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CHAPTER 7

THE THIRD SPACE
IN POSTCOLONIAL REPRESENTATION

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"Where there is power, there is resistance."
Michel Foucault, The Discourse on Language

The drive toward global uniformity in cultures, lifestyles and mentalities also extends to the production of literature. In literature, translation as an activity that always takes place in a specific social, historical and political context involves—voluntarily or not—asymmetrical power relations. With regard to "Third World" literatures, these power relations go as far back as the colonial period. Translation has played an eminent role in anticolonialism—witness the discourse of opposition to colonialism from the very beginning—and has therefore always been a part of the colonizing process. Postcolonialism, which generally refers to the period following independence, encompasses, more specifically, the ways of thinking and modes of behaviour in the "new" states, which are partly a result of independence. Therefore, the role of translation in the postcolonial context is closely related to the perpetuation of colonial structures.

Colonialism involved territorial, economic, political and cultural subjugation, appropriation and exploitation of another country and people, with the aim of establishing one's dominance in the world. Colonialism was not restricted to the countries and peoples of the "Third World," but also applied to other contexts. In fact, the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire can be compared, in some aspects, to the situations
occasioned by Third World colonies' independence from the colonizing powers. Decolonization affects both the colonized and the colonizer: both feel fragmented, dismembered, exhausted, inferior and weak. The new situation is marked by ambivalence on both sides. A shared coat, which somehow held together different cultural manifestations, is shed, and both parties must look for a new coat or create a patchwork from the remnants. The newly independent country remains determined from the outside as the empty spaces inside are filled with nationalism, fundamentalism and essentialism (see Weibel 1997, 15).

Austria, a former hegemonic country which had built up numerous colonies in Europe, is still in the throes of an identity crisis that can only be described as postcolonial in nature. The loss of the prestigious position which the empire had enjoyed for centuries within Europe, the loss of two world wars and a considerably weakened cultural situation have all contributed to a definite lack of cultural identity in Austria. Moreover, the aftershocks of the 1918 disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire are still being felt eighty years after the fact: the division of Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the dissolution of Yugoslavia into several small national states—all symbolize the violence of dismemberment of a multi-ethnic empire.

What is the value of this to the current discussion on postcolonialism? While it may be true, from an ideological standpoint, that the various individual ethnic and national groups did not enjoy equal opportunities within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the overall cultural climate that reigned cannot in any way be compared to that of Third World countries under colonialism. Under Austrian rule, the various states maintained a large part of their cultural traditions. If literary and artistic productions were censored, overall cultural output was not suppressed or wiped out, as was the case in Latin America and Africa. Consequently, after the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the independent countries found themselves in a culturally weakened—but not necessarily “hybrid”—situation, in the postcolonial sense of the word. Also, what remained of the Habsburg monarchy cannot be compared to the more or less well-established—politically and culturally, at least—hegemonic nations.

About four-fifths of the world's population, most of whom live in what is commonly called the Third World, have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism. However, global-impacting developments since the end of the 1980s (in particular, the end of the Cold War) and the whole phenomenon of globalization have contributed to a more dynamic foregrounding of postcolonialism. Frantz Fanon's Les damnés de la terre (The Wretched of the Earth, 1968), which came out in 1961, looks at the
metropolises of former colonial empires, and questions the predominant cultural canons and consensus. Today, the cultural map needs to be redrawn. Cultural identity—which has always been far from simple and unequivocal—has become even more complex, and a matter of particular interest in social studies. Several questions which are crucial to the discussion of postcolonial translation arise. If it is true that the discourses of Western institutions are being perpetuated in the discourses of so-called Third World societies, thus perpetuating colonial structures (Niranjana 1992, 3), one must wonder to what extent Western democracy allows us to translate social differences beyond the polarities of us and them, East and West, First and Third World? Is not the Other, as represented through translation, undeniably caught within the web of these discourses? Are not the various forms of Otherness still illusions or reflections, rather, of our own identities? To what extent are constructions of the Other still postcolonial or neocolonial phenomena in so-called multicultural societies?

