RELEASED FROM THE GRIP OF EMPIRE: LINGUA FRANCA AS TARGET CULTURE?

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> *We* were the Romans! We were up to date when you were a backward nation. The foreigners who invaded *you* found a third-world country! Even when you discovered India in the age of Shakespeare, we already had our Shakespeares. And our science –architecture– our literature and art, we had a culture older and more splendid, we were rich! After all, that's why you came.

Those are the words the British dramatist Tom Stoppard, in his new play *Indian Ink*,[1] puts into the mouth of the ex-patriate Indian Anish Das in conversation with the elderly British matron Mrs Swan: the ex-colonized to the ex-colonizer. Since Columbus discovered America over 500 years ago, European powers have dominated foreign peoples all over the world; by 1918, they were ruling over no less than 85% of the earth's surface. The 20th century, in particular the last fifty years, has witnessed a process of gradual decolonization, euphemistically described as the 'transfer of power', usually from the former colonial power to an indigenous elite.[2] The process, as we all know, has been far from smooth and simple, and it is not the aim of my talk to go into the tragic social and political upheavals of the colonial aftermath. We shall be concerned with a less dramatic but no less powerful or deep-seated element of colonial rule: the legacy of language.

Within this context I should like to make a distinction between what I call the *dominant* language and the *lingua franca*. A dominant language is one forced on the subjugated people along with the foreign world-view and culture; a lingua franca is one freely accepted as a system of communication for mutual understanding. In the case of newly formed nations after independence from colonial rule, the former dominant language is usually established either as an official language or as a generally accepted lingua franca. Thus Spanish is now the (or at least one) official language of most Latin American countries, and in the Philippines it is the language still spoken among an elite claiming Spanish descent. French can be described as a lingua franca in North Africa, and countries of former Indo-China, and similar examples could be cited for other European languages such as Portuguese or Dutch. At the same time however the newly formed nations see their indigenous language as a means of expressing their individual cultural identity, a vital factor one cannot overlook as a natural reaction to colonial rule –and other forms of foreign domination. (An interesting parallel was the use of Russian

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[1] Tom Stoppard: *Indian Ink,* London, Faber, 1995.

[2] Tejaswini Niranjana: *Siting Translation: History, Post-structuralism, and the Colonial Context*, Berkeley, Univ. of California, 1992.

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as prescribed dominant language in the countries of the former Eastern bloc; the violent reaction is now the rejection of Russian in general in most new democracries of Eastern Europe and an insistence on developing the local language as an expression of national identity, even to the extent of separating language varieties where only minor formal differences exist and where there is complete mutual understanding –a sad example is the development of Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian from Serbo-Croatian).

Beside this psychological need for national or cultural identity as expressed through language, there is also however the pragmatic necessity for international and supra-cultural communication in a world which is growing ever smaller. And here English has assumed a hitherto unparalleled role as world language and international lingua franca. This is of course partly due to its former role as dominant language of the British Empire, whereby standard British English has diversified into numerous regional and local varieties or «new Englishes»; it is furthermore due to the world-wide domination of American technology and culture and the adoption of English as the international lingua franca of science and commerce; and it is also due to the fact that English can be relatively easily acquired for everyday conversation and is used for the basic needs of superficial communication by native speakers of other languages all over the world. All in all, English has long since left the ownership of the native speakers in England and has become, as one might say, world property.[3] It has been estimated that roughly every third person in the world uses some variety of English as a non-native speaker, and it is one of the few languages used by a majority of people who speak it as a second, third or nth language.[4] This is also reflected in translation, where English dominates the market. Since the Second World War, English –as a source-language– has been the most widely translated language in the world, thus promoting even further the international expansion of Anglo-American culture.[5]

The process leading up to the «globalization» of the English language has been long and complicated, and it goes back to the beginnings of colonial rule. In recent years, the relationship between colonialism, language and translation has become a popular topic for research; one of the most enlightening books I have read in this field is *Siting Translation. History, Post-structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (1992) by the Indian scholar Tejaswini Niranjana. She shows, not only how the British colonizers imposed their language on the Indians, but how both language and translation were used to enforce and perpetuate unequal relations of power, prejudice and domination. This applies particularly where Indian texts were translated into English for the benefit of the British overlords. An outstanding example is the work of Sir William Jones, the famous orientalist and jurist who arrived in India in 1783 and sought to use translation

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[3] Henry Widdowson: «The Ownership of English», (Peter Strevens Memorial Lecture) in *IATEFL Annual Conference Report: Plenaries. Whitstable: International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL)*, pp. 5-9.

