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DOROTA KOŁODZIEJCZYK
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9321-4259
University of Wrocław
dorota.kolodziejczyk@uwr.edu.pl

CULTURAL DIFFERENCE IN TRANSLATION: THE TRANSLATIONALITY OF POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE*

Abstract

The article investigates the work of cultural difference in language in the context of translation, specifically as an effect of translation processes within postcolonial literature, and its role in reinforcing postcolonial literature as the world literature in English. Delineating the space of postcolonial literature as that of primary translation, the article looks into how cultural difference travels in interlingual translation of postcolonial literature from English to Polish.

In postcolonial literature, cultural difference, which functions as a specific element of otherness/foreignness in the text, reveals the ethical dimension of translation, because it uncovers the presence of other, prior or side-tracked originals making up the text of postcolonial literature. Cultural difference is, thus, the substance of postcolonial literature and nothing less than translation in progress. It is the process of negotiation between the original form/language and a new form in another language, which is the language of the (former) empire.

Basic features of postcolonial literature: resistance (Boehmer 2013: 307), counter-discourse (Ashcroft et al. 2000), imitation, mimicry and sly civility (Bhabha, 1994), abrogation and appropriation of the language of the empire (Ashcroft et al. 1989), the triumphant overcoming of peripherality in the "empire writes back" phenomenon (Rushdie 1982), and, last but not least, the marketing of the margins (Huggan 2001)

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and cultural brokering between peripheries and world capital (Appiah 1991) are also translational practices both in the cultural and linguistic sense.
The article proposes to study interlingual translation of postcolonial literature in connection with its paradoxical status of a monolingual (English-dominated) literature, in which cultural difference works as a spectral presence of other languages. In this difficult negotiation between multilingualism and monolingualism, postcolonial literature enacts key problems of translation studies.

Keywords: cultural difference in translation, postcolonial literature, untranslatability

"How could one have a language that is not theirs?"[1] Writing back to the empire

In postcolonial literature, cultural difference, which functions as the space of otherness/foreignness in the text, demonstrates the ethical dimension of translation, because it reveals the presence of other, prior or collateral originals making up the postcolonial text. It is the substance of that literature and, in all ways, translation in progress, negotiating between the original form and a new embodiment in another language, once the language of the empire. This language has all the features of the common language – *koiné* – but its commonality and communality is ambivalent, because it bears traces of colonial coercion. Consequently, cultural difference forces us to ask the perennial question: what is lost and what is saved, or regained, in translation. In this case, however, of particular importance are cultural and historical contexts of translational transformations occurring in the text of postcolonial literature, and their translatability in interlingual translation (which, as we know, is also an intercultural translation).

The question of what is saved and what is lost in translation is indelibly linked with the question of translatability as a condition of historicity, and, consequently, of the life of a literary text. It presupposes also another basic question, namely: what languages, including the languages of memory, cultures and histories, make postcolonial literature? The history of postcolonial literature in English has developed as a process of confronting the imposed language of the empire and the authority carried by that language. Its main elements are the following: resistance (Boehmer 2013: 307), counter-discourse

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[1] Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; Or, The Prosthesis of Origin* (Derrida 1998: 2).

(Ashcroft et al. 2000: 7, 50), imitation, ambivalent mimicry and sly civility (Bhabha 2012: 141, 173, 122, 128), abrogation and subversion of the authority of the empire through resistance and opposition (Said 1993: 230–340), appropriation of the language (Ashcroft et al. 1989: 37–58), the triumphant overcoming of peripherality (Rushdie 1991: 61–70), and, last but not least, marketing of the margins (Huggan 2001: 13, 108, 116) and cultural brokering by postcolonial comprador intelligentsia mediating between peripheries and world capital (Appiah, 1991: 348). The history of these phenomena is, however, closely linked with its less visible and more intangible performative space, which is the memory of other languages. The English language of postcolonial literature turns this literature into a paradoxical case of monolingual, in Jacques Derrida's aphoristic phrasing, "prosthesis of the original" (Derrida 1998), in which cultural difference becomes a phantom presence of prior languages. Through this problematic multilingualism, postcolonial literature epitomises the key problem in the philosophy of translation, namely, the relation of the original and translation (imitation, derivativeness, survival of the original or autonomous being). This relation includes the question of the original's very existence. First, because in many cases postcolonial literature is a translation without the original, since the coloniser's language has effectively obliterated the language of the "true" original. Second, it is also the problem of the work of foreignness in a literary text and the related question of language hospitality (Ricoeur 2006: 10).

The work of cultural difference in the language will be the object of my reflection on the role of translation in creating postcolonial literature, as well as in reinforcing this position in as an integral part of global literature in the English language and, as a result of interlingual translation, its significant role in the canon of world literature. Due to its multidimensional worldliness in the Saidian sense (Said 1983: 288)[2], postcolonial literature is a frequent object of translation into other languages. It seems suitable, then, to link the question of the internal translationality of postcolonial literature with the problem of cultural difference as an effect of tensions produced in the process of translation, which grants postcolonial literature its unique power and dynamic, revealing in itself traces of prior languages. Cultural difference understood as multidimensional translation and, simultaneously, the object of translation, is a witness to and the way of the original's "survival" in translation. As such, it contributes to the "perpetual renewal of language" (Benjamin 2004: 18) in the form of translational confrontations (and transformations). It is also worth asking what tasks translationality, spanning between the ethos of respecting the irreducible cultural difference in the process of translation and the fact of commodification of difference in many, even the best, works of postcolonial literature, sets for the translator from English (marked in postcolonial texts with traces of other languages) into Polish. How does the multilingualism intimated in most postcolonial texts look in Polish translation? How does the translator negotiate the space of cultural difference, so as to avoid reducing it to exoticism and commodification? How do the translated postcolonial works of literature fare when introduced into the Polish literary bloodstream?

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[2] Edward Said defines "worldliness" in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983) as a foundational feature of an engaged text, which is grounded in the recognition, in critical reflection developed in a literary, philosophical, critical, etc. text, of many potentially or really conflictual perspectives. Said combines in this term the ethos of critical work with the Latin root of the word "secular". Secularity and worldliness are for Said two linked and mutually translatable aspects of critical thinking.

In what follows, I will attempt a brief survey of prevalent translation strategies deployed by postcolonial literature writers and will take a look at how Polish translations resolve these language superimpositions (Berman 2004: 288) in such areas as (multilingual) logorrhoea, indigenization to the (phantom) original, the pedagogical imperative of translation ("explanations" of cultural difference in the form of glossaries as a paratext characteristic of Polish translations). This also includes a challenge posed by intensive postcolonial heteroglossia, developing into a complex geopoetics/politics of the English language, manifesting itself in the interplay between imperial English and its antagonist, anti- and postcolonial English, operating through narratorial irony or subversive pidgins of all kinds and locations.

