Continental Perceptions of Englishness, 'Foreignness' and the Global Turn

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By

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For my mother

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FOREWORD

This collection comprises essays written within the space of well over a decade or so, engaging with different conceptual frameworks and contexts of critical enquiry. As such, although they form part of what may be deemed an integrative approach, they do not form an organic whole, nor do they build towards or cohere into a single, central thesis, or seek to elicit a model of critical thinking. Consequently, whereas broadly analytical in substance and purport, the pieces gathered here make no claims to providing a unified, cohesive statement on the state of the subject, nor to contributing to the advancement of scholarship in English studies. Far from being politically grounded, the type of examination undertaken here is primarily geared towards the cultural paradigms that define Englishness as a structure of sensibility and imagination, touching upon aspects regarding the poetics, rather than the politics, of Englishness. Viewed as an ensemble, the essays describe, if anything, the pursuit of cultural narratives and interpretations of Englishness by a continental European scholar more concerned with the continuities, rather than the discontinuities, of the subject. To a great extent, my approach to the theme of Englishness is filtered through and informed by translation and comparatism, hence the opening piece which explores the culture-translation nexus positioned in the horizon of expectation of the continental European scholar, speculating on the subject of English as a 'third space' in the cultural studies acceptation of the syntagm as marketed by the postcolonial thinker Homi K. Bhabha. In the attempt to factor in contemporary, post-Brexit developments, the closing piece contains reflections on new departures, particularly on the failures of the multiculturalist project and the future of English studies in a multi-polar world. It is there that I seek to address the articulations between Englishness and Britishness, as well as the cultural disjunctures intervening in this equation in a global context.

It is the nature of long-term research commitments to be single-minded, heterogeneous and many-sided, in this case to seek to grasp the 'essence' of Englishness --the clichés, the belief systems, the stereotypes, indeed the myths lying at the heart of English identity-- and to do so by drawing on mixed and variegated sources. Although, in their current assortment the essays here do not formulate a unitary thesis *per se*, they

point to a concerted effort and give forth a set of reiterative themes regarding the ideals and ideas of Englishness. One of the leitmotifs running through these pieces is that of Englishness as a 'structure of feeling' accommodating, on the one hand, home-grown and vernacular, and on the other, continental, 'bookish' visions of the English character. In order to explore the imbricated elements constitutive of this dialectic, I set out to observe constructions of Englishness in the writing of Peter Ackroyd and Kazuo Ishiguro; two authors that illustrate, in my view, the mutually informing polarities underlying the aforementioned cultural paradigms. Foregrounded in their narratives of Englishness is a revealing, albeit unlikely, interchange between self-image and external projection, biography and historiography, and insularity and cosmopolitanism.

Doubtless the work of numerous authors with a declared interest in the theme could be brought to bear on Englishness, which has given rise to a whole plethora of canonical, mainstream discourses in diverse disciplines ranging from literary to postcolonial theory. In my view, however, it is this particular dialogic encounter that engenders an immediately relevant interplay between Englishness and 'foreignness,' the issue that has constantly formed the object of my enquiry over the years. In Peter Ackroyd's interpretive aesthetic model, the dialogue articulates itself in terms of 'indigenousness' versus internationalism: what he envisages as the "native English spirit," typifying the English 'cultural difference' and artistic sensibility, and a "bogus" type of internationalism; a cultural construct of ignorant contemporaries, blissfully unaware of a whole lineage of the English literary traditions (Ackroyd 2001, 329). Thus, in Peter Ackroyd's prodigious and 'ebullient' body of writing, I identify a distinct, holistic approach to what he defines as the "*genius loci*" (Ackroyd 2001, 330) of the English imagination, looking at aspects regarding cultural affiliation and their bearing on the 'English question.' Ackroyd's model is, of course rich, all-inclusive, and expressive; revelatory, as I argue, of questions pertaining to the English lineage and tradition, indeed of the chameleonic, versatile qualities of Englishness. His is, in my reading, a utopian model with little if any political agenda, one evocative of the Catholic heritage constitutive of English identity. Conversely, Kazuo Ishiguro provides an oblique, subtle, and concealing picture of Englishness as a structure of exclusion and genre of representation.