[4] See Corazón D. Villareal: *Translating the Sugilanon: Reframing the Sign,* Quezon City, Univ. of the Philippines, 1994, p. 63, and David Crystal: «How Many Millions? The Statistics of English Today», *English Today* (1985), 1, pp. 7-9.

[5] Lawrence Venuti: *The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation,* London, Routledge, 1995, p. 14.

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«to domesticate the Orient and thereby turn it into a province of European learning».[6] Jones's work has had a profound and lasting impact on generations of scholars right up to the present day, and Niranjana maintains that it has helped construct a powerful but falsified image of a submissive and indolent nation of «Hindus» taken over wholesale by later writers. The basic factors underlying Jones's work are diagnosed by Niranjana as follows:[7] firstly, the need for translation by a European translator, because the natives were considered unreliable interpreters of their own laws and culture; secondly, the desire as colonial overlord to be a lawgiver, to give the Indians their «own» laws (i.e. as seen by the colonizers after translation by a colonizer), and thirdly, the desire to «purify» Indian culture and speak on its behalf. It is not the aim of my talk to evaluate Niranjana's hypotheses; they are presented here because they have ominous implications for translation theory.

Niranjana's book shows translation as a factor reinforcing a power structure based on blatant inequality, and it debunks the linguistically oriented theories of translation based on the symmetrical concept of equivalence as derived from the structuralist concept of language as a code. Modern translation theory in Europe has in any case ceased to describe translation as mere linguistic recoding: it is explicitly reader-oriented, and the translated text is viewed and described in its function in the target culture. In the skopos theory (named after the Greek word *skopos* for aim, or purpose), the translation should be designed to fulfil its specific purpose for the target reader or audience (i.e. a stage play should be actable, and translated instructions or guidelines should function as such in the target system). In this view the source text is no longer the sole yardstick for measuring the adequacy of the translation –in other words, it has been «dethroned». Similarly, in the view of the proponents of the polysystem theory, which has gained great influence in literary translation, all translation «...implies a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose».[8] For well over a decade this approach has been widely accepted in European translation studies: it is however a view which might be seen to reinforce motives such as those of the early colonialists in India, and which confirms those dissenting voices in translation studies that warn about the dangers of abuse and plead for a reappraisal of the status of the source text.

In this lecture I want to continue the theme of translation in a postcolonial world. I shall be dealing, not with English source texts, but with translations from formerly colonized communities into English as former dominant language and present international lingua franca. Our starting point must therefore be the structures of inequality, as described by Niranjana, though the basic constellation has radically changed. William Jones as colonizer wrote his own translations to reinforce his view of the colonized people for his fellow Europeans. Today the formerly colonized communities, while fostering their cultural identity by means of their own language, use translation as a means of reaching a wider audience, with the lingua franca as target language. Does

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[6] T. Niranjana, *o. cit.*, p. 12.

[7] *Ib.*, p. 13.

[8] Theo Hermans (ed.): *The Manipulation of Literature. Studies in Literary Translation*, London, Croom Helm, 1985, p. 9.

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this work merely as a supra-cultural linguistic code despite the insights of translation theory, or is a target culture created in which the text is assigned a function? And what problems arise for translators working in this particular situation?

TRANSLATING FROM MALAYALAM

The texts I want to discuss are short stories from countries with a very different colonial and linguistic history –India and the Philippines. My Indian example is taken from the extreme southwest of the Indian subcontinent, from literature written in Malayalam, the language of present-day Kerala. The stories form an Appendix to a book published in 1968 by the Malayalam scholar K. M. George with the title *A Survey of Malayalam Literature*. It was written, as is explicitly stated, for the «non-Malayalee reader», and its purpose is described as follows: «Though the literature of Kerala has an important place in the development of Indian letters, very few accounts in English are available on the subject. This historical survey thus fills a long-felt lacuna» (dust-jacket). We thus have a native speaker of Malayalam as interpreter of his own unadulterated Southern Indian culture. The book falls into three clearly definable sections: first there is a survey of the traditional Malayalam literature, secondly, there is an account of literature deriving from European tradition (hence via colonial domination), including the novel and short story, and finally, there is an Appendix with poems and short stories translated from Malayalam by the author.

