

Running head: TRANSLATION AS A TRANSFORMATIVE ACT OF RESISTANCE 1

Translation as a Transformative Act of Resistance : A Postcolonial Exploration of the  
Western Metaphysics of Guilt

Md. Rakibul Alam

Lecturer, Dept. of English

Bangladesh Army University of Engineering and Technology (BAUET)

Qadirabad, Natore, Bangladesh

### Abstract

The act of translation is almost coeval with human existence. It is among those very few activities that date back to Babel, even if not to the Garden of Eden. There is an omnipresence of translationality in all human communicative activities. Unfortunately, for a long time, the dominant Western discourses of translation have assumed the act of translation merely as an unavoidable/unexpected post-Babel crisis. Translational activities have often been seriously undermined and charged with various guilts especially in the Western discursive practices. This Western metaphysics of guilt has conceived the act of translation as a secondary/inferior activity and the translator as no more than a betrayer to the 'original'. But by the advent of postcolonial translation theories, there is a paradigm shift in the conceptualization of translational activities. Nowadays the 'original' is no longer exclusively seen as de facto superior to the translation.

Translation is now seen as an autonomous free-standing creative work of the first order: not at all a secondary activity rather an activity which is primarily genuine and creative. This paper explores various postcolonial theories of and approaches to translation against the backdrop of Western metaphysics of guilt and attempts to establish the act of translation as a transformative act of resistance. Postcolonial approaches suggest ways to unsettle the unapologetic control and domination of the Western metaphysics of guilt surrounding the translational discourse. These approaches offer us with a significant site for invoking numerous questions involving serious issues like representation, power and historicity.

*Keywords:* Translation, Resistance, Negotiation, Transformation

### **Translation as a Transformative Act of Resistance : A Postcolonial Exploration of the Western Metaphysics of Guilt**

Translation had been at the heart of colonial encounter and had helped in the establishment and perpetuation of superiority of one language/culture over the other. Undeniably, it has been misused as a colonial tool. But the importance of studying translation studies in the postcolonial era has become even more important since the previously powerful languages and cultures of the West now interact with the languages/cultures once marginalized and ignored. These cultures of the marginalized now write back to the centre of power through translation. Thereby translational activities provide us with various opportunities to resist those linguistic and cultural hegemonies. This researcher observes that through resistance and negotiation, translational activities can envision and create a better world order based on mutual respect and understanding among people, community and countries. This article tries to show how literary translations can both undo and embody the hegemonic ideology and how the act of translation, especially in this neo-colonial era, can be an effective tool of transformative resistance in dismantling linguistic and cultural domination of the West by intervening intellectually into the prevailing dominant Euro-centric unjust academic and literary structures. It attempts at problematising the hegemonic processes which operate, almost in an unquestioned and unchecked manner, within Western translational discourses. This researcher deems that though translation has long been instrumental in perpetuating hegemonic operations, the time is ripe now to turn it into a decolonizing tool and by the process of resistance and negotiation the mono-linguistic domination of 'the' world language (English) or in extension the cultural imperialism

perpetuated by the West can be challenged and transformed through negotiations. It is urgent because, as the African proverb aptly suggests “until the lion learns how to write, every story will glorify the hunter.”

The translator apparently seems to determine the choice, process and product of a translation, but, in doing so, s/he always functions as an agent of translation politics and reveals/betrays the forces of ideology that has already made/produced her/him even before s/he attempts to choose. That means, before the act of translating, s/he becomes a being shaped up, determined, chosen and translated by the forces of translation politics.

The word ‘translation’ has etymologically started its tremendous journey from Latin translation (which primarily means “a carrying across” or “a bringing across”: in this case, of a text from one language to another) and has itself been translated with the passage of time establishing the act of translation as an autonomous free-standing creative work of the first order. Especially after the advent of postcolonial translation theories, we have been offered with an ethical paradigm for a systematic critique of an institutional suffering namely ‘imperialism’ and its aftermaths; and thereby it provides us with a discursive structure, imbued with ‘subversive potential’, for a systematic exploration of what the act of translation actually is and what it means at all to be a translator in an era of covert colonialism.

Evidently, “Translation Studies has for decades been dominated by Western modes of understanding and theorizing about translation and closed to models of other traditions.” One recent development is the keen interest in translation theories that transcend Eurocentrism.

The old notion of condemning translations “as second-best, as somehow lacking in some vital way” or as a secondary act has received a strong reaction as well as re-evaluation especially by postcolonial translation theorists.