Veering between Anglophilia and Anglomania, much of the work of English studies outside the UK remains anchored in extolling the so-called core British values; these may be characterized as insularity, an empirical tradition in philosophy, the imperialist project, and a shared colonial past. Ian Buruma's *Anglomania: a European Love Affair* (2000) is an excellent

--if at times anecdotal-- survey of this phenomenon. In sharp contrast, insider perspectives concentrate on the collapse of the Empire and the crisis of Englishness in an attempt to address the relation between imperial *hubris* and national identity. While these undoubtedly make for significant, distinct traits, they cannot in and of themselves account for complexities such as the hybridity and fragmentariness of Englishness. It is my contention that, in many different ways, Ackroyd's and Ishiguro's narratives of Englishness shed light on the imbricated inside-outside *rapport* between self-image and external projection and the processes of assimilation and trans-culturation inherent in Englishness that tell the national story in many different voices. Thus, whereas Ackroyd's construction of Englishness, even though aesthetically grounded, encapsulates the attributes that help perceive the commonality of an English cultural identity, Ishiguro's sense of English cultural identity is a site of veritable and inspiring alterity. In his exemplary rendition of Englishness, Ishiguro captures the elegiac, lamenting overtones of self-identity, expressed in the nation's so-called genre of predilection, which is evocative of the national sentiment, temperament and character, indeed, of the inborn melancholia and acquired Protestant ethic manifest in the iconic figure of the English butler. In his single-mindedness, Ackroyd is intent on providing a cultural rationale for the tangled history of the British Isles, isolating the theatrical and farcical traditions of entertainment as emblematic of English cultural identity. Ishiguro, on the other hand is concerned with a sentimental self-image and its reverberations on the 'civic' condition of English identity. The two author-based essays stage a conversation between a highly aestheticized, romanticized, dramatized, and illusory sense of English self.

The question arises as to the current constructions of Englishness; what of Britain in the new Europe, particularly in the aftermath of BREXIT? It is almost unanimously agreed that BREXIT marks a defining new phase in the cultural history of Englishness, one indicative of a deeply divided, polarized British society, and, according to some analysts, it is potentially conducive to the very dissolution of the UK. It has to be said, beyond the current, post-BREXIT jingoism, the true debate at the heart of global Englishness, it seems to me, lies not in Britain's future trade with the European Union; nor in whether the English language will maintain its status as a global *lingua franca*. The crux of Britain leaving the EU lies in the difficult relationship between Britishness and internationalism and the new patterns of cultural identification and 'othering' that BREXIT has uncovered and/or engendered.

As well as new patterns of identity in an age of inter-connectedness, global paradigms of Englishness comprise the "pathologies of contemporary

Englishness" (Kenny 11) and the anxieties of decentralisation that are already manifest at this stage of devolution. With its ethnically charged debates, BREXIT tested the boundaries of British nationhood, exposing the anger, the long-standing deprivations, the dilemmas, the ambiguities, the highly-entrenched prejudices, and, above all, the rifts within contemporary British society; it uncovered the sense of disconnectedness experienced by a divided nation. Of all the divisions that BREXIT laid bare, the most profound, and, it seems to me, the most impactful, are the atavistic fissures in the collective sentiment that have been disclosed, particularly Britain's heightened sense of non-belonging in Europe. These have already started re-emerging, many commentators evoking their recurrent nature, pointing back to previous patterns of exclusion, though perhaps with slightly different recipients. None of it, some argue, is in any salient way 'new'; it only appears so in the eyes of self-deluded cosmopolitan *elites* who have lost touch with the 'true values' of Englishness, which are seen to be embodied far from urban educated leftist liberals in the real heartlands of England, not only among the white working classes that have been 'left behind' by globalisation, but in the home counties, among the inheritors of the 'old and proud English gentry.' One of the reasons that Brexit has caused such shock is precisely because of this increased chasm between the 'chattering classes,' on the one hand, and the sturdy middle-class Protestant English gentry, on the other.

To the continental European scholar of English studies, benefitting from a certain insight into the roots of scepticism of 'perfidious Albion,' this comes as little surprise. Among the immediately foreseeable intercultural consequences, one notes the resurgence of English nationhood, the loss of which many traditional cultural historians have deplored, and an upsurge in Englishness. From where I stand, this is a revival of Englishness expressed through a reassertion of cultural difference pointing to the 'adventure of English' somewhat coming full circle. After a considerably long 'embargo' and process of tabooing-- one deplored by Ackroyd some fifteen years ago (1993; 2001)-- Englishness seems to have now again become a 'legitimate' concept for interrogation:

> […] Englishness itself remains very difficult to talk about. It has become almost embarrassing. Perhaps this has in part to do with a supposed reticence, and it is also compounded by the native English distrust for wide generalisations of an inconclusive nature. But in the last twenty or thirty years there has also been something close to a political or social embarrassment; there is no longer much guilt about erstwhile English imperialism, or colonialism but, nevertheless, the fear of appearing

'nationalistic' has led to a certain reluctance to espouse the virtues of Englishness at all. In addition, the apparent decline of English influence has on occasions promoted the belief that there may be nothing much left to celebrate or to preserve. (Ackroyd 2001)