Given that the author sees the «short story proper» as a branch of literature which developed from the western tradition,[9] one might assume that his English translations of the stories in the Appendix would read like imitations of works by western writers. Even a cursory look shows that this is by no means the case: the genre «short story» has developed its Indian variant just as the English language has developed its variety of Indian English. This applies both to the subject-matter and the narrative structure. The themes are mainly traditional, showing individual characters portrayed in a lush tropical setting, but there are clear signs of social criticism (racial violence, or the position of the woman); the western influence in this pastoral life-style emerges sharply, but without any direct attack on colonial power. The narrative structure is usually less distinct than it is in the classic British or American modern short story, and the stories read more like impressionistic sketches. I shall not be dealing with the translation process as such in my discussion, but will look at the English translations as texts valid in their own right.

My first example consists of the opening lines to the story *Survey Stone* by P. C. Kuttikrishnan, whom George characterizes as follows:

> (He) is a very sensitive artist. He does not indulge in excesses of any kind. He is quite confident that his subtle and refined treatment will evoke sympathetic responses in the minds of the cultured readers. He does not preach social revolution through his characters.

[9] K. M. George: *A Survey of Malayalam Literature,* Bombay, Asia, 1968, p. 183.

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The dialogue that Kuttikrishnan puts in their mouth will convince the reader that they are really human.[10]

Bearing this in mind, let us read the sample of his prose:

> Kuttappa Panikkar married Kunjitheyi Amma. He was happy, and so was she; but happiest of all, by far, was Icharan Nayar, her uncle. He was the *karanavar*, the chief of the house (or *taravad*, as it is called), devoted to its welfare. Lately, he had been worried about the marriage of his niece, the only scion of his house. He longed for a bud from her to continue the line. He had brought her up most tenderly, not daring to flying (sic!) even a flower at her, lest it should hurt her.
>
> Orphaned of her father and mother, she had grown up in the shade of her uncle's wing. She was eighteen now. The tender vine had shot up with a flourish of bright green leaves. How could the uncle look on with unconcern?
>
> Icharan Nayar had never bothered about his own children. «If they do well, it is good for their *taravad*», his thoughts ran. He prayed daily that Kunjitheyi should bear children to continue the line.
>
> He worked hard too for the coming generation. He got up in the morning, drank a bowl of gruel, and taking the yoke on his shoulders went to the field returning only after sunset. After a bath and supper, he sat for a while on a low bench in the verandah and relaxed. His thoughts then turned invariably to his niece. «She is a good-natured lass, and her horoscope is excellent», he thought.[11]

For the native speaker of British English this is quite convincing and coherent narrative with a certain exotic effect. The elements producing this are easily identifiable as cultural and not strictly linguistic: the names of the characters (e.g. Kuttappa Panikkar); the translation strategy which both leaves key culture-bound items untranslated and then paraphrases them with a broad generic term , l. 2. «He was the *karanavar*, the chief of the house (or *taravad*, as it is called)»; the use of items with antiquated connotations (l. 4 «scion of his house»), and the use of displaced regional variants (l. 16 «lass» with Scottish connotations). A striking effect is produced by the imagery, a major element in most Eastern cultures: in this case it is the metaphor, or rather the metaphorical field, of the plant, to refer to both the continuation of the family heritage (l. 4, «He longed for a *bud* from her to continue the line») and –for the modern native speaker of English rather quaintly– the physical maturity of the heroine (l. 8 «The tender *vine* had *shot up* with a flourish of bright *leaves*»).All in all we can conclude that the exoticizing effect has been produced by the impact of the «foreign» cultural items or devices on an otherwise conventional passage of English narrative.

The more clear-cut the conventions, the greater is the impact of the «foreign» content. Let us look at a passage from another story, S. K. Pottekad's *The Story of the Time-piece*:[12]

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[10] George, *o.cit.*, p. 187.