The problem of the translatability of cultural difference – and the resistance it puts up to mechanisms of equivalence and domestication mobilised in the process of translation – is fundamental for postcolonial literature already in the original (which bears traces of a prior text) and, definitely, to translation of postcolonial texts into other languages. This is why it is not possible to study postcolonial literature in translation, either as individual texts or as a phenomenon of the global literary circuit, without simultaneously relating the problem of translation to postcolonial literature as such. In this sense, postcolonial literature and its transfer into other languages will always embody translation as understood by Walter Benjamin, i.e. as a form of the original's survival, as I have signalled above. Jacques Derrida, who sees in Benjamin's concept of translation not so much an extension of the text's life as a transfusion of otherness/foreignness which enhances the text outside the author's reach, develops this idea by claiming that translation is a semiotics of asymptotic approximations (Derrida, McDonald 1988: 97, 100), not only due to the inevitable level of incommensurability between languages, but also due to their internal hybridity – in other words, their internal plurilingual heterogeneity. In *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation* (1988), Derrida writes: "Translation can do everything except mark this linguistic difference inscribed in the language, this difference of language systems inscribed in a single tongue" (Derrida, McDonald 1988: 100). It is, then, no coincidence that Derrida's perhaps most autobiographical and postcolonial sounding essay, *Monolingualism of the Other; Or, the Original Prosthesis* (1998) may be read as a *summa* of his reflection on translation, the sense of estrangement in one's own language, which is the colonial *koiné*, and the lost multilingualism substituted by it. An attempt to sustain, or intimate, the meanings hidden in this non-original (because "prosthetic") original of many languages, also in their transposition onto cultural difference, poses the biggest challenge for the translation of postcolonial literature.

From counter-discourse to commodification of otherness? Postcolonial literature and globalization

Considering the global reach and undeniable domination of English in world literature, the status and position of postcolonial literature in the global system is ambiguous. On the one hand, postcolonial literature in English is global due to its territorial span and a large potential readership. It is so only because the formerly colonised communities and nations took the effort to overcome the limitations that determined their dependence. It can be said, then, that the globality of postcolonial literature provides evidence for the ultimate overcoming of the empire's monopoly of power over language and mind. After all, this literature came into existence largely as an effect of the will of many writers to acknowledge that, in the space of the English language, their voice is autonomous and deserving of the status of literariness. Wole Soyinka recalls how he was refused the opportunity to give guest lectures on African literature in the Faculty of English at Cambridge University, in 1973. The lectures did take place, eventually, in the Faculty of Social Anthropology (Soyinka 1976: vii),[3] because English Literature was not at that time ready to recognise the attributes of literariness in the writings of an author such as Wole Soyinka, the future Nobel Prize winner, and other writers he was to speak about. In order to get recognition as writers, authors from the former British colonies had to go a long way from the derivativeness which was attributed to them, through various forms of critical deployment of the norms (genres and styles) of imperial writing, until the moment when it turned out that they are not only the recipient users of literary patterns but also their creators, contributing their own rules and innovations to the game called literature. In *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (1989), the first comprehensive critical discussion of postcolonial literature – as a historical-literary phenomenon whose distinguishing feature was the appropriation of the language (and, with it, the cultural) system imposed by colonialism, and the subsequent use of this language, by those colonised, for expressing the self, history, imaginaries and needs – the authors underline the transgressive and transformative character of that literary phenomenon which was once called Commonwealth Literature, and which consequently signed itself out of this Commonwealth (Rushdie 1982: 8).

On the other hand, however, the easiness with which postcolonial literature entered the global literary circuits, after the breakthrough of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* in 1981, may suggest a relinquishing of the subversive ethics at its foundations. Postcolonial literature emerged from the imperative of resistance against coloniality, expressed by the need of "rewriting the social text (…) of colonial domination" (Huggan 1996: 3). It was this need, of marking one's voice as a difference in the space of English-language literature, that inspired the writers from (ex)colonies, who, through counter-discursive strategies, took up the formidable task of including local languages into literary representation and expression. These were not only the Creole Englishes, but also other forms of linguistic difference, which disturbed the Englishness of literature through their (un)translated presence.

Subsequently, cultural difference, which was in the beginning a marker of the critical potential of postcolonial literature, turned into the emblem of the mainstream of postcolonial literature, albeit in a better-selling formula of exoticism. And it is perhaps this smooth transformation of critical cultural difference into the exotic that guarantees the attractiveness of postcolonial literature to the global readership. It may also be that many postcolonial authors yield to the temptations of exoticism and, in this way, they add their share to the commodification of cultural difference (Huggan 2001: vii), and, as a result, de-politicization of important social and cultural postulates which once were the landmarks of that literature. Certainly, it would be difficult to draw a clear line between those works which treat cultural difference as a critical, political, or even geopolitical force, and those which use it as a decorative element of the text. Usually, with some infrequent exceptions, if we deal with the marketing of "otherness" and "margins" (Huggan 2001: 1–27; Appiah 1991: 339, 342), this happens with a certain degree of ironical distance, suggesting a self-conscious participation of the author in the global game of cultural difference. When locality turns into cultural difference and becomes a carrier of otherness, this moment is already the inception of a translation process. In postcolonial criticism, this moment determines also the division into more "local" or "national" authors on the one hand, and, on the other, cosmopolitan authors functioning on the global market and consciously exploiting locality as cultural otherness, or, even, abusing it for the purposes of exoticization and showing their cosmopolitan distance from local politics.[4]

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[3] Susan Bassnett recalls this event in her *Translation Studies*, coedited with Andre Lefevere (1998: 130).

However, from the perspective of translation studies the role of cultural difference in postcolonial literature looks entirely different. Cultural otherness is some kind of a proper name in the process of translation – an element which will not find an equivalent in the target language. A new, domesticated equivalent for cultural difference can be secured, but it will no longer be an otherness, and thus the substance of the text will be profoundly changed (Derrida 2007: 191–225). If, then, cultural otherness is that element of foreignness in a postcolonial text which emerges in the process of translation as a difficulty and challenge, a good translation should by all means make sure to unravel the process of struggling with the matter of foreignness/otherness. Otherness mobilises the semiotics of difference already in the original – at least because most global postcolonial writers translated into other languages are self-aware cosmopolitans who are expert in linking the local specificity of the world represented by means of themes frequently appearing in postcolonial literature: worldliness, globality, planetarity, in their political, economic or social dimensions. The cosmopolitics of postcolonial literature (Ghosh 2004: 5, 44) develops from the locally rooted and globally transferred cultural difference. As such, in itself it is a project whose translationality should resurface also in an interlingual translation, because one of its messages is the desire of translation, a fundamental affect of the text whose significance Paul Ricoeur underlines following Antoine Berman (Ricoeur 2006).

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[4] Tabish Khair notes this division in Indian literature in English, in the class difference between cosmopolitans (babus) and national writers (coolies) (Khair 2005); Timothy Brennan criticises "Third-World intellectuals", along with Postcolonial Studies at large, for creating hybridity and cultural fluidity as the normative cosmopolitanism, which is nothing else but a way to globalize class privilege.

