

POSTCOLONIALITY AS TRANSLATION IN ACTION

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■ **ABSTRACT:** The postcolonial condition (or what I shall refer to as “postcoloniality”, as distinct from “postcolonialism” which is better reserved, I think, for an intellectual movement with a number of distinguishing traits ultimately traceable to certain specific historical conditions) is but another name for the politics of translation as it plays out today (RAJAGOPALAN 2002a). It lays bare the multiplicity of vested interests that have underpinned the history of translation through the ages. Furthermore, it forces us to rethink some of the time-honoured conceptual distinctions such intra-lingual vs. inter-lingual translation by problematising the very notion of “a language” (i.e. language in its individuating sense, as opposed to the generic or abstract senses). The main objective of this paper is to address the phenomenon of increasing hybridisation of the world’s languages and its implications for the way we theorise about translation.

■ **KEY WORDS:** Postcoloniality. Postcolonialism. Hybridity. Interlingual Translation. Intralingual Translation.

To restrict “hybridity”, or what I will call “living in translation”, to a post-colonial elite is to deny the pervasiveness, however heterogeneous, of the transformations wrought across class boundaries by colonial and neo-colonial domination. This is not to present a metanarrative of global homogenisation, but to

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emphasise the need to reinvent oppositional cultures in nonessentialising ways. Hybridity can be seen, therefore, as a sign of a post-colonial theory that subverts essentialist models of reading while it points toward a new practice of translation. —
Tejaswini Niranjana

Setting the scene: postcolonialism vs. postcoloniality

The term *postcolonialism* has gained widespread currency ever since it was coined in the early 1970s or thereabouts. The very fact that we no longer feel the need to hyphenate the word, as was common practice in the early days, is clear evidence for its having been fully absorbed into the stock-in-trade of contemporary critical jargon. The publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (SAID 1978) bestowed upon the term something of a cult status. The publication in 1989 of *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (ASHCROFT, GRIFFITHS, and TIFFIN 1989) gave it the final fillip, if at all it needed one, to become part of the mainstream. For the truth is—although not many postcolonial theorists would go along with me on this—postcolonialism is no longer a marginal movement. No doubt, the reality that it originally sought to bring to public attention was up until then of marginal interest. Arguably, even today it is. But the intellectual movement that brought that reality into spotlight is today very much part of the Establishment. And so are the key figures that spearheaded the movement in its early stages. Names like Frantz Fanon, Stuart Hall, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha and so on have conquered their places in the Hall of Fame of contemporary academic *dernier cri* called “cultural studies”. Since it might be useful to distinguish the movement or the “ism” from the condition or the state of being postcolonial, I suggest that we reserve the term *postcoloniality* specifically for the latter. Like postmodernity, it is a matter of primarily being placed historically in a certain mindset. Like *postmodernism*, the term *postcolonialism* will be used in the remainder of this paper whenever attention is being directed at the effort(s) to theorise the phenomenon we call postcoloniality. In a nutshell, then: postcoloniality refers to a historically conditioned phenomenon; postcolonialism the multiple theorisations thereof.

Objetctives

My aim in this paper is to argue that, whatever else it may be about, postcoloniality is also, in a fundamental sense, about translation. In fact, as I shall argue, postcoloniality is simply another name for the politics of translation as it plays out in our contemporary postcolonial times. Postcoloniality is translation in its self-conscious mode (in a sense to be spelled out later). It is, in a true sense, the Empire writing back—that is to say, writing in a language that has all the superficial trappings of the language of the imperial master—including its morphology and its syntax, though perhaps not its lexicon (at least not entirely and certainly not in its inherited form)—but which, on closer inspection, reveals the indelible imprint of the colonial experience and a constant reminder to all and sundry that the Imperial Metropolis is no longer in charge of its destiny. Postcoloniality is the condition in which Caliban, having become aware of his newly emancipated status, discovers all of a sudden that the language he was made to speak by Prospero can just as well be used to subvert the very same order that it was originally mobilised to shore up (RAJAGOPALAN, 2005b). In an important sense, every postcolonial writer is proclaiming in Shakespeare's words (*The Tempest* I, i, 363-365).

You taught me language, and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse. The red-plague rid you,
For learning me your language!

