The Power Politics of Translation: A Study of Translation-Ideology Nexus

Jamil Asghar

Abstract

The paper, situated at the intersection of translation studies, cultural studies and postcolonialism, seeks to contribute to the theory of translation with reference to the power politics of the target texts. The possibility and inevitability of translation is one of the most evident characteristics of our communication. This possibility and inevitability is hardwired into our communal and cognitive structure and it features prominently into our inter-cultural sensibilities. It is widely admitted, thanks to the "cultural turn" of the late 1970s, that translation is a site of contact as well as conflict. It is in the light of these considerations that the present study has been conceived which is a plea to re-envision translation in a broader politico-cultural perspective. Today, as humankind has just crossed the threshold of a new millennium, our first-hand understanding of other cultures and nations remains appallingly low. One major step to alleviate this problem is to accord greater and more nuanced recognition to the source texts emanating from cultures light years from our own. The present research subscribes to the view which posits translation as a *rewriting* of the source texts. This rewriting is said to have ideological considerations of its own and is, more often than not, manipulative in its practice. The researcher maintains that there is an urgent need to appreciate adequately the power relations inherent in the process of translation and to recognize the bearings they have on the practice of translation per se. It is largely due to these power relations that a new conceptualization of translation is required which could help us bear in mind its ideological and value-driven nature. This is what this paper intends to bring about.

Keywords: *translation, rewriting, postcolonialism, domestication*

Translation Distrusted and for Good Reasons

Language is the principal and arguably the most apparent means employed by humans to make their social existence possible. Humans express their deepest sentiments, talk about their likes, communicate their apprehensions and share their optimisms in and through language. It is language which not only makes our shared existence possible but also sustains it throws all the mutations of time and clime. If language grants the possibility of our collective existence and ensures the perpetuity of our social relations, it also poses a formidable challenge in the form of

translation. The problem is that translation, most of the time, is taken merely as a linguistic and theoretical challenge as the "rendering of words from one language to another" is the typical way of putting it (Crystal, 1995, p. 123).

However, the present study seeks to problematize this traditional and facile understanding of translation and aims at illustrating the immensity of its political and ideological intricacies. Traditionally what we do not seem to appreciate is the fact that translation obstructs our understanding not just because of linguistic reasons but also because of a vast array of non-linguistic factors. True, the usual discussions of translation routinely take into account the relevance of such notions as *context, co-text* or *culture*, but the perspective these discussions take on such notions is extremely narrow. Moreover, this danger becomes all the more real when we take into consideration the bafflingly vast range of languages and cultures in the ambit of which translation, of necessity, has to operate.

Historically, the idea of translation coupled with the mystique to know *the foreign* has always fascinated the theorists and scholars of language. From this historical perspective, it can be affirmed that, at the broadest level, all human communication is centered upon the very notion of translation. Primarily translation aims at actuating some inter-lingual communicative patterns along with effecting some intercultural dialogic engagements. However, in these intercultural and inter-lingual engagements, the complex notions of politics, manipulation, control and dominance inevitably emerge and complicate the relations between the source text (the original text that is to be translated into another language) and the target text (the finished product of a translated text). Furthermore, the inherently subjective and culture-sensitive character of language adds to the complexity of the power politics so closely associated with translation. Therefore the ubiquitous risk of miscommunication in translation ranges from the unintentional semantic misidentifications to a systematic and intentional propaganda (Crumbley, 2008, p. 4).The "mist and veil of words," as the Irish philosopher George Berkeley put it, is still a frequently debated issue in the discipline of translation studies (Daniel, 2007, p. 145).

However, George Berkeley is not alone in doubting the capability of language to communicate. A large number of philosophers and translation theorists harbor a considerable distrust of language and have been questioning its authenticity as a *clear windowpane* which could reveal facts with objectivity and total neutrality (Baker, 2006, p. 98). We have novelists like George Orwell who disputed our linguistic capacity to communicate and, at the same time, we have iconoclasts like Friedrich

Nietzsche who terms language utterly incapable of objective description because of its thoroughly metonymic nature (Emden, 2005, pp. 86, 140, 159).

