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### The Veiled Guest: Translation, Hospitality and the Limits of Hybridisation

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As I write this in the summer of 2018, a debate is raging in the British media about the use of Islamic face veils in the public space. The Danes, following the French and Belgians, have just passed a law forbidding the use of certain face coverings in public, on the grounds that they are “incompatible with Danish culture”, and the news has sent ripples through British society. Although much of the wrangle has been couched in terms of human rights and the extent to which these are challenged or fulfilled by the wearing of the aforesaid garment, the conversation ultimately revolves, in my view, around two fundamental issues that have interesting parallels in the debates about language that we have touched upon in this volume. The first has to do with the *limits of assimilation*—that is to say, the extent to which a culture can tolerate and absorb practices (sartorial or linguistic) that are foreign to it and still remain identifiably itself. The second concerns *transparency*: the deep-rooted, though largely unproblematised, belief that our understanding of things should not be obscured by veils of any kind and that we have the right—and indeed the capacity—to gaze directly at the naked truth.

In the first case, what conservatives object to is the fact that our language, like our streets and our culture, is apparently being overrun with foreign elements which, they feel, are threatening its very integrity. Some years ago, this was limited to an accent or a dialect overheard on a bus (the glimpse of a sari, in sartorial terms, worn by elderly women who, by and large, kept to the home). Now, however, those foreign voices have invaded the public domain. Not only are non-standard pronunciations now commonplace amongst newsreaders, politicians and public commentators, a whole raft of unfamiliar words and strange syntactical patterns routinely appear in print, jostling aside native elements with a presumptuous sense of entitlement. What is worse, in some contexts, the intruders are no longer systematically marked out as alien through italicisation or inverted commas but seem to be running amok through the language, disrespecting the grammar and spelling rules that make the English language what it is. For traditionalists, this is the linguistic equivalent of the burkha or the niqqab, not just glimpsed on the bus in

poor inner-city neighbourhoods, but now in the workplace, in schools, on television, perhaps soon on the benches of our governing bodies.

As well as the loss of identity that hybridity entails, the linguistic nationalist also fears the loss of transparency, not being able to understand everything that is there. Like all monolinguals, he dreads being met with a wall of sound or a page of runes that make no sense, an opacity that he can't hear or see through. It leaves him bewildered, disoriented, anxious. He worries about what is being communicated in this mysterious tongue, what secrets are being hidden from him (might there be a terrorist underneath that burkha?). Sometimes he even wonders if the gobbledegook is meaningful at all or if these are instead mystical incantations or secret symbols designed to invoke phantoms of the kind that were supposedly banished from the Western mind by the Enlightenment.

Of course, the monolingual's apprehensions have been systematically nourished by the narrative he was brought up on—namely, the notion that there is some mythical correspondence between territory, race and tongue, which gives credibility to his identity claims (Meylaerts, 2006; Makoni and Pennycook, 2007; Canagarajah, 2013) and renders the foreign-language speaker irremediably Other. But this narrative is also enmeshed in a much more complex fabric, one that was woven during the Enlightenment to sustain the political and economic systems that were taking shape in the rubble of the ancien régime. Designed to combat the obscurantism that sustained the pillars of that former system and the forms of in-group solidarity that we now call corruption, this narrative imposed an abstract universalism that assumed the translatability of cultures and reified notions such as tolerance, transparency, secularism, human rights, democracy and equality. Perversely, these values are now being used to exclude supposedly unenlightened others, causing gaping holes to develop in the ideological fabric. Some are the kind of holes that appear when a yarn is stretched too tight and breaks of its own accord (the value of tolerance, for example, which is being sorely tested by religious fundamentalisms and other forms of extremism). Others, like the transparency trope, are inherent weaknesses that were never easy to sustain, as I have argued elsewhere (Bennett, 2015, 2018, forthcoming).