(Geo)politics of literary translation – between violence and hospitable opening of the language

Already in the original, cultural otherness disturbs the protocols of stability of the represented world, forcing that which is felt as one's own and familiar to relate to that foreignness. This experience, especially if it develops as translation, should establish its own vision of ethical dialogue, because it makes us aware that the meeting with otherness engenders an obligation of recognition. This obligation, in turn, may be identified with what Paul Ricoeur (2006) postulates as language hospitality[5] – not really an imperative of limitless openness, but, rather, a somewhat ambiguous task of serving two masters, perhaps better represented by the metaphor of a double agent. This encounter is also dangerous, because it threatens to derail the familiarized episteme onto a new, unknown course. Antoine Berman underlined the necessity to preserve foreignness as a distinctive feature of literary translation. Similarly to Benjamin, Berman started from the conviction that translation of "meaning" is not the chief task of the literary translator; the "literal" translation is, i.e. one faithful to the letter/work. Berman advocates such fidelity to the original in translation as would be able to demonstrate its foreignness and, by that token, to enhance the literary system of the target language with that "derailing" foreignness (Berman 2004: 285–286). One of Berman's examples is translating proverbs into their equivalents in the target language. The pedagogy of translation requires looking for such equivalents, but, as the author rightly notices, what is elided is the whole linguistic and cultural environment that could also be transferred – translated and explicated in literal translation (Berman 2004: 260, 262). Contrary to translations which are grounded only in "semantic transfer", in literary translation foreignness countervails the transfer trying to preserve its own place in the space of untranslatability, which can be seen as an act of the target language capitulating before the source language, or as a triumph of the very essence of literariness. Berman claims that the notorious elision of the traces of foreignness in literary translation is nothing short of violence perpetrated on the text: "As if translation, far from being the trials of the Foreign, were rather its negation, its acclimation, its "naturalization". As if its most individual essence were radically repressed. Hence, the necessity for reflection on the properly *ethical* aim of the translating act (receiving the Foreign as Foreign)" (Berman 2004: 286). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak writes in a similar vein, defining translation as a gesture of hospitable openness towards the Other:

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[5] For the related concept of translation as language hospitality, see also Jarniewicz 2012.

> For one of the ways to get around the confines of one's "identity" as one produces expository prose is to work at someone else's title, as one work with a language that belongs to many others. This, after all, is one of the seductions of translating. It is a simple miming of the responsibility to the trace of the other in the self. (Spivak 1993: 179)

The notion of translation as that intersubjective exchange which Spivak implies in her writings is worth bearing in mind when reflecting on the border-status of language, on the heterogeneity of languages in postcolonial literature, and on the identity-forming processes which this literature both reflects, comments on and actively creates.

How to translate the cultural specificity inscribed in a language, both in its performative and representational layers, so that the process of translation manages to accommodate the most unique feature of postcolonial literature: the phantom presence of other languages, and, even, other originals which turn postcolonial literature into a border venture locating meanings between languages, and thus also between histories and cultures? Just as translation does not, from a certain perspective, divide languages but merges them in the space between the original and the target language, so is postcolonial literature animated by the urgency of intercultural contact. The cultural difference inscribed in postcolonial literature, and literary translation, are two deeply interrelated processes of foreignness and domestication/assimilation confronting each other. One of the most obvious motivations behind translation – the endeavour to transform what is foreign and alien into the familiar – clashes with the opposite intention of preserving the substance of difference in the new language environment. The translation of a literary text and the translation of cultural difference, although concomitant and simultaneous, are not identical. However, treated separately, they will not render the transformation which they bring about, and at the core of this transformation is a confrontation with the existing cultural politics (understood as culture management by institutions, through creating culture and the market for it, distribution and pedagogy of it, etc.). At the same time, translation itself is part of that politics and it additionally negotiates its own place within its bounds. Translation, then, creates its own space of politics; it can be seen as a space of *agon*, in the sense proposed by Chantal Mouffe, who underlines that confrontation is indispensable in order to recognise core common ideals, even if the roads taken to achieve them are different: "what is important is that conflict does not take the form of "antagonism" (a struggle between enemies) but the form of "agonism" (a struggle between adversaries)" (Mouffe 2013: 1). In postcolonial literature, which emerges from the ethos of anti-colonial resistance and the critique of the postcolonial world, cultural difference – the foreignness of the language, culture, behaviour, memory, social formats, and so on – is precisely that confrontational space of the potentially conflicting politics of language and culture, and, most often, also the space of negotiation between them. In this way translation – which itself produces cultural difference in a postcolonial text and, subsequently, poses a challenge to that difference – becomes the carrier of the politics, and even geopolitics, of literature.

Provincialising the language of the empire – a (non)vengeful translation

Reflecting on the collective experience of a liminal encounter with culture, postcolonial literature revindicates the subjectivity of the formerly colonised individuals and societies, and develops collective and individual identities in the process of revising history and the ideology of colonisation. Postcolonial literature confronts itself with the foreignness which it inherits from the empire in the form of self-alienation, as potently described by Franz Fanon in his *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952). Cultural difference and otherness have an important task in postcolonial literature, exactly in the context of foreignness, which is their true space of operation. Foreignness, the legacy of the empire, self-alienation, the difference of the literary idiom in the language of the empire, as well as the more or less strongly delineated cultural difference, together make up a unique language-translational-cultural space which we can tentatively call the heterotopia of postcolonial literature. This is a space of disturbed meanings (Foucault 1966: 9), which are confronted with their alternatives; it is in this heterotopia that the West gets blurred in incomplete or erroneous repetitions and in hybridizing connections with the local discourses. The West does not stand here exclusively for a real, geographically determined place, but, as Dipesh Chakrabarty proposes, it functions as an indispensable – because of the continuing lack of an alternative – total system of reference. The system cannot be rejected in an act of a postcolonial revenge, as Chakrabarty warns after Leela Gandhi (Chakrabarty 2000: 16); it has to be, rather, "provincialised" through spaces which it itself set up once as external to itself. These spaces have, in time, transformed into a somewhat troublesome translation, in relation to the "original" Europe (the West, the canon, and the western/imperial authority). Provincialising, which Chakrabarty proposes in his project of a non-revengeful rereading of history, is, then, as the author underlines, a translational process (Chakrabarty 2000: 17, 19). First, it recognizes the local practices of language use and the realities thus created; second, as a consequence it reveals the semantic (and, with it, ideological and political) heterogeneity of the project of European modernity as a project of imperial domination. The provincialisation of English literature by postcolonial literature in English can be read as a fascinating history of a complex translation, occurring at the very foundations of literary thinking. Postcolonial writers experience foreignness precisely as a semiotic challenge which, on the one hand, requires a translation, and, on the other, resists translation that is too facile, in which equivalence may turn out to be an appropriation. What follows now are a few examples from postcolonial literature.