It is, of course, now recognized that colonialism and translation went hand in hand. From the fifteenth century onwards, the expansion of European imperialism was a crucial reminder of the necessity of translation. Sometimes it was for the general urge of understanding others but very often for perpetuating Western hegemony. This intention is specially evident in the historical fact that a dominant metaphor of colonialism was that of rape, of husbanding “virgin lands”, tilling them and fertilizing them and hence ‘civilizing’ them. Since the European Enlightenment translation has been used as a manipulative tool to underwrite the practices of subjectification, especially for the colonized people, by setting and perpetuating different kind of hegemony. The colonial machines achieved the control of definition by carrying out an extensive range of translational projects which were imbued with reductionism, essentialism and diverse processes of othering the Oriental people and their culture. A sort of hijacking of the ‘agency’ was done by those projects. The colonized territory and its own depository of knowledge both were represented as the “exotic other”: a seductive, feminine, fantastic, exciting entity but at the same time evil and inferior in status. It was not a special case for the Eastern world only; the whole imperial projects all over the world were largely dependent on numerous translational activities as Eric Cheyfitz has argued that translation was “the central act of European colonization and imperialism in America.”

However, in our part of the world or in the Indian subcontinent, the desire of colonial discourse to translate and thereby control was comparatively massive and far-reaching. It is particularly evident in the colonial missionaries’ effort to make dictionaries for ‘unknown’ languages. Niranjana observes that “European missionaries were the first to prepare Western-style dictionaries for most of the Indian languages, participating thereby in the enormous

project of collection and codification on which colonial power is based.” Those missionaries very well knew that languages “simultaneously structure and are structured by time, by the syntax of past, present, and future.” So, besides their roles as priests and teachers, they used their capacity as linguists, grammarians, and obviously ‘translators’ to make feasible the dismissal of indigenous education and the introduction of Western education. They, by functioning as “colonial agents” in the formation of practices of subjectification, rather helped in occupying the psyche of the natives in a way that they started feeling self-guilt about their own culture and heritage. This subtle strategy was successful in colonizing the minds and erasing the merciless invasion and plundering by the Europeans. It ensured the eternal superiority of the Western culture in their mind. In short, translation in a compelling manner turned out to be what Homi Bhabha has called “technologies of colonial power.” Evidently, a process of “Capitalizing History” is formidably present in those enormous translation projects undertaken in the colonial period. Taking these issues of abusive use of translation as means of subjection very seriously, Tejaswini Niranjana sharply observes: Translation as a practice shapes, and takes shape within, the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism. What is here at stake is the representation of the colonized, who need to be produced in such a manner as to justify colonial domination, and to beg for the English book by themselves.

It is only after the First World War that the process of decolonization was initiated. For Frantz Fanon, decolonization started actually on a crucial point in time when people of the oppressed region who were so long forced-fed on foreign values no longer could stomach them:

## TRANSLATION AS A TRANSFORMATIVE ACT OF RESISTANCE

7

In the colonial context the settler obviously ends his work of breaking in the native when the latter admits loudly and intelligibly the supremacy of the white man's value. In the period of decolonization, the colonized masses mock at these very values, insult them, and vomit them up.

So, from the late fifties onward, we find a growing resistance to anything remote-controlled, from administrative structure to academic syllabus, and the phase of "nauseating mimicry" (in Fanon's phrase) gave way to a newer kind of phase in which ex-colonized cultures long for defining their own cultures "reactively and aggressively from within".

In other words, decolonization can customarily be envisioned as a period when the colonial "machine [went] into reverse."

But here it should be noted that this "end of domination" may not be as simplistic and linear as it sounds. Rather, from another perspective, the term 'decolonization' can be taken crudely as the "transfer of power" usually from the dominating colonial power to an indigenous "new elites—the 'Macaulayan' class, indigenous in blood and colour but Western in education, training and taste". In this line of argument it seems that in no ways it was the 'end' of domination because the symbolic domination is equally crucial like physical domination and thus factually "there is nothing post about colonialism"; at least not in this particular spatiotemporal dimension we are now engulfed in. It is much so because the basic strength of colonial discourse lies in its enormous 'flexibility'. So, Maswood Akhter observes succinctly that we now and then cannot help but discover that the old colonial patterns of power relations are being reproduced around us which can only be understood as "neo-colonial": It is not the official departure of the colonial machine that has engineered, by default, the architecture of a new world order, rather, while the colonies do not exist anymore (here of

course we take colony as implying a country under direct administrative set-up or structure of governance of another, more powerful, country), colonialism—which indicates both an idea and a condition—happens to continue, albeit without its more obvious signs.

So, in this neo-colonial era, Translation Studies offers us a significant site for invoking numerous questions involving serious issues like representation, power and historicity. Thus radical changes in the ways of perceiving the act of translation in the context of postcolonial societies are happening very fast; it makes the rethinking of translation an urgent and unavoidable task to undertake. As the non-western ‘other’ are underpinned by the dominant metaphysics of translation, these new approaches are increasingly focusing on the fact that new translational projects should bring into being the overreaching concepts of reality and representation which totally occlude the violence that accompanies the formation of hegemonic image of the colonial subject and thereby challenge and subvert it. Any such postcolonial counter-hegemonic practice aims to find out ways of writing and rewriting history in order to make sense how subjugation operates. These practices in general attempt to make sense of “subjects” already living “in translation” who are “imaged and reimaged by colonial way of seeing.” Hence, the status of translation has undergone a significant change after the end of the colonial period: “at this point in time, postcolonial theorists are increasingly turning towards translation and both re-appropriating and reassessing the term itself.”