Over a quarter of a century ago, an influential article in *The Atlantic* magazine (Barber, 1992) described the then situation in terms of a cosmic struggle between the 'centrifugal whirlwind' of 'Jihad' (shorthand for the tribalism resulting from the identity demands of increasingly narrow community groupings) and the 'centripetal black hole' of 'McWorld' (i.e. the forces of globalisation)—either of which could, the author argued, go on to determine the political future in the medium term. This chapter then became the starting point for an assessment of the state of the English language by Mary Snell-Hornby (1999), who saw the 'free-floating lingua franca' of International English as the 'McLanguage' of the globalised McWorld and the various individual varieties that exist around the world

as the linguistic equivalent of Jihad. Interestingly, Snell-Hornby created a quite separate third category for the new ‘in between’ language forged by the literary hybrid forms of postcolonial literature (Idem: 109), perhaps assuming, like Bakhtin (1981: 358–359), that the ‘intentional’ hybridity of artistic works is entirely unrelated to the ‘organic’ hybridisation inherent in language change.

Two decades later, these three aspects do not seem quite so distinct. International English, which Snell-Hornby (1999: 109) described as having “largely lost track of its cultural identity” and become a “reduced standardised form of language for supranational communication”, no longer makes any claims to uniformity or cultural neutrality, but has itself developed a plethora of sub-varieties marked by culturally loaded features calqued from other languages,<sup>1</sup> sometimes even admitting the extensive presence of untranslated fragments from non-English repertoires. As for the distinction between literary hybrids and non-literary ‘varieties’, one of the things that the present book has shown is that these cannot be so clearly distinguished. In most cases, the hybrid Englishes produced by literary authors in their writings are not ex-nihilo artistic inventions, as Snell-Hornby and Bakhtin supposed, but rather reflexes of speech forms that are actually used in particular parts of the world, which the authors in question may have grown up speaking. What is more, these artistic manifestations of hybridity then feed back into the cultural-linguistic matrices from which they sprang by disseminating and legitimising the varieties in question.<sup>2</sup> This reciprocity is especially clear in the case of popular culture—the Hip-Hop videos discussed by Taviano, for example, or the animated film of Attig’s chapter—both widely distributed through online channels), but it is also true of literary works that have become the target of prestigious nominations or awards (Pandey, 2016).

Hence, there is a need for a new taxonomy of forms of hybridity that takes account of the way these varieties are used in the real world and their potential to galvanise language change.

## Types of Hybridity

On the basis of the various kinds of hybridity described in this book, what follows is a tentative attempt at reclassification in accordance with the mechanisms that gave rise to them, irrespective of whether they are real-life or textual phenomena. The list does not claim to be exhaustive: rather, it is a provisional attempt to make sense of this panorama and may be reorganised or expanded as further varieties come to light.

The classic form of hybridity, to which both Snell-Hornby and Bakhtin refer, might be called the *postcolonial* variety, as it was created in the aftermath of empire by a generation that grew up with English in the former British colonies. For the linguist Edgar Schneider, the ‘truly mixed’ varieties

produced by second-generation authors<sup>3</sup> like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (discussed by Murphy in Chapter 7) represent an advanced stage in the evolution of language contact through creolisation processes (Schneider, 2007: 60–64; also Mufwene, 2001) and symbolise new hybrid identities “torn between or deliberately combining traditional indigenous values on the one hand and westernizing orientations and attractions on the other” (Schneider, 2016: 350). The Cree-inflected English of Tomson Highway (discussed by Miroux in Chapter 8) might be considered another example, although this author does not consider himself a native speaker of English. However, as Ortega (2014) and other authors have repeatedly argued, the division between native and non-native speaker is an artificial one, of little significance for multilinguals, who select from their repertoires according to need. As Highway is an unequivocal member of Canada’s indigenous speech community (Schneider, 2007: 238–259), his relationship with English is not so different from Adichie’s in substance.

A second kind of hybridity is the *diasporic* variety, resulting from the waves of migrations that brought speakers of languages like Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic to Anglophone countries like the United States and Canada, often for economic reasons.<sup>4</sup> Second-generation immigrants, such as those discussed by Oliveira Martins *et al.*, Vidal and Taviano, will typically have grown up with two languages—usually English in the public domain and a heritage language at home—blended in accordance with their communicative and emotional needs. It is this dual or mestizo identity that is both represented and performed in their writings, forging, as with the postcolonial variety, an indissoluble whole.