Raja Rao, an Indian author writing in English, wrote a short introduction to his novel *Kanthapura* (1938), which can be considered as spelling out the essence of postcolonial thought long before postcolonial studies entered the intellectual scene of literary criticism. The author reflects in his literary manifesto on the necessity of writing in English and the impossibility of delivering in that language the spirit of India. From this paradox of impossibility and necessity a new Indian idiom of English will emerge:

> The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades

> and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word "alien", yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up – like Sanskrit or Persian was before – but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it. (Rao 1967: vii)

The Nigerian Chinua Achebe wrote his first novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), in English, even though the default language of the (non-existing) original is the writer's native Igbo. The original, about the Igbo community right before the onset of colonisation is, then, already a translation. Sometimes this relation takes on the form of "sly civility", when a potential antagonism between the Igbo and e.g. an English missionary is neutralised by the cunning translator, so that no side gets to know that their respective goal has been represented to the interlocutor via translation in a totally opposite way. Both sides part satisfied with their achievement, existing only in translation (Gołuch 2011: n-p). The author explained that he was compelled to choose English, because his native language had been spoiled, as he put it, by Anglican missionaries who merged several Igbo dialects into one standardised language in order to popularise religious writings and make them accessible to all potential beneficiaries of missionary actions. Unfortunately, the new language standard did not retain the richness of expression of the old language and was devoid of naturalness (Achebe 1994). Achebe stated that he could not write real, living literature in such language. He did not, however, take up English passively – he developed from the coloniser's language his own, unique literary language, equipping it, through a holistic translational strategy, with the metaphoricity and ritualness of Igbo.

V.S. Naipaul, a writer originating from Trinidad, did not have a choice – he wrote in English, because he did not have a native language which could provide the "original" texture to his novels. And by that Naipaul meant the literary environment that makes a society palpable and real for a writer: "it seemed to me that those of us who were born there were curiously naked, that we lived purely physically" (Naipaul 1974: n-p). He feels the successor of another immigrant to the language of the empire – Joseph Conrad, whose style and visionary pessimism are the result of an émigré's alienation, the condition of a writer "missing a society" (Naipaul 1974: n-p). In this sense, the Nobel Prize laureate and refined stylist could not feel a fully entitled inhabitant in the house of English. He is a guest there – a newcomer from afar who does not have anywhere to return to. Naipaul always made the point that he was writing from nowhere, that for such makeshift colonial societies as his there is no formula to anchor literature in. This is how he defines his writing: "so my world as a writer was full of flight and unfinished experience, full of the odds and ends of cultures and migrations (…) things that did not make a whole" (Naipaul 2012: Preface, n-p). Between the true original – the "messy outside world" – and the target language of the great European literature which "came out of societies more compartmented, more intellectually ordered and full of conviction than the one I found myself in" (Naipaul 2012: Preface, n-p), spreads an intermediary space of good enough translation, watched over by Conrad's spirit (and letter).

Salman Rushdie made an epochal breakthrough in English literature with his *Midnight's Children* (1981), developing an extremely complex structure from quotations and paraphrases from European and Latin-American literatures, as well as, of course, the multilingual and multicultural traditions of India. The totality of that grand East-West transborder narration is grounded in genealogical fantasies inspired by Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, the grotesque peculiarity of the narrator borrowed from Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum*, and the narrative canvas of *One Thousand and One Nights*. Within this metanarrative framework, smaller narratives function: drawing on Hindu epics, classical Persian poetry, French drama, magical realism, and Bollywood and Hollywood cinema. This abundance of references has a lot to do with Saleem Sinai, the narrator-autobiographer, including the whole of India into his life story. These borrowings, which are also appropriations, provide the basis for the genealogical metaphor in which India is a child of many fathers and mothers: many histories from West and East, many religions and languages. Each chapter of Saleem's story is a chutney jar – an Indian version of the Proust-Grass recipe for preserving memory and linking worlds, times, literatures and imaginations. This is a translational version, made of local ingredients, spiced with a unique mix of flavours and dispatched for global export.

J.M. Coetzee, developing in *Foe* (1986) an alternative story of Crusoe the castaway and his servant Friday, told by a woman, Susan, and written down by Mr Foe the writer, compiles several stories from Daniel Defoe's novels. The compilation becomes the post-original of the novel *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), foundational for the development of the colonial mind.

Coetzee's novel shows how a history of castaways on a desert island might, or even should, look. One of them is an ex-slave whose tongue was torn out, and the other is the white man who issues orders to the black one but does not otherwise manifest any signs of colonial mission in relation to Friday. They are joined by Susan, who tries to understand the senselessness of life on the island and extricate from it a true story. Mr Foe the writer will, however, take over Susan's story, erase the woman-narrator from it, grant Friday the possibility to speak so that he can loyally serve his white master, and Crusoe (of Defoe's novel, of course), in turn, will convert Friday into a good Christian, as we well know. Susan's "original" story is not, apparently, sufficiently attractive; this is a story of spectral possibilities: things that could have happened but never did. Despite this, or, maybe, because of this, they haunt the existing stories as their mirror of truth. Coetzee's novel is another piece of evidence for the presence of translational heterotopias in postcolonial literature. Susan's story is pre-represented as the "true" and "erased" original of Robinson Crusoe's story, but even this original is premised on a lack–its missing original is Friday's untold story. If he does not tell it himself, all other attempts will be nothing more than colonial appropriations, even if done in good faith.

In the space of overlapping territories and intertwining histories (Said 1993) the author, even a monolingual one, is a translator. The translation in which he or she engages is not so much interlingual (even though that type of translation is clearly present in many postcolonial texts), as it is intersemiotic, as Susan Bassnett underlines (Bassnett 2013: 346). In the process of such a translation of texts and contexts, power relations and inequalities between languages, smuggled in as objective aesthetic facts of literature, are being unmasked (Bassnett, Trivedi 1999: 4). Translation often co-occurs with rewriting and yields an effect of shifted meanings. Referring to this, criticism uses metaphors of mobility – deterritorialisation, displacement, bearing-across, transfer, crossing over transit zones, as well as word play based on the ambiguity of "bear" in its past participle forms where "bearing" becomes, also, a (re-)birth.[6]

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[6] On the metaphorics of translation as movement and rebirth see also: Ghosh 2004; Bhabha 1994, ch. 11; Bassnett 2013: 340–341.

Salman Rushdie: Logorrhoea as a postcolonial legacy

Salman Rushdie proves in each of his novels that it is not possible to construct a text without a multi-layered translation, performed on principle within the poetics of borrowings – more or less faithful paraphrases of texts from many languages and cultures (with a visible domination of Western cultural texts, though). A huge mass of borrowings via translation is one of Rushdie's strategies of including texts from a limitless cultural repository from which the author acquires writing material like a hunter keenly setting out on a literary safari. Rushdie does not shy away from such intersemiotic translations as ekphrasis, especially important in *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), and, if we expand the concept onto other regions of art, the musical ekphrasis of *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999). Nevertheless, the author of *Midnight's Children* is a declared literary poacher, who hunts texts across very diverse territories, and he follows a certain rule in these pursuits. From the West, Rushdie borrows concrete texts with an identifiable author and title (the list is long and known), while from cultures of the East he borrows myths (Hindu, Muslim, Zoroastrian, Judaic and Christian), classical epics and lyrical genres such as ghazals.