It seems that what is at stake is the assumption that Western cultures are based on exclusion and delimitation, that they draw a line between themselves and other cultures, peoples, races and religions. Consequently, they tend to represent their authority primarily through binary oppositions such as the ones mentioned above or others like self/other, colonizer/colonized, developed/underdeveloped. The phenomena of visible and invisible "clashes of civilization" (Huntington 1996), however, result in different forms of acculturation, syncretism, hybridization or pidginization. A dramatic turn in the representation of the Other that goes far beyond the Manichean division of self and other is being taken. Advocates of this "turn" in cultural studies recognize the danger in simply reversing these dichotomies, and therefore look to deconstruct them by analyzing the complex processes involved in cultural contact and its various implications, and by emphasizing the concept of "difference" in the formation of cultural identity. Thus, the key concept in cultural studies is hybridity.

In this paper, I will attempt to outline the development and various applications of the term hybridity in cultural studies, and trace the various stages of its implementation in postcolonial representation. I will attempt to show that postcolonialism, as a "continuing process of resistance and reconstruction" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1995, 2) can be considered as a reading and writing practice which questions the production of knowledge of the Other. Several trends in cultural anthropology which analyze the ways in which ethnographic discourse is generated and sustained have proven effective for highlighting changes in cultural representation. I will discuss these first. I will then look at models of representation that have already been adopted, mainly in ethnography and gender studies, based on the concept of the space-in-between, which in turn is based on the concept of
Finally, I will argue in favour of a postcolonial translation practice that emphasizes interventionist strategies, and that seeks to transcend dichotomizing notions of translation.

**Ethnographic Representation**

In ethnography, representing cultures which are characterized by value systems different from those of the observing and describing scholars has always been a major problem. Since the 1940s, scholarly interest has shifted to the analysis of ethnocentrism, among others. It was realized that the "observers'" perception, judgment of and behaviour toward members of the other culture were strongly influenced by the patterns of perception, valuation and behaviour acquired in their own culture (Gewecke 1986, 285). This realization has had an effect on the object of study, the ideological support and the organizational base of ethnography itself. Furthermore, the independence of many (mainly African) countries in the late 1950s and early 1960s accelerated the trend. The newly independent countries implemented extensive national-planning programs which brought about radical socio-economic change. Issues arising from such change concern, among others, the implications of the power relationship between dominant (European) and dominated (non-European) cultures on the practicalities of ethnography, the uses to which ethnographical knowledge was put, the theoretical treatment of particular topics, the mode of perceiving and objectifying alien societies, and ethnographers' claim of political neutrality (Asad 1975, 17).

Immediate consequences of these reflections were the development of new ethnographical methods of inquiry. With the awareness that having worked on a foreign culture does not necessarily imply complete knowledge of it came the proposal that ethnographers speak for their co-subjects of knowledge. This proposal emphasized a reflexive approach to ethnographic writing. Marcus and Fischer (1986), for example, highlight representation as the key feature of reflexivity. They consider "writing" as a social praxis engaged in the construction and dialectical reformulation of the Other, and argue in favour of an ethnographic writing which opens itself to a plurality of voices. This style of ethnography decentres the authority of the anthropologist, and involves much more than simply reporting information provided by informants (see Ulin 1991, 70). Cultural representation not only defines a specific method of observation and recording, but also includes the social discourse of the informant. It became important to express other discourses in one's own discourse, as well as to identify and capture differences in language. The encounter between the two cultures (the observing and the observed) is therefore no longer destined to result in
the clash that ethnographic discourse, primarily shaped by academic, institutional and political forces, tends to produce. If it is true that discourses in postcolonial contexts are generally constructed against the backdrop of societies where power and privilege are still a reality (Wolf 1996, 285), the approaches adopted by postmodern ethnographic writing seem to represent a paradigmatic turn of the “writing between cultures.” Not only is discourse preferred to text, dialogue to monologue, but ethnography now also privileges collaboration between the parties involved. The discourse produced should result from a reciprocal, joint, dialogic process. Ideally, the product should be a “polyphonic text” or as Tyler puts it:

A post-modern ethnography is a cooperatively evolved text consisting of fragments of discourse intended to evoke in the minds of both reader and writer an emergent fantasy of a possible world of commonsense reality. (1986, 125)

It is precisely in the field of discourse production that an interesting overlap of the ethnographer’s and the translator’s main tasks can be seen. For both, translation between two different cultures (e.g., Northern and Southern hemisphere societies) ideally consists in mutual, dialogical production of a discourse. Such discourse can be regarded as the result of the meeting of two cultures which merge or “hybridize” without giving up or neglecting their own specific cultural features, but which emphasize, rather, the various perspectives that converge in the translation product. This process is based on the assumption that language, as Bakhtin (1994, 293) wrote, is “a concrete heteroglot conception of the world”—it is, by its nature, a hybrid construction. I will come back to this Bakhtinian reflection later.