The hybridisation that results from the individual’s personal voyage of self-discovery is a third variety, that of the *traveller or language learner* as discussed by Doloughan (Chapter 1) in the case of Xiaolu Guo. As with the diasporic kind, this is largely demand-pull motivated, in the sense that it is directly stimulated by the economic and political power of English in the contemporary world. However, unlike the previous cases, in which the two or more languages present in the hybrid have already fused into a new variety, in this case, English is accrued as a separate layer on top of an already existing linguistic identity. The fact that it is an individual rather than a collective phenomenon also marks it out as different from the previous kinds. As Doloughan points out, this may be considered as a form of ‘self-translation’, in the sense of a refashioning of the self through space and time, suggesting connections not only with travel writing and memoir but also with the German concept of *Bildung*, discussed below.

The fourth kind of hybridity broached in this book is *translational* hybridity—that created by the translator in his/her attempts to render a foreign tongue in English. In Peter Bush’s translation of *L’Últim Patriarca* by

Najat El Hachmi (discussed by Carrasco in Chapter 9), hybridisations are created largely as a compensatory measure to offset the various instances when the hybridity of the source text could not easily be reproduced in English. However, it should be stressed that a hybrid source text is not, in itself, a condition for translational hybridity. As a number of authors have already pointed out (e.g. Schäffner and Adab, 1997, 2001; Adab, 2005; Simon, 2011), the very process of trying to accommodate concepts that do not exist a priori in the target language will inevitably produce some manner of hybridisation, which may then become assimilated into that language if imitated by authors writing directly in it.<sup>5</sup> The relationship of translational hybridity to language change is clearly illustrated in Queiroz de Barros's study (Chapter 11) of the terms that entered English from Spanish via the historical translations of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*.

A fifth kind might be called *ad hoc* hybridity, the kind of code-meshing that occurs spontaneously in multicultural situations when speakers of different languages come together for whatever reason and attempt to communicate with the resources that they have available. For the proponents of multi- or translingualism discussed in the introduction (Pennycook, 2007; Blommaert, 2010; Canagarajah, 2013), this kind of hybridity is the determining feature of the new paradigm that has taken hold of the globalised world in the last decade or so, characterised as transient, context-dependent and multi-semiotic. However, Ray's study of Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* (Chapter 5) shows that the use of truncated repertoires from various languages in specific communicative situations is, after all, not such a new phenomenon. Similar interactions clearly occurred in the multilingual space of the Indian Ocean in centuries past and will have contributed significantly to language change, as indeed Samuel Johnson suggested in his famous dictionary:

They that have frequent intercourse with strangers, to whom they endeavour to accommodate themselves, must in time learn a mingled dialect, like the jargon which serves the traffickers on the Mediterranean and Indian coasts. This will not always be confined to the exchange, the warehouse, or the port, but will be communicated by degrees to other ranks of the people, and be at last incorporated with the current speech.

(Johnson, 1755: 3)

What is new, however, is the construction of the *reader* as multilingual, evident, Ray argues, in the gradual removal of the translations, glosses, in-text explanations and typographical highlights that sustain the foreign elements. Radical even for postcolonial texts, this leakage of the fictional world into the real one again illustrates the close bond existing between intentional and organic forms of hybridity.

Finally, we should consider a kind of hybridity that is not represented directly in this volume, but which is becoming increasingly important in today's world—namely, the *institutional* variety, the kind that develops in supranational bodies, such as the UN, OECD and particularly EU, where English is used for essentially pragmatic purposes. When the International/Global English model (e.g. Crystal, 1997; Graddol, 1999, 2007) was at its peak, the English used in EU institutions was often criticised as 'impoverished' or 'sub-standard' (Wagner, 2005; also Gardner, 2016) for its tolerance of nonnative-speaker usages and other forms of interference. Increasingly, however, Euro-English is being accepted as a variety (or cluster of varieties) in its own right, with a concomitant relinquishing of the inverted commas that used to be systematically placed around it.<sup>6</sup>

A catalyst in the process has of course been the infamous Brexit referendum of 2016, which may prove to have major significance for the future development of the English language. The event initially prompted speculation that English, no longer the official tongue of any EU state, would cease to be an official language of the body.<sup>7</sup> However, this was followed almost immediately by counter-arguments emphasising the vast investments that had been made in the language and its indispensability for global commerce. The case for its perpetuation has been made most forcibly by Modiano (2017), who argues that the withdrawal of the British will actually provide the necessary conditions for "the emergence of a continental European L2 variety of English" (2017: 325), which, freed of native-speaker policing, will be able to develop its full potential as a multi-faceted international hybrid. Despite the "monolingual bias" (Ortega, 2014) implicit in the reference to native-vs second-language speakers, this argument has won broad support from linguists, as can be seen from a forum organised on the subject by the journal *World Englishes* (Bolton and Davis 2017b).