This division inspired a heated critical discussion about Rushdie's attitude to Indian cultures, which was deemed somewhat (neo?-)colonial[7], even if this sounded paradoxical. His novels provide exegetes with a rich analytical material, and the writer takes care to make his games in translation sufficiently piratical and poaching in nature to keep the discussion on ownership in the text going, and with it the discussion on the borders of cultures and texts. The question where my text begins, and where it is still a borrowing, is a significant feature of Rushdie's writing. Translation – literal, implied, poaching, done on the premise of a hostile takeover, or (ab)using hospitality – is Rushdie's way to give the spirit (and letter!) of India, and, in his later novels, the spirit (and letter!) of globalization. India is a multi-directional and palimpsestic, always living and morphing translation. Where translation ends – as a warrant of multicultural, reciprocal inspirations – communalism starts, that is, the "politics of religious hatred" (Rushdie 2013: 27). In other words, where the language of cultural difference, especially concerning religion, gets appropriated by nationalist politics, transborder bridges across cultures are destroyed:

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[7] Cf. Tejpal 1997, a critical review of an anthology of contemporary Indian literature edited by Salman Rushdie and Elizabeth West, *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing 1947–97*, in which all but one author wrote in English. Rushdie justified the selection claiming that these authors contribute the most to world literature. Tejpal pointed out that the selection of authors writing in English was controversial enough because it did not include writers recognised both for innovative novelistic form and for acute critique of Indian reality, to mention only Kiran Nagarkar and V.S. Naipaul, for whom India is both a mythical homeland and a reality assessed from the distanced perspective of an émigré.

> There is a medium-sized town called Ayodhya in the state of Uttar Pradesh, and in this town there is a fairly commonplace mosque named Babri Masjid. According to the *Ramayana*, however, Ayodhya was the home town of Rama himself, and according to a local legend the spot where he was born – the *Ram-janmabhoomi* – is the one on which the Muslim place of worship stands today. The site has been disputed territory ever since independence, but for most of the forty years the lid has been kept on the problem by the very Indian method[8] of shelving the case, locking the mosque's gates, and allowing neither Hindus nor Muslims to enter. (Rushdie 2013 [1999]: 27)

As the author of *Imaginary Homelands* observes, forty years after the regaining of independence India substituted the project of the nation as unity in multiplicity with the project of communal separation and conflict. This is why Rushdie's unique style of nurtured logorrhoea – an excess of words pushed into a syntax producing a sense of hurry – is a conscious operation on the English language whose purpose is to express the essence of India as infinite multiplicity staked against nationalist calls to purism:

> "My" India has always been based on ideas of multiplicity, pluralism, hybridity: ideas to which the ideologies of the communalists are diametrically opposed. To my mind, the defining image of India is the crowd, and a crowd is by its very nature superabundant, heterogeneous, many things at once. But the India of the communalists is none of these things. (Rushdie 2013: 31–32)

Overeating ends with the digestive system getting rid of excess food. Logorrhoea is the final stage of the translational digestion of texts, which become decolonised in the process. They get purified from the inscription of the empire and become an autonomous material at the hands of the author. In Rushdie's language, logorrhoea has the function of an overriding metaphor of translation: it opens up language to its natural transgressiveness, encourages its need for crossing over limitations, allows chaos and overcrowding of words. It sets for the language and literary expression the task of guarding a freedom that lies, especially in the case of a writer from India, in the choice of language, or, rather, of language heterotopias, as the foundational critical power of literature.

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[8] In the Polish edition of this text (Rushdie 2013), the "Indian method" is translated into Polish as "na modłę iście hinduską", where "hinduska" means "Hindu". While it is common to say "Hindus" in Polish to refer to an inhabitant of India (the official "Indus" not being widely used, and "hindus" (non-capitalized) referring to the denomination), in this context the translator should have avoied the potentially divisive and misleading words.

Rushdie, who directly defined the condition of the migrant-writer as metaphorical (Rushdie 2013: 278) – an entity borne across worlds, languages and cultures, split and hyphenated – plays in all his novels with literal and metaphoric meanings developed on the substructure of translation and intertextuality. Thus, for Rushdie metaphor has a key ethical and political significance, especially as a form of translation indeed: it involves not only a transfer, language in movement, but also the building of bridges between languages as borders of (mis)understanding. Metaphor, then, emerges from within the deficit of language between a category (a thing, an action) and its translation; its work is to mend the gaping void of untranslatability. Multilingualism is a space of fission, as is the space of trauma. Cathy Caruth notices that the metaphor of "midnight's children" is premised on trauma:

> At the heart of the figure of the "children of midnight " is thus an orphan who signifies in an English no longer given as a "mother tongue": who enacts a linguistic split, within English, that is also the mark of a historical trauma that cannot be named in any single language. Midnight's children, in other words, are the orphan figures that cannot settle in the mother tongue or the fatherland. (Caruth 2011: 50)

Multilingualism – after a trauma which recurs as a disruption to narration – proves that the story cannot be for the survivor a simple return to the past. The very transparency of the metaphors created by Rushdie, their purposeful two-dimensionality, is in fact the visible marker of fission. Saleem cannot find a foothold in a stable ontology for himself, and this in turn results in unnaturalness, or, rather, the laid out artificiality, of the metaphor. The body of the individual as the metaphoric reflection of the body of the nation should be, one would think, one of the natural ontological metaphors whose constructedness has almost disappeared from our language consciousness (Lakoff, Johnson 1988: 48–55). In Saleem's metaphoric system, this naturalness is both an object of dreams and of deconstructive subversion. The splitting of the language creates a hindrance in translation, on which Rushdie's novel is based. And, simultaneously, it makes translation necessary.

Translating back to the original (?) – ćatni and Ćamća

Rushdie's opinion on the problematic thing called "Commonwealth Literature" is known. The name – moved back in the Polish translation of *Imaginary Homelands* (Rushdie 2013) to the time before Pakistan's and India's independence and rendered as the "British Commonwealth literature"[9] – is politically suspicious (it is both the legacy of the empire and an attempt to mask it) and uncertainly delimited. Writing this text, Rushdie could not know, even though there had been some symptoms of it already, that he would be the *spiritus movens* of globalising these "peripheries", which he, in the meantime, had defined as a new quality and energy in the English literary language: "What seems to me to be happening is that those peoples who were once colonised by the language are now rapidly remaking it, domesticating it, becoming more and more relaxed about the way they use it – assisted by the English language's enormous flexibility and size, they are carving out large territories for themselves within its frontiers" (Rushdie 2013 [1991]: 64). However, the Polish translation of this fragment does not fully reflect the power of the manifesto contained in the original. The "remake" has been translated as "przeróbki", and, while this choice is appropriate, it is not quite equivalent to the deep qualitative changes in the very politics of language that Rushdie's writing in general and the quoted essay in particular represent. Domestication, translated into "oswojenie", does not look like a controversial choice, but one might wish to see a more daring option, adequately reflecting the process of domestication as, more accurately, the *udomowienie* of English in the Indian culture, especially given that those who had been writing in English before, did not have to "familiarize" (*oswajać*) it. It was that stratum of Indian society which, often educated in the best schools and universities in England, did not feel unfamiliar with English at all. And, last but not least, "mają coraz mniej obiekcji co do jego użycia" as equivalent to "they are becoming more and more relaxed about the way they use it" (Rushdie 1991: 64) is decidedly not what Rushdie meant. And he means a long debate, started on both sides of the colonial divide, about the quality of English in Indian literature. In brief, it is not hesitation whether to write in English (*obiekcje*, "objections"/"reservations"), but an assertive development of one's own, individual and creative language that is the object of discussion in Rushdie's essay.

