TRANSLATION AND COLONIALISM

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Colonialism has been among the most debated and widely deployed terms in modern translation studies. Under the general rubric of the 'postcolonial,' the scope of anti-colonialist critique has been extended to social and political situations where no overt colonialism can be said to exist. On the other hand, the translation component of the paradigm has been no less versatile: translation has often become a metaphor for many types of intercultural communication beyond the most flexible textual practices to which translation scholars have typically applied the term. This chapter does not attempt an exhaustive catalogue of postcolonial perspectives on translation, so much as a critical analysis of their primary assumptions, emphases, later developments, and the various ways in which they have contributed to the theory and practice of translation.

1. What is Postcolonial Translation Studies?

If there is one unifying thread to the varied and multifaceted postcolonial approaches to translation, it is their paramount attention to the effects of power imbalances in communication between cultures. A key insight is that political inequalities (epitomised by the colonial encounter) carry over into linguistic and cultural interactions, including translation. As Robert Young put it: 'Languages, like classes and nations, exist in a hierarchy: as does translation itself' (2003, 40). Therefore, postcolonial critics reject the empirical premises of early translation studies, which see translation as the recovery of some stable linguistic or cultural meaning. Such theories reduced the problematics of translation to a question of linguistic difference, resulting from the syntactic, semantic, and phonological asymmetries of languages, or, when taking note of culture, to 'cultural words' classified by clear-cut categories (Newmark 1988, 94ff)—equivalents for which have to be found in the target culture, using a set of textual procedures. However, grounded within a cultural orientation to translation (Baker 1996), postcolonial critics emphasise that even the most mundane translation choices cannot be separated from the wider context of communication between the two cultures, which include the history of representation between them, images about the other culture, and the current social and political realities in each—all with the added emphasis on the power differentials governing the translation act, which can shape all these factors in decisive ways.

2. Early Beginnings

The emergence of postcolonial translation studies has to be seen in the context of the so-called 'cultural turn' in translation theory (Lefevere and Bassnett 1990, 8). However, the first investigations into the relationship between translation and colonialism were undertaken by scholars in the emerging field of postcolonial studies who (drawing on anthropology, ethnography, and, most importantly, poststructuralist analysis) began to observe the key role of translation in the operations of imperialist projects. As a major postcolonial critic was to remark years later, 'Nothing comes closer to the central activity and political dynamics of postcolonialism than the concept of translation' (Young 2003, 138). Nevertheless, Young's enthusiastic espousal (in its emphasis on translation as a concept, linked to colonial practices through analogy, rather than as a practical activity) typifies an approach that many translation scholars find problematic: a metaphorical, rather than a practice-oriented, engagement with translation.

This position can be seen in the earliest postcolonial interventions in translation studies, whose engagement with translation ranges from partly textual to purely metaphorical, with little interest overall in the everyday activities of translators. Thus, in her influential study *Siting Translation: History, Poststructuralism and the Colonial Context*, Tejaswini Niranjana demonstrates that, by collecting data about the local populations and facilitating communication between imperial rulers and their subjects, translation played a tangible part in British colonial administration of India (Niranjana 1992, 11). Yet, Niranjana argues that translation involved much more than textual operations. She sees colonialism itself as a translation project, whose aim is to transform its subjects into familiar objects for the coloniser. In this context, the entire body of orientalism falls under the realm of translation, as its task is the 'introduction of a textualized India to Europe,' hence 'to domesticate the Orient and thereby turn it into a province of European learning' (12). As for practical translation, in her analysis of the works of the eminent scholar William Jones, Niranjana does not find it necessary to 'compare his translation with the so-called originals' (13).

In *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* (1997), Eric Cheyfitz examines the role of translation in the Anglo-American colonisation of the New World in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, where translation figures not only as

a tool, but, even more crucially, as a metaphor. Cheyfitz identifies a 'romance of the racial, or national, identity that has dominated U.S. foreign policy (toward other than European people) throughout its history' as 'inevitably a romance of translation, in which … the other is translated into the terms of the self in order to be alienated from these terms' (15). Thus, the Native Americans' right to property is judged by the terms of Anglo-American law, whose idiom they are forced to speak (or, we may say, into which they are 'translated'). Yet, when it is found that their own laws and traditions inevitably fail to meet the terms of the law of the coloniser, they are denied the full right bestowed by this very law (13). Cheyfitz maintains that this type of translation ('transfiguring the domestic and the foreign in terms of one another,') is intrinsic to colonialism, so that 'at the heart of every imperial fiction (the heart of darkness) there is a fiction of translation' (1997, 15).