To state the obvious, the implications of BREXIT on Britain's establishment and institutions and its Euro-Atlantic relations are manifold, and the awareness of their transformative role is yet to sink in. Politically, analysts increasingly signal the rise of populism on a global scale; culturally, the BREXIT vote has been unpacked as a backlash against the project of multiculturalism coming under attack from both ends of the political spectrum. As a result of its high currency, the cultural backlash thesis features extensively in numerous platform papers:

> Perhaps the most widely-held view of mass support for populism— the *economic inequality* perspective—emphasizes the consequences for electoral behaviour arising from profound changes transforming the workforce and society in post-industrial economies. There is overwhelming evidence of powerful trends toward greater income and wealth inequality in the West, based on the rise of the knowledge economy, technological automation, and the collapse of the manufacturing industry, global flows of labour, goods, peoples, and capital (especially the inflow of migrants and refugees), the erosion of organized labour, shrinking welfare safety-nets, and neo-liberal austerity policies. According to this view, rising economic insecurity and social deprivation among the left-behinds has fuelled popular resentment of the political classes. This situation is believed to have made the less secure strata of society—low-waged unskilled workers, the long-term unemployed, households dependent on shrinking social benefits, residents of public housing, single-parent families, and poorer white populations living in inner-city areas with concentrations of immigrants -- susceptible to the anti-establishment, nativist, and xenophobic scare-mongering exploited by populist movements, parties, and leaders, blaming 'Them' for stripping prosperity, job opportunities, and public services from 'Us' (Inglehart and Norris 2016, 2).

Unsettling though BREXIT and the BREXIT ethos may be, viewed from the macro perspective on the scale of the global condition, it almost appears to be a logical consequence of it. Above all, it embodies the prospect of a fragmented world, closing in on itself, one in which the metaphor of the 'wall' has gained the kind of currency no one could have seen coming so soon after the fall of that other wall within Europe, 27 years ago. For whereas 'globality' might still be with us, due to the interconnected nature of finance and technology, it is coming under

considerable pressure by the forces of a renewed and quite strong parochialism/isolationism, as well as an increasing hostility to cosmopolitan ideals.

In an attempt to take stock of some of the topical concerns voiced above, a series of reflections on Englishness and the European imaginary, formulated from the vantage point of Britain's involvement in the New Europe project, close the present volume. Unassuming in both depth and ambit, like the rest of this collection, they are not indicative of an ambition toward reworking conceptions or designing a new algorithm of Englishness. The extent of my aspiration is that this volume will contribute to a broadening of the concept of Englishness as it profiles itself at this juncture and faced as it is with the trials and tribulations embedded in the condition of 'globality.'

CHAPTER ONE

ON THE TRANSLATABILITY OF CULTURES: 'FOREIGNNESS,' BORDER CROSSING AND THE UNTRANSLATABLE HORIZONS

Depending on how performative and permeable one's idea of the culture-translation nexus is, one sees translation as an activity, a product, process or act, and 'cultural translation' as an instance of this activity. Subsequently, if one is to understand cultures as the broadest, perhaps most comprehensive, text-performable-as-practice, cultural translation reveals itself to be an enactment of discursive practices. Beyond its self-evident function of producing a repertoire of texts, translation stands for an operation that is inseparable from the formation of cultural identity. Its underlying processes of transposition form an integral part of the dialogic mechanism laying bare cultural difference and specificity. By extension, translational processes can be viewed as accompanying all intercultural exchange, and, thereupon, partaking of the very condition of multiculturality. Whether we are aware of it or not, a translational operation is implicated in every cognitive and intellectual process; we convert text to converse, compare, contrast, summarise, interpret, describe, infer and deduce, synthesise and analyse—it is a communicative transaction invariably taking place within a socio-cultural framework. As a pivotal issue in translation, cultural reference lies at the heart of comparative studies, and, to a large extent, comparatism hinges on translation methodologies.

Traditionally, the role of the translator has been construed as that of a cultural mediator, the carrier of an 'original,' source message; someone whose linguistic competences determine the degree of fidelity and accuracy in the rendering of a given 'message.' Poststructuralism, in its discrediting of the referential function of language, inevitably called attention to the predilection of the translator towards the corruption and obscuring of a message, which was never fixed and 'reconstructed' in the first place. It shed meaningful light on how, hardly being transparent and cohesive entities outside representation, cultures are textual constructs yielding to partial, unstable and incomplete translations.

