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Book Review

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Concerns pertaining to translation ethics frequently revolve around the degree of allegiance that translators/interpreters have concurrently to the source text and clients. This allegiance can be philosophically based on two theories: “contractual, or duty-based” and “utilitarian or consequentialist”, as Chesterman (2018, p. 443) phrased it. Professional translators and interpreters are under more pressure than ever to not only demonstrate their technical expertise but also maintain elevated ethical principles in their line of work. Within the framework of translation ethics, Dr. Joseph Lambert’s book, *Translation ethics*, published in 2023, investigates the tension between being true to the original text and being responsible towards clients. Ethical considerations in relationships with clients and colleagues, as well as the moral dilemmas faced by translators and interpreters, are gaining more recognition in the contemporary translation and interpretation sector, to which this book pays close attention. However, the book addresses topics beyond fidelity and responsibility. It also addresses challenges arising in an age of technological progress, where machine-assisted translation, post-editing, and other AI-supported translation methods threaten translation ethics. This book, which is part of the *Routledge Introductions to Translation and Interpreting* series designed as an extensive resource for translation and interpreting educators and students, functions as a textbook for trainers while emphasizing discussions on professional practices for translators and interpreters. Dr. Lambert, a lecturer in Translation Studies with a sustained interest in translation ethics for both practitioners and trainees, authors this book that establishes a connection between the translation industry and the field of translation education.

Dr. Lambert has a continuing interest in translation ethics which is a recurring theme in Translation Studies. Since Berman initially proposed the idea of translation ethics in 1984 (1992), one can discern emerging concerns over translation ethics. The topic has been extensively investigated by a select group of distinguished academics. For example, the 2001 special issue of *The Translator* entitled *The return to ethics*, edited by Anthony Pym, reevaluated the relationship between translation and ethics, and the 2017 special issue *Translation, ethics and social responsibility* featured an extensive array of

articles focusing on translation ethics ranging from discussions over its theoretical foundations, to the topics concerning translators and interpreters as the subject and the industry and educational bodies as the organization. Lambert has been paying attention to translation ethics since long before. In *The Routledge handbook of translation and ethics*, edited by Koskinen and Pokorn, which mainly investigates the intricate relationship that exists between translation, ethics, and individual responsibility, Lambert published an article titled “Professional translator ethics” exploring the ethical considerations of professional translators in a comprehensive manner. The book *Translation Ethics*, representing Lambert’s new reflections on this topic, includes some of the most well-known ethical theories that have been developed and used in Translation Studies. It also looks at ethics from the point of view of a situated translator, tracing the ethical issues of translatorial actors in different settings.

As a framework, Lambert intends to establish translation ethics on philosophical foundations by drawing on the three most prominent schools of moral theory, namely deontology, consequentialism, and virtue ethics. He also intends to demonstrate how these foundations relate to truth, client obligation, justice, and social commitment, all of which are required of translators and interpreters. Lambert draws on Chesterman’s four main categories of ethics—the ethics of representation, service, communication, and norm-based ethics—to emphasize the four cornerstones of translation ethics: faithfulness, function, understating, and trust. According to Chesterman, these are the four most important aspects of ethics.

The book’s nine chapters can be divided into four parts. The first part, Chapter 1, opens with a question regarding the concept of ethics and tries to differentiate between ‘ethics’ and ‘morality’. It also delves into the philosophical underpinnings that support the translation theories discussed in this textbook and examines the various notions of ethics. It outlines the three most prominent schools of thought in moral theory—deontology, consequentialism, and virtue ethics, which are all present in theories of translation ethics. By defining important concepts, this concise general overview helps readers to reflect on the philosophical foundations of translation ethics.

The second part consists of Chapter 2, which borrows Chesterman’s (2001) four key ethical domains. Ethics of representation deals with fidelity; ethics of service is about functionalist models of translation; ethics of communication falls in line with reaching understanding; norm-based ethics centers around predictability and trustworthiness. After that, the chapter delves into the specifics of translation ethics by discussing some basic ethical principles. In addition to exploring the critical issue of faithfulness, this chapter lays forth four primary foci on translation ethics.

The third part includes the chapters from 3 to 6, anchoring the questions of truth, or the ‘right’ way to translate, the issue of responsibility, or the translators’ loyalty to the clients, the question of justice, or the non-neutral, subjective nature of ethics, and the question of commitment, or the roles of interpreters or translators as mediators or advocates of certain causes. Chapter 3 explores the reoccurring theme of fidelity in translation ethics. Therefore, concerns about truth are thoroughly investigated in this chapter within the context of the textual domain. The relationship between the translator and the text is one that is always branded with ‘loyalty’. Drawing from the views of translation researcher Antoine Berman, this chapter’s discussions center on deontology and raise questions about the existence of a universally ‘correct’ approach to translate. Lambert discusses Berman’s deontology by reviewing his

critique of the tendency of translation to ‘negate’ the foreign. In responding to some scholars’ criticism of the elitism in Berman’s ideas, Lambert highlights the strength of Berman’s deontology and deontological rulings, believing that they can provide an insight into dominant modes of translation. His fervently supported argument highlights specific textual elements to be considered during translation.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 shift the attention to the interpersonal domain in the translation industry, exploring the various actors engaged beyond translators’ interaction with texts. Chapter 4 begins by examining the intricate subject of responsibility from a functionalist viewpoint, delving into Nord’s definition of loyalty and then discussing Pym’s ideas on cooperation, risk, and trust. These notions emphasize the importance of human involvement and prompt translators to reflect on their responsibilities, while also referencing the context-specific, personal, and ideologically charged aspects of ethics. This spectrum of themes is highlighted in Chapter 5, which examines the concept of justice. In addition to establishing the inherent subjectivity and lack of neutrality in ethics, this chapter unequivocally asserts that the translator and interpreter play an active role in influencing the transmission of knowledge. Furthermore, it represents a significant transition towards considering the broader social context within which practitioners operate. Chapter 6 continues this theme by examining the boundaries of agency in the context of commitment. This chapter challenges the demarcation between the personal and the professional, broadening the responsibilities of translators and interpreters beyond that of cultural intermediaries. An examination of these concepts is conducted with a specific focus on Baker’s contribution, which ultimately prompts readers to contemplate the significance of accepting responsibility for our decisions and deeds, as well as the dangers associated with moral relativism. The three chapters can be categorized under the theme of agency, examining different levels of active involvement among translators and interpreters, each with its own pros and cons. There is a progression from interpersonal dynamics to social dynamics across the chapters.

