Cultural Translation in the Context of Glocalization
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In an increasingly globalized world, forces of localization have the potential to shape a powerful paradigmatic shift in viewing the vital role of translation in the global context of cross-cultural communication. The emergence of globalized commodity culture is certainly assisted by translation, and dictates the ways in which translation is conducted. Globalization also raises the troubling possibility of cultural colonization as a consequence of cross-cultural encounters, thereby creating a homogenized world that threatens to destroy local cultures. It is therefore a question of primary importance to (re)establish cultural location and identity in response to globalization. Through translation, a universalized and universalizing cultural language reawakens and reinforces cultural identification. Translation activities are part of local realities in relation to the global world of transnational cultures. In this respect, indigenous or local knowledge is indispensable to successful cultural translation by means of negotiating an acceptable cultural discourse for the target system. Global economic integration has enabled China to play an increasingly prominent role in today's world, economic and political, though not quintessentially cultural—a major source of dissatisfaction for many Chinese intellectuals. China has enthusiastically—if also somewhat circumspectly—embraced economic globalization while viewing cultural globalization with suspicion and scepticism. Thus, while localized appropriation of globalized cultural information is well explored, more shared or universal references are making it possible for Chinese translations of foreign, especially western texts, to be less encumbered by cultural difference, which facilitates cultural translation as a dynamic process of cross-cultural exchange. More than ever before, cultural translation is characterized by mixture and hybridity; yet it is still fraught with sharp cultural and political tensions. Rapid globaliza-

tion in China has inculcated an ethnocentric fear of cultural difference and symptoms of cultural alterity are very much in evidence. Issues of cultural difference and the translation strategies formulated accordingly are best examined in the cross-cultural context of glocalization.

I. Globalizing Trend and Translation

Globalization and localization are concurrent phenomena as twin forces representing two opposing perspectives on the world, and as a result, different cultures meet and clash because globalization brings diverse populations together in every aspect of communication and life. Translation contributes significantly to universalism and hence, globalization. Falling trade barriers between nations have led to falling linguistic and cultural barriers, which in turn further promotes globalization. And translation has created, consciously or unconsciously, a circular globalizing trend: global restructuring and colonial precedents bring potential implications to local identity and the perceived assault of globalization upon collective national spirit or personality has become a constant source of cultural anxiety. The rapid pace of globalization causes and increases local disorientation, and the displacement and realignment of the sovereign states are responsible for many local crises. Since globalization is at times perceived as predetermined and unchanging, it threatens to reduce and even erase local difference. Thus, local cultures struggle to redefine themselves, to reassert local identities within globalization, which also empower a reconstruction of a local sense of self, mediated by the global. Meanwhile, foreign or global influences are reinterpreted or internalized as part of localization practices.

It is important to stress that global unification leads to homogenization and local resistance. Diversification and heterogenization become increasingly desirable in order to reduce continuous political conflicts and cultural tensions. Developed and developing countries respond differently to globalization in different stages of historical development. According to George Ritzer, globalization is either embraced or opposed by nations according to "whether one gains or loses from it" (190). In commenting on Ritzer's ideas, Colin Sparks points out: "In this kind of theory, the process of globalization is one which destroys the local, at

whatever level it is manifested, and replaces it by a single, standard, and usually US-inspired, society" (78). American-style cultural globalization produces a devastating homogenizing effect that makes it difficult or impossible for indigenous cultures to survive and ultimately threatens to reduce the entire world to a stultifying sameness.

Translation plays a key role in promoting both globalization and localization in that it calls for the recognition of the value of other cultures and the limits of local culture. Increasing global connectivity means that cultural protectionism is worthy of condemnation. Yet behind the global or the international is none other than the local. As it happens, "[t]hose who oppose globalization can continue to support the local as an alternative to the global" (Ritzer 199). And they fight globalization with localization as a counter-measure so as to neutralize it by making it less intrusive or contentious. The complex interaction of the global and the local means that there is rarely anything purely local, but rather, all is "glocal." New identities of shared attributes involving the local community emerge in an increasingly globalized world.