Notwithstanding this distrust expressed by philosophers, semanticists and scholars, translation has been playing an extremely significant role all through human history whenever there has been a conjunction of cultures and/or languages. Nevertheless, it is also true that for a considerable part of history, the act of translation has been viewed as subversive, controversial and perilous — an act of betrayal necessitating suspicion, distrust and even executions:

> There is an Italian proverb that says, "Translators are traitors" (*Traddutore, traditore*), and it's true. All translation loses meaning. All translators are traitors to the actual meaning. There is no such thing as a noninterpretive translation. Anyone who says otherwise probably has limited exposure to translation theory and it may not be worth discussing the point with them. (Mounce, 2003, p. 73)

Some of the translation theorists attribute this distrust of translation to the fact that, by and large, the act of translation amounts to a *rewriting* of the source text. The dominant socio-political institutions play a major role in these acts of rewriting accomplished in the name of translation. This rewriting emerges after an elaborate process. The discourses based upon such themes as racism, gender inequality, minority rights or unipolarism become a mouthpiece for entire social institutions. These institutions, by virtue of their power, exercise huge influence and as a result of this influence ideologies emerge. These ideologies in turn shape the visions of *reality* in their own images. Once sufficiently shaped, these visions of reality guide the trajectories of the translation practices (Hatim & Munday, 2004, p. 93).

The act of rewriting operates on the politics of inclusions/ exclusions as well. Which readers/writers, systems of values and sets of beliefs are to be privileged and which ones are to be deprived? This is a fundamental question and plays a critical role in the politics of inclusions/exclusions. It is also interesting to note that how a large body of foreign literatures translated into English mostly tend to look *similar*. This can largely be accounted for by appreciating the tendency of the target text to enforce its own constraints on the source text during the process of translation. However, in the context of the power politics of translation, this implies some sort of inclusions/exclusions somewhere—either denying a certain constituency of readers the access to a certain text or forcing

them to read it in a particular way. It also implies somewhere "an author committed to oblivion or a translator doomed to be invisible" (Hatim & Munday, 2004, p. 94).

The Anglo-American translation tradition is particularly noted for its tendency to practice these exclusions/inclusions. This is usually done through selectively adopting such apparently apolitical and innocent-sounding strategies as *gisting*, *free translation*, *compensation*, *heavy glossing*, or *ennoblement*. At the same time, the so-called translation *norms* also come into play and effectively transform translation into an ideological weapon with power to exclude/mute a writer by engaging in such seemingly innocuous techniques as normalization, clarification or rationalization. This is usually done to achieve such edifying goals as *bringing fluency* and *preventing boredom*. Eventually, the translators themselves fall prey to the same politics of exclusions by the hard-nosed editors and money-minded publishers (p. 95).

All this elaborately structured politics of exclusions/inclusions paves the way to what we have just discussed as the rewriting of the source text. The notable French translation scholar André Lefevere aptly describes the damaging and culturally alienating effects of this practice of rewriting not only on literature but also on society:

> Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society . . . But rewriting can also repress innovation, distort and contain, and in an age of ever increasing manipulation of all kinds, the study of the manipulative processes of literature as exemplified by translation can help us towards a greater awareness of the world in which we live. (Lefevere, 1992, p. 67)

Obviously when translation becomes a rewriting, it is bound to depart from the cultural and linguistic specificities of the source texts. All rewritings, regardless of their motives, have firm ideological underpinnings (p. 68). To Lefevere, ideology is one of the "very concrete factors" which steadily govern the course of translation and eventually help it turn into a rewriting (p. 2).

The 20th Century Indictment of Translation

In spite of all the previous problematizations of the practice of translation, it is its 20th century indictment by such scholars as André Lefevere, Antoine Berman, Lawrence Venuti, Philip Lewis, Tejaswini Niranjana and Gayatri Spivak which helped lay bare the real nexus between translation and ideology (Munday, 2013, p. 156). These scholars and theorists also successfully brought the inner workings of politics of translation to the fore. The deep-rootedness of the discursive and highly institutionalized power operative behind and through translation came in the lime light and powerful pleas were made for a self-critical reflection on the part of the translators. Translation was perceived as a *discursive construct* which essentially deals with two distinct linguistic codes underwritten by two distinct cultural patterns (Munday, 2007, p. 96). In short, a move was made from the appreciation of translation as text to translation as culture and politics and Mary Snell-Hornby named this trend as the cultural turn. This was subsequently taken up by other translation theorists as a metaphor for the politico-cultural characterization of translation. The *cultural turn*, over time, came to denote a conglomeration of influence semanating from the power of publishing industry, pursuits of ideologies, feminist writing, cultural appropriation and colonialism (Munday, 2001, p. 125). This *cultural turn*, in this way, proved to be a paradigm shift in the conceptualization of translation and some really unprecedented questions were raised such as:

- WHO is translation?
- For WHOM is he or she translating?
- WHY is this translation being made?
- WHOM does this translation benefit?
- WHOM does this translation harm?

In fact, it was largely due to the raising of such radical questions that the cultural complexity and the ethico-political role of translation were adequately recognized. Furthermore, the translation theorists and the postcolonial critics also began to appreciate the fact that it is not enough to approach translation merely from the perspectives of literature and humanities. Instead, such disciplines as media studies, international relations, cultural studies, corpus analysis, feminism and post-colonialism should also be taken into account.

This radically new conceptualization took translation as a site of ideological conflicts marked by struggle for power and supremacy underpinned by a variety of socio-historical and political factors. It was

largely for this reason that the translation theorists maintained that meanings are not just carried by texts as such; rather, they are constantly constructed and reconstructed by an intersection of situational, ideological and linguistic variables. It was in this perspective that Hermans saw translation as a patent form of *manipulation* in which the text coming from a dominant culture invariably triumphs (1995, p. 67).This conceptualization of translation formed an extremely important benchmark in the modern history of translation.

In this new conceptualization of translation, the discipline of cultural studies (in line with the trend set by the *cultural turn*) played a very important role. Arguably, cultural studies has done more than any other discipline to make translation studies a truly multidisciplinary subject and to bring it in tandem with the contemporary debates and issues. Sherry Simon illustrates the importance of cultural studies in these words: "Cultural studies brings to translation an understanding of the complexities of gender and culture. It allows us to situate linguistic transfer within the multiple 'post' realities of today: poststructuralism, postcolonialism and postmodernism" (Simon, 1996, p. 100).

As the act of translation does not take place in a vacuum, therefore, it is inevitably complicit with the larger questions of power, transformation, authority and marginalization. Moreover, translation has also been playing a foundational part in the creation, perpetuation and distribution of differential and asymmetrical power relations across cultures and nations. Moreover, as translation invariably involves the socio-cultural imperatives, it appears to be more like a political and narrative scheme which results not only in social convergence but also in social antagonism. In this context, it is not difficult to see how the repercussions of translation go well beyond the syntactic and semantic bounds of the text and create and socio-political network in which individuals as well as cultures situate themselves in relations to one another as well as the society at large (Meschonnic, 2011, pp. 77, 110).

However, this broader politics of power, manipulation and control also operates at a micro level, i.e. at the level of equivalence and sentence. It is at this level that we come across such problems as distortions, misidentification of meanings, false friends, inadequate equivalents, lacunae, etc. All this partly results from a translator's inability (or perhaps unwillingness) to communicate the delicate semantics of the source text. One example of this subtle mistranslation is the English equivalent *demand* for the French word *demande*. Here the problem is that the French *demande* simply means a *request*, which is similar to but also very different from a *demand* in English and *demandar* in Spanish. Sometimes, when a word is borrowed from another language, it undergoes

a thorough semantic transformation. For example, *angst* means *fear* in a general sense (as well as *anxiety*) in German, but when it was borrowed into English in the context of psychology, its meaning was usually taken as *a neurotic feeling of anxiety and depression*.

We run into the similar difficulties when we translate the Arabic word فکر (*fikr*) into English as thought. The Arabic word *fikr* is not exactly thought. Rather the word thought with its contemporary meaning hardly occurs in the traditional Islamic texts. In fact, what would better correspond to the proper meaning of *fikr* would be something more like the French word *pensée* as used by Blaise Pascal which could be translated into English as meditation rather than thought. In this sense, the Arabic word *fikr* exactly correspond to the Persian word اندیشہ (*andíshah*). In the traditional Islamic philosophy, both *fikr* and *andíshah* are associated with meditation and contemplation (See Nasr, 1987, p. 99).