[11] *Ib.*, p. 288.

[12] *Ib.*, p. 320.

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Cannanore, January 14

Sir,

Kindly trace the old timepiece in the wardrobe in the southern room of «Woodbine» bungalow and send the same per bearer, Kunikkoran, the butler. The key of the room is sent through him.

Yours truly
(Sd.) Kunnumel Koloth Chirutha
Owner of Woodbine Bungalow

What we have here is a letter conforming strictly to the now outdated British text-type conventions governing business correspondence –it is in fact a relic from colonial times. These conventions involve not only the formulaic opening and closing phrases («Sir», «Yours truly, signed, with the identification of the writer in this particular social and situational role»), but also the choice of linguistic structures («kindly trace», «send the same», and then the use of the passive). Within this rigid and extremely formal framework the content seems excessively quaint, including the description of the messenger as a «butler». These are used as overt devices for «exoticizing» the text.

TRANSLATING THE SUGILANON

Let us now look at an example from the Philippines, a country with a long colonial experience and a particularly complicated language structure. In India the British colonizers found a rich complex of cultures, languages and dialects upon which they imposed their language and world view. Now, after independence, it has remained a rich complex of cultures, languages and dialects, of which the most widely spoken language, Hindi, has emerged as official language, with English as second official language and lingua franca. In the Philippines over a hundred languages are spoken, most of them regional, of which Tagalog, spoken in Metro Manila, is the basis for Filipino, the national language; American English, as a result of the 20th century colonial history, has remained as second official language and lingua franca for domestic and international communication, while Spanish, as a remnant of previous colonial rule, is spoken among an elite who claim Spanish descent and are known as the *ilustrados*.

For our purpose it is however important that nearly three and a half centuries of Spanish rule have left indelible cultural traces, extending to Philippine literature. This is shown very convincingly in a book published in 1994 by Corazón Villareal called *Translating the Sugilanon: Re-framing the Sign*. Like Tejaswini Niranjana, Villareal discusses the phenomenon of translation as an issue «inevitably enmeshed with questions of power»,[13] and she too shows how colonial overlords used translation to cement belief in the superiority of their own culture. Whereas Niranjana views translation from a post-structuralist perspective, Villareal adopts a semiotic approach: translation, like other aspects of the Filipino's socio-cultural life, has existed within the sign frame of the colonizer. Her book is divided into two sections: a theoretical and historical part,

[13] Corazón D. Villareal, *o. cit.*, p. 5.

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and a corpus of ten stories in Hiligaynon, the language of the Ilonggos in the Central Philippines, with translations by the author into Filipino and English.

The *sugilanon* is the name given to the narrative form discussed here, but in contrast to the Malayalam scholar K. M. George, Villareal emphasizes that these short stories are not direct descendants of the western genre, but are embedded in an indigenous tradition going back to the oral literature of pre-Spanish times, and should be treated accordingly. As a written form, this type of narrative can be traced back to 19th century works, in particular the *corrido*, a narrative poem set to music and chanted[14] –modern translation theory would describe it as a multi-medial text, of which language and narrative structure, in contrast to the Western short story, are only elements of a larger and complex whole. This might explain why these stories are more stylized in form and looser in structure than the classic short story of Western tradition.

Unlike K. M. George, who in the 1960s wrote his book in English as an obvious and undisputed means of making the literature of Kerala available for the «non-Malayalee reader» –hence using English as a neutral lingua franca– Villareal is highly aware of the sensitive issues involved in the choice of language. In the Philippines, the question of English has always been a political one,[15] the language having been historically associated with elitism, and hence with cultural imperialism. On the other hand recent studies have shown[16] that the language of the ex-colonizer can be used creatively for linguistic emancipation, particularly in the case of English, whose flexible structure provides «potential modes for resistance and affirmation».[17] On the basis of this, Villareal suggests that the translator should experiment with what she calls a «Filipino variety of literary English»,[18] which she calls «english».[19]

In principle this demand is nothing new. Filipino English has long since been recognized as a «new» variety of English, and as such it could well form the basis of a new form of literary expression, as have other varieties in other continents. Henry Widdowson[20] quotes the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe as follows:

> I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. [...] But it will have to be a new English, still in communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new surroundings.