The logic of postcolonialism

In Richard Attenborough's 1982 Oscar award winning film *Gandhi*, there is an interesting episode that nicely captures what I will call the logic of postcolonialism. The scene is a crowded assembly hall somewhere in South Africa where Gandhi is about to initiate a prayer meeting. Sensing potential trouble, the local police authorities have taken all precautionary measures and sent scores of officers, fully equipped for all eventualities, to monitor each and every single movement of the young 'rebel' leader and his followers. As Gandhi is about to begin chanting his customary prayer song "*Raghupati raghava rajaram*" by way of initiating the ceremony, he notices the unwelcome presence of visibly indifferent, if not ostensibly hostile, police officers strategically seated amongst the audience, ready for

action at short notice, and resolutely refusing to follow the crowd as they were getting up from their seats in deference to the gods being invoked by their spiritual leader. Acting on the spur of the moment, Gandhi changes his mind and, to the embarrassing surprise of His Majesty's proud soldiers, starts singing "God save the King". In the end, one way or another, Gandhi does achieve his objective, which was to make those soldiers rise to their feet.

Gandhi knew full well he would have only made a fool of himself if he had politely requested the officers on duty there to rise to their feet. After all, those enforcers of the imperial authority were there precisely to remind one and all as to who was calling the shots. What they had not bargained for was that the shrewd politician that was Gandhi also knew how to make a request that they could not—rather would not dare to—refuse. In other words, Gandhi adroitly used the very symbol of colonial power to subvert the hierarchy that the law enforcement authorities were there to uphold. It is, thus, a questioning of the colonial authority from within the confines of its own logic and not from a point safely outside its purview. It is not confrontational in the traditional sense, but contestatory nonetheless.

Postcoloniality is by no means a straightforward or an outright rejection of everything that colonialism stood for. If it were, it would only buy into the very logic of colonialism which it is concerned to disrupt. Colonialism is premised on the logic of 'either/or'. The colonial authority consolidated itself by cleverly transforming what was originally a matter of simple difference into a radically irreconcilable opposition. In fact, as has been pointed out by a number of scholars, the discourse of colonialism systematically sought to drive a wedge between the coloniser and the colonised. If there were no clear markers with the help of which to articulate the opposition, well, they were simply conjured up. Race, religion, cultural history, in fact any and every real or imaginary marker of difference was blown up beyond recognition and stretched to the utmost to justify and perpetuate the divide and drive home the point that the chasm between the two was unbridgeable or, equivalently, to transform Kipling's prediction "[...] never the twain shall meet" into a self-fulfilling prophecy. The binary logic underlying that discourse is designed to aid and abet the colonial subject formation in ways most conducive to the perpetuation of the colonial structure.

It is this binary logic that postcolonialism is concerned to call into question. The postcolonial subject is one who, having come to understand the workings of the logic that underwrote the terms of his/her subjugation (or hegemony, depending on which side of the divide you happen to look at it from) consciously seeks to subvert that logic from within (RAJAGOPALAN 1998b, 1999, 2001). In this sense, Gandhi's simple gesture, in the episode from the film referred to above, bespeaks a moment of postcolonial self-awareness. Gandhi thwarted the colonial order by strategically invoking the terms of the very logic and insisting that they be fully and faithfully obeyed on pain of blatantly delegitimising the very authority the police officers were there to enforce. He deconstructed the colonial authority and the entire structure of binary relations that propped it up and made it look formidably unassailable by simply insisting on working that authority through to its own limits of self-sustainability and, through forcing it to trespass those limits, making it fall through on its own.

Postcolonial subjectivity is thus out and out political (RAJAGOPALAN, 2002a). It is political because it is conscious of its own workings and possibilities and calculating in its mode of self-representation. Postcoloniality emerges as the colonial subject becomes aware of the awkward blindspot in the mindset that sustained the colonial order and deliberately moves on to work through it, thereby destabilising—or, deconstructing, if you will—the order from where it appeared least vulnerable. In order to do so, he/she mobilizes the very resources of the colonial power to undermine colonial authority and one-sidedness. He/she *translates* the old logic into a new one—mobilising the very resources of the old logic but doggedly pursuing the mission of eventually thwarting it from within.

Yet care should be taken not to portray the postcolonial stance as consciously oppositional all the time or across the board, let alone uniform or homogeneous. As Franz Fanon (1963) has pointed out, there is an inherent paradox in the very phenomenon of the emergence of national identity under colonial domination. Initially at least, it tends to be an identity constituted by the native bourgeoisie who, in the absence of other role models to look up to, model themselves on their ex-colonial masters and, in so doing, simply replicate the very colonial order it claims to contest. To a great extent, such a reaction is part of the very colonial agenda which

sought to perpetuate itself by creating a “pseudo-elite” (like the “brown sahibs” in the Asian subcontinent under the British) and systematically driving a wedge between that elite and the masses at large or the ‘hoi polloi’. In the words of Fanon (1963: 210):

When we consider the efforts made to carry out the cultural estrangement so characteristic of the colonial epoch, we realize that nothing has been left to chance and that the total result looked for by colonial domination was indeed to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness. The effect consciously sought by colonialism was to drive into the natives’ heads the idea that if the settlers were to leave, they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality.

