

## PREFACE

*Titela VÎLCEANU*<sup>1</sup>, *Yves GAMBIER*<sup>2</sup>, *Ramunė KASPERĖ*<sup>3</sup>, *Nadina VIȘAN*<sup>4</sup>

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.52744-978-606-26-1702-8-01>

The present volume, *Translation Times: Texts, Contexts, and Environments*, sets out to explore how translation (re)conceptualisation evolves in response to changing cultural, historical and technological environments. The title suggests an examination of translation from multiple perspectives: the nature of the texts themselves, the contexts in which translations occur, and the various environments that shape and are shaped by translation.

“There is a danger (or an illusion) of conceptualising translation (and the translator) in monolithic or universal terms, by giving priority or even exclusive domination to our own concept” (Gambier, 2018: 19). Laver and Mason (2018: 90) also draw our attention to the diversity of the meanings of *translation* across time and space, pleading for “an all-encompassing term for processes of transfer, change of form or even of location”. Acknowledging the changing nature of translation practices and research, we have to note that *translation* has become “a web of interlocking concepts” (Baker, 2022: 3), and that this complexity reverberates on other related concepts such as *text* and *context/environment*. “In three decades, a new work environment has shaken up the translator’s world. New types of translators are emerging, with a new hierarchy between them, in parallel with a multiplication of labels created for *translation*” (Gambier and Kasperė, 2021).

Needless to say, translation operates with a variety of texts, including fiction, technical documents, legal texts, media content, and online materials that are authenticated while embedding the translator’s voice (Vișan, 2022). Different types of texts present unique challenges to be navigated, requiring specific linguistic skills, domain knowledge and cultural sensitivity. This also raises the question of *translatorship*, which, holistically, can be said to refer to the translator’s expertise, authority, ethics and accountability. In other words, the translator should activate macro-strategies that enable him/her to provide intelligent solutions for particular problems arising in specific situation (Risku, 2004), to integrate information in text

---

<sup>1</sup> University of Craiova, Romania, titela.vilceanu@edu.ucv.ro, ORCID number: 0000-0002-6216-812X

<sup>2</sup> University of Turku, Finland, Kaunas University of Technology (KTU), Lithuania, yves.gambier@utu.fi, ORCID number: 0000-0002-1858-4281

<sup>3</sup> Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania, ramune.kaspere@ktu.lt, ORCID number: 0000-0003-0782-3758

<sup>4</sup> University of Bucharest, Romania, nadina.visan@lls.unibuc.ro, ORCID number: 0000-0001-8291-7848

production rather than in text reproduction through “continuous re-evaluation and reassessment of the original text” (Risku, 2002: 525), to use strategic planning and decision-making skills and self-manage through a reflective approach (Vîlceanu, 2017).

Delving into contexts and environments, we highlight that various contexts influence the source and target texts alike. These contexts can include historical events, cultural norms, social conventions, as well as the intended readership or audience's expectations. Environments can also refer to ideological and geopolitical landscapes, supporting the vision of translation studies as a dynamic, multifaceted field that resists streamlined structures, rigid patterns and narrow perspectives.

On the other hand, *translation times* reflect how the field of translation has shifted over time, considering how past and current events, global interactions and digital encounters impact translation. The phrase might also refer to the time-bound nature of translation work, where the meaning and relevance of translation can change as languages and cultures evolve. Moreover, this unsettling field should find value in its inherent uncertainties, using them as a productive force for further exploration and understanding.

Admittedly, we should understand that translation has managed to evolve in sustainable ways, from a pastime activity to a recognised profession, supported by theoretical insights, meeting the needs of its users, establishing short- and long-term priorities, creating tools and resources that positively impact on the productivity, quality and vitality of the translator's work. It is also important to understand that assembling know-how (*savoir faire*) cannot be separated from *faire-savoir* (as a kind of mirror of *savoir-faire*), encompassing relevance, accessibility, expectations, needs of the receivers, etc. To put it crudely, from its origins to its current status, translation continues to grow in both scope and importance, in the context of an interconnected and rapidly changing global landscape.

Within this framework, the volume incorporates contributions that offer diverse perspectives and insights, showcasing a range of approaches to the interdisciplinary field of translation. These contributions collectively enrich the discussion by presenting multiple standpoints, methodologies and interpretations, reflecting the complexity and openness of the subject matter. Featuring the specific inputs, we mention Cristina Benicchi's concern with literary and cultural translation in *Translating Postcolonial Poetry: Navigating Cultural Diversity*, also shared by Eva Nicoleta Burdușel in *Cultural Transfer in Monastic Context. Erudition and Spirituality in the Translation of Religious Texts*. Onoriu Colăcel concentrates on transmedia issues in *Intersemiotic Translation of Conspiratorial Ideation: from Romanian Language Text to Meme*. Mihaela Cozma evaluates literary translation quality in *On the Relation Between Retranslation and Correctness: The Case of Proper Names in Children's Literature*. Sanae Ejjebli embarks upon *Navigating Collaborative Translation in the Era of Multimodal Communication*, believing that emerging forms of translation have the potential to become more engaging