To the extent that they cannot exist outside interpretation, writing and reading are acts of translation, pointing to the translator's function as an intense receiver and producer of discourse. The comparative roles a translator fulfils, it has become apparent in the postlapsarian symbolic order, much exceed the sphere of linguistics. Whereas the linguistic medium is the translator's vehicle, it is by no means the only grounds for comparison at work in the translation process. Moving adeptly between source and target cultures, the translator works in the spaces between and betwixt texts, constantly negotiating between cultural and symbolic codes. It is, for the most part, a privileged position, entailing as it does, beyond hermeneutic flair and philological erudition *per se*, a deliberate exercise in self-positioning, along with a certain eagerness to be part of an ongoing process of cultural (re)writing.

Reflecting on the shifts in translation over the last few decades or so, one cannot help noticing how divergent, and at times mutually un-informing, translation theory and practice find themselves to be at this precise juncture in their disciplinary history. Encased in a specialism for the interested few, theoreticians may, on occasion, appear blatantly non-reciprocating in their dealings with cultures and translators. Considering the act of communication that translation, across modes and registers, is unanimously held to be, the two universes profile themselves as surprisingly non-communicative. In a global and globalising perspective, this is indicative of a narrowness of vision that does not sit well with the image of the multilingual, multidisciplinary environment that the New European 'cultural zone' projects for itself. For while the cultures of translation have become complexified, the translation of cultures has become an increasingly precarious and obscure operation, visibly unaided by the advancements of an otherwise thriving and professionalized enterprise. This *incommunicado* sensibility and the position of marginality in which specialism for specialism's sake puts itself, appears to be manifesting itself transatlantically, its 'realities' still lagging far behind the theory. Indeed it would seem that neither multiculturalism nor transdisciplinarity has had a proven track record of success in raising awareness of the form of collaboration that translation can foster. Area studies are yet to identify mutually beneficial directions conducive to border studies. Capitalising on norms and procedures, theoretician and practitioner alike somehow still think about translation in the narrow and rarefied terms of subject technicality. A select few cross the border of the 'in-house' endeavour to reach outside familiar quarters in pursuit of an inter-communal ground of experience. The question arises, whence this resistance to (ex)change preventing the cultural insight of the theoretician and the bi-cultural vision of the translator from working together? After decades of "living with difference" (Gilroy online),

visiting the trans-cultural space of alterity should come more naturally; it should as well be possible to transcend atomistic attitudes and delve deeper into newly acquired wisdom in answer to the question of what unites or divides cultures. To do so is to rethink and repopulate the hermeneutic space translation occupies and be prepared to negotiate the borderlines of one's identity discourse to let others in. It is to make room for the potentially disruptive strangers and 'aliens' constantly intruding upon the translational process.

Drawing a line on the legacy of comparative cultural studies, these past decades appear unequivocally to have been subject to the power play and 'ruling of difference.' The unparalleled commitment to theorising and legitimating cultural difference harnessed by the cultural studies revolution has both heightened and rendered further problematic the awareness of the articulations between culture and translation. Cross-cultural theory has thus propelled translation studies well beyond the conventional text-based investigation into a new phase of scholarship; one in which the idea of culture as a site of nationalities and collectivities has turned obsolete. Part of the unprecedented emancipatory missions sparked by the cultural studies revolution has been the expansion of the notion of translation upon the domain of culture at large. Translation acts have thus been brought to bear on the frontiers of culture, and a sophisticated conceptual framework set up to analyse this phenomenon of transliteration. A central line of enquiry, the reading of translational and transnational as analogous, has produced invaluable insights into the peripheries and 'margins of culture.' This culturally empowered translation scene has proved particularly revealing in terms of how minority cultures translate majority cultures, immensely telling in the reading of the body of narratives of postcolonialism, dissident writing, and the cultural diasporas of postcommunism. Most importantly perhaps, it has contributed fresh angles to the dialectical relationship between mother tongues and mother cultures, instigating concerted exposures of Western ethnocentrism and the canon of translations that have nurtured it. The realisation, however, that in the process of being translated difference is assimilated, made subject to adoption and commodification, complicates the terms of identity politics. Whether 'translating within' one and the same culture, in homolinguistic fashion, or between and across cultures, translators voice narratives of belonging and exclusion, of trespassing and violating boundaries.