So there is an important sense in which not all of postcolonialism is a conscious attempt to denounce or eradicate the legacy of the colonial past. Rather, in their very anxiety to spell out their differential identity, the new ruling classes unwittingly reproduce the very same essentialising gesture that made the colonial divide possible to begin with, both discursively and materially. The local elites have all too frequently been observed to be keen on maintaining or, at the very least, not worrying themselves about challenging the hierarchical order that was the hallmark of colonial rule and which, despite all the rhetoric to the contrary, is in their innermost interests not to call into question. We shall return to this theme later (see Section 7)

Postcolonial subjectivity and translation

Salman Rushdie’s famous remark about British Indians as “translated men” (RUSHDIE 1991: 17) applies to all postcolonial subjectivities in the sense outlined above, *tout court* (and, needless to say, with due rectification of the sexist bias of that unfortunate turn of phrase). Rushdie is anxious to stress the political importance of the former colonial subjects *choosing* to write in the language once thought to be the pride and zealously guarded monopoly of their former colonial masters. The political—political precisely because it involves a conscious *choice*—significance of such a decision ought not to be overlooked. As Alatas (1977: 17) has pointed out:

Colonialism, or on a bigger scale, imperialism, was not only an extension of sovereignty and control by one nation and its government over

another, but it was also a control of the mind of the conquered or subordinated.

And one of the ways in which the Empire ensured (or hoped it would ensure) success in controlling the mind of the 'savage' native was by 'administering' the language of the Metropolis in just the 'right' dosage (because a full exposure to the master's language, a generous dosage, would, it was feared, put the slave on an equal footing and make him/her a potential danger). Macaulay's famous 'Minute on Indian education' (MACAULAY 1972, cited in LOOMBA 1998:85) explicitly recommended that the aim of introducing the English language into the educational system of the subcontinent was to train a select group of local people "Indian in blood and colour" to become "English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect." The new elite would, it was hoped, act as a kind of 'buffer zone' or, to change the metaphor, some sort of a 'shock-absorber' every time the natives, the large masses, "grew restless".

Those postcolonial writers who *choose* to write in the very language that was once introduced into their midst in order to hold them in perpetual slavery are thus relishing the sweet irony of writing back in a language now fully appropriated and reclaimed to serve their own interests. In so exercising their choice, they remake the language for their own purposes. It is not just that the language—English, French, Spanish, Dutch or Portuguese, or whatever that once served as the conveyor of the colonial authority—undergoes inevitable changes in response to the new uses to which it is put, or the new realities it is employed to portray, or the new users and their subjectivities whose new-found self-consciousness it is harnessed to give expression to. Nor for that matter is it the case that, in opting to write in a language that belonged to their erstwhile masters, these former colonial subjects have wilfully decided to translate themselves for the benefit of a foreign readership.

The reason why one must insist on this last point is that the language in question is no longer the language of the "Other". What Bhabha (1990: 291) famously referred to as an "uncanny fluency of another's language" must be understood to mean the eerie presence of a sense of otherness intruding into the language in such a way that not even those who considered themselves the rightful "owners" of the language recognise themselves in it any longer. The postcolonial reality of the English language, for instance, is such that it is, strictly speaking, nobody's mother tongue

(RAJAGOPALAN, 2004a). This is so because, as Widdowson (1994) shrewdly pointed out, a language is only international in the true sense of the word to the extent it does not belong to any one nation or even a group of nations.

Translation and its role in colonial history

Language has always been at the heart of the colonialist enterprise, prompting JanMohamed (1985) and other scholars to call our attention to the “profoundly symbiotic relationship between the discursive and material practices of imperialism.” The colonial encounter pits two cultures, along with the languages through which those cultures find self-expression, against each other. To the unsuspecting eye, the encounter is between two languages that had little or no contact with each other until then and is therefore in urgent need of devising ways of achieving mutual understanding. But, as scholars have begun to realise more and more, the colonial gaze is typically unilateral and so too is the need for communication between the coloniser and the colonised. The former is interested in learning more about the latter, with a view to being better prepared for attitudes and reactions typical of alien cultures. The more you know about the natives and their culture, the better you are in a position to control and manipulate them. On their part, no doubt, the colonised need to understand the new rulers, if for no other reason than that they have no choice. But it is through their self-consciousness as the downtrodden that the colonised are ultimately successful in returning the gaze and, in so doing, turning the tables on their colonial masters.