In *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (1993), Vicente Rafael maintains a broad concept of translation in his analysis of how Spanish Christian missionaries tried to 'translate' the native Tagalogs into their own terms: 'Translation in this case involves not simply the ability to speak in a language other than one's own but the capacity to reshape one's thoughts and actions in accordance with accepted forms' (1993, 210). Rafael is also attentive to the textual and linguistic mechanisms of translation in the complex interaction between colonisers (especially the Christian missionaries) and their subjects. In the face of the colonisers' implacable demands that the local population speak the language of the coloniser and assimilate into their ways of life, the Tagalog people responded with something of a counter-translation: they adapted Spanish and Christian terms into their own beliefs and traditions, giving them new meanings, thereby averting their 'dislocating effects'. This is how they tried 'to find ways to fit "Spain" and "Christianity" into a context familiar to them' (1993, xix). In describing this textual counter gesture, Rafael prefigures other postcolonial translation scholars in envisioning spaces of resistance within colonialist textual practices. 'Translating the untranslatable,' says Rafael, 'entailed deferring to the signs of authority while at the same time eluding the meaning and intent behind those signs' (1993, 121). It is this strategy of subversive assimilation that Anuradha Dingwaney and Carol Maier later describe in *Between Languages and Cultures: Translation and Cross-Cultural Texts* (1996). They argue that 'the (colonized) native deliberately (mis)translates the colonial script, alienating and undermining its authority' (1996, 9).

This and similar textual techniques have circulated widely in postcolonial translation studies as strategies of resistance.

3. Later Developments

In his 'Decolonizing Translation,' an early attempt to delineate the emerging field of postcolonial translation, Douglas Robinson commends the new studies for drawing attention to the 'the power issues,' which 'have been so studiously repressed by translation theorists for so many centuries' (1993, 124). He recognised at the time the ground-breaking impact that these approaches would have on the study of translation: 'Cheyfitz and Niranjana have stirred up a hornet's nest in Translation Studies, and if, as I hope, their books are read and taken seriously by people working in the field, it will never be the same again' (124). Indeed, in the following years, postcolonial translation saw an enormous growth in the number of studies and their scope. No more confined to history, nor to a literal (or, arguably, narrow) definition of colonialism, scholars in postcolonial translation studies expanded the new field in many directions.

Focused on veritable colonialist relations, historical investigations of colonialism continued. However, with the increasing involvement of scholars versed in the by now rich and diverse body of research in translation studies, especially on the cultural aspects of translation, analysis became more connected to the textual practices of what most translators and translation scholars understand by the term 'translation.' This trend brought with it a deeper understanding of the linguistic functions that facilitate (and sometimes subvert) power imbalances in cultural interactions. Furthermore, detailed micro-textual examinations of translation, using the indispensable comparative method (no matter how myopic and empirically oriented it may seem to postcolonial critics) reveal the complexities and nuances of the workings of translation in colonial and postcolonial contexts, beyond broad, and sometimes vague, generalisations.

Let us take an example of two scholars who tackle such issues, respectively from outside and inside translation studies. In their 'The Translation of the Treaty of Waitangi: A Case of Disempowerment' (2002), Sabine Fenton and Paul Moon address similar issues to those covered by Eric Cheyfitz. Signed in 1840 between a representative of the British Crown and over five hundred Mauri chiefs, the Treaty of Waitangi became a major document in the foundation of the modern state of New Zealand, symbolizing the birth of a new nation (Fenton and Moon 2002, 25).

It came to represent the possibility of bringing 'together two distinct cultural groups in an act of enlightened respect for and trust of each other' (25). Yet, in their analysis of the differences between the English original and its Maori version, and the circumstances in which the translation was produced by Anglican missionary Henry Williams, Fenton and Moon demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between translation and colonial power—specifically, how cultural and linguistic differences are not resolved by textual decisions, but by political hegemony. In his translation of some of the key legal terms of the treaty, words like 'possession' and 'sovereignty,' Williams resorted to Maori words that had quite different meanings in the conceptual world of the Maoris. Consequently, the Maori chiefs signed a treaty that gave the British Crown more rights than they were willing to abandon (had they understood the true import of the English terms). Different interpretations unavoidably ensued, and, as the English original was the authoritative version, it was the Maoris who (typically) had to pay for this case of cultural incommensurability. Especially in comparison with the bird's-eye view of Cheyfitz, Fenton's and Moon's approach, combining close textual analysis with awareness of the political context of communication reveals that the relationship between political relations and textual operations is not as clear-cut as a broad standpoint may suggest: translation techniques in this case betrayed (or, possibly, belied) expressed enlightened intentions. Another important dimension that emerges in this type of investigation is the agency of the translator, whose contribution, it turns out, is not always elided by inescapable political forces.

Beyond historical research, perhaps the most significant development in postcolonial studies has been the extension of the domain of analysis to modern (neo)colonial relations of all kinds, on the assumption that the 'Hierarchies institutionalized in colonial administration continue to shape epistemologies today' (Merrill 2013, 159). Thus, Mahasweta Sengupta, in her study of Rabindranath Tagore's self-translation of his poetry into English from his native Bengali, shows how the Indian poet manipulated his poetry 'in a manner that suited the psyche of the colonizer' (Sengupta 1996, 161). Sengupta demonstrates the powerful impact of a long history of representation: 'the dominant power appropriates only those texts that conform to the preexisting discursive parameters of its linguist networks' (159), so Tagore resorted to 'foregrounding that aspect of his self that was recognizable to the English through earlier literature that had been translated from the Indian languages (166).' As a result, Tagore, Sengupta suggests, 'fell into the

stereotypical image of the saint of the "East" who spoke of peace, calm, and spiritual bliss in a troubled world entering the cauldron of the First World War' (167).

