demonstrate that literary translation goes beyond the mere linguistic reproduction of texts: it is an expression of the negotiation between the literary and socio-cultural norms of the source system and of the target system. By highlighting the relevance of social context and ideological norms in shaping translation strategies, I have attempted to demonstrate the value of research projects such as this one in contributing to cross-cultural understanding and communication. In addition, my research into the translation of Vladislavić's first short-story cycle has contributed to raising awareness about a much-neglected area of contemporary South African translation research – namely, the translation of authors writing in the transitional period, and, more specifically, the translation of short fiction.

While the relevance of my short research project is clear in the context of a globalising world, where concepts like identity and culture are increasingly questioned, it is also important to acknowledge the limitations of such an enquiry, and to suggest areas of further study. As stated by Lambert and Van Gorp, “any text comparison is indirect: it is a comparison of categories selected by the scholar, in a construct which is purely hypothetical”, and it is impossible to “compare texts by simply juxtaposing them” (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 48). While Fairclough’s categorisation of social practices was intended to ensure an impartial selection of text segments to be compared, there is no denying that in cases where more than one option was available, the final choice was informed by my awareness of the initial hypothesis. Similarly, while I have made every effort to observe the shifts between ST and TT in an objective manner, the analysis itself was inevitably shaped by my knowledge of the ST themes, as well as my knowledge – as a second-language speaker – of the French language.

Despite these limitations, and given the paramount role played by intercultural communication in the context of a multilingual post-apartheid South Africa, I wish to suggest some areas for further research. The final step of Lambert and Van Gorp’s methodology (see Appendix A) suggests not only a confrontation between preliminary, macro- and micro-level findings, but also an inter-textual comparison – between the strategies observed in *Portés Disparus*, and those observed in other “translations by the same translator, in the same series, in the same genre” (Hermans 1999: 68). Indeed, a study of Richard’s translations – such as of works by Alex La Guma, Miriam Tlali,

Njabulo Ndebele, Mandla Langa, and Sello Duiker – would bring to the fore patterns of regularity, which would either confirm or disprove my assumptions (target orientation, with touches of source-culture orientation). Such a study would also provide a useful sounding board for debates on the translator’s ‘visibility’ and agency.

A second area of interest, as suggested by Hermans (1999) above, might be an exploration of translation choices involving other South African short-story collections published in the series, ‘L’Heure Furtive’ – e.g. Njabulo Ndebele’s *Fools and Other Stories* (1983). Such an exploration would provide a further test of the target culture’s criteria involved in the selection of STs.

Finally, the fact that since 1997 two further collections by Ivan Vladislavić have been published in French translation opens up a new avenue of comparative translation research. It is noteworthy that both texts – namely *Propaganda by Monuments and Other Stories* (1996), and *The Exploded View* (2004) – were translated by one translator – Christian Surber – and published in Switzerland by Editions Zoé. Like Belgium, Switzerland is a multilingual and federally-governed country, and this suggests certain socio-cultural affinities between multilingual European countries and post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, a study of this larger corpus would provide further insights into the translation norms of ‘minority’ literatures produced in ‘major’ languages.

Vladislavić pushes the notion of translation beyond its daily uses, to show that beyond transliteration, which itself is complicated by the echoes and debris of cultural specificity, the concept also involves movement from one place to another and from one condition to another.

Popescu 2003: 411

One of Ivan Vladislavić's most well-known short stories, "Propaganda by Monuments", deals with the important theme of the 'translatability' of cultural artefacts from one geographical, historical and cultural space to another. In keeping with Vladislavić's own concern with the hurdles of translation, and in the light of Popescu's statement above, this mini-thesis has explored the ideological and cultural shifts that occur in cross-cultural translation. I hope that my effort may contribute to the ongoing debate on cultural identity in the context of an increasingly globalising world, and that I have shown the key role played by translation in the process of cultural negotiation.

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APPENDIX A

Lambert and Van Gorp's "Synthetic Scheme for Translation Description"⁹⁵

1. Preliminary Data:

- Title and title page (e.g. presence or absence of genre indication, author's name, translator's name, ...)
- Metatexts (on title page; in preface; in footnotes – in the text or separate?)
- General strategy (partial or complete translation?)

These preliminary data should lead to hypotheses for further analysis on both the macro-structural and the micro-structural level.

2. Macro-level:

- Division of the text (in chapters, acts and scenes, stanzas...)
- Titles of chapters, presentation of acts and scenes, ...
- Relation between types of narrative, dialogue, description; between dialogue and monologue, solo voice and chorus, ...
- Internal narrative structure (episodic plot? Open ending? ...); dramatic intrigue (prologue, exposition, climax, conclusion, epilogue); poetic structure (e.g. contrast between quatrains and tercets in a sonnet)
- Authorial comment; stage directions; ...

These macro-structural data should lead to hypotheses about micro-structural strategies.

3. Micro-level (i.e. shifts on phonic, graphic, micro-syntactic, lexico-semantic, stylistic, elocutionary and modal levels):

- Selection of words
- Dominant grammatical patterns and formal literary structures (metre, rhyme, ...)
- Forms of speech reproduction (direct, indirect, free indirect speech)
- Narrative, perspective and point of view
- Modality (passive or active, expression of uncertainty, ambiguity, ...)
- Language levels (sociolect; archaic/popular/dialect; jargon...)

These data on micro-structural strategies should lead to a renewed confrontation with macro-structural strategies, and hence to their consideration in terms of the broader systemic context.

4. Systemic context

- Oppositions between micro- and macro-levels and between text and theory (norms, models, ...)
- Intertextual relations (other translations and 'creative' works)
- Intersystemic relations (e.g. genre structures, stylistic codes...)

⁹⁵ Taken directly from Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 52-3.