Such a multi-voiced representation also has its dangers. Considering “difference” as an effect of inventive syncretism, Edward Said and other scholars have cast radical doubt on the procedures by which alien human groups are represented, without however proposing systematic new methods or epistemologies. Their studies suggest that while ethnographic writing can never entirely escape the reductionist use of dichotomies and identities, it can at least struggle self-consciously to avoid portraying the Other as abstract or ahistorical (Clifford 1983, 119). I shall now examine these views of representation.

Hybridity or the Location of Cultural Encounter

Edward Said’s Orientalism, published in 1978, inaugurated a new era in postcolonial studies. His focus on discourse analysis, in the Foucauldian sense (Foucault 1972), enabled him to unmask the discriminatory image
that Western writings offered of the Orient. Said examines various European representations of the Middle East—literary, scientific and journalistic texts, travel writings, anthologies of nineteenth-century translations. He shows the collusion between literary texts and Western political domination, which results in the creation of images of the Orient that separate the spheres of the colonizer and the colonized, and portrays the latter as backward and passive. Through his analysis of colonial discourse, Said tries to show how the West—like every conqueror and empire—objectified the rest of the world and constituted itself as the Subject of History, within the framework of the emerging constellation of modernity (Chambers 1996, 47). In so doing, the West produced and codified knowledge about non-metropolitan areas and cultures, especially those under colonial domination. Orientalism, in Said’s words, is simply “a kind of Western projection onto and will to govern over the Orient” (1978, 95).

As Robert Young (1990) argues, Said refers the whole structure of colonialist discourse back to a single originating intention within colonialism—the intention of the colonialist power to possess the territory of the Other. It is this assumption which seems to be the most controversial part of Said’s theory. In Dennis Porter’s (1983) opinion, for example, Said’s construct of Orientalism is overly monolithic. Porter also identifies fundamental contradictions throughout Said’s book, which, in his opinion, are due to Said’s use of two theories whose positions are incommensurable: Foucault’s and Gramsci’s. Witness Porter’s concluding remarks to his critique of Said’s Orientalism:

In the light of all this, the reason why Said is unable in the end to suggest alternatives to the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism is not difficult to explain. First, because he overlooks the potential contradiction between discourse theory and Gramscian hegemony, he fails to historicize adequately the texts he cites and summarizes, finding always the same triumphant discourse where several are frequently in conflict... Finally, he fails to show how literary texts may in their play establish distance from the ideologies they seem to be reproducing. (1983, 192)

In Culture and Imperialism, Said (1993) tries to further develop his theory. On the one hand, he aims at elaborating a more comprehensive theory of the interrelations between culture and imperialism, extending his area of research to other colonized regions (e.g., the Caribbean, Black Africa and India). On the other hand, he stresses anti-imperialist resistance in an attempt to draw a more balanced picture of the processes of colonization and decolonization. In so doing, he tries to get away from using binary oppositions and to offer a view of both sides of the “imperial divide” between
colonizer and colonized (Kreutzer 1995, 203). He therefore disapproves of essentialist argumentation—for example, the European against the African, and vice versa—and seeks to focus on the heterogeneity of culture. It is in this heterogeneity that Said locates hybridity, a dynamic diversity which ultimately, according to Said, characterizes every culture.