Unequal cultural exchanges and their impact on translation in the modern world has been a common theme in postcolonial studies. In the translation of Arabic literature into Spanish, Ovidi Carbonell finds that 'Cultural hegemony is obviously also echoed in translation' in several ways (1996, 85), including the very absence of translation. Carbonell notes the striking indifference among Spanish Orientalists to the large body of Arabic scholarship on the Andalusian period of Spanish history. Furthermore, he argues that the limiting effect of stereotypes is not confined to translation from Arabic. For one can detect a 'perennial taste of both the European reader and writer for stereotyped fictions of the Levant, the South, Moorish Spain and the like, as a correlate to similar fantasies of the Far East, unknown Africa, or primitive Indians or aboriginals' (1996, 84). In *Translation and Linguistic Hybridity: Constructing World-View* (2014), Susanne Klinger argues that stereotyping non-Western literature is practically the norm:

> the more the non-Western work complies with Western stereotypes about the non-Western culture, and at the same time confirms Western values, the more easily it will be accepted by a Western audience, whereas a work that challenges Western stereotypes or Western values minimizes its chances of being translated into a Western language and therefore reaching a Western audience (150).

On the other hand, the metaphorical approach to translation continued to produce new work. Studies of this type are usually classified under the heading of 'cultural translation,' defined as an approach that does not concern itself with 'translating specific cultural texts but of consolidating a wide variety of cultural discourses into a target text that in some sense has no "original", no source text' (Robinson 1997, 43), or as one focused on 'transactions that do not explicitly involve linguistic exchange' (Bassnett 2011, 102). Perhaps the single most influential thinker in postcolonial studies, after Edward Said, has been Homi Bhabha. However, Said, the recognised fountainhead of postcolonial studies, it is sometimes argued, generally portrays colonial discourse as monolithic and overpowering, fixing the colonized as passive subjects (see, for example, Young 1990, 158-180). Conversely, Bhabha (drawing on the work of such poststructuralist critics as Derrida) emphasises the hybridity, uncertainty, and multiplicity of the

colonial textual universe, allowing ample space for textual play, exchange, and resistance. Focusing on British colonialism of India, he argues that the Indian colonial subjects (like their Tagalog counterparts in Rafael's *Contracting Colonialism*) were required to assimilate to the colonisers' ways of life. Their method of subtle resistance was a form of imitation which 'corrupted' the original by injecting it with their own interpretation, giving it completely new meanings; it is this 'hybridity' that engenders uncertainty and fracture at the heart of the colonial discourse (1984, 97). One of Bhabha's most influential gestures has been the extension of this condition of hybridity beyond veritable colonial relations to the neo-colonial condition. Authors from the pre-colonial world, writing in the language of the ex-colonisers, use their position in a 'third space' between languages and cultures to 'write back' to the empire; they hybridise it and change it from within. For 'cultural translation involves a process in which the migrant intervenes in the hegemonic culture that he or she finds him or herself confronted with […] therefore, it is the migrant who transforms the receiving culture, not vice versa' (Young 2012, 160).

These formulations have resonated deeply with various translation scholars, who have reflected on the challenges they pose for some traditional principles of translation and the consequent opportunities for new forms of liberatory and subversive inter-linguistic and intercultural practice. Samia Mehrez sums up the potentials and aspirations of this approach in her discussion of the Maghrebi postcolonial novel:

> the emergence and continuing growth on the world literary scene of postcolonial anglophone and francophone literatures from the ex-colonies as well as the increasing ethnic minorities in the First World metropoles are bound to change and redefine many accepted notions in translation theory which continue to be debated and elaborated within the longstanding traditions of western 'humanism' and 'universalism'. These postcolonial texts, frequently referred to as 'hybrid' or 'métissés' because of the culturo-linguistic layering which exists within them, have succeeded in forging a new language that defies the very notion of a 'foreign' text that can be readily translatable into another language. With this literature we can no longer merely concern ourselves with conventional notions of linguistic equivalence, or ideas of loss and gain which have long been a consideration in translation theory. (1992, 121).

With reference to linguistic and aesthetic techniques by Québécois writers in Canada (another modern extension of the colonial situation), Sherry Simon identifies a hybrid text as one that is the result of 'a voluntarily incomplete translation process' (2001, 217). Such texts are 'produced by writers who want to highlight their position between cultures, creating a new site of individual and collective expression' (217). Translation figures in such a practice as an aesthetic performance, as it were, rather than as an actual process of transmission between two languages: hybridity relies on '"translation effects" to question the borders of identity' (217). While the resultant hybrid text may become an 'expression of loss and disorientation,' it affords minorities with chances for identity expression and empowerment (226).

Canadian Québécois literature can be said to operate against the background of concrete hegemonic structures and political struggles. However, the postcolonial angle has been applied to situations where political relations are not so overtly present, but where the imbalance of power is a defining factor—most importantly, perhaps, by feminist scholars. In fact, one of the earliest contributions to feminist translation studies explicitly emphasised the link with the then emerging field of postcolonialism. In 'Gender and Metaphorics of Translation' (1988), Lori Chamberlain notes the familiar view of translation 'as the literary equivalent of colonization,' a conquest of the source text that adapts it completely for the use and consumption of the target culture, and which 'can expand both literary and political borders' (1988, 459). Chamberlain argues that this 'politics of colonialism overlap significantly with the politics of gender', for the colonial violence sometimes exercised in translation can have, often explicit, sexual overtones: 'the sexual violence alluded to in this description of translation provides an analogue to the political and economic rapes implicit in a colonializing metaphor' (460). Consequently, Chamberlain calls for a feminist theory of translation that is 'utopic' in that it subverts 'the process by which translation complies with gender constructs (1988, 472).