and culturally resonant. In even more insightful ways, Yves Gambier, in *Multimodality, Translation and Audiovisual Translation*, discusses how multimodality and audiovisual translation intersect in fascinating ways, especially in the digital and media-rich environment of today. Concepción Martín Martín-Mora reflects on institutional translation and highlights the value of coordinated efforts in “*Making multilingualism work*”: *translation policies and practices in the European Union*. Daria Protopopescu goes beyond the linguistic approach in *The Impact of Adverbs on Free Indirect Discourse in Translation*, assessing adverbs as effective devices to capture tone, local flavour and emotional colour. Diana Ștefan-Dinescu and Mihaela Zamfirescu focus on lexical and grammatical gaps in *Romanian specialized affixes – issues in translation between Romanian and English*, building on the hypothesis that affix specialization in deverbal nominals features Romanian rather than English. The role of cutting-edge technology in specialised translation is exemplified and explained by Cristina Varga in *TermTestQA. Question-answering benchmark for measuring ChatGPT 3.5 consistency in terminology*. Last but not least, Nadina Vișan underscores the unique ways in which each language structures meaning and conveys subtleties in *Difficult Tenses? The Argument from Translation*, thus enriching cross-linguistic studies and translation practices.

We hope that this volume will launch an open invitation for researchers, practitioners, translator trainers and other stakeholders to engage in a constructive dialogue so as to align their interests and resources while pursuing innovative, ethical and sustainable solutions in translation.

The Editors

## References

- Baker, Mona. 2022. *Unsettling Translation*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Gambier, Yves. 2018. “Concepts of Translation”. In *A History of Modern Translation Knowledge.*, edited by Lieven D’hulst and Yves Gambier. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 19-38, doi 10.1075/btl.142.02gam.
- Gambier, Yves and Ramunè Kasperè. 2021. “Changing Translation Practices and Moving Boundaries in Translation Studies”. *Babel*, 67:1. 36-53, <https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.00204.gam>.
- Laver, John and Ian Mason. 2018. *A Dictionary of Translation and Interpreting*. <https://fit-europe-rc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Dictionary-of-translation-and-interpreting-Mason-Laver.pdf>
- Risku, Hanna. 2002. “Situativeness in Translation Studies”. *Cognitive Systems Research*, 3:3. 523–533, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1389-0417\(02\)00055-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1389-0417(02)00055-4).
- Risku, Hanna. 2004. *Translationsmanagement. Interkulturelle Fachkommunikation im Kommunikationszeitalter*. Tübingen: Narr.
- Vișan, Nadina. 2022. “Three Versions of *The Hobbit*: Strategies of Authentication and Their Translation into Romanian”. *Linguaculture*, 13:1. 147-162, DOI: 10.47743/lincu-2022-1-0237.
- Vilceanu, Titela. 2017. *Dynamic Interfaces of Translation, Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication*. Craiova: Universitaria.

# TRANSLATING POSTCOLONIAL POETRY: NAVIGATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

*Cristina BENICCHI*<sup>1</sup>

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.52744-978-606-26-1702-8-02>

## **Abstract:**

*The translation of poetry represents a multifaceted endeavor extending beyond mere linguistic conversion, a complexity particularly accentuated within the realm of postcolonial literature. Within this domain, themes of cultural identity, displacement, and resistance to colonial and imperial domination frequently manifest. This article delves into the intricacies inherent in translating postcolonial poetry, delineating the myriad challenges and nuanced considerations therein. These encompass the imperative to navigate variegated cultural and linguistic terrains, underscored by a profound comprehension of the historical and cultural milieu encapsulating the source text. Moreover, we scrutinize the formidable task of replicating the aesthetic nuances intrinsic to the original poem. Central to this discourse is the recognition of collaborative efforts between translator and poet or author as pivotal, wherein mutual engagement fosters an enriched understanding of the text's intricacies. Furthermore, we illuminate the instrumental role of postcolonial poetry as a conduit for fostering intercultural dialogue and appreciation. In sum, the translation of postcolonial poetry emerges as an exigent yet indispensable endeavor, demanding a synthesis of linguistic acumen, cultural sensitivity, and creative dexterity.*

**Keywords:** *poetry translation, postcolonial literature, cultural identity, displacement, resistance, colonialism, imperialism, cultural context, linguistic differences.*

## **1. Introduction**

In contemporary times, the translation of poetry stands as a formidable challenge owing to its nuanced complexities, extending beyond mere linguistic conversion. Poetry transcends mere semantics, encompassing elements of sound, rhythm, and imagery, thus necessitating a holistic approach to translation. This complexity is particularly pronounced within the realm of postcolonial literature, where the translator grapples not only with conveying literal meanings but also with capturing the essence of poetic form and the variegated cultural backdrop.