What, then, are the factors accounting for this rift in the cultural poetics and politics of translation today, if the two can ever be considered separately? And what are the chances of a 'trans-poetics' to narrow the gap? In its contemporary moment, a significant departure in the poetic and critical

discourses of cultural translation would be an attempt to take stock of the transgressive element in translation and unpack its transformational trans-creative capabilities. Still, in the days of the post-cultural revolution, one question resurfaces with renewed acuity: are human cultures translatable at all? From the vantage point of the enriched, 'decolonised' horizon opened up by cultural studies, increasingly, the limits of translation posit themselves along the incongruities between transnationalism and transculturation. The crux of the matter, it would seem, is reconciling the plural-lingual project of globality and its residual monolithic mindsets. This is a form of translation of the broadest scope and its difficulty resides in refining one's capacity to think cross-culturally and incorporate a whole new dimension of 'foreignness' that has emerged after the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the war on terror, and the opening up of Eastern European borders. Translatability, in this case, will depend on the transactive skills and empathetic quality of the translator, on how successful a dialogue s/he orchestrates across what is an inherent, albeit not insurmountable, cultural divide. The new state of 'foreignness' is, of course, a function of the new state of alliances, as Gayatri Spivak notes with regard to disciplinary coalitions, for "borders are easily crossed from metropolitan countries, whereas, going the other way, the so-called peripheral countries encounter bureaucratic and political frontiers, altogether more difficult to penetrate" (2000). Affiliations and cultural proximities inform various disciplinary crossovers, which is why, by analogy, the new *inter*-national topographies implicitly call for a reconsideration of interdisciplinary boundaries. What is at stake in impervious, non-permissive barriers is, in Spivak's description, the integrity of comparatism, and, ultimately, the validity of knowledge itself as "this notion of restricted permeability spreads right across the epistemological reaches of both Comparative Literature and Area Studies, with incalculable consequences" (Spivak, online lecture).

In their enquiry into the subject identity of English studies, postcolonial thinkers formulate a set of lucid propositions regarding 'post-millennial trends' in humanistic practice. Among these, one takes note of what they distinguish as the debate between textualism and culturalism, which cuts to the chase of the contemporary translation setting. After decades of intransitivity in seminal disciplinary distillations, the dialogue *between* rather than within texts, the workings of co-textuality rather than those of intertextuality, reveal themselves as more telling.

However narrowly or broadly understood, whether intralingual or intersemiotic, verbal and non-verbal, between different languages or within one and the same, translation is a form of cultural intervention rather than a static encounter between cultures. Though it has been with us since the beginnings of literate times, translation is larger than the literatures in which

it originated, its poetics more straightforward than its cultural politics. It is a get-between polyglottal act the workings of which echo far beyond the realm of transplanting concepts. Empathy and scholarship in verse translation, the art-and-technique, language-and-literature polarities lay bare the extent to which translation constantly challenges the easy 'export-import' transaction, compelling the translator to perform imbricating acts as an intervening agency. Exploits in the teaching and practice of translation, as an integral part of creative writing, foreground this disciplinary cross-pollination in relation to drama and the in-built meta-languages of the process of adaptation.

If 'foreign' is the unhomely and the unfamiliar, translation 'brings home,' in both a figurative and the most literal sense, the experience of the other. Without wishing to espouse a vision too stark, or dwell on mistranslating difference, one cannot help but note that the experience of the latter years has been one of a profusion of idiolects poorly handled in a host of artificial renditions. The 'babelising' of cultural understandings after 9/11 and 7/7 recalls to mind a perception of language as "the source of all misunderstanding" (de Saint-Exupery 1995, 69). With the potential of global *lingua franca* that its vehicular language status confers upon it, English has the capacity to act as a translator between the vernaculars and the Englishes (the 'globish' idiolect) around the world, bridging the divide between target and source languages. Beyond the idealistic construct that it defines, this is a vision of English as a 'third space,' not so much a common language undoing the confusion of tongues, as a discursive heterolingual field benefiting, not uniquely, the Anglophone world, but the various local vernaculars constitutive of it. Ultimately, it is a vision, not of a blissful, pre-Babel state or of an otherless world, but of one in which 'aliens' and most 'othered' nations have become dead metaphors. In the context of global languages, 'outsourced' and 'customised' for a diversity of markets, the crucial translation to exercise is both within and between traditions, in the process, doing justice to both the Queen's idiom and Pidgin.

Between the total relativism of postmodern ethics and the absolute commitment of post-9/11 fundamentalism, the urgency lies in recuperating the notion of translation as a (post-) humanistic act on which we depend for the progress of cultural discourse. To do so is to valorise the dialogism embedded in the translator's intervening role with full awareness that it is the shared concepts or values that permit the act of translation in the first place In an era dubbed post-humanist, to be forward looking is, perhaps, to think through acerbic critiques and charges of 'Eurocentrism,' essentialism and 'universalism,' in an effort to rehabilitate humanism. Against the backdrop of what profiles itself as the unsecularisation of the world, in the search for a perfect equivalence, we would be well advised to remember to revalorise the

ineffable that defies translation, that irreducible difference the fault lines of which form an integral part of the ethics of translating. In ingenious modes and registers, the body of current and emerging texts on translation, speak to one another, crossing the borders of intercultural discourse to explore the limits of translation, and bring out, for a change, the values significantly gained in translating after Babel. World literature is one of them.