Part 4 consists of chapters 7, 8 and 9, which revolve around standards that professional translators and interpreters are expected to abide by and other key concerns facing today’s ethical professionals. Chapters 7 and 8 provide a notable transition in emphasis, directing our consideration specifically towards the professional fields. Standards that professional interpreters and translators are expected to adhere to are examined in detail in Chapter 7. This entails a thorough analysis of the content, structure, and deficiencies of codes of ethics in the field. It exposes voids, blind spots, and contradictions while elucidating fundamental principles, thereby encouraging readers to engage these documents critically. Chapter 8 examines other significant issues that contemporary ethical professionals encounter. This comprehensive chapter addresses a variety of subjects, including pay rates and environmental sustainability. It also encourages introspection and calls for both external and internal evaluations, where the issue of accountability resurfaces. Lambert argues that while it is important for translators to demonstrate social responsibility in their outward actions, they must also acknowledge the importance of prioritizing their own mental, physical, and potentially financial wellbeing. In this part, Lambert points out that the dynamic nature of the language industry necessitates our consideration of ethical issues that have emerged alongside technological advancements. In certain instances, Lambert argues that these profound transformations have fundamentally altered the way translation is

conceptualized, particularly with regard to privacy, quality, fidelity, and practice types.

Chapter 9 concludes the book by examining questions that are emerging and becoming prominent and that illustrate novel, inventive, and thought-provoking approaches that further contemplate translators/interpreters' conceptualization of ethics and the ways in which they ought to treat Others. The 'case studies' in the examination of otherness encompass concepts of selfhood, representation, and representativeness. Prior to concluding, Lambert revisits the perpetual matter of responsibility. This time, translators/ interpreters are encouraged to contemplate possible future courses of action, equipped with insights obtained from the extensive array of theories, concepts, and frameworks examined throughout the textbook. In this part, suggestions are also offered for future discussion and research.

Translation ethics, the focal point of the present book, is a significant and swiftly developing subject within the field of Translation Studies. The book's contributions can be summarised in the following aspects.

By structuring his book to address first truth, followed by responsibility, justice and commitment, Lambert establishes a continuum from textual fidelity to the translator's mission as cultural mediators and advocates, with the translator's loyalty to clients and subjectivity lying in between. This continuum effectively addresses the dilemma of adhering strictly to the text or the client, fully acknowledging the genuine circumstances that may justify the translator's inclination towards either fidelity. Secondly, Lambert focuses on the translation ethics that underwent significant changes in conjunction with the widespread implementation of machine translation in the translation sector. Lambert, for example, investigates the dilemma of prioritizing the development of human translation or the instruction of machine translation post-editing, as the latter yields superior outcomes. Additionally, Lambert investigates the compensation of translators that are impacted by technological advancements, such as new systems, workflows, and other modifications. Furthermore, Lambert addresses the issue of resource sharing in machine translation projects, emphasizing that various clients receive translations that employ similar or identical terminology and style, thereby violating their intellectual property rights and invalidating their investments. Lambert is apprehensive about the issue of privacy and confidentiality, as numerous providers utilize translation data for training purposes or to expand their corpora, which may compromise the privacy and confidentiality of their clients. He contends that the concept of fidelity is either no longer relevant or must be rearticulated in the context of collaborative works, as no single translator is responsible for the ultimate product. Lambert also addresses the issue of cultural hegemony, noting that the widespread use of MT and the dominance of English as the lingua franca of our era are resulting in a greater amount of material being translated into and out of English, which further enhances its position. Consequently, practitioners are encouraged to confront the intricate situation that arises when technological advantages and industrial risks intersect. Third, designed for translators, trainers and trainees, this book is a connection between translation training and translation industry. It functions as a textbook that orients translator/interpreter trainees into the industry before they become professional both in skill and ethics. Fourthly, this book delves into the contemporary translation contexts, examining new ethical principles in accordance with the tradition of researching the connections between translators, texts, and consumers, as well as the translating profession. It focuses not only on translators' responsibilities as cultural intermediaries and their professionalism, as frequently discussed in the context of translation

ethics, but also addresses issues related to translators' compensation, benefits and challenges posed by technological advancements, as well as the physical and psychological impacts of translation work on translators. The last but not least contribution in the book lies in its addressing various inquiries within the expansive field of ethics pertinent to translation, including post-colonial translation studies, gender studies, censorship in translation, child language brokering, accessibility, and research ethics.

What constitutes an 'ethical' approach to text translation? What conduct is expected of a professional translation or interpreter? What is the ethical consequence of technical advancements in the language industry? In this book, Lambert addresses these questions, offering incisive analyses of the ethical tensions between textual fidelity and client responsibility, examining moral dilemmas in contemporary translation practice, and presenting critical insights into the ethical challenges posed by AI-assisted and machine-mediated translation technologies. Consequently, it is essential reading for anyone interested in practice codes for translation and interpreting professionals, as well as trainers and trainees.

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