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[9] "Literatura Wspólnoty Brytyjskiej nie istnieje" (The Literature of the British Commonwealth does not exist) – the Polish title announces, and rightly so, because this is not the thing that Rushdie talks about in his essay. Polish translators tried to face the challenge and used the adjective *indyjski* [Indian] in the following clusters: *społeczeństwo indyjskie* [Indian society], *literatura indyjska* [Indian literature], *wzorce indyjskie* [Indian models], *indyjska kultura* [Indian culture], *indyjski poeta* (70) [Indian poet]. But when *Hindus* (rather than *Indus* is the preferred collective name for the inhabitants of India in Polish, it is not certain how to classify the category of *Indo-Anglicy* – Rushdie, using the qualifier Indo-Anglians, means a person living in India writing in English, while by using the noun form in Polish the translators change the sense entirely, because *Indo-Anglik* would be a person of English origin born and/or living in India, like e.g. Rudyard Kipling.

Let us look at how translators of Rushdie into Polish cope with a very difficult case of English being "domesticated" in India (and, in the case of *Shame*, in Pakistan). What the reader of the original should associate with a typical Indian idiom and accent is definitely lost in the Polish translation. The translator has to negotiate between preserving a level of foreignness in the text and pursuing legibility. In Rushdie's novels, we usually deal with translational bipolarity spread between the "aggressive presentation" of Indian cultural elements and "assimilative approach" in which, as Tymoczko expounds, similarity and universality dominates and differences fade (Tymoczko 1999: 25). Between these opposite poles "refractions" are distributed – simplifications in presenting the cultural system, performed by the authors themselves (Tymoczko 1999: 23).

Investigating the game of multilingualism in postcolonial literature in her "Postcolonial Literature and the Magic Radio: The Language of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*", Gillian Gane developed a classification of translational strategies deployed by Rushdie, drawing on Meir Sternberg's earlier studies. The list shows the complexity of the way in which multilingualism operates in Rushdie's novel. Among the most important strategies are the following:

- selective reproduction – an occasional citation of the language substance by users (in dialogues), yielding an effect of synecdoche (mainly: affective expressions, polite addresses, terms for local cultural phenomena);
- verbal transposition – a type of a montage translation, whereby the target language (the English narration) preserves features of the origi-

nal. This is something like a purposefully erroneous translation which becomes one of the main strategies of introducing foreignness/otherness to the target text (Indianisms, changes in the grammar, reduplications characteristic for Hindi, literal translations of proverbs or idioms);

- conceptual reflection – a recreation in the target language of the cultural specificity of the world represented; a strategy of approximating and explicating the other culture;
- explicit attribution – the statement of what language a character is speaking. In *Midnight's Children*, this is: the multiplicity of the midnight's children's languages, language wars in Bombay, the Bengali in Tagore's poem, Urdu used by Saleem in Pakistan. English features as the "original" in dialogues with Evie Burns and Padma, but in a characteristic, Bombay-type, hybrid and multilingual version (Gane 2006: 574–575).

Of the above, verbal transposition is the most difficult to translate; the translator has to develop a strategy of translating a text which already contains a degree of a foreign language element, coded as non-standard phrasing, syntax, or lexical choices. And this is the particular way of writing that determines the exceptionality of *Midnight's Children* and Rushdie's other "Indian" novels: *Shame, The Moor's Last Sigh, The Ground Beneath Her Feet* or *Shalimar, the Clown*.

Few of those Indianisms and Anglicisms, in the role of the foreign element, remained in Anna Kołyszko's Polish translation (Rushdie 1999). Here are some examples:

- reduplication: *co dla niej znaczy ta cała polityka-polityka?* (134);
- verbal transposition: *Przyniesiono do domu jego śmierć spowitą w jedwab* (229);
- selective reproduction together with the elements of montage translation: the dialogue of friends-generals on the opposite sides of the Indian-Pakistani war, carried out in a casual, colonial English of the officer class: *Po obu stronach trafiali się cholernie kiepscy agenci wywiadu. Nie, toż to, bez obrazy, brednia, czysta brednia. (. . .) Doprawdy, cholernie się cieszę, że cię widzę, Tygrysie, ty stary diable!* (489).

But most Indian idiosyncrasies occurring in the English original get translated into standard Polish. The translator makes an effort to find the adequate colloquial forms: e.g., *łysoń* (145) – "baldie"; *pisanina* – "writery"; Amina's complaints: *rozum mu odjęło?* (122) – "has his brain gone raw?"; *nigdy cię nie dopadną* (489) replacing the English "they will never catch", which is erroneously non-transititve, the object being added in the Polish translation; and the normalised reduplication of *nikomu ani mru-mru* (489) – "you want it secret-secret?", or *nudziarskie scenariusze* (311) – "boring-boring scripts". The translation from an already existing montage translation is especially difficult, because the Polish reader may not quite understand the purpose of the erroneous or non-standard language forms. Hence, in all probability, the frequent "corrections" in the Polish translation seem inevitable. It is also worth remembering that the default reader of Rushdie's novel in the original is not only the British inhabitant of the metropolis, who may recognise the specific idiom of English used by Indian immigrants, but also the speaker of English from India who takes part in this language hybridisation on an everyday basis.

However, the Polish translations of postcolonial literature contribute yet another strategy to the range of translational mimesis mentioned above. The proposed name for it would need to be a choice between "translational overkill" and "the original's restoration". Ćatni, the metaphor of memory, remembering and archiving, coordinating Saleem's narration is, as we know, a popular Indian pickle made of vegetables, fruit, oil, vinegar and spices. The glossary appended to the Polish translation of *Midnight's Children* transcribes "chutney" into "ćatni" (603), which not only returns the original spelling of "chutney" back to the non-existent original spelled in the system of international transcription, but it also disturbs the world represented in the novel. First, the marinade is produced by Braganza Pickles, not "Fabryka Marynat Braganza (Własność prywatna) Ltd." (584). The effect of mimetic failure reaches far beyond the text of the novel – chutney is a well-known global food item, a product marketed with the English spelling even in India. Reinventing it as "ćatni" in the Polish translation creates a non-existing product of a linguistic purist's imagination.