CHAPTER TWO

TRANSLATION, GLOBALISATION,
AND THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH
AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

The following is a critical examination of the transformations in the cultures, politics, and practices of translation under the pressures of global economy, multicultural language policies, and new information technologies. What I am particularly interested in observing is the relationship between the rise of professional translation and the current state of translation scholarship, and the extent to which they inform each other across the dense interdisciplinary field of translation studies. This enquiry veers, therefore, between aspects of the hermeneutics and the pragmatics of translation, hinging on the newly forming articulations between translation theories and translation industries. A derivative scope is that of refocusing the problematics of English as an international language in the global environment, shifting attention from translation as an interlingual act to translation as an intercultural act. The thrust of my argument is that, in the absence of a heightened translation consciousness, the radical transformations in the global economy, coupled with the new technologies assisting the translation process, make it easy to overlook the role of the agency of translation and leave us confined to a viewing of it in purely instrumental terms. Equally, this is an attempt to grapple briefly with the issue of the proliferation of Englishes in circulation and the continuing rift between the practices and theories of translating. It seems to me that a likewise consideration is now long overdue.

One of the phenomena typifying the global order, in addition to the transnational framework of reference, is 'time-space compression,' -- the shrinking or annihilation of distance as a result of the massive reduction in the time needed to connect various locations. As well as indicative of the logic of acceleration underlying late capitalism, this brings forth a dramatically different conception of social existence and the activities constitutive of it. It is a conception wherein space loses its ontological integrity somewhat, sliding into a mere extension of time. With the advent of instantaneous communication, locality enters obsolescence and de-

territorialisation steps in as the very prerequisite of velocity. Thus, not only does the virtual medium become the primary medium, but, powered by the cyberspace environment, what appeared as a utopian project, simultaneity, forms a regular condition of social activity; increasingly the subject is defining him/herself out of the 'no-place.'

Consequently, by virtue of high-speed assistive technologies, recent years have duly seen a prosperous and rapidly growing translation industry where the new roles of the translators are those allocated by the market-based economy. Those most immediately apparent are, of course, those of delivering more, to higher standards, and at a faster pace. Directly responsible for the redisposition of the status of translation in the global world, outsourcing -- the economic expression of deterritorialisation --marks a sea change in the translation paradigm. Increasingly professionalized, the sphere of translating is now oriented towards profit, issues regarding production, becoming a question of the 'ably translated' in a corporate business reflective of 'the morality of the marketplace,' and manifesting the features of the corporation as a dominant form of hyper-capitalism. Under the impact of accelerated temporality, the brand of servicing that the outsourced freelancer provides gets the upper hand over that of the in-house translator, a corporate translation culture emerging out of the dominant corporate structures of the global economy. Against this backdrop, to which one adds the Janus-faced language policies in force, the role of the professional translator mutates in several distinctive, albeit conjoint, ways. Rather than linguistic *per se*, the crux of this change in the translation situation is the interface between the different cultures of translation, in many respects, the ultimate manifestation of the political agenda of translation. In the Anglo-American arena, a practice particularised by a twofold tendency can thus be identified. On the one hand, one notes a tendency toward foreignisation and the rendering visible of the articulations of cultural difference, consonant with the celebration of difference. This consists in an under-translation of 'foreignness' that lays bare the particularity of the source-culture text and the intervention of the translator in its rendition. On the other hand, there is domestication, methodologically replicating the mechanisms of standardisation and homogenisation at work in the global experience. Thus, if one were to axiomatise this shift, the translation differential lies in how concealing or revealing of the interpretation of a foreign culture, indeed of the degree of transparency underpinning it, the translation process is. As Lawrence Venuti aptly points out (1995), implicit in the question of the (in)visibility of the translator is an array of cultural attitudes and ideologies intimately connected to the problem of authorship and hotly debated in literary translation. What is therefore at stake in foreignising or domesticating is the adoption of foreign

cultural values, the under- or over-translation of which is bound to depend on the dominant target-culture. The extent to which a translation assimilates the foreign text, 'sending the reader abroad' or bringing the source text home to him/her, is a matter of ethical choice. Whereas previously, 'managing' this dimension of strangeness would have preponderantly been the province of the individual translator and of the publishing industry s/he served, in global capitalism, institutional and, more often than not, corporate interests alone dictate the canons of cultural texts to be translated, as well as the convenient degree of acculturation and transculturation the translation experience is required to accommodate. Besides calling into question the very standards according to which translation work is assessed (fluency and naturalness above all), the interplay of 'strangeness' and 'naturalness' foregrounded in translating cultural difference poses significant problems pertaining to cultural politics. How the 'foreign' is received, and in how assimilative and confiscating a manner, defines the ethos of the target culture. The kind of double-edged situation embedded in this inspired another influential poetician of intercultural translation, Antoine Berman, to speak of the *épreuve* pervading the act of translating between cultures:

> "The properly *ethical* aim of the translating act is receiving the foreign as foreign…The negative analytic is primarily concerned with ethnocentric, annexationist translations, and hypertextual translations (pastiche, imitation, adaptation, free writing), where the play of deforming forces is freely exercised" (1992, 286).