## The New Paradigm and Its Implications for Translation

Despite the recentness of the Euro-English debate, the question of whether or not a particular hybrid is sufficiently standardised and coherent to be called a variety has already started to seem irrelevant in the increasingly complex and individualistic context of super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007). For Edgar Schneider (2016: 340), English can no longer be considered a language or even a set of varieties, but "a globally available resource for speakers, including speakers with limited access to formal education, employing it for their own communicative purposes in creative ways". Like other proponents of the trans/multilingual paradigm (e.g. Makoni and Pennycook, 2007; García and Wei, 2014), Schneider considers that the way English is being used in the present age is better reflected by the notion of 'translanguaging'—i.e. the act of building on a single repertoire drawn

from various languages. As García and Wei (2014: 3) point out, this model has multiple advantages over traditional conceptualisations in that it is able to “go between and beyond socially constructed language (. . .) systems, structures and practices” to engage diverse meaning-making systems and subjectivities.

The reconceptualisation also offers a new perspective on the two theoretical issues broached at the beginning of this chapter—namely, the questions of linguistic identity and semantic transparency. As regards the first, the abandoning of the concept of “the English language” by scholars working at the cutting-edge of linguistic research suggests that the fear of an identity collapse provoked by the mass assimilation of foreign elements is very real. What is more, it seems unlikely that the process can now be stalled, despite recent electoral events in the UK and United States. Britain’s attempt to “take back control” of its borders might succeed in impeding the influx of Europeans (whose lack of linguistic subalternity is particularly unsettling for a country used to imposing its language on others), but it will do little to halt the diasporic hybridity proliferating on its own territory amongst established immigrant communities, nor indeed the demands of home-grown dialect groups, like the Scots. Even if strict language policies were reinstated to enforce the national standard, the result is likely to be linguistic parochialism, with little or no effect on the English spoken in the rest of the world.

As for the matter of semantic transparency, this will be another casualty of the new paradigm given the sheer diversity of codes playing their part in any linguistic transaction. Rather than the super-endowed multilingual individuals envisaged by Ray (Chapter 5) for whom no dimension of meaning is obscured, the average participants in translanguaged conversations (and the readers of the literary works that re-enact them) are more likely to have only a partial understanding of the various repertoires being activated at any one time. While this might be frustrating to the old guard, nostalgic for the clarity afforded by standardisation, those operating on the forefront of these multicultural interactions appear decidedly unfazed. Almost every chapter in this book records examples of ‘English’ conversations that are rendered partially opaque by the presence of foreign elements. Clearly, the participants depicted in those fictional encounters are using contextual and nonverbal clues to help with their interpretations, while the reader is being asked to appreciate the texture of the foreign without demanding access to the full range of meanings encoded in the words. This would seem to signal a lowering of Enlightenment expectations regarding the possibilities for full intelligibility, an increased tolerance of what Dufourmantelle (2000: 28) calls the “nocturnal side of speech”, that which always “pulls itself back from unveiling in the very movement of speech or writing”.

What are the implications for the translation of these developments? As we have seen from the various chapters in this volume, hybridity poses

a range of problems that are not only technical but also philosophical and ideological in nature.

First and foremost, it undermines the basic understanding of what translation actually is in the Western tradition—namely, the transfer of information from one language to another for the benefit of a recipient that is unable to access the original. Hybrid texts challenge not only the notion that languages are homogeneous and bounded entities, separated from each other by a gulf that only the translator is able to cross, but also the assumption that their primary function is to transmit information. The case studies described in this volume offer ample testimony that language is also used to express deep emotion (Oliveira Martins *et al.*), to forge bonds with other human beings or exclude them (Ray, Doloughan, Attig, Murphy, Vidal), to contest dominant power structures (Taviano, Carrasco, Vidal, Miroux) and create beautiful artefacts that will give pleasure to others (all the above).<sup>8</sup> In fact, for the producers and users of many of these hybrid discourses (particularly the postcolonial and diasporic varieties), the *performative* aspect of language often takes priority over the representational, enabling the enactment of identities in a way that is profoundly emotive, embodied and context-embedded.