It should be noted that the term hybrid has its origins in biology and botany; it became a key term in nineteenth-century positivist discourse, mainly to describe physiological phenomena, and has been reactivated in the twentieth century to describe cultural phenomena. Today, “the use of hybridity prompts questions about the ways in which contemporary thinking has broken absolutely with the racialized formulations of the past” (Young 1995, 6). Bakhtin introduced the concept of hybridity in philological reflections on representation. For Bakhtin, hybridity defines the way in which language, even a single sentence, can be double-voiced. According to his literary theory, a language can represent another language while still retaining “the capacity to sound simultaneously both outside it and within it” (1994, 358). He continues:

What is hybridization? It is a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor. (358)

Where he considers a language to be simultaneously the same, yet different, he associates it with the Romantic concept of irony. However, hybridization “doubles” irony in its ability to cause one voice to ironize and unmask the other within the same utterance. For Bakhtin, therefore, hybridity describes the process of the authorial unmasking of another’s speech through a language that is “double-accented” and “double-styled.” A “hybrid construction” is an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical and compositional markers, to a single speaker, one that actually contains within it two utterances, two manners of speech, two styles, two “languages,” two semantic and axiological systems. Bakhtin (1994, 304-5) showed that frequently even one and the same word belongs simultaneously to two languages or two belief systems that intersect in a hybrid construction. It is through this hybrid construction that one voice is able to unmask the other within a single discourse. It is at this point that authoritative discourse becomes undone. Authoritative discourse is univocal, it “is by its very nature incapable of being double-voiced; it cannot enter into hybrid constructions” (344); if it does, its univocal authority will immediately be undermined.4

Hybridization as subversion of authority in a dialogical situation of colonialism is examined by Homi Bhabha. He argues in favour of the
double vision that individuals, such as migrants or social minorities, positioned at the merging of cultures possess, and stresses the intercultural tension produced by this merging. Bhabha’s “double vision” recalls Norbert Elias’s metaphor of man on the threshold of a new age, between what we call the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (1990, 107). Elias’s man is standing on a bridge and has the face of Janus—his gaze is turned in two directions: one looking forward, one looking backward. In the “double vision” situation, the complex perspective of the marginalized is transmitted through the creativity of translation and transformation, thereby contributing to transcending social binarities of race, nation, gender or generation.

Bhabha’s view of representation takes hybridity as a starting point. He analyzes different types of hybridizations produced by various postcolonial societies. In a colonial context, cultural hybridity is produced at the moment of the colonial encounter, when self and other are inseparable from mutual contamination by each other. The colonial encounter is therefore embedded a priori in power relations, and requires constant awareness of the limits and possibilities of representation. Bhabha transforms Bakhtin’s definition of the hybrid into an active moment of challenge and resistance to the dominant cultural power. He sees hybridity as a “sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities” (1994, 112), and as a moment in which the discourse of colonial authority loses its univocal claim to meaning. In Bhabha’s words:

Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other “denied” knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority—its rules of recognition. (114)

Hybridity is thus not simply a third term that resolves the tension between two cultures in a dialectical play of “recognition,” and cannot be discussed as an issue of cultural relativism. Bhabha argues that an important change of perspective occurs when the “effect of colonial power is seen to be the production of hybridization rather than the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions” (112). Hybridity therefore describes a process in which the single voice of colonial authority undermines the operation of colonial power by inscribing and disclosing the trace of the other so that it reveals itself as double-voiced (Young 1995, 23). Bhabha’s concept of hybridity can thus be viewed as radically heterogeneous and discontinuous, a dialectical articulation that involves a new perspective of cultural representation. Cultural difference is no longer seen as the source of conflict, but as the effect of discriminatory practices; the production of cultural differentiation becomes a sign of authority. This changes the value of difference and its rules of recognition (1994, 114).
Under Bhabha’s concept of hybridity, cultural dimensions, such as space and time, can no longer be understood as being homogeneous or self-contained. Cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic as in the relation *self*—*other* (1994, 36), rather there is a *Third Space*, which can neither be reduced to the *self* nor the *other*, neither to the First nor to the Third World, neither to the master nor to the slave. Meaning is produced beyond cultural borders and is principally located in the Third Space, a sort of “in-between space” located between existing referential systems and antagonisms. The production of meaning

requires that these two places [the I and the You] be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot “in itself” be conscious. (36)

It is in this Third Space between former fixed territories that the whole body of resistant hybridization comes into being in the form of fragile syncretisms, contrapuntal recombinations and acculturation. And, as Bhabha states, the Third Space is also the potential location and starting point for postcolonial translation strategies:

It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew. (37)

What Bhabha calls the Third Space of representation in the postcolonial context has already been discussed and shaped in other discourses under different forms, and not necessarily within an elaborated model of representation. I shall now discuss some of these approaches, as adopted in ethnography and gender studies. These approaches will serve as a basis for my argument in favour of a translation practice in which the Third Space “carries the burden of the meaning of culture” (Bhabha 1994, 38), thus enabling an engaged, interventionist translation strategy to come into being.5

Space(s)-in-Between

Already in 1949, Margaret Mead argued in favour of an ethnographic representation evolving from a space located between her observations and subsequent statements thereof, and the reader’s consideration. This space should serve to convey to the reader not only the results of her observations as a fieldworker, but also the method by which she obtained her results. The
ethnographer should thus be able "to interpose between my statement and the reader's consideration of that statement a pause, a realization not of what authoritative right I have to make this statement I make, but instead of how it was arrived at, of what the anthropological process is" (1974, 13). The encounter of the culture being observed and to be represented, and the anthropologist's textualization in "strong" academic language (in Mead's case, English) on the one hand, and the reader's reception and consideration on the other hand, is perceived by Mead as a means of reflecting the process of cultural representation at the very border where the observer and the observed's perspectives merge.

In gender studies, the "space-in-between" stands for the desire for representation beyond the traditional male/female binarity. Women in different societies have been relegated to the position of the "Other." In this respect, a parallel might be drawn between women and colonized cultures: both have experienced oppression, and both are obliged to express themselves in the language of their oppressors. This "double colonization," as it were, by imperial and patriarchal supremacy is also a key concept in postcolonial translation theory.

Rosemary Arrojo's discussion (1995) of Susan Bassnett's essay (1992) on the elaboration of an "orgasmic theory of translation" seeks to deconstruct the male/female dichotomy, without however reversing the male/female power relationship, and equating the female with the non-violent and, therefore, legitimate. Bassnett argues that an "orgasmic" theory would transcend the violence implied in "colonialist" and "sexist" conceptions of translation which describe the translator's task in terms of "rape and penetration, of faithfulness and unfaithfulness" (1992, 72). She uses Hélène Cixous's notion of the "in-between" to illustrate the parallels between the development of Translation Studies and feminist theory in the 1970s. Cixous describes the feminine as being a place "in-between" the male and female poles:

To admit that writing is precisely working (in) the in-between, inspecting the process of the same and the other without which nothing can live, undoing the work of death—to admit this is first to want the two, as well as both, the ensemble of one and the other, not fixed in sequence of struggle and expulsion or some other form of death but infinitely dynamized by an incessant process of exchange from one subject to another. (qtd. in Bassnett 1992, 64)

Cixous, as well as other feminist poststructuralist theoreticians, principally questions binarities such as transcendence/immanence, spirit/body, subject/other. She calls for another sort of subjectivity—one which no longer devalues and denies the body. Cixous, after Jacques Derrida, adopts these traditional logocentric oppositions as a starting point. In doing so, she con-
siders the whole system of Western knowledge as based on male supremacy, the result of patriarchal hierarchization. Arrojo (1995, 72) argues that Cixous’s “feminine” becomes the new paradigm, the new logos, synonym for the non-violent, the good and the positive. Cixous, in attempting to empower the “feminine,” which she associates with everything that is good and desirable, inevitably emphasizes not only the male/female polarity, but all the other polarities her argument implies, for example, violence/non-violence, evil/good, life/death. Cixous ends up defending an essentialist thesis. The intervention in the text—in other words, the “woman-handling” of the text (Godard 1990, 94)—becomes just an inverted version of the patriarchal practice.