These statements are also taken up by Villareal herself as a solution for translation, and using her semiotic concept of «re-framing the sign», she discusses and applies altering strategies in a bottom-up model working from the word, via syntax to rhetoric. The theory is intriguing; in practice however, she suggests little more than what we

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[14] *Ib.*, p. 13f.

[15] *Ib.*, p. 56.

[16] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin: *The Empire Writes Back. Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*, London, Routledge, 1989.

[17] Jane Batsleer: *Rewriting English*, London, Methuen, 1985, p. 5.

[18] C. D. Villareal, *o. cit.*, p. 61.

[19] *Ib.*, p. 67.

[20] Henry Widdowson, *o. cit.*, p. 7.

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have already observed in the simple passages from the English translation of the Malayalam story: non-translation of culture-specific items, exploitation of syntactic shifts, and retention of source-language rhetorical devices such as redundancy.

Let us now look at an extract from one of her translations and see what kind of a text is produced:

> The moon shone brightly that Christmas night. Don Juan's palatial home was illuminated and its large doors were wide open. Its first floor was filled with the strains of music by a well-known orchestra whom the gracious hosts had earlier welcomed upstairs.
>
> Bluish bulbs from two crystal chandeliers radiated light as bright as day on the spacious living room where young women from a famous group were singing. There must have been no less than sixteen of them and all were pretty, but the one who stood out was the beautiful Anabella, a young Spanish mestiza with a lovely bearing and a flower-like face. Her soprano voice, sweet and gentle, captivated Tito Navarro, the sole heir of the owner of the house. For indeed, no one could resist the charm of Anabella. Dressed in a white *baro* and *saya* with red stripes, she wore no expensive jewelry, but was as beautiful as a star glowing in the night.
>
> The songs, the dance and the orchestra numbers all drew warm applause. Then, with his precious violin in hand, Tito approached Anabella to request her to sing. The alluring lady did not refuse. Accompanied by Tito's violin, she sang a tender *kundiman* which the audience heartily applauded. Only Doña Julia, the proud and haughty mother of Tito seemed displeased.
>
> «*Sus,* who is this goddess Tito adores? A singer? How shameful! I shall not allow him to be smitten by someone as poor as Anabella», the mother grumbled in her bedroom.
>
> After the carolers had left, Doña Julia ordered the lights turned off. She then called Tito into her room and in a tone full of authority and rebuke, she said: «My son, you cannot carry on this way with Anabella. You ought to marry a woman with more wealth and name than we have».
>
> «Mother, why must you be so snobbish? At death, do not the bones of the poor and the rich mingle?»

This is the introduction to the story *Anabella* by Magdalena Jalandoni, whom Villareal describes as a prize-winning pioneer in the sugilanon. But about this particular story the author has her doubts:[21]

> In a way, «Anabella» confirms what critics have listed as the weaknesses of vernacular literature in the Philippines: «a cloying romanticism», «a lack of concern for technique», and thus a looseness in form [...], «didacticism», and «sentimentalism». Added to these is stylized or conventional characterization. When the story is translated into English, these features are heightened –the effect is downright mushy, contrivedly didactic and offensive to the taste of anyone who has read Poe, Anderson, Hemingway, Lardner, and Faulkner.

The passage I have just read indeed confirms this criticism, though in all fairness one should add that this particular story is not typical of the collection: the others, like the Malayalam stories we have been looking at, rather depict, not the circles of the *ilustrados,* but rural characters in a pastoral, pre-technological environment. The subject-

[21] C. D. Villareal, *o. cit.,* p. 13.