This resurgence of performativity also calls into question the pre-eminence traditionally accorded to the verbal over other semiotic systems in Western culture. In many of these chapters (Taviano's particularly, but also the others to varying degrees), it becomes clear that expressive, phatic, ideological or aesthetic meanings are often conveyed through predominantly *nonverbal* means: musically (by emphasising the rhythms, sounds and intonation patterns of language over and above the referential sense), kinaesthetically (through body language, facial expression) or visually (through scenarios and other contextual features in the case of oral interactions and graphic devices in the case of written texts). These performative elements cannot be translated, in the conventional sense of the word: they can only be "creatively transposed" (Jakobson, 2000: 118) or "transcreated" (Portela, 2003).

Thus, the fragmentation of cultural identity and the performative turn associated with it have resulted in the return of *untranslatability*, a concept effectively banished with the universalist project of the Enlightenment.<sup>9</sup> Although literary translators have always known that their task is utopian (cf. Ortega y Gasset, 2000), the notion of equivalence has prevailed in linguistic approaches to translation, playing a particularly important role on translator training courses.<sup>10</sup> It is also implicit in the project of world literature, with its unproblematised understanding that almost anything can be expressed in English, with only minimal losses.<sup>11</sup> Now, however, things are poised to change. The recognition that the untranslatable occupies far greater ground than was formerly thought has led to a groundswell of works exploring the implications for translation studies and culture in general. Pioneers in this domain include Barbara Cassin



(2014, 2016), whose *Dictionary of Untranslatables* (2014) emphasises the way that philosophical concepts have changed and shifted over time in different environments, and Emily Apter (2013), whose crusade against World Literature has tried to reinstate respect for those cultural differences that are not expressible in English. There is an ideological dimension too. Recognition of untranslatability undermines the general discourse of universality that sustained the Enlightenment project, allowing the other a space of refuge that is hers alone, a quiet space away from the translator's implacable gaze, the right to be veiled, if you will.

Not everyone supports these developments, of course. There is worry that linguistic relativism, with its creed that "misunderstanding is a right, that translation is theoretically impossible and that bilinguals are schizophrenics" (Ricoeur, 2006: 15) is not only unrealistic but also potentially dangerous. Hence, there have been attempts to get beyond the impasse created by the Jihad/McWorld binary through a compromise dynamic that urges respect for alterity within a broad framework of ethical universalism. Interestingly, translation is now being embraced by supporters of this 'new cosmopolitanism' (e.g. Bielsa, 2016; Delanty, 2009; Derrida, 2001) as potentially paradigmatic of all encounters with the foreign.

### Translation as Hospitality

It is often pointed out that the word 'translation' in most European languages contains within it the notion of *carrying or leading across*, evident in the Latin roots *trans-latus/trans-ducere* and the Germanic roots of *Übersetzen*. Though this may be interpreted as suggesting some kind of trading relationship (Davidson, 2012: 3–4), it has more commonly been understood as an act of domination or assimilation of the foreign other, expressed most vividly in Jerome's famous metaphor of the translator as conqueror, who "by right of victory carried the sense captive into his own language" (Jerome, 2004: 25). Not surprisingly, this understanding of translation first developed in contexts of political and/or cultural imperialism, when small localised communities were beginning to be absorbed into larger units, triggering the need for a universal language in which everything could be expressed (Assman, 1996). The position was occupied first by Koine Greek in the context of the Hellenistic Empire, followed (almost seamlessly) by Latin, French and then English, each of which acted not only as a *lingua franca* in its area of influence but also as a pivot (*tertium comparationis*) for translational activity between more peripheral cultures. In all cases, the reality of power was supported by broader discourses on universalism, which sanctioned and naturalised the imposition of hegemonic values and practices.

However, universalistic discourses also legitimise and institute exclusions, indeed, may be "built on exclusion" (Balibar, 2007: 1), and as such, they have a tendency to generate their opposite, the discourse of Jihad,

or belligerent untranslatability. This symbiosis was visible in Hellenistic Alexandria with the Jews' resistance to the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (Assmann, 1996), amongst 19th-century Germans straining to free themselves from the dominance of French and in radical Islam today. For this reason, there are now calls for translation itself to be reconceptualised in order to break the deadlock between these binaries and better reflect the dynamics operating in a new context of *post-globalisation* (Fabbrini, 2010; Mitchell, 2016; Pandey, 2016).