Berman formulates here a vision of translation as the playground of power relations, yielding to a reading and reviewing that cannot afford to overlook the hegemonic attitudes involved. To the extent that globalisation entails processes of interdependence and interconnectedness based on mechanisms of unification and identification, the kind of local-global dynamics it is located in can be figured as analogous to a synecdochic- metonymic relationship, where the part is contained in the whole -- a mode of processing the political economy of culture as text. From this vantage point, the indelible mark that localisation and outsourcing, especially in their self-centred American guises, leave upon the field of professional translation lies in the cultural interstices between the source culture and the foreign culture. In the global world of manufactured sameness, the right to cultural resistance appears ever harder to claim. At the crossroads, the translator as communicator is now faced with the danger of becoming subject to commodification, his/her linguistic competences catering for a value-driven arena, answering to a host of contractors and sub-contractors, rarely, if at all, entering into cultural exchange with the end-client.

Deploring the bland, adoptive style of one prominent translator of the Russian classics, Joseph Brodsky notoriously remarked: the "reason English-speaking readers can barely tell the difference between Tolstoy and Dostoevsky is that they aren't reading the prose of either one. They're reading Constance Garnett" (2005). In its atavistic fear of its cultural 'others,' the West in general, and the Anglophone world in particular, have a long history of domestication and annexation of foreign cultures. Indeed, in the capacity to 'translate' difference, it would appear that absolute fidelity to the target language in English translation practices stems from a compulsive desire to over-translate, and, in so doing, make absolutely sure the English-speaking reader always reassuringly 'finds' him/herself in translation, applying Western frameworks to translate (appropriate) non-Western cultural texts. This inevitably brings one to the issue of the interdisciplinarity of translation studies in current Anglo-American contexts. An emergent discipline yet to establish its agenda, better still, an inter-discipline of sub-fields and institutional settings ranging from the specter of linguistics and applied languages to comparative literature and cultural anthropology, the expanding and extending area of translatology gravitates on a defragmenting orbit of decentralising English studies.

As we advance into the twenty first century, a distinction that is vertiginously eroding is that between 'general,' 'standard English' and the public and professional Englishes around us; the functional uses, specialisms and idioms of English, rather than its geographical varieties, taking a front seat. Working in the corporate business of translation forces one to reconsider the adequacy of one's translation tools with a view to determining how adapted to the newer Englishes in circulation and the supra-national institutions these appear to be. Over the past 3 decades or so, the monolithic subject of English has liberally morphed into a series of 'Englishes as' EIL, EFL, ESP, English as a 'lingua franca,' or an international medium of intercultural exchange. In trying to unpack these many brands of English, one cannot but stay alert to the dimension of English as a site of power play, its dominance in the global market and that which profiles itself as the new era of English hegemony, the 'triumph' of English over minority languages. Of the three categorical designations attached to English: 'world,' 'international,' and 'global,' it is thus the 'spread' of English as a global language of power, the increase in its global usage, and also its multinational uses and abuses, that stand out as the real challenge confronting the contemporary researcher.

In *Des Tours de Babel* (1985), the late French philosopher Jacques Derrida, revisiting the binding inheritance and negative theology of translation, addresses the 'legacy of confusion' inscribed in the act of translating. Typically, he proceeds to a causal analysis, etymologically (*Ba—*

'father,' *Bel*—'God,' hence the translation 'city of God'), in an effort to raise awareness of the *hubris* inscribed in the scene of translation. Symbolically, translation, Derrida argues, is a site marred by the primal confusion that leaves the translator entrapped in an endless Beckettian vicious circle, caught between an insurmountable impossibility and an absolute obligation to translate. While not all translation acts are prone to this exemplary Beckettian compulsion to translate language into silence, the translator, Derrida recalls to mind, is generically and genealogically an inheritor of a prior meaning tied to an original text. In our post-Derridean era of deconstruction, no longer does the myth of the 'scientific' need any demystification. Surely no self-respecting scholar, whichever disciplinary role s/he happens to fulfil, believes in translating as a form of value-free, disinterested scholarship. Yet, the imperative need to fully valorise translation as an exemplary act of self-understanding remains. One would add that it is time one rethought the continuing need for critical translation studies to take stock of the translation situation and gain new translation insight into the emerging paradigms; time we moved beyond the state of prostrating, naïve marvel at the plethora of primary and secondary meanings befallen on the 'Global babel' lest we remain forever caught in a state of limbo, waiting for the language before the fall to return to that Biblical holy city.