However, with the increasing awareness of the power politics of translation, such issues as gender, identity, ethics, hegemony, power, and cultural relativism were brought into sharp focus by the researchers and the students of translation alike (Venuti, 2013, pp. 78-83). André Lefevere's notion of rewriting and Lawrence Venuti's idea of domestication and foreignization have considerably helped bring the questions of ideology and politics to the fore. As a result, not only the scope but also the definition of translation studies has been broadened. This shift increasingly conceptualizes translation in metalinguistic terms — an intercultural communication embedded in numerous discursive practices and underwritten by politico-ideological considerations. How these metalinguistic terms influence translation can be seen by the following statement of Amitav Ghosh, a modern Bengali writer, who bemoans the fate of a South Asian writer, "To make ourselves understood, we had both resorted [. . .] to the very terms that world leaders and statesmen use at great, global conferences, the universal, irresistible metaphysic of modern meaning" (1993, p. 237).

The statement characteristically describes the power politics which typifies the translation practices in the contemporary global world. What Ghosh means by irresistible metaphysic of modern meaning is a complex combination of geopolitical and economic factors which privileges certain nations and the discourses emanating therefrom. The ascendancy of this *metaphysic of modern meaning* is more cultural than textual and it is primarily underpinned by the scientific and economic supremacy. This ascendency affects the entire process of translation right from the selection of the works and their interpretation to their publication and circulation. Aijaz Ahmad, a well-known Marxist literary theorist and

political commentator, describes the far-reaching outcome of this ascendency:

> By the time a Latin American novel arrives in Delhi, it has been selected, translated, published, reviewed, explicated and allotted a place in the burgeoning archive of "Third World Literature" through a complex set of metropolitan mediations. That is to say, it arrives here with those processes of circulation and classification already inscribed in its very texture. (1994, p. 45)

This means that the act of translation is situated on a continuum with hosts of factors, each having politics of its own. All translations are embedded not just in language but also in institutions, practices, marketing dynamics and varied cultural and social economic configurations. Therefore, a translation is inevitably interwoven, intertwined and implicated with so many things besides language.

Translation: From Subjugation to Conquest

For millenniums the study of translation just focused on the purely literary and linguistic aspects of the texts and the questions of power and ideology were not accorded due recognition. Too much attention was paid to the aesthetic and stylistic features of language to the virtual exclusion of the issues of politics and power embedded in the practice of translation (Asghar, 2014). The attention of the translation scholars has been appallingly limited to such issues as comparisons, contrasts, thematic analysis and textual criticism. A cursory look at the European tradition of literary translation makes it abundantly clear that it has been more of a norm than an exception with the European translators to subjugate and domesticate the non-European texts while translating them. Lawrence Venuti's book *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (1995) is a landmark study of this phenomenon. In this book, Venuti cogently contends that the European translators routinely sought to adapt the Oriental source texts to the Western norms and canons of translation (2013, p. 127).

In this magnum opus, Venuti shows how the Oriental texts were usually treated by the European translators as 'raw material' which it was their duty to turn into elegant and edifying target texts. Therefore, it was not uncommon with the European translators to remove all the supposed coarseness and inappropriateness from the Oriental texts and make them acceptable to the *urbane and cultured* readership at home. The translators felt no qualms in going to great length in *improving* and *refining* the source texts. Scholars like Edward Said, Philip Lewis, Venuti and Niranjana consistently censured this condescending attitude of the European

translators and dismissed it as mere euphemism and apology for geographical or cultural imperialism (Venuti, 1995).