A strong candidate for such a reconceptualisation, discussed by Bielsa (2016), Davidson (2012), Díez Fischer (2014) and Inghilleri (2017), amongst others, is the idea of *linguistic hospitality*, which suggests civility and respect for difference, rather than violence and domination. Developed particularly fully by Paul Ricoeur (2006), it mobilises an alternative strand in the Western tradition according to which translation is conceived not as 'transfer' but as 'interpretation' (Greek *hermêneuein*), that is, as a way of trying to understand the other on his own terms.<sup>12</sup> With this shift, translation now becomes an act of generosity, a way of offering refuge to exiles and 'errant nomads' who, foreign to universality, "would have given up the search for the asylum afforded by a language of reception" (Ricoeur, 2006: 9–10). For the translator, it is both an ethical posture and a source of happiness as "the pleasure of dwelling in the other's language is balanced by the pleasure of receiving the foreign word at home, in one's own welcoming house" (Idem: 10).

Crucial to Ricoeur's argument is the notion that the host language, as well as the foreign one, benefits from this exchange. Drawing upon Antoine Berman (1992), he suggests that the *experience of the foreign* implicit in the translation process effectively tries or tests<sup>13</sup> the home language and culture, thereby enabling it to unfold and attain its "full dimension" in a process of *Bildung* or self-transcendence. Thus, by "de-provincializing the mother tongue, which is invited to think of itself as one language amongst others, ultimately to see itself as foreign" (Ricoeur, 2006: 9), this approach claims to offer "a passage from the particular to the universal" (Berman, 1992: 44) thereby helping break the deadlock of Jihad/McWorld.

If, however, we recall the broader context in which this discourse arose, Ricoeur's optimism starts to seem a little naïve. Berman's title *The Experience of the Foreign* is a direct translation of a phrase by Heidegger writing on Hölderlin (*Die Erfahrung des Fremden*) and echoes ideas rehearsed by many German Romantics, from Herder to Goethe and Schiller. In Schleiermacher's famous text 'On the different methods of translating' (1815), we get a glimpse of the ultimate purpose of the cultural *Bildung* process as envisaged by the German Romantics. Driven by "an inner necessity, in which a peculiar calling of our people asserts itself", they translate en masse in order that, one day, it will be possible to "unite all the jewels of foreign science and art together with our own in our own language,

forming, as it were, a great historical whole that will be preserved at the center and heart of Europe” (Schleiermacher, 2012: 62). Seen in this light, the impulse seems less about allowing the foreigner a voice than about equipping the German language with the resources necessary to enable it to achieve cultural supremacy as the next great lingua franca of the Western world.

Derrida’s explorations of hospitality (2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2001) also cast a dark shadow over Ricoeur’s optimistic vision. Translation is, Derrida (2000c: 6) says, an “experience of hospitality, if not the condition of all hospitality in general”, due, in part, to the etymological identification of the notion of ‘acceptation’ (in French, the “meaning given to a word”) with “acception, the action of receiving, the welcome given, the way one receives” (Idem: 7). However, the hospitality concept contains within it an inherent contradiction that threatens to scupper any idealistic application of it. The fundamental right to hospitality in the Greek cosmopolitan tradition depends, Derrida argues (2000a: 49, 2000b), on a clear definition of thresholds between the self and the other. The foreigner (*xenos*) must remain recognisably other in order to be deserving of hospitality—not so other as the *barbaros*, admittedly, who is “the absolute other (. . .) the savage absolutely excluded and heterogeneous” (Derrida, 2000a: 21)—but sufficiently other to not threaten the host’s sovereignty over his home. If he comes too close, a curious chain of meaning inherent in the word *hostis* is activated, which darkens the climate of generosity into one of suspicion and antagonism.

Anyone who encroaches on my ‘at home’, on my ipseity, on my power of hospitality, on my sovereignty as host, I start to regard as an undesirable foreigner, and virtually as an enemy. This other becomes a hostile subject, and I risk becoming their hostage.