Inversion of male and female power relations endangers both the feminist stand and a feminist theory of translation which seeks to go beyond the binary concept of “equivalence.” Also, considering the “turnaround” in the role of the parties involved (man-author/woman-translator), one would have to admit that Bassnett’s “orgasmic theory of translation” does not differ very much from the violent intent of the theories she herself rejects (Arrojo 1995, 67). What is important, however—as Arrojo points out in her concluding remarks—is recognition of the “need to make reality (and, consequently, also texts and objects) our own, the need to fight for the power to determine and to take over meaning” (74). Such recognition is surely possible if there is a mutually respectful collaboration between author and translator. While Arrojo’s critique of Bassnett underlines the ineluctability of violence in any act of interpretation or writing (Simon 1996, 29), it must also be borne in mind that language, although a vehicle of meaning that is always driven by the will to power (Foucault 1970), is also a means of social change. The use of an inclusive language, at the level of parole and discourse, entails changes in perspectives, which in turn act as stimuli to changes in human action and reality. Cixous’s “writing in the in-between” stands precisely for this dialectical process of change.

The space-in-between, the encounter of male and female concerns which cannot be seen as an ahistoricized phenomenon, exists in everyday life. It is in this everyday encounter that new meaning can be produced. As Homi Bhabha puts it:

Translation is also a way of imitating, but in a mischievous, displacing sense—imitating an original in such a way that the priority of the original is not reinforced but by the very fact that it can be simulated, copied, transferred, transformed, made into a simulacrum and so on: the “original” is never finished or complete in itself. The “originary” is always open to translation so that it can never be said to have a totalised prior moment of being or meaning—an essence. (1990, 210)
So far in this article, I have discussed Homi Bhabha's concept of the Third Space, that is, the space between two poles or binarities. Feminist translation has created its own space-in-between. Whereas Bhabha's space is a natural creation born of the more or less violent "clash of civilizations," the feminist notion of *intertext* is a conscious creation of a space-in-between. Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood defines the intertext as a

communicating and resonating collective text scripted in the feminine by feminists rereading and rewriting what other feminists have written and spoken. It is composed of the women's voices and words constantly present in our own voices and words, synergizing our memories, our imaginations, our actions. (1991, 126)

In translation, the production of the translated text is usually dependent on the translator's knowledge of various other pertinent or related texts and contexts. This seems to be the classical conception of the notion of *intertextuality*. However, if we look at Michael Riffaterre's use of the terms "intertext" and "intertextuality," we see a clear distinction between the two notions. Indeed, as Barbara Godard points out:

Riffaterre makes a distinction between "intertext" (the totality of texts that may be related to the text being considered) and "intertextuality" (the reader's perception of significance, that is, of the literariness of the text). (1993, 570)

Here, *intertext* is considered very generally as a semiotic transformation, whereas *intertextuality* is limited to the reader's personal perception. Therefore, in our context, *intertext* refers to the presence of expressions, themes, stylistic devices and so forth in a text, which obviously have their origin in other previous texts. Like all writing, translation is nourished by reading. In this sense, the feminist intertext would consist of all feminist texts read by the translator—fiction, theory, criticism, translations—which can be considered a sort of memory bank of words, meanings and references that constitute the background for feminist translation strategies. But, the result goes beyond feminist translation which is marked by feminist intervention. Lotbinière-Harwood observes:

*d'une part elles [les re-belles et infidèles] bénéficient de l'apport créateur de l'intertexte, de l'autre, elles contribuent à l'émergence d'une culture au féminin en opéran un élargissement du vocabulaire, du sens et de la conscience.* (1991, 58)

*[on the one hand they (the *re-belles et infidèles*) benefit from the increased creativity brought by the intertext, and, on the other, they contribute to the emergence of a culture in the feminine, by broadening vocabulary, meaning and consciousness.]*
What we end up with, in fact, is a "shift from discourse, from ideologeme, to body, to identity," a shift from "conflicting ideologies ... toward a vision of sororal harmony" (Godard 1995, 78). The "clash of civilizations" concept is substituted by a concept of harmony created in the space-in-between, which views voice, sound and rhythm as the main features of writing in the feminine.