A similar case occurs with the name of the protagonist of *The Satanic Verses*, Saladyn Ćamća, in the Polish *Szatańskie wersety*. The spelling with the "ć" in the Polish translation has a somewhat absurd effect, because it does not align with Polish grammar rules.[10] Maybe Ćamća could simply be spelled as Czamcza and avoid in this way alienating the Polish reader with the riddles of transcription that neither features in the original, nor in the target language system, but in an international transcription system used only by specialists in linguistics. And this case also affects the world represented in the novel – Saladyn Ćamća is a British citizen, an owner of a passport and driver's license, which the British policemen humiliating Chamcha upon detaining him discover to their dismay. The name is clearly spelled Salahuddin Chamchawala. If nativisation through transcription from a supposed original was meant as a strategy of translational vindication, it did not work the best. The difference that was, already in the original, an effect of translation and translation in progress (Chamcha truncating or reinventing his name), gets back to the imagined original and becomes fixed there, a bit like a museum exhibit. The language expertise of the Polish translation editors wipes out this element of language game that is crucial for the text dynamic. And for the Polish reader, it would be much more important to know that the novel represents, in this concrete symbol of chutney, the globality of a certain cultural phenomenon.

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[10] "Ć" is a softened "c", but in combination with a vowel it is spelled as, e.g., "cia".

Polish translation and the geo-poetics and -politics of English

The most challenging aspect of translating Rushdie into Polish is the dynamic of hybrid language transgressions in which Rushdie excels, both in number and in innovativeness. These are, however, a characteristic feature of many postcolonial novels. In this realm, hybridity marked with Indianness dominates, not least because the Indian diaspora has been a global phenomenon at least since the times of the colonial indentured-work system. To deliver the heteroglossia of everyday English in Mumbai, Kolkata, or, for that matter, the Indian diaspora in New York or London, the Polish translator should perhaps look for inspiration from Polish migrant literature.[11] Naturalising the language of the original to the standard colloquialisms of the target language, or stylisation into an archaic countryside dialect, which are the most frequent techniques used in translating postcolonial novels, are at best proper, but cannot aspire to translational masterpieces in which the reader can find new language discoveries and new hybrid connections stimulating language creativity.

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[11] A good source of inspiration for ideas how to hybridise the language of a migrant would be Janusz Głowacki and Edward Redliński, and, among younger writers, Piotr Czerwiński. All of these writers turned the Polish-English border language (the émigré "Ponglish") into a solid novel material.

In Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), translated successfully into Polish (*Brzemię rzeczy utraconych*, 2006), the translator, Jerzy Kozłowski, evinced an impressive sensitivity to the nuanced language in which the author combines the ironic distance of the narration with the overall ambience of lyrical closeness. On yet another level, in relation to the direct satirical critique of the global mechanisms of exploiting cheap labour from developing countries, Kozłowski's translation may serve as a paramount example of dealing with the problem of cultural diversity encoded in the original. The play of the foreign/other and the familiar is well preserved in translation. It includes: ethnic strife on the India-Nepal border and its caste and class grounds; the ambiguous legacy of the British empire, manifest in the colonial nostalgia of upper-class Indians decades after regaining independence; the layers of old, outdated Cold-War divisions reminding one of the India-USSR romance; the translational experience of migration which has a different route in the case of illegal labour from the poor countries of the developing world than in the case of the middle class, equipped with material resources and good faith in egalitarianism, in principle rather than in practice. These are some of the translational heterotopias of Desai's novel. The author takes care, however, that the dichotomous geography of globalisation does not lead to a postcolonial revenge, but, rather, provokes ironic transgressions and reversals of the system.

Desai's novel is exceptionally well-oriented in the geopolitics of global mobility, and dazzles with a rich repository of migrant languages which do not always find immediate equivalents in Polish. Kozłowski chose the strategy of lexical import and montage translation. Some of his choices, which move the Polish translation away from the original's dynamic of global English, invite a more careful examination. This is the case especially with the strategy of simplifying the language of Africans arriving to the US on tourist visas and immediately seeking help from their America-based compatriots. In the Polish translation they mostly speak in infinitives, which triggers an association with Henryk Sienkiewicz's Kali.[12] The situation is similar with expressions denoting an ethnic context. The protagonist of the American thread of the novel, Biju (*Bidżu* in the Polish translation), works illegally in New York restaurant basements (in Americanized Polish “basementy”, not necessarily *podziemne kuchnie* [40]). Confused by the cosmopolitan chaos among migrants from all over the world like himself, Biju is happy to step into the familiar war when the enemy, a boy from Pakistan, gets employed at the same restaurant. The problem, however, is that for Biju this is not a neutral “Pakistani” but the hated “Paki” (Desai 2006: n-p). The Polish translator decides on a safe propriety: “Pakistańczyk” (38), but not always consistently – *Paki* comes up, uncensored, in the musings of the French restaurant owner: *Co oni sobie myślą? Czy restauracje w Paryżu mają piwnice pełne Meksykanów*, desi i Paki*?* (41).

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[12] Kali – an African character in Henryk Sienkiewicz's 1911 adventure novel for teenagers *W pustyni i w puszczy* (*In Desert and Wilderness)*. Represented within the colonial framework, Kali obediently follows the white master, a Polish teenager, Staś, recognising his moral and civilizational superiority. Kali's language is very rudimentary and ungrammatical.

Another key example of differences – in relation to complete conceptual systems that are not compensated by individual lexical choices – are references to the semiotics of colonialism. The French restaurant, tellingly branded with the nostalgic-elegant name “Le Colonial”, is to attract wealthy patrons whose aspirations are sublimated via the familiarity with the European culture in the form of its idealised French cuisine. In the novel, it is the tinge of colonial nostalgia, encoded in the restaurant name, that becomes the object of an ironic narratorial taunt as that place in the postcolonial world that nurtures and reinforces colonial structures of power: *Bidżu w Le Colonial, autentyczne kolonialne doświadczenie. Na górze bogaty kolonialny świat, na dole, biedny i etniczny* (38; Eng. Ch. 5). The “poor native” of the original can be delivered into Polish as *etniczny*, but it disturbs the primary dichotomy of the rich colonial and the poor, native or indigenous, worlds. The restaurant is an embodiment of both opposite spaces of the colonial divide in their global shifting. Somewhat paradoxically, the replication of such colonial relations is encouraged by the ethos of multiculturalism – that accompanies the process of globalisation – but is also symptomatically shifted in translation. “Ethnic” has an effect of a euphemism and shows the surrender to processes masking (neo)colonialism, because it means, in the American context, the cultural activity of non-white communities and is to be a marker of positive change in racial relations. This example is of key importance, because it shows how one word in translation can neutralize an urgent political commentary inscribed in the play of tension between culturally and historically loaded terms.