(Derrida, 2000a: 53–54)

In linguistic terms, this means that the “monolingual bias” (Ortega, 2014)—that is, the rigid separation of native and non-native speaker—needs to remain intact for hospitality to occur. A defining feature of the *xenos*, Derrida says, is that he does not speak our language; it is precisely his place as a linguistic outsider that entitles him to receive our hospitality. But things seem different if the foreigner who arrives on our doorstep already speaks our language. “Is he still a foreigner?”, Derrida asks. Can we still “speak of asylum or hospitality in regard to him?” (Idem: 15–17).

This reflection sheds a great deal of light upon the matter of linguistic hybridity that we have been discussing throughout this volume and helps explain the hostility that has developed in many “inner circle” (Kachru, 1985) countries in recent years. While the foreign other remained properly foreign, British and Americans were happy to extend him hospitality by teaching him their language and translating his literature. The gap in

status generated a certain graciousness: it gave the hosts the authority to correct his mistakes and determine the form in which his literature circulated in the world, permitting them to be indulgent and paternalistic. Now, however, the threshold is much harder to distinguish. Since the World Englishes model (Kachru, 1985) set up rival standards and created the category of the second-language speaker for whom English is neither a mother tongue nor a foreign language, the inner circle has seen its authority diminished. The English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) model (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2011) eroded it even more, by removing the native speaker's right to arbitrate over International English. Now any last vestige of authority has dissolved with the discrediting of the concept of the native speaker under the multilingual paradigm. For those inner-circle members that never bothered to learn another language, secure in the knowledge that they were the arbiters of all international communication, it must be tremendously disconcerting to be told that monolingualism is, after all, a myth and they no longer have the right to call the shots.

For beleaguered British and Americans of the older generation—those that still remember a time when the old standards still applied—it must feel as if the guest has taken advantage of the hospitality that was so graciously extended and is taking over the family home. Huddled in tiny rooms, these original owners of the language are now desperately defending their shrinking territory by piling sandbags against the door and reinforcing the walls. The voices that they hear filtering through from the rest of the house are speaking some kind of English, but it is barely comprehensible.

Veiled women moving about the dwelling whose faces are never seen. As Derrida and the press would say, this is now a hostage situation.

## **The End of English?**

Let us close this reflection on linguistic hybridity and translation with a consideration of what it all entails for the future of the English language. We have seen how contact with other tongues across a range of situations has already produced varieties so diverse that they are barely intelligible to each other. Does this spell the end of English as we know it? Stretched to the limit, is it now in the process of mutating into something new, just as Vulgar Latin did before it?

The Latin analogy is not unprecedented of course. With different inflections, it has been drawn by many authors, such as Maley (1985: 31), McArthur (1998) and Wright (2004). It has also been robustly denied by others (e.g. Rajagopalan, 2009), who point out that the centripetal forces of media technology and globalised trade will offset any tendency to fragmentation and ensure that English prevails for many generations to come. I would like to enter the fray by suggesting, on the basis of the evidence presented in this book, that both of these positions may be true,

in the sense that, while English may indeed persist for a while longer, it will be in a very different form to what we have known till now. The major difference will be that inner-circle varieties seem set to recede from the international arena. Protectionist dynamics already set in motion in Britain and the United States suggest that their varieties will soon cease to serve as standards for global communication, causing them to become increasingly parochial until they eventually start to sound like quaint old-fashioned dialects that the rest of the world has left behind.

As for the postcolonial and diasporic hybrids, motivated by the centrifugal forces of Jihad, these will draw steadily apart until they become mutually unintelligible, eventually producing a new generation of creoles that are used for everyday and literary purposes. However, given the competing centripetal pressures of technology and globalised culture, the educated speakers of these hybrids are unlikely to relinquish their grasp on more formal varieties completely, but instead will move between them in accordance with their communicative needs. They may also pick up bits of other languages along the way given that, in large metropolises and other multilingual contexts, the *ad hoc* form of hybridity (translanguaging) may become the norm in the informal sphere, perhaps supplemented by nonverbal forms of communication to compensate for the loss of verbal transparency.

As for more formal contexts such as those found in supranational institutions, the Englishes spoken here will sooner or later come under pressure from the centripetal forces of 'McWorld' to impose a more vigorous codification than is presently the case. When this occurs, it may produce a coherent lingua franca which, like Medieval Latin, is no one's mother tongue. To some extent, this process is already at work in the domain of academic/scientific English, which is heavily codified and policed, though increasingly not by native speakers (Mauranen, 2012).