Initially at least, intercultural contact of the sort brought about by the colonial encounter is realised through makeshift languages such as pidgins. As the need for consolidating the contact arises, so too does the need for translation, i.e. translation in its prototypical sense, viz., interlingual translation. As suggested already, the need for translation is clearly one-sided. It is at this stage that there arises, in the words of Niranjana (1992: 47)

[..] the question of the historical complicity in the growth and expansion of European colonialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of those interested in translating non-Western texts [...] and those involved in the study of “man”

In point of fact, a case can be made for the argument that the academic discipline we call anthropology—whose roots do not go farther back into history than the early nineteenth century—is a brainchild of the spirit of colonialism that took Europe by storm during that very century. Aided and abetted by the new air of optimism and self-confidence engendered by Enlightenment, as encapsulated in Alexander Pope’s famous couplet,

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan
The proper study of mankind is man,

the White Man turned his gaze to far-flung lands. From the “Dark Continent” of Africa which needed to be brought to light by the “civilising” presence of the newly enlightened European, through the “Inscrutable” Orient, whose mystic secrets urgently needed to be unlocked through the use of cool scientific reason, to the “New” World whose native inhabitants needed to be “saved” from their soulless condition through the message of the Gospel, the mission (or rather, the *excuse*) was always the same: to save the rest of the world from perdition. Immediately after the passage quoted earlier, Niranjana goes on to confront the reader with the following rhetorical question:

Is there something in the very nature of the problems posed—and the kinds of solutions adopted—in translation studies and ethnography that lends itself, borrows from, authorizes the discourse of colonisation that underwrites the project of imperialism? (*ibid.*)

Translation and the subversion of the colonial design

It is a tribute to the uncanny ways of human resourcefulness and man’s endless possibilities for re-writing history that the classical colonial enterprise crumbled the way it did, not from pressures exerted through changing external circumstances but as a result of fissures from within the colonial structure itself (Needless to say, future historians will only cut corners in their retrospective analysis of the neo-colonialist tendencies in evidence today if they look for possible causes for its demise).

Rushdie’s remark about postcolonial men and women in India applies just as well to *all* postcolonial contexts. Postcoloniality or postcolonial conscience could not have been possible had it not been for the experience of having lived a life of translation. Niranjana’s felicitous turn of phrase

“living in translation” underscores not only the condition of hybridity that is the lasting heritage of the colonial experience (affecting not just the colonised but the colonisers as well) but also the felt requirement of having to negotiate the sense of shifting, kaleidoscopic identity produced by it.

Perhaps nowhere else is this new identity more visible than in postcolonial literary writing. The following remark by Rushdie (1989:4) about his own ill-fated work *The Satanic Verses* ably sums up the point:

The Satanic Verses celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combination of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelisation and fears the absolutism of the Pure. Melange, hotch-potch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world. (...) It is a live-song to our mongrel selves.

The profundity of this remark ought not to be allowed to go unnoticed. The process of mongrelisation it refers to affects both parties to the colonial experience; neither side comes out entirely the way it was before the symbiotic contact between what were until then two nations with no historical liaison whatsoever.

It is no surprise either that of all literary genres, it is the novel that has come to be privileged site for postcolonial writing. As critics like Ian Watts (1957) have long reminded us, the novel is tied up with the post-Renaissance European ethos. In his *Myths of Modern Individualism* (WATTS 1996), the author explores at length how the rise of the novel also coincided with the rise of self-centred, navel-gazing individualism as represented in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, whose plot revolves around the figure of a loner surviving in a desert (well, almost) island, by braving the elements and “domesticating” Man Friday, a wild and uncouth native. Hailed as the first English novel, Defoe's work may be seen as a celebration of and an apology for the spirit of colonialism that, from the sixteenth century onwards, galvanised Europe's principal seafaring nations and made them explore the uncharted waters in search of distant lands and their untapped wealth. As Watt shows, *Robinson Crusoe* also represents a significant turning point in the way European literature had until then treated the figure of the loner, for such characters as Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan — all loners *par excellence* and all originally conjured up between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries by their respective creators as proto-types of “anti-individuals” (the first two are burned in hell-fire and the last publicly

mocked and ridiculed) suddenly become objects of admiration and symbols of the conquering spirit of the White Man (needless to remind, all these characters are also *male*) and his self-appointed destiny to conquer and subjugate distant lands. Curiously enough, it is this very spirit of adventure that is invoked by Sir John Burgh, Director-General of the British Council, in his 'Forward' to a book featuring papers presented at an international conference entitled 'Progress in English Studies'. Here are his words:

The year 1934, when the British Council was founded, did not of course mark the beginning of the spread of our language and culture to other parts of the world. One might perhaps see the Pilgrim Fathers as the first British Council mission, or, as was suggested by an overseas delegate, Robinson Crusoe, as the first English Language Officer. (BURGH 1985: vii)

It is of no small significance either that the South African writer J.M. Coetzee chose to revisit precisely the all-time classic work of Daniel Defoe and re-write it as *Foe*, from the female castaway's viewpoint. What makes this novel a prime example of postcolonial quid pro quo is the complete reversal of priorities, effected through a simple yet significant shift in the positioning of the story-teller and the way it opens the sluice gates, releasing long-repressed meanings that were always already present in the original narrative, albeit contained and concealed in virtue of its tenacious one-sidedness. There is, in other words, something subtly Derridean about such reversals in that the tables are turned by showing how the spotlight could equally well be turned to what had been sidelined to the margins (RAJAGOPALAN 1998a; 2000, 2005a).

Language at the service of the postcolonial writer

As we have already seen, language plays a significant role not only in the resistance offered by colonised under the oppressive regime, but also in the way the postcolonial self fashions itself. Postcoloniality consists, among other things, in appropriating the very same language that was once instrumental in bringing about colonial subjugation. In Section 3, it was pointed out that, initially at least, postcolonial identity replicates the hierarchies and the associated values imposed by the colonial order. Likewise, postcolonial writers who have been through the whole process of transition and have lived through both sides of the divide often display

a demeanour which is somewhat ambiguous and Janus-faced. It is thus generally only with the second and third generations of writers that postcolonial writing assumes its distinctive flavour. In Fanon's words,

While at the beginning the native intellectual used to produce his work to be read exclusively by the oppressor, whether with the intention of charming him or of denouncing him through ethnical or subjectivist means, now the native writer progressively takes on the habit of addressing his own people. (FANON 1963: 212)

The following words by the Nigerian writer Chinua Achibe illustrates the former mindset:

For me there is no other choice. I have been given this language and I intend to use it [...] 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 African surroundings (ACHIBE 1975: 103, cited in LOOMBA 1998:91).

"Still in communion with its ancestral home" — this is the key to the attitude that characterised the first generation of postcolonial writers who were postcolonial only in the sense that they were not speaking from a colony — not any longer, that is, not in a *de jure* sense. One may notice here a certain sense of frustration or remorse at the idea of having to use someone else's language and having to adapt it for new uses.

As we turn to the newer generations of postcolonial writer, the contrast is very striking indeed. Khushwant Singh (2001) makes this point eloquently when he says

I am entirely in favour of making English an Indian language on our terms. Maul it, misuse it, mangle it out of shape but make it our own *bhasha*. The English may not recognise it as their language; they can stew in their own juice. It is not their *baap ki jaidaad* — ancestral property.

Notice the deliberate interlacing of words from Hindi and, even more interestingly, the almost condescending gesture of translating *baap ki jaidaad* into "ancestral property" (in case Prospero is flummoxed by the lexical intrusions). Surely, this is not a piece of writing in English "in communion with its ancestral home". If anything, it is a calculated move to jolt the ancestral home into a sense of estrangement, indeed bizarreness — a defiant

way of saying, as Caliban did to Prospero, "Gone are the days when you thought you called all the shots."

Translation and the role of renaming

The defiance of postcolonial positioning consists, among other things, in "wrenching" the language of oppression from its erstwhile "owners" and reusing it for the purpose of "writing back." In the process, one frequently observes an eagerness with which names (mostly place names) that had been appropriated by the colonial authority are reclaimed. The examples are legion. Ceylon became Sri Lanka; Burma became Myanmar; Rhodesia became Zimbabwe; Bombay became Mumbai; and so forth. Such re-naming is suffused with political connotations. This point is ably brought out in the play suggestively called *Translations* by the Irish playwright Brian Friel (1984). Widely acclaimed as a classic of modern Irish theatre, the play has a plot that unfolds around the episode of British troops and engineers conducting an ordinance survey intended to map the landscape for military intelligence and transliterate the Gaelic place names into the King's English. If, as the play shows, translation turns out to have been the process through which colonial violence was practised, it is through the very same activity of deliberate re-translation that postcolonial identity finds its self-expression. Not that it succeeds in erasing the colonial violence once and for all – what the gesture of re-translation succeeds in doing (if at all) is re-taking a linguistic "possession" that had been taken away forcibly. The gesture, in other words, is more symbolic than material (RAJAGOPALAN 2002b, 2004b). But then so too is all of what one might call postcolonial legacy.