Now, it is evident that in case of translating any literary work, the task of the translator is far more challenging because it is texts, not sentences, nor words that a skilled and conscious translator focuses on. And texts, in turn, are parts of larger cultural groups of diverse perspectives through which different visions of the world are disseminated. A text, as far as



the postcolonial paradigm is concerned, is not only a mere artistic artefact but also a representative category or means— essentially a socio-cultural and political product. As Dilthey emphasizes, every act of understanding is itself involved in history, in a relativity of perspective. Hence, instead of looking at it as a mere piece of art which contains only various ‘beauties’ or ‘qualities’ in it, a politically aware translator rather considers any literary text as representative of a society or community. And when s/he interprets a text in this way, they are naturally looking for “the politics of representation.” S/he reads a text with the particular awareness that we acquire, hold and digest information and perceptions via narratives. Hence, any literary work has broader social, cultural as well as political implications. Such reading of a text is a political reading because s/he is in search of the dynamics of power relations, the politics of exclusion and inclusion, and the strategies of ‘othering’. Thus they tend to take both the literary and para-literary issues into consideration; issues which go formidably into the ‘making’ of the text. Hence s/he endorses not a literary reading rather one that can be tentatively called cultural reading of a text by not being solely dependent and enchanted by those so-called ‘universal’ or ‘timeless’ values of a text rather by accommodating a politicized or contextualized reading where local concerns are equally important. Hence, the invocation to cultural contexts is central in these views because only then we can understand a text with adequacy and translate it carefully based on an inclusive and holistic ground.

A capable translator, in the process, foregrounds the essential ‘glocality’ of a text— being global and local at the same time. S/he endorses such belief in ‘glocal’ reading because any culture which germinates a text always travels and it is kind of borderless in nature. It is fluid and never homogeneous; it is never ‘pure’ rather always an amalgamation, a *mélange* of

heterogeneous tendencies—any culture, in this sense, is always already an amalgamation of various cultures. A translator, then, in his or her mind, always keeps track of this essential hybridity and heterogeneity of cultures. They consequently detect the hegemonic operations and power relations tacitly in play behind any text present at his/her hand waiting to be translated. Also they deem that a text is always, to use Raymond Williams' phrase, a part of the "lived life" and to translate it properly we have to situate it there because those issues of the "whole way of life" markedly control both the making of the text and how it is received by people in different cultural scenarios. As Anthony Burgess aptly opines, "translation is not a matter of words only: it is a matter of making intelligible a whole culture." Steiner also comments in this regard: "a text is embedded in specific historical time; it has what linguists call a diachronic structure. To read fully is to restore all that one can of the immediacies of value and intent in which speech actually occurs."

This type of translation has often been named as "cultural translation" which recommends the cultural reading of a text instead of formal reading. Its simple assumption is that texts cannot invoke the same response from all the readers as they belong to different cultures. In this relation, Derrida's insight is indeed illuminating. He emphasizes on the fact that "every text is undecidable in the sense that it conceals conflicts within it between different authorial voices—sometimes termed the text and subtext(s). Every text is a contested terrain in the sense that what it appears to 'say' on the surface cannot be understood without reference to the concealments and contextualization of meaning going on simultaneously to mark the text's significance".

Reading and translating, therefore, should be contextualized and culture-specific. So, para-literary issues too should be considered. It must be read in conjunction with the lived life and

other life practices. No text, to be precise, can be read divorced or disjointed from the dynamics of the whole way of life that brings it into being. Hence Ricoeur rightly remarks: The work of the translator does not move from the word to the sentence, to the text, to the cultural group, but conversely absorbing vast interpretations of the spirit of a culture, the translator comes down again from the text, to the sentence and to the word.

Lefevere also sharply opines:

I simply want to make the point that, contrary to traditional opinion, translation is not primarily 'about' language. Rather, language as the expression (and repository) of a culture, is one element in the cultural transfer known as translation.

Therefore, we need to be aware, Professor Fakrul Alam thinks, of the "transformative potentials" of such cultural translation and appreciate "the manifold ways in which translation activity has conveyed cultures from one sphere to another over time." So, before starting translation, to ascertain cultural reading of any text and to trace its immanent silences or lacunas, it is better to bear always in mind that though a text is, on the surface level, nothing but a combination of words, phrases and sentences, a system of signs and semiotics, yet interpreting and understanding them is to primarily locate them in their contexts. It is an act of contextualizing them with a set of attitudes and conventions which are barely, or rather rarely, given in the text. A translator has to simultaneously come to terms with the signs and symbols and the tropes and conventions given in the text and acquire and familiarize oneself with the conventions and contexts within and against which a text works and becomes meaningful. The translator must actualize the implicit 'sense', the denotative, connotative, illative, intentional, associative range of significations which are always implicitly there in

the 'original'. Hence the uncanny remark in one of Kafka's notebooks is arresting: "we are digging the pit of Babel."