The homogenization of culture informed by the dominance of English around the world is at the root of the fear of globalization. Globalization has relentlessly eroded on local culture and its identity due to the widespread use of English. Significantly, the use of English by non-native speakers can glocalize it as in the case of Singaporean English with its local identity as a distinctive part of the language. Glocalization is also widely evident in local languages being translated into English. There is a good chance that "glocal Englishes" are created as a result, particularly if the target language is not the native language of the translator. Such local identities, as redefined within the conceptual framework of glocalization, are reinforced in many ways. Indicating the desire to reach out for the purpose of self-expansion, translation invites and introduces difference and in doing so, allows or forces "self" to interact with "other." Because it centres on adaptation and transformation localization is championed in response to what is perceived as colonizing and postcolonial foreign incursions. At a time when nation states, under the threat of sameness, are drifting into an abiding state of placelessness, and the interplay between deterritorialization and reterritorialization is power-

ful the current glocalization discourse gains importance. It is therefore crucial to investigate cultural and political tensions in the process of translation in the cross-cultural context of glocalization.

There is no doubt that localization influences conceptions of the world, and the result, as stated earlier, is a hybrid form of glocalization. But the real issue is how localization varies and changes in different times and places in relation to broader political, social, and cultural power. Localization inherent in translation is not just for the purpose of intelligibility and readability but also, more significantly, constitutes an act of transformation regarding both language and culture. In producing adaptation to another use, translation needs to take wider contextual import into consideration because it is dictated by events, circumstances, and above all, asymmetrical power relations. The temporality (as opposed to permanence) of any localization strategy represents a significant feature of the experience of cultural translation. Translation cannot be separated from power relations, social setting, political context, and cultural paradigm. And with a more nuanced awareness of the unequal power relations between the global and the local, translation is bound to be culturally or politically polarized with differing interests being demonstrably at odds with one another. The painstaking effort of cultural negotiation made by the translator epitomizes the struggle for cultural survival, and thus tends to annul the difference of languages and cultures.

The ways in which translation is conducted, not to mention what texts are selected for translation, are closely related to the risk of hostility and alienation, and it is thus often incumbent on the translator to exercise the practical function of localization. In general, however, excessive localization regarding translation leads to de-alienation, which may be prompted by either cultural superiority or cultural inferiority. In the former case, the target culture is too complacent to let foreign cultural values come into play in translation whereas in the latter, fear of cultural erosion engenders indigenous resistance to foreign or global cultural impositions. The pressure of the local cultural, political and social context causes translation to go through varying degrees of localization in its interaction with what is imported through the exertion of cultural power. To be sure, translation reflects and alters specific cultural power

structures involved in the process of textual transfer so as to affect the outcome of glocalization. Cross-cultural negotiation lays bare the power relations at work in the target system, since power determines the level of intervention and manipulation on the part of the translator in a bid to negotiate more favourable or less unfavourable terminologies. It is evident that the more powerful side is likely to exercise more influence.

II. Local Culture in a Global Context

While globalization transforms nations, localization transforms the world in the form of global cooperation, interconnecting the local and the global. Therefore, globalization and localization are at once separable and inseparable. In John Tomlinson's words, "the problem of understanding culture as constitutive of globalization turns on how we conceive of culture as having consequences" (24). As globalization shrinks the world with a tendency towards sameness, localization multiplies cultures with a firm emphasis on difference. Tomlinson argues:

> The fact that individual actions are intimately connected with large structural-institutional features of the social world via reflexivity means globalization is not a "one-way" process of the determination of events by massive global structures, but involves at least the possibility of local intervention in global processes. (26)

"Local intervention" is, in many cases, culturally motivated and conditioned, functioning as a mechanism to disallow globalization to be culturally in conflict with local values and norms, or simply to block what is culturally or politically offensive and unacceptable.