Chamberlain does not elaborate on the principles or implications of such a translation theory, but one assumes that it involves the rejection of the dynamics of domination and subordination which have informed colonial powers, patriarchal systems, and (some forms of) translation theory and practice. Looking for a way out of these destructive dichotomies, Bassnett posits an 'orgasmic theory of translation,' in which elements are fused into a new whole in an encounter that is mutual, pleasurable and respectful (1992, 72). Such a theory would arguably transcend the binary oppositions, and the concomitant violence, of 'colonialist' and 'sexist'

theories of translation, which conceptualise translation through metaphors of 'rape and penetration, faithfulness and unfaithfulness' (72). Adapting Helen Cixous's conception of the 'feminine' as a place 'in-between' the male and the female (which is, of course, reminiscent of Bhabha's 'third space'), Bassnett points out that 'feminist translation scholars have chosen to work with the idea of the in-betweenness of the translator, of the space between the poles, and, if those poles are metamorphosed into masculine and feminine, then the space becomes androgynous or even bi-sexual, neither the one nor the other' (66). The question, of course, is how such a conception of translation can be converted into actual practice. As an example, Bassnett refers to a group of translators and writers around Nicole Brossard in Quebec, who reject 'both the old writer-oriented criticism and the newer reader-oriented criticism, arguing that neither component should be prioritized' (66). One of these translators, Kathy Mezei, describes her practice in this way: 'When I translate I read the text ... then I re-read the text and I re-read the text, and then I write in my language, my words: I write my reading and the reading has rewritten my writing' (66). Bassnett is probably right in describing these statements as enunciating 'a very different notion of translation to that offered by George Steiner, who sees translation as involving the "appropriative penetration" of the source text' (66). Yet, it is difficult to identify exactly how it is different, and, more importantly, in what ways it outlines a new practice based on collaboration and the fusing of worldviews. For one thing, it may be argued that Meizei's insistence that she writes the (source) text in her language, her words, is akin to an act of appropriation. In fact, Rosemary Arrojo remarks that Bassnett's account of supposedly liberatory feminist practices, including her own, itself relies on strategies that can be described as appropriative and assimilative (1995, 73-74).

Apart from theoretical conceptualisations of translation, feminist postcolonial critics have highlighted the predicament of female translators or translated authors who have to suffer the double bind of patriarchy and colonialism. Sherry Simon and St-Pierre argue that 'a parallel might be drawn between women and colonized cultures: both have experienced oppression, and both are obliged to express themselves in the language of their oppressors. This "double colonization" […] is a key concept in postcolonial translation theory' (Simon and St-Pierre 2000, 136). In her much anthologised essay 'The Politics of Translation' (1992), a reflection on the task of the feminist translator in the postcolonial condition, Gayatri Spivak considers the situation where this 'double colonization' is not only a parallel, but a lived reality. While recognising the importance of the solidarity of women across different cultures, Spivak questions the facile and Eurocentric manner

in which it is often supposedly realised in translation. The ostensibly democratic ambition 'to give access to the largest number of feminists' comes with the requirement that 'these texts must be made to speak English' (1992, 180). The result is an 'act of wholesale translation into English,' which 'can be a betrayal of the democratic ideal into the law of the strongest' (180). What this means for translation practice is that 'the literature of the Third World gets translated into a sort of with-it translatese, so that the literature by a woman in Palestine begins to resemble, in the feel of its prose, something by a man in Taiwan' (180). Spivak's rejection of adaptive translation practices aims to challenge the underlying universalist assumption that 'that women have a natural or narrative-historical solidarity, that there is something in a woman or an undifferentiated women's story that speaks to another woman without benefit of language learning' (181). In this respect, her argument complements critiques of 'naturalizing,' 'assimilative' techniques of intercultural representation and translation (see below), as based on outdated humanistic principles inherited from the Enlightenment which cannot mask their Eurocentric nature even as they strive for 'universality.'

4. Translation as Political Commitment

If it has been demonstrated that translation may aid colonial and neo-colonial projects, then the question arises as to what translation practices are needed to avoid, or even resist, these pernicious practices. As Christie A. Merril remarks, the question is an ethical one, and it lies at the heart of all postcolonial interventions (2013, 166). Of course, some of these have been largely descriptive, documenting resistance strategies in translation, especially in historical contexts, without necessarily prescribing new ones. Thus, in her *Translation in a Postcolonial Context: Early Irish Literature in English Translation* (1999), Maria Tymoczko, discusses how Irish translators in different historical periods, before and after independence, manipulated ancient heroic tales in their English translations, using a variety of techniques to assert Irish identity, resist colonialist stereotypes, and advance nationalist, anti-colonial agendas. Tarek Shamma analyses the (generally unsuccessful) project of British anti-colonialist activist Wilfred Scawen Blunt, who deliberately used adaptive techniques in his translations from Arabic literature (highlighting universalist themes, as well as analogies with, and influences on, Western literature) in an attempt to dispel dehumanizing stereotypes (Shamma 2009a, 86ff).