As for translation, this will not disappear with this new scenario; on the contrary, it is poised, as Ricoeur (2006) predicted, to become the paradigm of our times. Having relinquished the concept of equivalence that has so limited its reach until now, the new model will start from the assumption that translation changes everything, thereby introducing a temporal dimension into what has hitherto been a predominantly synchronic exercise.

In the medieval period, translation was a far-reaching concept, with a vertical as well as a horizontal component.<sup>14</sup> Now it is again being used in senses that take it far beyond the merely textual. In philosophy, it is "understanding, interpretation and hermeneutics"; in linguistics, it is "meaning, conceptualization, construal and metaphor"; in anthropology "an encounter with others and oneself" (Blumczynski, 2016: ix). In biology, genes are translated into cells and bodies, while in medicine, scientific findings are translated into enhanced health and well-being (Robinson, 2017).

Translation offers the key to how things change, metamorphose, become other. For the dynamic is not random. The new is always modelled on the old, reformed in accordance with changing circumstances. In this constant process of becoming that is constitutive of languages, knowledge and cultures, the linguistic guests that we welcome to our homes are angels of destiny, propelling us forwards into the future.

## Notes

1. See the literature on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)—e.g. Jenkins (2007, 2015), Seidlhofer (2011), Mauranen (2012).
2. As linguist Edgar Schneider (2007: 61) puts it, the creolisation processes involved in the production of new hybrid varieties are “a product of the agency and linguistic creativity of speakers who use linguistic means to express their identities”.
3. Unlike the previous generation who often experienced the colonial language as an imposition and source of alienation (e.g. Fanon, 2008/1952; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 1986), these authors understand it as an integral part of their linguistic identity. See Bandia (2008) for other examples.
4. Some diasporas are of course directly related to empire, such as influx of Indians and West Indians to Britain after the Second World War, while others are the consequence of war, persecution, famine or other disasters.
5. This is most noticeable when the source language is prestigious in relation to the target, as when the English discourse of science spread, though calquing, to other languages (Bennett, 2011). See Schneider (2007: 21–97) for a more detailed analysis of the mechanics involved in language change.
6. Compare, for example, the scepticism of Jenkins *et al.* (2001) and particularly Mollin (2006), with the various articles in Bolton and Davis (2017).
7. Just hours after the Referendum, French politicians such as Robert Menard and Jean-Luc Melanchthon, as well as some high-ranking EU officials such as Michel Barnier and Danuta Hübner, were arguing that English would no longer have any legitimacy in the EU after the departure of the British. See Modiano (2017: 316) and Bolton and Davis (2017: 302–303) for a more detailed appraisal of these claims.
8. All of these functions were contemplated, directly or indirectly, by Roman Jakobson (1960).
9. Translatability essentially rests on the belief that human languages are underpinned by universal structures, which enable the production of equivalences (Hermans, 2009).
10. See the various uses of the notion of equivalence in, for example, Nida (1964), Vinay and Darbelnet (1955/1958), Newmark (1987) and Baker (1992, 2004).
11. The World Literature project might be considered a modern manifestation of what Ricoeur (2006: 9) calls “the dream of building up the complete library, which would be, by accumulation, *the Book*; the infinitely ramified network of the translations of all the works in all languages, crystallizing into a sort of universal library from which all the untranslatabilities will have been erased”. Previous manifestations of this desire (e.g. the Library of Alexandria, School of Wisdom in Baghdad) also occurred during periods of universalism imposed by powerful empires.
12. C.f. George Steiner’s motto “To understand is to translate”, a concept that underpins what he calls the ‘hermeneutic approach’ to translation (1998: 249).

13. Berman's original French title, *L'Épreuve de l'Étranger*, contains both the idea of 'experience' and of a 'trial'. Compare Venuti's (2000) translation with the 1992 one by S. Heyvaert.
14. "In Middle English, flowers, bishops, captured peoples, and the relics of saints are all translat from garden to garden, see to see, kingdom to kingdom, shrine to shrine; the soul is translat to God in mystical rapture or at death; and learning, culture, political power, and divine covenant are translat from east to west, pagan to Christian, Old to New Testament, in various manifestations of 'translatio studii et imperii', the translation of learning and empire" (Watson, 2008: 76).

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