Venuti is obviously not alone in problematizing and questing the European translation tradition. A prominent postcolonial critic and theorist Gayatri Spivak has also discussed this ideological aspect of the European translation tradition at length in her works. To her, the *Third World literature* is not rendered proper justice when it is translated into English. Spivak has addressed this issue in her seminal essay *The Politics of Translation:*

> In the act of wholesale translation into English there can be a betrayal of the democratic ideal into the law of the strongest. This happens when all the literature of the Third World gets translated into a sort of with-it translatese, so that the literature by a woman in Palestine begins to resemble, in the feel of its prose, something by a man in Taiwan. (2000, p. 338)

Lefevere also bears Venuti and Spivak outand maintains that the European and the non-European literary traditions are at such a great variance from oneanother that a translator while dealing with these traditions has to engage in a process of *cultural mapping*. It is only through this cultural mapping that a *bi-culturalism* can emerge and which can assist a translator in rendering greater justice to the autonomy and distinctiveness of the source text. To Lefevere, the non-European texts have been usually conceived, constructed and situated in the categories, thought-patterns and genres derived from the European translation tradition (see Bassnett, 2011, p. 158). However, it remains to the credit of Venuti to bring all these varied concerns together and give them a systematic and disciplinary expression. To Venuti, the European translation traditions have their own well-defined canons of acceptability, notions of correctness and highly institutionalized conventions which inevitably come to bear upon the practice of translation. It is not uncommon for the target text to *domesticate* the source text and to recast it in its own image. In this domestication, the patterns of variations along with the linguistic and cultural distinctiveness of the source text are usually obliterated by the target text. This subjugation, so to speak, of the source text leads to its ultimate conquest:

> Translation is often regarded with suspicion because it inevitably domesticates foreign texts, inscribing them with linguistic and cultural values that are intelligible to specific domestic constituencies. This process of inscription

> operates at every stage in the production, circulation, and reception of the translation. (Venuti, 1998, p. 209)

The first step to subjugate a source text is to *familiarize* it to the reading constituencies at home. A source text is uprooted from its original historico-cultural setting and is re-planted into an altogether different milieu where the foremost task of the translator is to *familiarize*it to the *readers at home*. It is certainly in this act of familiarization that a source text goes through a systematic and extensive process of trimming and accretion which results in a huge linguistic and cultural loss. The translator situates *the foreign* outside the cultural comprehension and the literary imagination of his domestic readers. The utmost care is taken by the translator not to perturb the *urbane sensibilities* of the readers at home, no matter how much linguistic and cultural loss is caused to the particularities of the source text. Such an idea of translation is a strategic schematization of an idealized *inter-national* world in which nations are situated at various geographical points, enclosed by territorial borders and invested with nationalist narratives (Venuti, 2013). All this tends to lead to kind of cultural closures and can have far-reaching repercussions for our global world. To some of the cultural critics, such closure scan, at times, possibly result into the ethnocentric states of mind which can be dangerous for our shared and collective existence (Bayart, 1996, pp. 7-21).

What goes hand in hand with this large-scale domestication of the less privileged discourses or what provides it with a rationale to operate is the Eurocentric tendencies in our socio-academic world. From Macaulay's denunciation of the entire Indian and Arabic literature to Fredric Jameson's highly unflattering view of the 'Third World novel', we come across a long line of these Eurocentric tendencies which put the non-European texts at a clear disadvantage in the power politics of translation. Here is Macaulay's utterly sweeping statement, ". . . a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia" (in Momma, 2013, p. 97). Now look at this totalizing statement by Frederic Jameson, "The third-world novel will not offer the satisfaction of Proust or Joyce" and will only "remind us of outmoded stages of our own first-world cultural development" (in Bahri, 2003, p. 18). These two statements by two leading spokes persons of the European politico-cultural world go, at least, some way illustrating that patronizing attitude which, to Venuti and Spivak, has been a hallmark of the European literary traditions.

This makes one wonder as to whether Hafiz Shriazi (a Persian poet whose works are regarded as a pinnacle of Persian literature), Baba Farid (a Sufi saint of the Punjab), Sultan Bahu (a Sufi mystic, poet and scholar active mostly in the Punjab), Abu Aqil Labid ibn Rabiah (an Arabian poet of