On the other hand, some postcolonial critics have adopted what may be termed a prescriptive position on translation strategies. While cultural and linguistic incompatibilities are inevitable in any translation, postcolonial scholars are concerned about the cases where it is not simply a problem of asymmetry (as it was often handled in traditional translation theories), but rather of inequality. In situations of unequal power relations, difference is inevitably resolved at the expense of the colonised, the weaker side, whose uniqueness and authentic characteristics, so the argument goes, are erased, with the conceptual frameworks of the coloniser imposing themselves as the only norms. This is why prescriptive approaches to resistance have revolved around methods of either preserving, or emphasising, the difference of the (ex)colonised text, and/or resisting the homogenising drives of the (post)colonial context of reception, usually through this very foregrounded difference. In practice, these effects are to be produced through textual devices signalling the foreignness of the source text, usually through some form of literalism.

Theorisations of resistant strategies have been around since the early postcolonial approaches to translation. In *Siting Translation* (1992), Niranjana rejects translation that 'erases and distorts beyond recognition [...] the *names* of the colonized' (183), resulting in 'coherent and transparent texts through the repression of difference, and participating thereby in the process of colonial domination' (43). In response, she proposes a 'disruptive translation' technique which follows the syntactic structures of the source text and preserves words for which no equivalent is available in the target text: 'seeing "literalness" as an "arcade," I privilege the word over the sentence […] inserting my translation into the attack against homogenizing and continuous narratives' (185). Whether such textual manoeuvres would actually have the wide-ranging effects attributed to them is far from clear (see, for example, Merrill 2013, 161-162, and Criticisms below). Yet, Niranjana's arguments have foreshadowed widespread later formulations.

One of the main champions of literalism in postcolonial scholarship has been Gayatri Spivak. Her position of 'literalist surrender' (1992, 188), submitting 'to the linguistic rhetoricity of the original text' (1992, 189) stems from her rejection, as we have seen, of universalist, homogenising, and ultimately imperialist tendencies. However, the most systematic, and influential, taxonomy of translation techniques along these lines has been formulated by Laurence Venuti. While not directly drawing on postcolonial studies, Venuti's work shares their basic rejection of the 'unequal cultural exchanges' in which 'the hegemonic English-language nations […] engage their global others' (Venuti 2008, 16). Such imperialist attitudes are based on an

'ethics of sameness,' which erases the alterity of the Other through what Venuti calls 'domesticating' translations. In response, he proposes a 'foreignizing' translation method, which 'can be a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism, in the interest of democratic geopolitical relations' (16). While Venuti recommends several methods of signaling the 'translatedness' of the source text and preserving its alterity, literalism is a key technique.

Other postcolonial critics have advanced various strategies of preserving the foreignness of the source text as a way of disrupting the monolithic discourse of the imperial centre, mainly under the influence of Homi Bhabha. His theorisation of hybridity and mimicry as not only intrinsic to the colonial context, but also as sites of resistance and subversion, have inspired various forms of textual practice in postcolonial studies. Thus, echoing anticolonial projects of 'writing back to the empire' (as in the edited collection by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2003), Paul Bandia's *Translation as Reparation* (2008) commends writing techniques such as hybridity and polylingualism which have become a staple of postcolonial literature (147). Translation scholars, he argues, should abandon the traditional conception of translation as a means of bridging the gap between two autonomous, homogenous linguistic entities. In the postcolonial situation, with its power inequalities, translation conducted in this traditional framework may become a means of imposing the hegemony of the dominant centre. Hence, it is through a 'postcolonial polylingual writing practice' that the committed translator can undertake the 'deliberate attempt to resist the hegemony of translation by opposing assimilation to the dominant metropolitan language' (148). And the best the way to achieve this goal is to preserve the alterity of the source text: the 'postcolonial subject rejects the totalizing effects of dominant language by refusing to translate himself (sic) totally or unreservedly, in other words by refusing to disappear or to exist only as a translated being, or as the shadow of the *métropole*' (149). While Bandia conceives polylingual writing as a means of translating African oral literature, polylingual writing in different forms has also been advocated as a strategy of resistance in other postcolonial studies (e.g. Simon 2001; Young 2012a; Mehrez 1992; Bandia 2012; Villareal 1994, 90).

However, one should note the cases where hybridity is not the result of translation, but is a feature of original texts (Snell-Hornby 2001). Translation here is, again, a metaphor. A hybrid text, in this case, is one that is written to read as a translation, displaying linguistic and stylistic features that make it 'strange' or 'unusual' even in its own language (Schäffner and Adab 1997,

325). G. J. V. Prasad notes how some 'Indian English writers are [...] using various strategies to make their works read like translations' (1999, 54-55). In such texts, translation becomes a writing, as well as a reading, strategy, involving 'a back and forth movement between languages in the reading of polylingual literature which mirrors the act of translating' (Bandia 2008, 149).