Translational activities are always replete with both intellectual and ethical issues. A.K Ramanujan's remark casts more light on this point when he says: "a translation should be true to the translator no less than to the originals." George Steiner notes too that: Each living person draws, deliberately or in immediate habit, on two sources of linguistic supply: the current vulgate corresponding to his level of literacy, and a private thesaurus. The latter is inextricably a part of his subconscious, of his memories so far as they may be verbalized, and the singular, irreducibly specific ensemble of his somatic and psychological identity.

It becomes more vital in the sense that the decoding and meaning construction processes largely depend both on the cultural inheritance of the decoders as well as their subconscious and private memories which by turn is closely connected to their cultural orientation and education.

That is why no transcendental theory of translation can ensure the complete equivalence. No universal method can be found which can automatically capacitate someone to render the ultimately 'correct' translation. For the sake of argument, even if it is found, the case would not be much different: as humanity always exists in "pluralist framework", that is to say there is plurality of human beings, cultures, tongues; so it means that even any legitimate form of 'universality' will naturally find its equivalent plurality. This very dialectic between universal versus plural, it is interesting to note, then amounts to the situation where "the task of the translator is an endless one, a work of tireless memory and mourning, of appropriation and disappropriation, of taking up and letting go, of expressing oneself and welcoming others."

Yet the final word of Ricoeur's last major published book, *Memory, History and Forgetting* is 'incompletion' which is rather very suggestive in this regard as it indicates that the act of translation, being an endlessly unfinished business, is "a signal not of failure but of hope."

Ricoeur holds the opinion that the work of the translator is like that of a middleman between "two masters", between an author and a reader, a self and another. Hence a translator is bound to undergo the experiences of tension, anxiety and suffering because s/he is bound to check the impulse to reduce "the otherness of the other" and "to subsume alien meaning into his target scheme of things." So, it is rather a double duty: to "expropriate oneself as one appropriates the other." He further states that when we translate "we allow our language to put on the stranger's clothes and simultaneously we invite the stranger to step into the fabric of our own speech." Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi illuminatingly explain this process: Translation does not happen in a vacuum, but in a continuum; it is not an isolated act, it is part of an ongoing process of intercultural transfer. Moreover, translation is a highly manipulative activity that involves all kinds of stages in that process of transfer across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Translation is not an innocent, transparent activity but is highly charged with significance at every stage; it rarely, if ever, involves a relationship of equality between texts, authors or systems.

Translation practices in the colonial context have always been studied as a part of the asymmetrical power structure that exists between two languages and cultures. Such practices do not merely consist of the interaction between two authors, rather entails a deep political implication. As postcolonial Translation Studies accommodates many insights from other disciplines, it becomes inter-disciplinary or cross-disciplinary, a hybridised academic field of study. It entails more democratisation of academic discipline. It tells us to re-examine our

conventional wisdom about poetic diction by challenging the traditional hierarchy between/of literary vocabulary and everyday language. It also identifies culture among non-elites and in the process it blurs the distinction/boundary between high and low cultures. Hence, many consider postcolonial Translation Studies as an academic site for the marginal and peripheral.

FakrulAlam opines:

Knowledge of the transformative power of translation... is something that scholars...have been discussing again and again. They have also been drawing on the also expanded notion of culture pioneered by Raymond Williams where it is viewed as a way of life of any group of people and not something reserved for the elite...

It is crucial to understand how politics of selection operates in the formulation of such hegemony. There is always a rejection of a considerable amount of elements that are actually part of the “lived life”. It tries to erase the details that may ‘confuse’. Of course there are elements of deception and cheating in such a formula. Its profile, therefore, is essentially duplicitous. That is why Walter Benjamin rightly comments:

[t]here is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism.

And just as such a document is not free of barbarism, barbarism taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one owner to another.

Mahasweta Sengupta argues that poets from former colonies have had to adjust their poetry in line with the prevailing dominant images. For instance, texts from Oriental languages were conceived as representative of a culture which is “simple, natural and in the case of India, in particular, ‘other-worldly or ‘spiritual as well”. She bluntly goes on arguing that the power of the dominant discursive parameters was such that even an extraordinary genius like Rabindranath Tagore “had to succumb to the power of the ‘image’ of the ‘Orient’ as it had

been produced by the English.” Tagore, Sengupta argues, “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.” Again, the reason is that “the representation of the native cultures and peoples— through writing about or translating from them – has been carried out in ways that are compatible with existing frames, discursive strategies and ideologies in the cultures of the ex-colonial powers” since a “third-world” writer could join “world culture and literature with the proviso that the ex-colonizer be the judge of any success.”

Meanwhile, however, the old business of translation traffic among languages goes on in the once-and-still-colonized world, reflecting more acutely than ever before the asymmetrical power relationship between the various local vernaculars (i.e. the languages of the slave, etymologically speaking) and the most dominating singular ‘master’ language namely English.