exceptional literary prowess), Abu Ali Ahmad ibn Miskawayh (a philosopher and historian from Iran who was the author of the first major Islamic work on philosophical ethics), Al-Jahiz (a notable Arabic prose writer), Francis Marrash (a Syrian writer and poet of the *Nahda* movement—the Arabic renaissance), Maulana Rumi (a Persian poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic),Tulsidas (a Hindu poet-saint, reformer and philosopher), Muhammad Iqbal (legendary Urdu poet and the ideological father of Pakistan) and other scores of such Arab, Indian and Persian writers are as worthless as not to produce the brilliance and grandeur of 'a single shelf of a good European library. This also makes one wonder as to what is there in Proust or Joyce which one does not find in Taha Husayn, Tawfiq al-Hakim or in Naguib Mahfouz. Moreover, if the artistic majesty and literary merits of Bahaa Taher, Nawal El Saadawi or Orhan Pamukare not known to the European readership, it is largely due to the power politics of translation because of which either such literary giants have not been translated at all into the European languages or they have been translated in a highly domesticated fashion. Therefore, when a non-European writer of exceptional merit and prowess is translated into a European language in a domesticated way, he/she ipso facto loses the lion's share of his/her originality and turns out to be just harping on the commonplace European literary themes and motives.

Although considerable effort has been made even within the European cultural as well as the academic world to combat such stereotypical legacies, people like Venuti, Niranjana and Spivak have shown its vigorous persistence to this day. To these writers, when it comes to translation, the non-European literatures are usually relegated to the genre of *non-canonical literature*. The supposed *canonicity* of the European literatures invests them with greater power and influence. These practices and trends have contributed to the asymmetry of the contemporary cultural relations. At the same time, they have been one of the main causes behind the traditional European estimation of the non-European literatures. Obviously the European scholars are aware of only those Oriental works which have been translated into any of the major European languages. What has not been translated into any of the European languages just does not *exist* for them as such. This is once again what I have discussed above as the politics of exclusions. Even Frederic Jameson has been indicted of it by Aijaz Ahamad. To Ahmad, Jameson is guilty of a facile overgeneralization and his statement about the *Third World Literature* is insufficiently theorized (1994, pp. 98-110). To mention yet another case in point: even the most celebrated and influential Muslim poet, Rumi, was introduced to Europe as late as 1935, when R. A. Nicholson translated him into English. Similarly, there are scores of

Chinese, Indian, Persian, Arabic, African literary giants waiting to be translated into any major European language.

The Way Out

It is paramount to re-think this way of going about the business of translation. Thanks to the radical and insightful theorizations of the late 20th century, at present a sizable critical literature is available which can help us appreciate the power politics of translation and take steps to avoid it. People like Venuti, Berman, Lefevere, Niranjana and Spivak stand for an *ethics of difference* in translation (Munday, 2013, p. 128). The golden principle endorsed by these scholars is crisp and effective: *instead of moving the author to the reader, seek to move the reader to the author* (p. 134). This means that a translator should avoid obliterating the linguistic and cultural distinctiveness of a source text as much as possible. Instead of *rewriting* a source text in the image of a privileged target text, the job of a translator should remain to communicate it *on its own terms* as much as possible.

This obviously is not an easy task given the sedimented and centuries-old notions such as *appropriateness*, *transparency*, *correctness* and *fluency*. These notions are firmly rooted not just in the minds of a large number of translators but also in the publishing industry and the academia. The difficulty of breaking away from them has always been recognized by the translation scholars mentioned above (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013, p. 198). Therefore, Venuti calls for more valor and greater courage on the part of the translators and asks them to resist and defy the Eurocentric hegemony and discursive dominance in an ethnodeviant manner. After all, speaking truth to power has been the dream of all the postcolonial theorists ranging from Edward Said to Gayatri Spivak (Munday, 2013, p. 93).

All these theorists and scholars agree that the syntactic specificities and the cultural distinctiveness of the source texts should not be sacrificed for the sake of spurious and stereotypical notions of *urbanity*, *taste* and *accuracy*. All such elitist notions are bourgeoisie constructs formed to perpetuate the Anglo-American discursive dominance in a post-industrial and globalized world. The best way to stand up to the appropriations and rewritings of the source texts is the *strategy of foreignization*—a technique advocated by Lawrence Venuti. Foreignization can be understood as a radical translation technique which is aimed to *send the reader abroad instead of bringing the author home* (Boase-Beier, 2011). It does not advance the pseudo claim of substituting the source text in an absolutist and unmediated way. Its avowed aim remains to vigilantly

register and communicate all the essential linguistic and cultural characteristics of a source text (Toury, 2012, pp. 48, 210).