Postcolonial scholars have also drawn on anthropology to formulate resistant translation strategies. Looking for a solution to the specific problem of translating African proverbs in a manner that would show 'genuinely informed respect for others' and 'challenge ourselves and our students to go further' (1993, 818), Anthony Appiah borrows the concept of 'thick description' from anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973, 3ff) to develop what he terms 'thick translation.' A combination of literal translation (Appiah 1993, 808) with 'annotations and its accompanying glosses,' thick translation aims 'to locate the text in a rich cultural and linguistic context' (817). While Appiah conceived thick translation as a way of dealing with the specific problem of translating folk proverbs from Ghana, the term has been used by various scholars (e.g. Hermans 2003, Cheung 2007), with the underlying aim of resisting assimilation and preserving the complexity of the original.

5. Criticisms of Postcolonial Translation Studies

One of the most salient features of postcolonial translation studies that should have become clear from the above overview is the coexistence of two distinct lines of inquiry: what may be termed the metaphorical and the practical approaches to translation. The former uses translation as a trope for practically all forms of intercultural exchange in the (post)colonial condition, whereas the latter examines the functions and implications of various translation strategies in implementing or resisting colonial power. While the two approaches have occasionally been combined in the work of the same scholar (e.g. Spivak), they have remained mostly separated, a situation which has sometimes created tension and suspicion (Wang 2007, 203; Merrill 2013, 159, 164; Bassnett 2011, 103). Harish Trivedi, an early contributor to postcolonial translation, observes a schism in the field between 'translating culture' and 'cultural translation.' Reviewing the theoretical formulations coming mainly from 'the domain of postcolonial and postmodernist discourse' (2007, 282)—be it Bhabha's metaphor of translation for 'the condition of human migrancy' (283) or Niranjana's conceptualisation of translation 'to denote the colonial power-play between the British rulers and

Indian subjects' (284)—Trivedi laments the fact that their use of the term does not reflect 'what translation normally means' (284). Such positions, he sternly warns, may spell 'the very extinction and erasure of translation as we have always known and practised it' (282).

To be sure, most translation scholars have little problem with the often resourceful ways in which the metaphor of translation has been used in other disciplines (e.g. Guldin 2015, Chapters 4-5). Objections arise to theorisations of translators' work without solid grounding in either translation practice or relevant current theories. A typical postcolonialist intervention (one may argue at the risk of some reduction) involves a rejection of the simplistic notions that presumably govern translation theory and practice, positing as they do an unproblematic linguistic transfer, which requires little more than the recovery of well-defined, stable meanings, between two distinct and clearly demarcated cultures. From such straw-man arguments, the critic proceeds to reveal the many cultural and political layers underlying the translation process, sometimes proposing new strategies that would arguably capture this complexity—but ones which would usually strike a practicing translator as self-evident, impractical, or, at best, thoughtful but barely ground breaking. One could possibly excuse Niranjana's characterisation of translation theory in 1992 as 'Caught in an idiom of fidelity and betrayal […] based on an unproblematic, naively representational theory of language' (48-49), even though the 'cultural turn' (Lefevere and Bassnett 1990) and 'the manipulation school' (Lambert 1985) had already begun to destabilise such orthodoxies. However, similar pronouncements can still be found well after these early studies. As late as 2012, Robert Young complains about 'the traditional model,' which 'posits an essentially static spatialized idea of language—a ready-made entity like a box of tools which the translator employs' (13). Needless to say, no modern translation scholar, nor any translator with critical reflection and some knowledge of theory, would subscribe to such a naive position. In reflecting about the challenge that African literary works pose for 'normative translation theory' (2015, 149), Paul Bandia stresses the necessity of avoiding homogenisation. According to him:

> When translating these types of work, one does not depend mainly on the source language […] Translating these texts means, basically, achieving similar effects on the receiving audience by using other resources. For example, when one is translating into French a novel which includes the varieties of English used in Nigeria, it is crucial to bear

> in mind the socio-cultural and socio-political values which characterize the varieties of French used in the Francophone world. (150)

This is, no doubt, sound and practical advice. But it hardly warrants the sweeping conclusions that, as a result of such methods (which are employed with little fanfare by translators who regularly face the many challenges of cultural incompatibility), 'the original ultimately becomes negligible, almost obsolete. It takes a life of its own when it goes from one language to other languages in what Deleuze and Guattari define as a "rhizomatic projection"' (150).[1] As it becomes clear from Bandia's discussion, the gap separating these two approaches is one between the postmodernist notions of textuality, which view with suspicion any notions of original, well-defined identity, textual stability, or the very possibility of meaning transfer, and the everyday realities with which translators, and scholars deeply involved in practice, have to grapple. In translation as a profession, such principles as original and reproduction, one-directional transfer, and fidelity can certainly be problematised and reflected upon, but not simply dismissed as empiricist myths.

Postcolonial formulations of resistance have been the subject of some of the most heated debates in translation studies. Critiques have especially focused on the championing of textual manoeuvres that do not take into account the complexities of the socio-political context which postcolonial critics are so keen to emphasise. What Benita Parry calls 'textual idealism' (2004, 3)—the tendency 'towards collapsing the social into the textual' (4)—has been pointed out by several critics of postcolonialism. One may argue that such limitations are especially relevant in the study of translation, where linguistic and stylistic issues take central stage, making the risk of slipping into broad, context-free prescriptions even more pronounced. For example, in a typical postcolonial gesture, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin describe how by 'appropriating the imperial language, its discursive forms and its modes of representation, post-colonial societies are able, as things stand, to intervene more readily in the dominant discourse, to interpolate their own cultural realities' (2003, 16). Yet, they hasten to explain that 'it is equally important to insist on the need for metropolitan institutions and cultural practices to open themselves up to indigenous texts by encouraging the learning and use of these languages by metropolitan scholars' (17). But could one in all seriousness expect dominant institutions to provide the tools of their own subversion? In the words of the anthropologist Talal Asad (himself a critic of homogenising translations, 1986, 157), 'the structures of power the colonized writer confronts are institutional, not textual' (1996, 330).