CHAPTER THREE

ANGLO-CENTRIC ATTITUDES: RECONSTRUCTING ENGLISHNESS IN THE AGE OF DEVOLUTION

Judging by the plethora of books on the subject of Englishness that has inundated the arena of debate over the past decade or so, it would appear that a long and tortuous process of deconstructing Britishness is on the point of exhausting itself. Indeed, it seems as though a long-standing 'embargo' on investigating English difference is now being lifted and the climate is increasingly propitious for a 'post-ideological' examination of English cultural identity in terms other than the hegemonic. As well as a measure of how Anglocentricity is being exploded, this resurgence of interest in English national identity is a healthy sign of recovery from post-imperial hangovers. Through the porous filters of what is cementing, one would hope, an irreversible process of decolonising the mind, it is becoming possible to acknowledge the existence of a distinctly English identity, legitimately reclaiming itself from the splintering critiques of postcolonialism. Engaging as it does with the phenomenon of globalisation, devolution and constitutional change, the new literature on Englishness points to the urgency with which re-signifying Englishness is being felt in cultural and critical theory today.

The itinerary leading up to this contemporary moment is nothing short of imbricated: out of copious ethnic-cultural variety -- the mongrel nationhood of Defoe's 'True Born Englishman' --grow the myths of the nation, the narratives of English centrality underlying white British/Englishness and the London-Oxbridge images of national culture. These give rise to the counter narratives of the Empire, that seek to displace a monolithic construct from the margins, bringing minority, plurality and hybridity into an already muddled English-British equation. And along came devolution and the separatist revival of the Celtic constituent nations, the *Ultima Thule* of fracture, providing the utmost corrective to Anglocentric bias. As an antidote to disintegration, the decentralisation engendered by the devolutionist phenomenon has waged the ultimate war against essentialism, amending the exclusionary precepts embedded in English hegemony. It has implicitly

elicited a radical rethinking of post-imperial British identity, re-polarising Saxonism and Celtic-ness in the alembicated matrix of British trans-national cultures. Yet, under global pressures and the dictates of New Europe, New Britain is especially lacking in a re-valorising, countervailing narrative of self-identity, one entailing intrinsic and extrinsic frameworks of analysis, or else comparative critical study. Between regionalism and internationalism, internal fissures and intertwined histories, English identity finds itself at a crossroads, calling for an unprecedented interrogation and the reforming of our conceptions and appropriations of it.

After the willed-amnesia syndrome following the decline of 'Greater Britain,' contemporary English sensibilities betray an identity in crisis, given to cultivated remembrance and the sifting through of invented and inherited tradition in pursuit of a sense of overarching, irreducible English *ethnie*. A preliminary step towards 'separating the wheat from the chaff' in rewriting Englishness is the recourse to de-definition and de-politicisation as modes of unpacking the 'English' in the Anglo-British dyad. Disentangling 'English ethnicity' is, therefore, as much a question of re-describing political insignias as of identifying the 'essence' of Englishness. Far from straightforward in the genealogy of Englishness-Britishness, the category of Englishness poses, in fact, the most problems as it remains the most elusive and under-researched of the identities of the 'Union.' At this juncture, the process of reconstructing Englishness articulates itself as a twofold operation: purging the debate of the ideological residues of an analytic apparatus gone stale on its way to ossification and reconfiguring the European political economy of British/Englishness. Ironically, the area that fostered most acerbic postcolonial critiques of English identity, 'English Studies,' seems to be the slowest to generate a response in kind. Not only does it fail to address the reverse processes of colonialism, the incorporation, adoption and inscription undergone by English culture itself, but also Britain's internal and external 'others' in the New Euro-global context and their stake in it: the newly emerging absolutisms and fundamentalisms in the equation.

An apt and more synchronic charting of the new and permeable maps of Englishness comes from the academic discipline of English literature itself, the terrain, indeed the very medium of articulating, and at times parading, cultural difference. Increasingly reflective of the so-called 'internationalisation' of English literature, the body of recent criticism coming out of academic presses speaks of and to the new trends, immigrant writings, emergent minorities, and landscapes within multicultural, multiracial England. This goes to show that the discipline has successfully itinerated from English literature to literatures in English, fusing the double-barrelled experience of identification and dis-identification.