For instance, commenting on the factors of translation politics surrounding Bangla-English or English-Bangla, Professor Abdullah Al Mamun sharply observes that the age-old binaries and disparities are still very much active even in this postcolonial setting:

From British colonial times to date, all translations from Bangla to English are determined by the obvious power-relation between these two languages. Previously the relation was between the languages of the master and the subaltern subject having the dictum of Macaulay lurking underneath all through; at present the relation is between an/the international language and its literature having all the assumed properties of superiority and dominance and a language that has a significant and vast body of literature but reveals all the symptoms of having a peripheral, receiving-end existence.

Mamun identifies the symptoms of linguistic hegemony and imperialism by furthering his discussion in the similar line of thought that the peripherality of vernaculars, in this case Bangla, is specially visible by the fact that English, to a considerable extent, is still considered “officially and culturally a more prestigious language” in this part of the world and we are observing an increase in the number of “fame and name seeking so called creative writers in English” in spite of the fact that Bangla is spoken by the fourth largest number of people and its literature has the potential to flourish to a satisfactory level economically. Because of such formidable presence of linguistic imperialism in our current world scenario, postcolonial translation theorists have critically examined the act of translation as a crucial communicative activity which has the subversive potential to dismantle this unjust linguistic binary. Naturally in such a grand and risky enterprise, Lefevere observes, “tension and conflict are all but inevitable”.

Now we are well aware that the English language has undeniably been used as a tool of cultural oppression and aggression by the colonizers. Another important point is that most discussion of translation in English has been of works translated into English. In other words, the people ‘whose’ literature is being translated have not until very recently entered the discussion, either as participants or even as subjects discussed (except in a very generic ‘what-emotion-did-this-arouse-in-the-original-reader?’ context). It did not seem any kind of appropriation that a literary work should be removed from the people for whom it was first written; nothing was 'lost'; it was perhaps construed as a mark of respect that another people should want to read their work. In our Indian sub-continental context, where works are being translated from an Indian language into the colonial language (which was for long the medium for exploitation) and being translated to the West (from where information is most



widely disseminated, and which therefore produces the greatest, most powerful Truths) introduces a different set of parameters into the algebra of translation.

So, any conscious translator cannot be expected to be too much comfortable with his or her experience with that language as they unjustly used it in order to downplay the native languages and cultures. But in this era of ‘globalization’, English is becoming an increasingly global language and the number of multilingual people is rising too. Because of the huge audience English has already earned by now, we cannot practically do without English in the foreseeable future. The scenario will never be changed if we make ourselves reluctant to engage with it, to debate with it. So, the wholesale rejection of English is almost impossible in our current situation and also undesirable as the very intention is flatly fascist and exclusivist in nature. A complete refusal to understand the ‘other’ may lead us, as Tzvetan Todorov argues, “to renounce the very idea of shared humanity, and this would be even more dangerous than ethnocentric universalism.” Moreover, resistant translational activities can also capacitate us in altering the knowledge-power relations between the West and its “other”; equitable exchange, is then possible instead of one-way exchange. Indeed Ricoeur goes so far as to suggest that the future ethos of European, and eventually world politics, should be one premised upon an exchange of narratives as well as memories among nations, for it is solely when we ‘translate’ our own wounds into the language of strangers and ‘retranslate’ the wounds of them into our own language that healing and reconciliation can possibly reign again; it may also enable us, to understand that “we all, from every part of the world, live in one world.”

Satchidanandan thinks that now “translation is being recognized as a cultural activity involving not merely literary texts, but cultural codes and practices.” The conceptualization

of the translation act as a *fait accompli* in most research masks translation as “a seemingly neutral exercise which merely needs to be managed.” So, Lawrence Venuti rejects the notion that a translator should even aim for “impartial intentions”. The ‘faithful’ reproduction of the original text is, he says, not only an unreasonable goal but an undesirable one. Venuti is in agreement with Spivak and de Beaugrande when he underlines the essentially political nature of translation: an intercultural linguistic act such as translation never takes place in a political or ideological vacuum. Further, he explains, “institutions... show a preference for a translation ethics of sameness, translating that enables and ratifies existing discourses and canons, interpretations, and pedagogies...if only to ensure the unruffled reproduction of the institution.” If we are to resist this ‘domestication’, we must first bring the urge to domesticate to the surface. For this reason, Venuti calls for a translation practice that would retain and lay bare the ‘difference’ between the source text and the target language; that would account for what Leclercle calls “the reminder”—the “minor variables” of a language that are held in check by the dominant metaphysics. Rather than aiming for ‘impartial’ renderings of an ‘original’, then, the translator’s task is to allow the ‘remainder’ to surface in the translation. Therefore, such observation arises:

...thick translation can correct contemporary translation studies’ easy but often self-serving assumption that whatever translates as translation is[sic] translation, and of their eagerness to rush into generalizations, laws and universals at the expense of the complex nesting of concepts and practices of translation in their environment and history.