Nevertheless, cultural difference can become acclimatized to the local environment as part of a localizing process, which offers escape from local stagnation or lack of palpable development. Successful localization allows individualism and a certain degree of autonomy without losing, and even foregrounding, indigenous identity. Identity formation in cultural contexts seems to be an integral part of cross-cultural translation. So the recognition of a local cultural identity, also made recognizable in the translated text, is of great importance in establishing relationships

of reciprocity in the process of cross-cultural communication. Razaq D. Abubakre and Stefan Reichmuth assert that "the expanding networks of communication and transport not only serve as channels for the diffusion of 'Western' messages and products but are equally used with great success by different cultural communities all over the world for their own purposes" (183). Local inscription in translation fits well into this category of taking advantage of globalization. In brief, local culture cannot be as easily erased as imagined by some people, and it may be a surprise that local culture, in a bid to overcome circumscribed provincialism, is also being globalized at the same time.

Localization seems so intimately related to translation that Anthony Pym has gone as far as to suggest that translation theory "can be rebaptized as localization theory" (57). Translation moves the text to be translated into the globalization/localization continuum, and in a way, globalization and localization undergo more or less the same process and show a tendency towards a culturally rich conflation. Aside from its danger of cultural hegemony, globalization brings different local cultures together, which can be construed as a positive step toward collaborative and constructive relationships. Globalization does not necessarily result in an imposed cultural hegemony but can link a given local culture to outside cultures. Rather than destroy local culture, exterior cultures provide opportunities for its growth. In this ever-changing interconnected age, local practices are often driven by local interests. Thus, the culturally unacceptable can be easily turned into the culturally inaccessible despite, or because of, translation. Also, it is possible that local culture is transmitted to the translated text so as to create a hybridized cultural product. Particularly, in translating out of the translator's native language from a local culture, the translator may consciously or unconsciously leave discursive features of the local culture in the translated text as detectable cultural traces.

In an era of rapid globalization, the inevitable trend is that local culture is re-situated in the global context. The corollary is a more complex relationship between local and global cultural discourses as reflected in translation, which is a constant process of decolonization in its cultural reproduction open to cultural specifics inherent in a different tradition.

In response to cultural specifics, the assertion of local identity can be palpable from time to time. Unavoidably, translation is confronted with part and parcel of a local culture, which may be sensitive to cultural specifics contained in the source text. Culturally specific items are often loosely classified as untranslatable due to lack of identifiable equivalents in the target language system that is inextricably bound up with its own local culture. A sense of cultural otherness fostered by globalization exacerbates the problem for fear of the possibility of contaminating local culture. However, an extreme localization that replaces alien and unrecognizable specifics with recognizable and familiar local ones is antithetical to promoting or improving cross-cultural communication, which is not always an effective way of conflict resolution, although there is a clear need for adaptation to local needs, requirements, and conditions. And the actual adaptation level would be a significant factor in determining local variants of translation.

It is worth noting that localization is not necessarily the form of resistance it might appear to be. It can be gentle inducement instead: to allow global products to flow into the traditional territories of local culture without impediment as shown in the widespread translation practice in the late Qing dynasty [mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries] in China. The many points of global/local contact denote that local culture is full of contradictions, reflecting subtle shifts in paradigms of identity. Cultural strategies can be temporary and malleable because localization is adopted out of necessity, which has nothing or little to do with an ideal pre-designed arrangement. Indeed, it is common for the translation text to be rewritten and suitably acclimatized for a local audience. When it includes inscriptions of local culture, a given translated text is less unfamiliar and de-alienated to some extent. It is necessary to point out that localization is different from and more than domestication, which is used in the practice of translation mainly in a technical sense as a smoothing exercise without radical changes, such as deletion, addition or radical alteration. Both localization and domestication pursue integration into the target culture, but the end product of domestication remains essentially untransformed. In the latter case, there is barely any cross-cultural negotiation, and instead it is a case of forced substitution.

Localization, on the other hand, entails a more systematic, conceptual, dynamic interaction and exchange between two cultural systems encompassing values, conceptions, and experiences.

Localization as manifest in translation is an act of erasure and projection with regard to local culture in the global context. Local culture is rooted in its tradition, and when confronted with a foreign cultural representation in translation, it is forced to react to cultural otherness. Many contextual details concerning cultural specifics in both source and target texts are intertwined, and the complex interrelations between the two represented cultural systems prompt the translator to engage in cross-cultural negotiations. Let us suppose that there is one source text that is translated into different target languages at different places and times. It must be localized in different ways. Likewise, the means of compensation for loss differ widely in the hands of different translators as in the case of retranslation(s) into the same target language. Nonetheless, translation must cross subcultural divisions by dismantling the seemingly insurmountable differences between the global and the local into transnational fusion. When framed within a culturally relevant context, local relevance and importance are duly emphasized so as to give impetus to transcultural flows, the result of which can enrich local culture.