Postcoloniality and its implications for translation theory

If, as we have seen, hybridity is the hallmark of postcoloniality, what does it mean for translation in the postcolonial context? Before attempting to answer the question, let us remind ourselves that hybridity is a condition that directly affects identity. It affects the identity of both the colonised and, whether one believes it or not, that of the coloniser as well. No nation, no individual comes out of the colonial experiences unaffected by the cultural shock. But perhaps nowhere else does the colonial contact leave its indelible imprint more starkly than on language—or rather, the

individual languages that were forced to cohabit the new intercultural space created by the colonial encounter.

Hybridity wreaks havoc on some of our hallowed conceptual (as well as terminological) distinctions in translation theory. A case in point is the notion of inter-lingual translation—thought by many to be translation in its ‘purest’ or ‘most authentic’ sense. Referring to Jakobson’s celebrated three-way distinction of interlingual, intralingual, and intersemiotic translation, Derrida notes that such a neat classification “presupposes that one can know in the final analysis how to determine rigorously the unity and identity of a language, the decidable form of its limits.” (DERRIDA 1985:173) What postcolonial hybridity does to language is destabilise its self-same identity and its putative ‘purity’—and also the identity of speakers. To recall Rushdie’s words, it acts as a constant reminder of our “mongrel selves.”

In other words, as we contemplate the status of translation in the postcolonial context, the following words by George Steiner takes on a new sense of urgency and inevitability:

Translation is fully implicit in the most rudimentary communication. It is explicit in the coexistence and mutual contact of the thousands of languages spoken on the earth. (STEINER 1975:471)

To put matters differently, postcoloniality highlights the immanence of translation in all forms of communication. Far from being an aid to communication in exceptional or extraordinary circumstances, translation turns out to be the very key to communication. If the need for translation was once believed to be the outcome of perceived communicative breakdown, postcoloniality acts as a powerful corrective to the very paradigm of thinking about language that underwrote that conviction and instead to impress upon us the idea that, without the inevitable slip between the cup and the lip, no communication would at all be possible.

Concluding remarks

Postcoloniality, as we have seen, is primarily a mindset, an attitude to a host of themes that stare at us as we take stock of the colonial (mis)adventure, its impact on everyone concerned (i.e. the entire humankind, *tout court*—there being no difference whatsoever in this sense

between the colonisers and the colonised), as well as the spillover from it, whose exact dimensions still evade our grasp. Perhaps a most fitting way to round off our discussion of the role of translation in the making up of postcoloniality is to recall the following words from an essay by Barbara Johnson fascinatingly entitled "Nothing fails like success":

What the surprise encounter with otherness should do is lay bare some hint of an ignorance one never knew one had [...] The surprise of otherness is that moment when a new form of ignorance is suddenly activated as an imperative. (JOHNSON, 1987:16)

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Pós-colonialidade como tradução em ação

■ **RESUMO:** *A condição pós-colonial (ou melhor, "pós-colonialidade", termo que utilizarei em oposição ao "pós-colonialismo" que, no meu modo de entender, deve ser reservado para se referir a um movimento intelectual com um conjunto de características que lhe são próprias e que podem ser ligadas a determinadas condições históricas) é apenas um outro nome para a política de tradução tal qual ela se configura nos dias de hoje (RAJAGOPALAN, 2002a). O termo escancara a multiplicidade de interesses ocultos que têm subscrito a história da tradução através dos séculos. Ademais, ele nos obriga a repensar distinções conceituais consagradas pelo tempo tal como "tradução intra-lingual" versus "tradução inter-lingual", ao problematizar a própria noção de "língua x" (isto é, "língua" em seu sentido individualizante, em oposição aos sentidos genérico ou abstrato). O principal objetivo deste trabalho é focar o fenômeno de hibridização crescente de línguas no mundo inteiro e suas implicações para a forma como teorizamos a respeito de tradução.*

■ **PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Pós-colonialidade. Pós-colonialismo. Hibridez. Tradução Interlingual. Tradução Intralingual.*

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