These new views of translation take into consideration the dynamic and fluid aspects of every language and that is why they tend to be more elastic, comprehensive, holistic and relaxed views of language and translational activities related to it:

...ordinary language is, literally at every moment, subject to mutation. This takes many forms. New words enter as old words lapse. Grammatical conventions are changed under pressure of idiomatic use or by cultural ordinance. The spectrum of permissible expression as against that which is taboo shifts perpetually.

Rather, we must find out the possibilities of how, through undertaking numerous translational projects, English can also be transformed into a decolonizing tool to achieve our own end: which of course is not revengeful in spirit but an end which ensures, in this case on the linguistic level, equity and justice. Appropriation of English can help a lot in this regard; in Achebe's phrase, "a new English" altered to suit our own purposes can be of great help in our attempt of resistance. Through appropriation, linguistic as well as cultural negotiation is very much feasible to a significant extent. This researcher envisions that we may wisely capitalize on this politically, historically and socially charged relation with English. If this prospect is accepted, then it is wiser to ensure now that the labour of learning English is fully exploited in giving voice to the less heard: our own literary culture; to subvert the cultural and linguistic monopoly of the colonizers. Regarding this issue Sujit Mukherjee opines that "the proverbial brace of birds can be killed by the same stone if we direct the learning of English towards the discovery not of England's literature but of the literature written in many Indian languages." This alludes, in turn, of course to one of the central focuses of this article: translation as a transformative act of resistance against the linguistic and cultural monopoly already established by Europeans. Devy points out, Postcolonial writing in the former colonies in Africa and other parts of the world has experienced the importance of translation as one of the crucial conditions for creativity. Origins of literary movements and literary traditions inhabit various acts of translation.

Translational activities can ‘resist’ such politics of stereotyping and thus immensely contribute to the overall ‘transformation’ of the unjust structures prevailing across the world. This resistance might be a chance for us of seeking the alternative human history. All the insular, elitist, exclusionary, fragmentary and hegemonic perspectives/visions can be discarded and altered. In this way interlingual translational activities can have a great impact on the target language and culture “that is lasting and that may be potentially transformative.”

Walter Benjamin also asserts that the able translator knows always that by translating creatively a resonant work from another culture, s/he is “allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tone.” Simply put, postcolonial translation projects are bluntly against any aggressive generalization and cast a critical eye on the formulation of the notion of representation because in the final analysis, as suggested by Amartya Sen, our representation becomes our identity. That’s why this researcher conceives the act of translation as something potentially subversive and thereby a transformative act of resistance. But, here, we have to be always aware of the fact that the subversive potentials of translational activities do not/cannot exist as such for a long period of time, since the market and the capitalist arrangements discover in it commercial potentials; they intervene duly and exploit the newly found market. In the process translational activities may lose its subversive potential. This process is part of the capitalist system: the hegemonic effect to destroy the opposition by commoditizing/ commercialising the very subversion. It makes the ‘deviation’ itself a ‘product’.

Therefore, it is the task of the postcolonial translator to convey the thought processes of a community in a way that combines close reading as well as empathy. To attain this end they must learn to hone his/her skills in re-presenting people and their culture by entering into a

kind of dialogic relationship with them. Fakrul Alam explains how this transformative concept can be benefited from Walter Benjamin's idea about the transformation of the target language through various translational activities, Edward Said's notion of "travelling theory" and James Clifford's conceptualization of "travelling cultures". Ultimately cultural translation, Fakrul thinks, is the means "in which the world has been redressing itself again and again after the fallout it has been enduring after Babel." Fakrul Alam opines:

... the concept of cultural translation can be most useful when conceived in terms of the root meaning of the word 'translation', that is to say, as the movement of ideas born in languages from one part of the world to another in paradigmatic moments of history when we witness the phenomena of transformation.

Translation can be a very effective tool to resist and transform this neo-colonial situation. We know that postcolonialism is a discourse that primarily deals with the processes, effects and responses to colonialism. One form of 'response' is of course resistance. Here arise the significance and effectiveness of translational activities. The customary understanding is that postcolonialism means 'anti-colonialism'. But postcolonialism must not be thought like that because there is no automatic connection between postcolonialism and anti-colonialism.

Rather postcolonialism is a bewildering term in which possibilities jostle, some of them are even contradictory. Hence, any postcolonial translator must fix his resistance strategies very much carefully. Talal Asad warns us that there is always the risk of misrepresenting a text culturally when the translator is from a more developed society or "is inevitably enmeshed in conditions of power—professional, national, intentional." But if the postcolonial translators are well aware of the "asymmetrical tendencies and pressures in the language of dominated

and dominant societies” and are willing to explore sincerely the possibilities of cultural translation then they can do a job that is worth doing.