III. Local Knowledge and Accessibility

It is very tempting for translation to localize, making connections with local realities, and increasing relevance to local needs. Yet local culture is not automatically connected with outside cultures, and although local knowledge may sometimes impede understanding foreign otherness, it can also help improve translation results. How localization affects translation strategies and the reception of translation must be addressed because local concerns, issues, and problems, through translation, are related to each other, in various ways, and to the outside world as a means of cultural dialogue. Local knowledge, therefore, is of particular relevance to translation. Lawrence Venuti asserts that

> [t]ranslation, with its double allegiance to the foreign text and
> the domestic culture, is a reminder that no act of interpretation
> can be definitive for every cultural constituency, that interpreta-

tion is always local and contingent, even when housed in social institutions with the apparent rigidity of the academy. (46)

The protean nature of interpretation makes it extremely difficult for translation to maintain strict allegiance to the original, but without necessary local knowledge, translation is devoid of an interpretative framework. It is therefore reasonable to presume some local knowledge on the part of the translator in order to make available foreign material to the target reader.

The validity and legitimacy of interpretation depend, to a large extent, on local knowledge. And the efficacy of communication is determined by whether local circumstances and conditions are taken into account. It is easier for a translation to make sense if the target reader is helped to make connections with local realities. In this regard, a useful analogy can illustrate the importance of local knowledge in cross-cultural practice. Translation is like navigation. A foreign vessel approaching a local harbour, due to the captain's unfamiliarity with the navigation hazards, is routinely navigated by a pilot with local knowledge (usually a local person). This is a safe passage arrangement, and with a local harbour pilot onboard, the ship can move into and out of the harbour without serious risks. The obvious benefit of local knowledge is also corroborated by the common assumption that the translator normally translates into his/her native language rather than out of it for the sake of better accessibility. If the translator has sufficient diasporic experience, translating out of his/her native language can be accomplished. To summarize, knowledge of target culture is a prerequisite for successful cross-cultural communication, and translation is necessarily carried out on a local level. Further, due to the potential loss of referentiality, a translation has to be localized to varying degrees for it to work. It is not uncommon that many translated texts are still relatively inaccessible. The changed cultural context means that translation on the lexical level, which seems relatively easy, renders meaning hard to follow. This reaffirms the indispensability of the knowledge of the cultural context for translation.

How exactly is translation localized? The strongest possibility is through local idioms that are highly salient to enable the foreign to

come into the target system. But whether over-reliance on local knowledge does the original any injustice is open to debate, given the possibility of perceptual distortion and misrepresentation. It can hardly be denied that local knowledge is sometimes part of the problem, for misuse of local knowledge leads to manipulation. On the other hand, local knowledge is required to navigate translation so as to send the text to the designated cultural location while trying to avoid cultural or political clashes and conflicts. This local co-operation or complicity is essential to the success of translation. Furthermore, localization features prominently in the stage of selecting the appropriate texts for translation, and local knowledge is no doubt helpful in assessing the needs of the target reader.

Since local knowledge is most essential to the reproduction of cultural meaning, an awareness of local practices generates a sense of participation on the part of the translator, whose local knowledge is a crucial element in problem identification. In reality, local knowledge is also insider knowledge: the translator needs to get inside the target language system to prepare for the translation to work within the target culture. In addition, a locally informed perspective means that imposition from the outside is greatly reduced, since non-local knowledge is not necessarily universal. It is therefore essential to identify what is universal knowledge expressed through the local in the process of translation. Thus, the innate precariousness of cross-cultural translation often provides an enriched mixture of real ethnography and imaginative guesses. It is also essential for the translator to restore a proper understanding of sociocultural traditions of the target culture to permit meaningful participation in cultural reproduction while translating significant global concerns into concrete textual details in local idioms. In globalizing local experience, an empathy with local views and features is undoubtedly significant not only for recovering cultural information from the original, but also for presenting it properly to the target reader.