In other words, foreignising effects, plurilingual writing, literary heteroglossia, and other stylistic novelties are not enough to disrupt what are essentially material forms of hegemony. Innovative stylistic strategies may provide opportunities for impressive textual performances, but 'the modern world culture,' Asad insists, 'has no difficulty in accommodating unstable signs and domesticated exotica, so long as neither conflicts radically with systems of profit' (331).

Apart from their effectiveness, critics have questioned the one-sided functions attributed to certain translation strategies. It has been argued that foreignising and literalist techniques can be used for imperialist purposes, just as effectively as assimilative, homogenising ones: whether to create exotic, dehumanising images (Robinson 1997, 111; Carbonell 2003, 150), or to provide accurate accounts that are necessary for colonial projects (Shamma 2009a: 7ff). This is especially the case when colonisers have no interest in fashioning their dominated subjects in their own image, but simply in the material appropriation of their land and property (Shamma 2009b, 189). Here emphasising the difference that is so cherished by postcolonial theorists certainly works for the benefit of the coloniser, as cultural differences are interpreted as signs of the inferiority of the translated Other (Wang 2007, 198-199).

6. Postcolonial Translation Studies Today: New Challenges and Future Prospects

As argued above, the most important contribution of postcolonial translation studies has been its investigation into the effects of power inequalities in intercultural transfer. To be sure, this aspect was not totally absent even from early translation theory (Toury's second law of translation, for example, recognizes a shift in strategy 'when translation is carried out from a "major" or highly prestigious language/culture,' [1995, 278]). Yet, especially in their exposure of the historical complicity of translation in imperialist endeavours, postcolonial scholars have posited the inequality of power as a determining factor in the translational exchange, rather than as a potential one among others. Furthermore, they have challenged some entrenched concepts in translation theory. Their relativisation of such categories as origin and derivative, equivalence, and the stability of meaning, have drawn on similar interventions in postmodernist analysis. However, one could argue that, in linking textual criticism to the mechanisms of political power, they have produced more convincing readings, where such reversals are tied to their material causes, rather than postulated as the mysterious outcomes of some inscrutable textual processes.

Following its early beginnings in historical case studies, the postcolonial paradigm has expanded widely, proving attractive to scholars in many disciplines, including various strands in translation studies. Nevertheless, it can be argued that this remarkable malleability poses one of the most serious challenges to this approach in its later developments. In a general critique of postcolonialism, Susie Tharu observes that the field has become 'both too diffuse and too narrow' (2007, 642); for 'Postcolonial theory encompasses everything in India, or for that matter in the Third World. Its scholarship and theory are not bound to or by location. Yet it is, at the same time, restrictively attached to an isolated and definitive problematic: colonialism' (643). Indeed, to what extent, one may ask, can the varied lines of inquiry operating under this umbrella term claim to be investigations of colonialism, even in the metaphorical sense? And what connection, if any, does the postcolonial still maintain with the historical conditions that gave rise to it?

One certainly could argue that colonialism persists in different manifestations in today's world (ranging from covert forms of cultural dominance to military invasion). But the question is, should not new forms of colonisation require new approaches, rather than those predicated on past histories? In a highly critical and influential essay, the historian Arif Dirlik notes that the traditional dichotomy of coloniser-colonised, mapped onto geographical and cultural boundaries, is no longer tenable in the world of globalised capital, where 'Third Worlds have appeared in the First World and First Worlds in the Third' (1994, 352). 'New diasporas,' he says, 'have relocated the Self there and the Other here, and consequently borders and boundaries have been confounded. And the flow of culture has been at once homogenizing and heterogenizing' (352-353). Postcolonial critics, Dirlik concludes, 'have engaged in valid criticism of past forms of ideological hegemony but have had little to say about its contemporary figurations' (356).

In other words, while the disparities of power remain, their structures have become more complicated, configured by 'transnational capital' (Dirlik 1994, 350), rather than the aftereffects of past European empires. There is no doubt that the trends described by Dirlik in the mid-nineties are even more pronounced today. In translation, these developments can be seen in the rise of multinational publishers, the internationalisation of the book market, and the phenomenon of international blockbusters and bestsellers. The result has not simply been a 'flat' world with equal access for all, although the faster and easier 'flow of culture' has offered new possibilities for previously marginalised writers to gain a wider readership (see, for example, Rodríguez Murphy 2015, 148; Rafael 2015; Shamma 2015). But the new formations of power demand new models.