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matter and the characters of *Anabella* seem decidedly European, and the values unashamedly Western.To describe the setting and the people phrases are used which to the European reader are trite and overladen. He or she is actually confirmed in long outdated cliches of his own culture. The only exotic features are the culture-bound items *–baro, saya, kundiman–* which have on principle been left untranslated. A strange feature is the formal and extremely wooden character of the spoken dialogue, though this too is apparently a conscious strategy on the part of the translator, which she justifies as follows:

> R. K. Narayan, in *The Financial Expert,* uses grammatically correct English to the point of stiffness. It is not just the financial expert who does so, but the supporting characters. The peasant says, for example, that «We should not talk about others unnecessarily», while the policeman declares that Margayya «has come after his son, Balu, about whom a card has emanated from here». Weir comments that Narayan must have had two reasons for using this style: to convey the idea that the characters in this South Indian village of Malgudi speak grammatically in a language not in English, or that Narayan is trying to show the foibles of the characters through stilted speech.
>
> Characters speaking in formal or academic English are not unusual even in Philippine writing in «english» [...] As for the characters in the sugilanon included in my corpus here, it would definitely be unnatural for them to use American slang or English idiomatic expressions.[22]

This last point is crucial and provides us with an answer to the question about the problems arising for translators working in a postcolonial context, and it also shows us that for texts such as these the lingua franca –English– cannot function merely as a neutral, supra-cultural linguistic code as it can in informative texts (like instructions for use, scientific reports, road signs and so forth) –and even these are not without complications. For expressive, narrative texts such as the ones we are considering here however, the translator must consider both the artistic profile of the source text (in this case the portrayal of characters) and the probable reactions of the target reader, as a living person with experiences, emotions, world-knowledge and a cultural background: in other words, the translation strategies indeed create a potential target culture, with which the translation should be coherent. If it is not, problems will certainly arise.

Precisely that is the case here. In the descriptive and narrative passages the western reader is confirmed in his own well-worn cliches, but in the dialogue he is suddenly confronted with language that is stilted and inconsistent in register (within the intensely formal framework there are suddenly colloquial words like *smitten* and *carry on*). In other words this is the frozen and artificial language of a translated code. Such is not however the case with the passages quoted from Narayan, who is consistent in presenting the formal language characteristic in India as once learnt from the British overlords and which is quite coherent with the Indian background. Villareal is right in rejecting American slang as incoherent with the Philippine background, but strategies other than «translationese» could have been found.

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[22] *Ib.*, p. 72f.

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To find such strategies we need to turn to texts like the one by Narayan which Villareal has quoted, the so-called «hybrid texts», now a familiar feature of the postcolonial literary scene, writen by the ex-colonized in the language of the ex- colonizer, as was already described for English by Chinua Achebe. Samia Mehrez, writing on the North African francophone texts,[23] points out that these have «succeeded in forging a new language»:

> For these texts written by postcolonial bilingual subjects create a language «in between» and therefore come to occupy a space «in between». In most cases, the challenge of such space «in between» has been double: these texts seek to decolonize themselves from two oppressors at once, namely the western ex-colonizer who naively boasts of their existence and ultimately recuperates them and the «traditional», «national» cultures which shortsightedly deny their importance and consequently marginalize them.

This principle is perhaps even more relevant for similar writings in English, because the «in between» language is based on an established, hence living variety of English. A striking example can even be found in the Philippines: in his volume of short stories entitled *The Bread of Salt* –itself a translation of the *pan de sal,* the Filipino breakfast roll– the writer N. V. M. González demonstrates how English can be used creatively to describe the same pastoral world of the Philippines as is revealed in the stories of the sugilanon. In the Preface González writes as follows:

> In the Philippines, colonization made us into a truly submerged people. We are not mere fictions. To write fictions about us would seem superfluous and irrelevant, were it not for the fact that Art intervenes even as we attempt to give form to our judgement. With English, which America brought to the country initially as a tool for colonial administration, came a tradition and a culture ready to hand.
>
> The language has been with us for nine decades now. While these have been years of grieving over fancied or real losses in the native culture, these have also been years of opportune expression through a borrowed language. An alien language does not fail if it is employed in honest service to the scene, in evocation of the landscape, and in celebration of the people one has known from birth.[24]

Most of the writings on postcolonial literature portray an extremely negative dichotomy of the dominant versus the dominated language and culture, and the positive approach of both González and Chinua Achebe with his English «still in communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new surroundings» might be recommended, not only for the so-called «hybrid texts» but also as a strategy for translation.