Postcolonial translation theorists propound the vision and mission that translation can be an effective tool to subvert the already established scheme of things; it can ‘resist’ and alter the existing linguistic and cultural imperialism or the monopoly of the West for what we have here is the problematic issues like “translations of texts from cultures that are not civilisationally linked, and among which exists an unequal power relationship.” The whole enterprise is pervaded by an urge to unsettle the discursive structures of power which perpetuate colonial beliefs and practices. Fanon rightly suggests:

The Third World must start over a new history of man which takes account of... the pathological dismembering of his functions and the erosion of his unity, and in the context of the community, the fracture, the stratification and the bloody tensions fed by class, and finally, on the immense scale of humanity, the racial hatred, slavery, exploitation.

Talal Asad stresses that “the structures of power the colonized writer confronts are institutional, not textual.” Asad argues for the need for a “more systematic consideration of the social preconditions and consequences of translating Western discourses”. Thereby it can bring positive ‘transformation’ in the existing unjust order of the world, in the “Eurocentric stereotypes”. Many strategies can be taken to meet this end. ‘Appropriation’ of the English language is one of them: we can use English in such a way that suits our purpose. Of course this does not mean/ recommend the mindless/romantic assertion of indigenous aspects.

Moreover, through the act of translation we may create our own agency, i.e. control over means of representation and thereby we can dismantle existing hegemony. It entails the starting of the process of decolonization because those hegemonies are the means through

which neo-colonialism is operated successfully. Translational activities, in the process, may unsettle the centuries-old centres/margins or Orient/Other binaries. Simply put, the process of decolonization involves dismantling of the binaries. Plenty of intellectual and literary translation is necessary for this. Hence, translation can be an act of discursive resistance to colonialism. Lefevere comments that translation as “rewriting manipulates, and it is effective.” He assumes that we now exist in the most manipulative culture human beings have ever lived through and therefore a study of translation may not tell the students what to do, but it can very well show them “the ways of not allowing other people to tell them what to do.”

To conclude, it can be said that translation from one language to another, and by extension of the concept, from one culture to another as well, in the sense that Asad has in mind, if carried out with sensitivity and competence, can have a transformative effect on the target language as well as on the readers of the recipient culture. To put it in the words of the Canadian scholar Kyle Conway, such translation has “the potential to open up a space for cultural Others.”

References

Abdullah Al Mamun (2008), Translating *versus* Being Translated, *Praxis*, 3, p.39.

Amartya Sen (2007), Identity and Violence, New York: Penguin. AmartyaSen finds today's identity politics as the root of all worldwide violence.

Andre Lefevere [ed.] (1992), *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, op.cit., p. 20.

Andre Lefevere [ed.] (1992), *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, op.cit., p. 9.

Andre Lefevere [ed.] (1992), *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, op.cit., p.57.

Anthony Burgess (1984), Is Translation Possible?, *Translation* 12, p. 7 (pp. 5–7).

Ben Agger (1991), Critical Theory, Poststructuralism, Postmodernism: Their Sociological, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 17, p. 112.

Chinua Achebe, The African Writer and the English Language.

<http://writinglanguage.weebly.com/uploads/2/4/0/24059962/> (Accessed 20 August 2018).

Christopher Kasparek (1983), The Translator's Endless Toil, *The Polish Review*, 28 (2), p. 83.

Defeng Li [Preface] (2015), Libo Huang, *Style in Translation: A Corpus-Based Perspective*, Defeng Li [trans.], London: Springer. p. 27.



For a comprehensive description of the convergence of missionary and imperial efforts in

Bengal, the first center of British government in India, see David Kopf (1969), *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Fakrul Alam (2015), *Cultural Translation and the Transformation of Cultures*, op.cit., p. 9.

Fakrul Alam (2015), *Cultural Translation and the Transformation of Cultures*, *Praxis*, 7, p. 11, 12, 27.

Frantz Fanon (1961), *The Wretched of the Earth*, Richard Phicox [trans.], New York: Grove Press, p. 238.

Frantz Fanon (1968), *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington, New York: Grove Press, p. 43.

Ganesh Devy, (1999), *Translation and Literary History: An Indian View*, Post-colonial Translation: Theory and *Practice*, Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi [eds.], op.cit., p. 183.

George Steiner (1975), *After Babel*, op.cit., p. 18.

George Steiner (1975), *After Babel*, op.cit., p. 161.

George Steiner (1998), *After Babel*, op.cit., p. 30.

George Steiner (1998), *After Babel*, op.cit., p. 67.

George Steiner, (1998), *After Babel*, op.cit., p. 249.

TRANSLATION AS A TRANSFORMATIVE ACT OF RESISTANCE

26

Henry Louis Gates Jr [ed.] [1986], *Race, Writing and Difference*. University of Chicago Press :Chicago, p. 374.

Homi Bhabha (1985) *Signs Taken for Wanders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi, May 1817*. *Critical Inquiry* 12, (1), pp. 144-65.

Ibid, p. 9

Ibid, p.16

Ibid, p.24

Ibid, p. 39

Ibid, p.44

Ibid, p. 49

Ibid, p. 164

Ibid, p.167

Ibid, pp. 206-213.