The postcolonial translation – cannibalism, Calibanism, recuperating things lost

The translation studies reflection on postcolonial literature was a result of a general cultural turn in criticism. The figure of the cannibal became, in postcolonial translation studies, the main metaphor of translation (Bassnett, Trivedi 1999: 1–18; Bassnett 2013: 352–354). In the foundational study by Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin, Caliban also becomes a potent symbol – he represents the first colonial subject of early modernity, performed as a sly and subversive mockery-mimicry and resistance. Translation studies contributed to the study of postcolonial phenomena – migration, multiculturalism, identity hybridisation and so on – the reflection on language as the primary substance making literature. In the case of postcolonial literatures, translation studies proved that this matter is a particularly vulnerable object of ideological wars. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi underline that, in the context of translation studies, the postcolonial perspective initiates a discussion of inequality between languages that gets naturalised as an objective fact of literary aesthetics (Bassnett, Trivedi 1999: 5). Graham Huggan emphasises that translational awareness of postcolonial literature and the postcolonial perspective in translation studies is a direct consequence of colonisation, which functioned on the symbolic level as the "original", a text of a higher order (Huggan 2013: 302–303). The technique of rewriting itself, applied mainly to mark one's place in the space of literary authority of the empire, which, at the same time, has been world literature, should be looked at as a translation strategy. The canonical text is overlaid with another signifying system; as a result, the primary text and the cultural environment it emerges from turn into a space of negotiation. Maria Tymoczko observes that translation work by postcolonial authors involves encoding culture so that the reader immerses herself in cultural otherness softly, or, conversely, becomes violently confronted with it. In this way, Tymoczko claims, "unlike translators, postcolonial writers are not transposing a text" (Tymoczko 1999: 20). It is difficult to concur with this somewhat artificial and not entirely logical division of translation labour into real translators transferring text (probably understood also as a whole marked with a title) and postcolonial writers who transfer cultural, linguistic and historical environments outside. The situation is much more complex, because the postcolonial writer's departure point is a translation with the purpose of communication and the overcoming of limits, which gives them the impulse to write. Postcolonial writers, then, transfer a text in a similar way to translators, albeit not in the same way, which Tymoczko does admit, though she seems to put little stress on the politics of cultural difference in postcolonial literature as a literature in the process of translation.

Bill Ashcroft develops the concept of refractive representation of source culture, showing the effect of a metonymic gap created by cultural difference in a postcolonial text (Ashcroft 2014: 22–26). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak sees in the translation from Third-World countries into the language of the metropolis a danger of the disappearance of the critical function of cultural difference in the process of standardisation. The process involves translation into types and categories which eliminate cultural and linguistically vulnerable indeterminacies and lacks, as she writes in "The Politics of Translation", limiting translation either to "reactive nativism" or its opposite, the global standard (Spivak 1993: 207, 210). In his survey of achievements of the "postcolonial turn" in translation studies, Bo Pettersson criticizes the trend for its theoretical superimposition, deriving from poststructuralism, and accuses it of a deficit of case studies in which a pragmatics and awareness of cultural and social grounding – modelled on ethnography and cultural anthropology – would provide the basis for postcolonial translation studies (Pettersson 1999: n-p). All the commentaries on translation strategies in postcolonial literature brought together here are warranted by a common consensus about the place and role of cultural difference in the language of postcolonial literature. This is a dynamic translation construct which subverts the dichotomous structure of the imperial authority and colonial derivativeness. As such, it is the main factor constituting the language autonomy of postcolonial literature. This is possible only because cultural difference almost always has in postcolonial literature the function of a discursive opening to worldliness – a play of meanings between locations of culture, borders of language and contexts of history.

Conclusions: Postcolonial literature as a hermeneutics of polysemy

Postcolonial literature literally opened literature in English onto the world. And this does not mean, obviously, the opening for the language, because the globalisation of English, mainly through business, pop-culture, and also literature, is the paramount feature of late modernity. What it means, rather, is the opening of literature and criticism to transborder thinking across cultures and languages, but also across histories. In this respect, one can prove by countless examples that postcolonial literature pushed literature in English into worldliness: like Said, in his study of the intertwining of culture and imperialism, it proves that literary imagination and geopolitics are strictly linked, that there is a tension between them realised as dialogue and opposition, and that borders imposed once in the imperial order did not erase themselves but have been in the process of being transgressed and abrogated over a long period of time. Transgressing borders in postcolonial literature – the borders of literariness determined by the empire (English literature/Commonwealth Literature), the border of Englishness, and, most importantly, the borders of cultures – is performed through transfers of meaning. Voices critical of that worldliness, which comes very close to globalization, are also worth mentioning. Graham Huggan has written about the mechanisms of marketing cultural difference, in postcolonial literature, through more or less refined exoticism which works as "the control mechanism of cultural translation" (Huggan 2001: 203). Timothy Brennan has defined the whole of postcolonial theory as "Third world cosmopolitanism", and postcolonial writers as "Third World elites" whose class-privileged cosmopolitanism reinforces global imperialism (Brennan 1997: 203). The worldliness of literature often develops through conflict and contestation, which makes us remain vigilant about processes of canonisation determining world literature.[13]

It is, then, all the more necessary to increase the awareness of the ethical dimension that postcolonial literature develops through its translationality. The main idea behind Walter Benjamin's reflection on the task of the translator is that translation is good (and possible) only if it necessitates reconciliation with the otherness of the language (of the original). If we follow that, postcolonial literature already in the original contains another language within it, which is at the same time its spectral, prior original. The postcolonial condition of a writer whose origins are in the once colonized cultures, depends precisely on the existence of that spectral original, even if it is a void and a lack, as J.M. Coetzee and V.S. Naipaul prove in their works. Rushdie's logorrhoea, Amitav Ghosh's language tested in the narrow space between reason and madness (*The Circle of Reason*), and narration as a binding substance of the world and the shadow of historical trauma (*Shadow Lines, The Hungry Tide*), the brilliant dialogues of Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* in which the immigrants' language represents a live, performative translation hybridizing languages, minds and identities, the precision and language sensitivity of Kiran Desai's writing, stretching between lyricism and acerbic cosmopolitics as a form of critical commentary on the world, the new Orientalism in the strategies of postcolonial exoticism in such novels as Chitra Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* who, like many other writers, in more or less direct ways reinforces the orientalist stereotypes by representing cultural difference as the Indian mystical essence healing the soulless West, and, last but not least, the asceticism of J. M. Coetzee's writing turning into nothing short of an ethical imperative, and V.S. Naipaul's conviction that sceptical realism is what the writer from the peripheries of the empire, devoid of own language, can take from the imperial legacy – this broad spectrum of postcolonial writing is the proof that locality of culture, functioning in the text as cultural difference, imposes on the writer the necessity to develop such a language politics as will acknowledge otherness as the paradoxical substance of the language of postcoloniality. This otherness, encompassing the range of meanings between foreignness and exoticism, is translational but also reconciled with the inevitable incommensurability between languages.

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[13] On world literature as a centralized system of consecration and canonization, see Casanova 2004: 82–102.

This otherness – difference – does not always have to be, often is not, and sometimes never was, a substantial language or cultural being. Its matter is delicate and indeterminate. This is a difference that remembers something, that is a record of a presence (forgotten, not fully acknowledged, sensed) which may as well be a new organism that came to life by absorbing another. The condition of translational writing – deriving from the trauma of split languages, identities and worlds – makes us aware, through the fact of postcolonial literature, that

1. We only ever speak one language.
2. We never speak only one language. (Derrida 1998: 7)

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