In the intricate tapestry of postcolonial literature (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 1989, 1995), where cultural and linguistic identities converge in a vibrant mosaic, translators

---

<sup>1</sup> Università degli Studi Internazionali UNINT - Roma, Italy, [cristina.benicchi@unint.eu](mailto:cristina.benicchi@unint.eu), ORCID number: 0009-0002-8708-2119

assume a pivotal role in navigating the many-sided terrain of intercultural transfer. As Bassnett and Trivedi (1999) assert, translation goes beyond linguistic conversion; it embodies a transformative process fraught with inherent power dynamics and cultural nuances. Postcolonial literature, with its fusion of cultural and linguistic identities, presents translators with the task of delicately traversing cultural and linguistic chasms to convey the profound nuances and intricacies of the original text.

*Now what, we may ask, does this narrative have to do with translation? A great deal, in fact, but before considering the question more fully, it is important to establish certain premises. First, and very obviously: translation does not happen in a vacuum, but in a continuum; it is not an isolated act, it is part of an ongoing process of intercultural transfer. Moreover, translation is highly manipulative activity that involves all kinds of stages in that process of transfer across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Translation is not an innocent, transparent activity but is highly charged with significance at every stage; it rarely, if ever, involves a relationship of equality between texts, authors or systems.* (Bassnett and Trivedi 1999, 1-2)

Postcolonial literature introduces an additional layer of complexity by grappling with themes of cultural identity, displacement, and resistance against colonial hegemony. These thematic undercurrents are deeply entrenched within the historical and cultural milieu, demanding a profound understanding of the contextual backdrop from translators to faithfully convey the author's intended message. Spivak's seminal essay, *The Politics of Translation* (1992), underscores the imperative for translators to eschew the imposition of personal biases, advocating instead for a nuanced approach cognizant of the power dynamics inherent in the act of translation. Furthermore, the translation of poetry poses unique challenges, necessitating the adept handling of metaphors, symbols, and other poetic devices that may lack direct equivalents in the target language. Thus, translators are tasked with the arduous endeavor of encapsulating the poetic essence of the original text within the confines of the target language, necessitating a profound grasp of its rhythmic cadence and aesthetic nuances.

In summation, the translation of postcolonial poetry in contemporary times epitomizes a multifaceted undertaking, demanding not only linguistic proficiency but also cultural and social acumen. It is a delicate balancing act wherein translators navigate the intricate interplay of cultural and linguistic disparities, all while striving to preserve the poetic integrity of the original work. Despite the myriad challenges, the translation of postcolonial poetry serves as a catalyst for fostering cross-cultural dialogue and appreciation, embodying the transformative potential of literature in bridging divides and fostering mutual understanding.

## **2. The challenges of translating poetry**

Translating poetry in postcolonial literature is a complex and multi-layered task that requires a deep understanding of the cultural and linguistic context of the original

text, as well as the target language and its cultural nuances (Bassnett and Trivedi 1999). Poetry is a form of artistic expression that goes beyond the literal meaning of words, as it relies heavily on sound, rhythm, and imagery. The translator must capture not only the meaning of the words but also the poetic form, which can be challenging in the context of postcolonial literature.

Postcolonial literature often reflects the cultural and linguistic hybridity of the postcolonial experience, where the use of multiple languages and cultural references are common. The translator must navigate these complexities, negotiating the cultural and linguistic differences between the source and target languages, and find a way to convey the nuances and intricacies of the original text (Niranjana 1992). This requires not only a deep knowledge of the languages involved but also an understanding of the cultural and historical context of the text, as well as the intended audience. In addition, translating poetry in postcolonial literature raises questions about power dynamics and the role of the translator as a mediator between cultures. As Spivak argues, translation is always a form of cultural and linguistic appropriation (Spivak 1992). The translator must be aware of the power dynamics involved in the act of translation and resist the temptation to impose their own cultural and linguistic biases on the original text.

In the realm of translation, Venuti (1995) emphasizes the translator's intricate role as a mediator between languages and cultures, echoing Bhabha's notion of translation as a space of negotiation akin to the "in-between space" (Bhabha, 1994). Venuti posits that translators must exhibit sensitivity not only to linguistic disparities but also to the broader cultural and historical contexts of the source and target texts. This involves a delicate balancing act, wherein the translator endeavors to convey the complexity and richness of the original text without succumbing to the temptation of simplification or distortion. Venuti underscores the imperative of preserving the foreignness of the original text, resisting the urge to domesticate it to conform to the norms and conventions of the target culture. In this vein, Bhabha's concept of the "in-between space" can be used as the lens through which to elucidate the liminal territory traversed by translators, wherein linguistic and cultural boundaries blur, giving rise to a dynamic interplay of meanings and interpretations.

*What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These "in between" spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. [...] It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. (Bhabha 1994, 1-2, 12)*