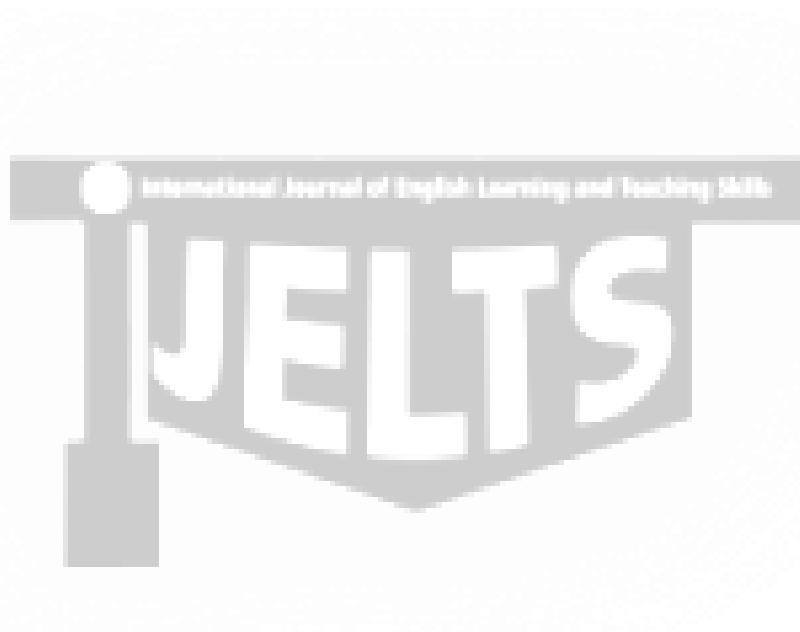
Ibid, p. 329

Ibid, p. 837

Ibid, p. 841

Ibid, p. xvi

Jean-Paul Satre [Preface] (1968), *The Wretched of the Earth*, op.cit.,p. 9.



Joyce Tolliver (2002), *Rosalina Between Two Shores: Gender, Rewriting, and Translation*,  
*Hispania*, op.cit., p. 36.

K. Satchidanandan (1999), *Reflections: Rethinking Translation*, *Indian Literature*, op.cit., p.  
12.

Kyle Conway (2012), *A Conceptual and Empirical Approach to Cultural Translation*,  
*Translation Studies* 5 (3), pp. 264-269 (Accessed on 20 August 2018)

Mahasweta Sengupta (1995), *Translation as Manipulation: The Power of Images and the  
Images of Power*, Anuradha Dingwaney and Carol Maier [ed.] *Between Languages  
and Cultures. Translation and Cross-cultural Texts*, Pittsburgh and London :  
*University of Pittsburgh Press*, p. 159, 160, 171

Maswood Akhter (2014), *On Doing Postcolonialism, Literature, History and Culture:  
Writings in Honour of Professor Aali Areefur Rehman, Abdullah Al Mamun and  
Maswood Akhter* [eds.], Rajshahi: Department of English, University of Rajshahi, p.  
840-841.

Paul Ricoeur (2006), *On Translation*, op.cit., p. xx.

Paul Ricoeur. (2006), *On Translation*, op.cit., p. 33.

Raymond Williams (1961), *The Long Revolution*, London: Chatto & Windos, pp. 57-60.

Richard Kearney [Introduction] (2006), Paul Ricoeur, *On Translation*, London and New York:  
Routledge, pp. xv-xvi.

Sigmund's Freud's notion of the "process of sublimation" can be taken into consideration in this relation here. As any art work is, according to him, a kind of expressions of suppressions, any translational project is also engulfed by the psychic desires at work in the mind of the translator.

Sujit Mukherjee (1994), *Translation as Discovery*, op.cit., p. 38.

Susan Bassnett (2011), *Reflections on Translation*, Bristol: Multilingual Matters, p.119.

Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi [eds.] [Introduction] (1999), *Post-Colonial Translation*, op.cit., p.4.

Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi [eds.] (1999), *Post-colonial Translation*, op.cit., p. 13.

Susan Reuben (2017), Translators come out of the shadows, *The Jewish Chronicle*, <https://www.thejc.com/culture/books/translation-jessica-cohen-nicholas-de-lange-books-1.439874> (Accessed 20 March 2018)

Talal Asad (1980), The concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology. In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. ed. James Clifford, Los Angeles: *University of California Press*, P. 165

Talal Asad (1996), *Translation, Critique and Subversion.*, Anuradha Dingwaney and Carol Maier [ed.] *Between Languages and Cultures. Translation and Cross-cultural Texts*, Pittsburgh and London : *University of Pittsburgh Press*, p. 330.

Tejaswini Niranjana conceives translation potentially as an act of 'disruption'. For details see Tejaswini Niranjana(1992), *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 163-186.

Theo Hermans (2003), Cross-Cultural Translation Studies as Thick Translation, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 66(3), p. 387.

Walter Benjamin (1969), *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry John, New York : Schocken Books, P.256.

Walter Benjamin (2000), The Task of the Translator, *The Translation Studies Reader*, [ed.] Lawrence Venuti. London: Routledge, p. 22.