To cite one illustrative example: describing her experience translating *Girls of Riyadh* by Saudi writer Rajaa Alsanea, Marilyn Booth asks whether 'the prevalent notions of the "first-world" translator's power to speak for "postcolonial" texts' (2008, 197) are still valid for the global marketplace of today's world. Embracing the postcolonial ethic of difference, and drawing in particular on Spivak's injunction to engage with the rhetoricity of the original (200), Booth 'attempted a maximum amount of "literalist surrender"' (201) in her translation of the Arabic novel. Consequently, she used a 'foreignizing' strategy whose aim was to reject 'homogenizing language' (200) and capture what she saw as the hybrid features of Alsanea's novel (198). But to Booth's dismay, the author successfully lobbied the publisher (Penguin) for a 'domesticating' version that she hoped would convey the globalised milieu of the novel and emphasise affinities with British and American 'chick lit' (201). As a result, Alsanea was permitted to revise the translation without consulting the translator, and the published English version reflected all the editorial changes that she had asked for. Whether one agrees with the rationales for Alsanea's revisions or not, it is clear that the widely held postcolonial principle of preserving the alterity of the source text, assuming somehow discrete and self-contained cultural entities, requires serious rethinking. What is even more important is the new configuration of power that seems to underlie the whole project: a 'Third World' author, backed by a 'First World' transnational publisher, managed to reverse the decisions of a 'First World' translator. For this reason, Booth questions conventional theorising of 'what the Western translator does to non-Western texts' (209). Such 'binarized categories,' she argues, take 'for granted a unidirectional power flow that is inaccurate in today's economy of corporate publishing and star-power advertising'. Hence, the traditional '"global North-global South" hierarchy' (209) cannot be taken at face value anymore.

Such developments have not been lost on practitioners in postcolonial studies, which has seen a growing concern in recent years about 'the potential exhaustion of postcolonialism as a paradigm' (Wenzel 2007, 233). Scholarly forums have queried 'The End of Postcolonial Theory' (Yaeger 2007) and 'What remains of the postcolonial' (Young 2012, 19). While there is a general agreement that the basic problems postcolonial studies addresses (especially inequality of power as governing intercultural exchange) remain valid today, new interpretive frameworks have been proposed to compensate for 'the absence of new paradigms for tackling fresh and continuing imperialisms' (Wenzel 2007, 634). Potential alternatives have included ecocriticism, human rights (634), anthropogenic global warming (Chakrabarty 2012), and generally a focus on 'particular

modes of cultural production, performances, narratives of modernity, and wider issues of political and moral economies' (Diouf 2007, 641).

Quite recently, Paul Bandia, a major exponent of postcolonial translation studies, has declared that 'the colonizer-colonized dichotomy is worn out' (Rodríguez Murphy 2015, 148). He argues that the experience that current translation theories have to capture 'is one of people surviving among themselves and in relation to the global community, not always in relation to the former colonizers' (149). This experience, Bandia maintains, is especially important in modern writings whose 'main objective is not just a knee-jerk response to the colonizer, or tinkering with the European language to impress the colonialist critic' (149). Whether the 'postcolonial' will be superseded by a new term like 'Post Postcolonial Translation Studies' (149) remains to be seen. More studies on postcolonial translation will certainly continue to appear in the coming years. However, with the global landscape increasingly marked by porous borders and multiple identities, generating new forms of domination and resistance, together with the growing bifurcation of current paradigms and the emergence of new ones, postcolonial translation studies may be under pressure to re-define its scope, possibly even to justify its existence as a separate analytical framework.

7. Further Reading

Booth, Marilyn. 2008. 'Translator v. author' (2007) *Girls of Riyadh* Go to New York.' *Translation Studies* 1:2. 197-211.

Through her experience with the translation of a controversial novel by a Saudi female novelist, Booth rethinks the translator/author relationship in the modern, globalised market, which often goes beyond the traditional East-West power dichotomies.

Rafael, Vicente L. 2015. 'Betraying Empire: Translation and the Ideology of Conquest'. *Translation Studies* 8:1, 82-93.

In a forum on "Translation and the Ideology of Conquest", a major figure in postcolonial translation studies examines the linguistic politics of Western empires (Spain and the United States) from a historical perspective and considers their operations in today's world. Responses in this and the following issue critique Vicente's arguments, with some authors expanding the scope of analysis beyond the Western tradition.

Rodríguez Murphy, Elena. 2015. "An interview with Professor Paul Bandia." *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 23:1. 143-154.

A (self)reflection on the current state and future prospects of postcolonial translation studies by and an important contributor to the field.

Shamma, Tarek. 2009. 'Translation Theory and Postcolonial Studies.' *MonTI: Monographs in Translation and Interpreting* 1. 183-196.

An overview of the major trends in postcolonial approaches to translation, focusing on their applications, strengths, and weaknesses

Simon, Sherry and Paul St-Pierre. 2000. *Changing the Terms: Translating in the Postcolonial Era*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.

Published at a time when postcolonial translation studies was rapidly expanding, this book captures what the authors saw as exciting and paradigm-shifting developments in the field.

8. Related Topics

Translation history, knowledge and nation building in China; Social contexts, ideology and translation; Translation, clashes and conflict; Cultural resistance, female voices; Indigenous cultures in translation; Translation, hybridity and borderlands; Culture and translation in the rise of globalised education

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[1] An application of the Deleuzian-Guattarian concept of rhizome to Translation Studies has been done by the Spanish scholar África Vidal-Claramonte (*En los límites de la traducción*, 2005, prologue by R. Arrojo, pp. 35-6; and *La traducción y los espacios*, 2013, pp. 89-91).