**Does liget Translate as "Heart"?**

An example from ethnographic representation will illustrate the creativity of the space in-between of diverging cultures. The ethnographer and the translator are usually the "first readers" of the other culture, and both must represent the other in a primary process. On the surface, the process of translation seems quite different for ethnographers and translators. The ethnographer first interprets the social discourse of the informants by trying to find out what they mean by what they say; then she/he systematizes and textualizes her/his interpretation for a target audience who is usually of the "First World." This is therefore a two-step translation process, at the very least. The translator, however, is already faced with a written or encoded text, which she/he must decode, interpret and reconstruct in her/his language, usually also for a "First World" audience. This is a manifold process (Wolf 1997, 128). As has been shown, both ethnography and translation in Third and First World contexts are positioned between systems of meanings that are marked by power relations. Translating between cultures must therefore be understood as the transfer of meanings of the "other" culture to the (con)texts of the "developed" world, which are determined by their own institutions, traditions and history.

With regard to the representation of rituals or, more generally, belief systems of other cultures, the ethnographer in the role of translator must "think in terms of essence, shape and image when translating" (my translation) (Kramer 1987, 73). In doing so, she/he must consider different layers of meaning separately, and include each in the decision-making process that the translation entails. For example, cultural phenomena attached to belief systems could have cosmological, sociological or psychological layers of meaning. The following example of the emotional layer of meaning attached to liget illustrates the diversity of cultural categories. Philippine Ilongot head-hunters consider that the liget ("heart") is the driving power behind the head-hunting ritual (Rosaldo 1980, 27). The liget encompasses energy, anger and passion. "Heart," therefore, contrary to its meaning in Western cultures, is not the locus of individual expressions of emotion, but of "social passion." It is the source of action and awareness, the centre of vitality and will (36). The term liget suggests the "passionate energy that..."
leads young men to labor hard, to marry, kill and reproduce, but also, if ungoverned by the ‘knowledge’ of mature adults, to engage in wild violence. Ideally, ‘knowledge’ and ‘passion’ work together in the ‘heart’” (27).

In Rosaldo’s opinion, the ethnographer’s exploration of meanings and intentions in order to “translate between cultures” is a crucial concern: We can learn about Ilongot life by using words like liget as an initial text ... because a proper understanding of what liget means requires us to look beyond the word itself to sentences in which it is employed, images through which it is invoked, and social processes and activities that Ilongots use it to describe. (24)

Rosaldo opens up a space between her interpretative labour, which is necessarily marked by Western thought, and the motivations which lead Ilongot head-hunters to claim that “liget is what makes men kill” (24). Only a detailed analysis of the ritual (e.g., ceremonies, songs, speeches, tales) will enable deeper insight into this imagery. And Rosaldo can do this only by using a terminology embedded in Western institutional language. But in so doing, the terms she uses in specific contexts are already marked by hybridity. The colonial encounter takes place precisely in this (ethnographic) interpretation, and continues into the translation process. Once translated, none of the parts involved remains the same: meanings are remixed; a dialectical interaction of the two cultures involved takes place (Bhabha 1994, 114). By highlighting the background of the concept of liget, Rosaldo creates a fertile space of understanding between different, already existing reference systems. Thus, liget can never be represented/translated as a sign, but must pass through a “space-in-between” where it is “appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew” (1980, 37).

**Intervention from the Third Space?**

As can be seen in the different approaches to translation between cultures considered in this paper, as well as in the textual example, the question as to whether it is “legitimate” to intervene in a text using any of the above-discussed strategies becomes an important one. Indeed, “spaces-in-between” provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of individuality, and contributing to initiating new identities (Bhabha 1994, 1). Both colonial and patriarchal power produce hybridity. Once we understand the process of hybridization, we can see how “the discursive conditions of dominance” can be turned into “the grounds of intervention” (Bhabha 1994, 112). Recognizing the hybrid therefore means translation, deformation, displacement. In her article “Translation and the Postcolonial Experience,” Samia Mehrez observed that postcolonial texts understood as hybrids have created their own language:
Hence, in many ways these postcolonial plurilingual texts in their own right resist and ultimately exclude the monolingual and demand of their readers to be like themselves: "in between", at once capable of reading and translating, where translation becomes an integral part of the reading experience. (1992, 122)