The consequence would be a shift of perspective in translation theory. First of all, for postcolonial texts from a formerly dominated language and culture, the status of the

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[23] Samia Mehrez: «Translation and the postcolonial experience: The francophone North African text», in L. Venuti (ed.): *Rethinking Translation. Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology,* London, Routledge, 1992, p. 121.

[24] N. V. M. González: *The Bread of Salt and Other Stories,* Seattle, Univ. of Washington, 1993, p. xii.

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source text needs to be reassessed. In his recent book *The Translator's Invisibility,* Lawrence Venuti deplores what he calls the «dominance of transparency in English-language translations»[25] which reinforce the «international expansion of Anglo-American culture»[26] and, reviving Friedrich Schleiermacher's well-worn dichotomy of 1813, pleads for a «foreignizing» as against the current «domesticating» method of translation. By foreignizing he means «bending the language» in Schleiermacher's sense and as understood by Corazon Villareal to interfere with rules and structures of the language system. Precisely this however creates that artificial «translation code» or translationese which impairs the coherence and hence the message of the translation as a literary work. An alternative is the exoticizing strategy as described above, where possible in a variety of the target language «to suit its new surroundings', or, if none is readily available, in creative use of a neutral standard form. English as a world language and lingua franca provides both the flexible basis for creative extension and numerous natural varieties «still in communion with the ancestral home» as a living target culture. In this sense we can again reject that rigid age-old dichotomy of «foreignizing» as against «domesticating» the *text* in favour of what Christiane Nord[27] has described as the ethical principle of *loyalty* towards the *partners* involved in the act of translation, that is, both the source-culture author and the target-culture reader.

Bearing this in mind, the translator could approach the text holistically and, reversing Villareal's model, develop strategies in a top-down model, proceeding from basic decisions as regards language variety, rhetoric and style in the text as a whole to the individual grammatical and lexical items which will then depend on them. A relevant theoretical model would be the scenes-and-frames approach going back to Fillmore and Lakoff.[28] In postcolonial texts the cultural background and hence the scenes are usually foreign to the reader in the Western target culture. This effect can be highlighted in the treatment of the imagery, particularly the wealth of metaphors typical of oriental cultures, and other culture-bound items. This is even clear from our first simple passage from the Malayalam story and the elements of it we have already discussed, whereas the passage from *Anabella* produces the cloying effect pointed out by Villareal simply because the scenes it activates are *not* foreign to the European reader, but seem basically familiar and are hence judged on the same basis as a story of the Anglo-American genre. Exoticizing strategies could have been activated to reduce this effect by the deliberate choice of linguistic frames that set the familiar against the foreign in the same way as the few untranslated culture-bound items stand out against the English text. Such strategies could be extended to the choice of adjectives, syntactic structures and rhetorical devices combining to form an English which uses its creative potential «to suit its new surroundings».

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[25] L. Venuti, *o. cit.*, p. 5.

[26] *Ib.*, p. 15.

[27] Christiane Nord: «Loyalität statt Treue. Vorschläge zu einer funktionalen Übersetzungstypologie», *Lebende Sprachen* (1989) 3, pp. 100-105.

[28] Mary Snell-Hornby: *Translation Studies - An Integrated Approach,* Amsterdam, Benjamins, 1988.

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On the dust-jacket of Tom Stoppard's play *Indian Ink* the process of decolonization is succinctly phrased as «one of the great shifts of history, the emergence of the Indian subcontinent from the grip of Empire». In the passage I quoted at the beginning of my paper the Indian Anish Das inverts the pattern of dominance and compares the status of his country's rich and ancient culture to that of the Romans, who invaded the backward, third-world country of ancient Britain. Many centuries later, the descendants of those and other backward tribes were to rule over most of the world, creating power structures of untold dimensions. A major instrument for consolidating those power structures was language. Now, as a recent book title has phrased it, «the empire writes back»,[29] and the once dominated cultures seek forms of self-representation, both in their national language as expression of their individual identity, and in the former dominant language as lingua franca and means of global communication. In the pluralistic societies of today we have the chance to enable this legacy of language to be put to positive use, in particular through the channels of translation. This will involve overcoming the vertical power structures inherited from the past and to some extent still perpetuated today, and creating a balance of partnership based on mutual interaction.

[29]Ashcroft et al., *o. cit.*

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