Furthermore, foreignization does not seek to barter away the actuality of the source text with the acceptability of the target text. In this way, the technique of foreignization efficiently excludes any possibility of setting up the ideological dominance of the target text over the source text. Instead, it puts the source text at par with the target text and the power imbalance between them is strategically calibrated. In a systematic way, the strategy of foreignization foregrounds the cultural and linguistic peculiarities of the source text by enhancing their visibility and reinforcing their centrality (Asghar, 2014). This calls for a kind of interventionism on the part of the translator which Venuti describes in the following words:

> I want to suggest that insofar as foreignizing translation seeks to restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation, it is highly desirable today, a strategic cultural intervention in the current state of world affairs, pitched against the hegemonic English-language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others. Foreignizing translation in English can be a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism, in the interests of democratic geopolitical relations. (Venuti, 1995, p. 208)

It should also be noted that the technique of foreignization does not seek to overly familiarize the source text to the reader. Rather a quasi-surrealist ambience of mystique is retained in which the reader is set free to develop his/her own understanding in an experimental and incremental way. The suspense and curiosity of *the foreign* is not totally repealed. Nor is any overly patronizing assistance offered to the reader. The autonomy of the reader is as much respected as the autonomy of the source text. The *regimes of power* are replaced with democratic textualities. As a result, instead of being a liability, it appears to be one of the most remarkable assets of a translation to look *unfamiliar* and *foreign* (Munday, 2013, pp. 57, 62). Therefore, in its most characteristic form, foreignization prevents the source and non-canonical texts from being standardized, internalized, in short, cannibalized (Asghar, 2014).

However, it is not enough to just foreignize the source text. Along with this a paradigm shift of perspective is required which would allow a re-thinking of the non-European and non-canonical literatures. Moreover, what is commonly called the *World Literature* (sometimes in contradistinction with the so-called *Third World Literature*) is not to be taken as an outcome of the contemporary internationalization but instead

as a critical dimension by which various cultures and cultural turmoils can be appreciated in their complexities.

Arjun Appadurai, the Indian-born US ethnologist and writer, has ingeniously introduced some new post-national perspectives which seek to substitute translation with *deterritorialization*, that is, by transferring, blending and shifting the local towards the metropolitan (1996, p. 198).

The post-national demographic dynamics such as diaspora, exile and migration are throwing new challenges to the practice of translation. The present day Syrian refugee crisis, galvanized by the tragic death of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian boy whose image made global headlines after he drowned in the Mediterranean Sea while attempting to escape the civil war in Syria, aptly illustrates the immensity of these challenges. As a corollary of this, the idea of a nation as the *carrier* of culture and the sole source and target of translation is being increasingly questioned. Therefore what needs to be revised is not just the practice of translation but the canons of cultural studies and comparative/world literature. In this regards, our literary imagination, hybrid identities, syncretistic cultural experiences and composite self-images should all be accorded a due place. Therefore, all acts of translation should be underwritten not only by our collective affiliations but also by what Homi Bhabha calls our "shared historical traumas" (see Simon, 1996, 137).

Conclusion

Today when the questions of identity and voice are increasingly coming into play, we can no longer ignore the power politics of translation and its effects on the marginalized texts and communities. In this study, I have laid bare the deeper questions of ideology, power, manipulation and hegemony which invariably underpin the practice of translation. Instead of investigating the question of translation from purely semantic and syntactic perspectives, the practice of translation has to be judged from ideological and political viewpoints also in order to understand its nexus with power and control.

Moreover, ours is a world of terrorism, suicidal fury and genocidal conflicts verging on ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Our technological prowess has added exponentially to our ability to kill. Never in human history was there a more crucial and more immediate need to understand the other cultures and civilizations as it is now. With the onslaught of a neo-imperial vernacular hatched by the Eurocentric corporate culture, a new challenge has been posed to the fate of less privileged languages during the practice of translation (Fisk, 2007, p. 678). In the view of this complexity of the situation what is really required is the

greater and more empathic understanding of the source texts during their translation into the dominant European target texts. Cultural misapprehensions born of highly domesticated translations can lead to ethnocentric states of minds. Translation is the foremost means to initiate and sustain a dialogue between different cultures and nations.