Anuradha Dingwaney goes even further when she locates in the between a space "from within which the (colonized) native deliberately (mis)translates the colonial script, alienating and undermining its authority," proceeding from an "awareness of the 'other's' agency and own forms of subjectivity, which 'returns' the 'other' to a history from which she or he was violently wrenched" (1995, 9). The space-in-between is therefore a fertile and, at the same time, disquieting space where the dialectical interaction of at least two cultures takes place. It is a place where the dominant culture and language can be subverted, and thus functions as a sort of resistance. If we consider the Third Space as the potential and starting point for interventionist translation strategies, we realize that such strategies go far beyond the traditional concepts of "original" and "translation," and the old dichotomy of "foreignizing" versus "domesticating" in all its implications. These strategies imply a shift toward the centre, where cultures encounter each other, and where meanings are effectively "remixed" (as shown in the example of liget). The place where cultures overlap and hybridity comes into being can already be considered as the focus of translation. This implies that culture is already itself translation. Doris Bachmann-Medick sees this equation as a new paradigm which substitutes the notion of "culture as text" (Geertz 1973):

Culture as translation ... is a new paradigm which stresses the aspect of negotiation in the constitution and assertion of cultures as well as emphasizing the problematic search for cultural commensurability and, at the same time, for local-historical grounding. (Bachmann-Medick 1996, 11)

What then does this turn in cultural representation mean to the role of translators? It would seem that much needs to be done to facilitate a "translation culture" which could address certain questions that arise. Translation obviously no longer means bridging a gap between two different cultures but, rather, producing meanings which are created through the encounter of cultures that are already characterized by multiculturality. Multiculturality is an ambiguous notion. According to the philosophy of multiculturalism, "the other" is an excepted entity, which implies the existence of difference. At the same time, however, this permissive philosophy can also serve as a pretext for exclusion precisely because of alterity. Unfortunately, the logic of multiculturalism does not transcend the dialectics of
inclusion and exclusion. The translator must always be aware of this ambiguous situation and act accordingly. She/he must also be aware of the ambiguity of the term *globalization* as it is used today. Politically, Western societies are drawing their curtains and getting ready to build fortresses; culturally, these societies are pleading for transcultural flexibility. Difference and alterity may have become legitimate, but they do not necessarily imply the basic right of equality. In fact, colonialism is perpetuated under a different form and name; globalization can be considered akin to neocolonialism, this time by transnational corporations.

The translator is caught within the web of this contradiction. Her/his task is primarily a cultural one. Yet the political implications of her/his activities cannot be ignored. Awareness of this double-bind situation can open new avenues for the translator. In a situation of hybridity, the translator operates in an environment characterized by the hybridization of language, culture, behaviour, institution and communication. She/he becomes shaped by a sort of exile, involved in, yet still on the borderline of, culture. The translator is no longer a mediator between two different poles, but her/his activities are inscribed in cultural overlappings which imply difference. This difference is no longer taxonomical, but interactive and refractive. In this way, the translator realizes that translation is not a transparent activity, but one which, as Iain Chambers (1996, 49) states, always involves “a process of re-citing, hence cultural and historical re-siting, and is therefore a travesty, a betrayal, of any ‘original’ or ‘authentic’ intention.”

Hybrid identities and the multiplicity of cultural borders are permanent features of contemporary societies. They call for a state of knowledge and a state of consciousness that can withstand the pressure of constantly being called into question. This might be viewed as our chance to listen to the unsaid in our own and in others’ discourses, as our chance to be continuously aware of the power relations governing the limits and possibilities of translating between asymmetrical cultures.

**Notes**

1. Discourse is meant here in the Foucauldian sense, as a system of possibility of knowledge. What rules, for instance, govern the identification of certain individuals as authors, and of certain texts as literature? At the same time, however, these discourses are subject to the will to power which penetrates them with the intention of controlling them: the will to knowledge is the will to power (see Foucault 1970, 1972).

2. For the dangers of using the term “translation” as a metaphor in cultural studies, see Simon (1997), 462.

3. An illustration of this sort of “cultural translation” is described in Clifford (1983), 126-27.


6. In traditional translation studies, the creation of consciousness as one of the translator’s functions is not always approved of. Kalinna Reiß (1993), 38, for instance, is of the opinion that “it is not the translator’s task to bring about a change in language and consciousness” (my translation). This, according to Reiß, is tantamount to the manipulatory practices of dictators and ideologues.

7. See Kahn (1995) for an in-depth analysis of problems relating to liberal, postcolonial multiculturalism.

Works Cited


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