Therefore, it is paramount to be aware of the ideological and political factors which can impact negatively upon our perception about other peoples and nations. It is time to re-assert and re-invent the autonomy and distinctiveness of the source texts and less privileged discourses. In this regard, Venuti's technique of foreignization can go a long way to help us. The sources texts should no longer exist as mere raw material awaiting the miraculous prowess of a translator to turn into something *real* and *finished*. What has to be realized by the translators, theorists, scholars, researchers, diplomats and policy makers is the plain fact that every language stands for a culture and a historic tradition and when it constitutes a source text; its historico-cultural legacies must be recognized and honored. That is the only way to ensure a mutually respected co-existence in a world already rent with the linguistic and ethnic clashes.

References

Aaltonen, S. (2000). *Time-sharing on stage, drama translation in theatre and society.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Ahmad, A. (1994). *In theory: Classes, nations, literatures*. New York, NY: Verso.

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimension of globalization*. Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press.

Asghar, J. (2014). *An analytical study of domestication of V. G. Kiernan's translation of Muhammad Iqbal's poetry into English* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.

Bahri, D. (2003). *Native intelligence: Aesthetics, politics, and postcolonial literature*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Baker, M. (2006). *Translation, power and conflict*. London: Routledge.

Bassnett, S. (2011). *Reflections on translation*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Bayart, J. F. (1996). *The illusion of cultural identity*. London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd.

Bertacco, S. (2014). *Language and translation in postcolonial literatures*. London: Routledge.

Boase-Beier, J. (2011). *A critical introduction to translation studies*. New York, NY: Continuum.

Crumbley, A. (2008). *The politics of translation: Authorship and authority in the writings of Alfred the great* (Unpublished graduate dissertation). University of North Texas, Denton.

Crystal, D. (1995). *Dictionary of linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Daniel, S. H. (2007). *Reexamining Berkeley's philosophy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Emden, C. J. (2005). *Nietzsche on language, consciousness, and the body*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois.

Fisk, R. (2007). *The great war for civilisation: The conquest of the Middle East*. New York, NY: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Gentzler, E. (1993). *Contemporary translation theories.* London: Routledge.

Ghosh, A. (1993). *In an antique land*. London: Granta Books.

Hatim, B. (1997). *Communication across cultures: Translation theory and contrastive text linguistics.* Exeter: Exeter University Press.

Hatim, B., & Munday, J. *Translation: An advanced resource book*. London: Routledge.

Hermans, T. (1995). *The manipulation of literature studies in literary translation.* London: Croom Helm.

Jameson, F. (1998). *The cultural turn: Selected writings on the postmodern, 1983-1998*. London: Verso.

Kiraly, D. C. (1995). *Pathways to translation: Pedagogy and process.* Kent, OH: Kent State University Press.

Kirk, R. (1986). *Translation determined.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Kuhn, T. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lefevere, A. (1992). *Translation, rewriting and the manipulation of literary fame.* London: Routledge.

Meschonnic, H. (2011). *Ethics and politics of translating*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Momma, H. (2013). *From philology to English studies.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Morris, M. (1995). *Translation and the law.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Mounce, W. D. (2003). *Greek to the rest of us*. Grand Rapids, MN: Zondervan.

Mukherjee, S. (1994). *Translation as discovery and other essays on Indian literature in English translation.* New Delhi: Orient Longman.

Munday, J. (2007). *Translation as intervention*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Munday, J. (2013). *Style and ideology in translation.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Nasr, S. H. (1987). *Traditional Islam in the modern world*. London: Kegan Paul International Ltd.

Neubert, A. (1985). *Text and translation.* Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopadie.

Pym, A. (2012). *On translator ethic: Principles for cross-cultural communication*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Saldanha, G., & O'Brien, S. (2013). *Research methodologies in translation studies*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Simon, S. (1996). *Gender in translation: Cultural identity and the politics of transmission*. London: Routledge.

Spivak, G. C. (2000). Politics of translation. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *The translation studies readers* (pp. 397 - 412). London: Routledge.

Toury, G. (2012). *Descriptive translation studies—and beyond*. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Venuti, L. (1995). *The translator's invisibility*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Venuti, L. (2013). *Translation changes everything*. New York, NY: Routledge.