Local knowledge is also knowledge of a particular local situation that is context-specific, and it is also necessary to be reminded that translation is designed for the consumption of local people and that so-called 'universal' knowledge can be culturally relative. To localize is to assimilate the

source text to some extent, and in this sense, the translator acts as a local representative of the target language community, negotiating the terms of understanding and reception by accommodating particular local needs. Cultural intervention may be driven by a desire to reinforce cultural relevance. Thus, unfamiliar cultural features of the original are deleted, altered, replaced, or explained through assimilation or localization.

More tellingly, a culturally dismissive attitude is shown in the deletion of details on the assumption that such features or references are not worth serious treatment and their preservation will lead to virtual unintelligibility. Thus, cultural attitudes are responsible for determining the extent of a translator's intervention, and sometimes it can be fairly radical. Now and then, translation even reorders the text and changes to the narrative sequence of the original are particularly revealing. In discussing the Chinese translation of Edward Bulwer Lytton's *Night and Morning*, Patrick Hanan observes that "the translator's identification of characters differs frequently from that of the original in manner and timing. Postponed identification was a favorite device of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English novelist." Since the target reader was not familiar with this narrative sequence, ". . . in each case the text has been reordered so as to identify the character first" (92). He goes on to point out: ". . . background information, often withheld in the English, is regularly brought forward in the Chinese" (92). In this case, a general disregard for the narrative conventions of the source culture is a reflection of local knowledge at work to make possible successful cross-cultural communication, but also shows a cultural power struggle in a rather radical form.

To sum up, translation tends to be partially rather than totally localized. And in the long run, translation is not easily circumscribed by local culture and provincialism whose vulnerability becomes more apparent than ever before, and works increasingly at the global/local interface. Local preferences aside, translation thrives on global awareness, and local practices are closely associated with functionalist models of cultural integration in negotiating different knowledge traditions to enhance the quality and efficacy of cross-cultural communication. Meanwhile, the wish to globalize local knowledge signifies a move towards universalism based on

local values and ideas. By drawing on local knowledge, the translator is empowered to communicate more effectively to the target reader.

IV. Localization of Translation

According to Anthony Pym, the practice of localization wrongly assumes that translation is in essence about "an uninteresting automatic process of producing equivalence" (54). It is true that the concept of equivalence has become very problematic nowadays. But translation is far more than just "a linguistic part of localization" as claimed by Pym, albeit with qualification (57), which would then be domestication. Undeniably, domestication does not just create problems of a linguistic nature. Not only cultural difference but also linguistic mismatches prompt domesticating treatments in translation. As stated earlier, localization is more adaptive and transformative than domestication, well above language replacement in line with the principle of equivalence. Strictly speaking, the general tendency towards increased explicitness in translation is a sign of localization rather than domestication. Besides, strategies and tactics of adaptation of, or resistance to, global domination are part of counter-hegemonic challenges.

Localization provides a performative context in which the intersection of the local with the global makes it possible for things to make sense by incorporating local forms and values in the translated text. Localization implies a degree of transformation with local customs, particularities, and details contributing to it. And appropriation is part of localization to convey meaning or to make it relevant to the target culture. Mel van Elteren observes that

> The "traveling cultures" idea focuses on how cultural languages travel to new areas and are appropriated by people of other cultures to tell their own story, a process that transcends stable, unified national cultures. This approach looks almost exclusively at the receiving end of these encounters, and as a result tends to overemphasize the active appropriation of cultural forms and to neglect cultural imposition through behavioral and structural forms of power. (172)

This form of cultural replacement is a violent act of local interpretation, resulting to the performativity of translation that is pressed for expropriation. The translator's seriousness of purpose sometimes creates a move towards moral culpability that marks some translations out as obviously inauthentic.

The main concern of translation still remains semantic validity, yet cultural imposition is an unavoidable factor in cross-cultural communication. Although it is sometimes difficult to predict the consequences of cultural imposition, localization within a specific cultural context needs to search for ways to avert such consequences. While the value of localization is fully acknowledged, certain overarchingly intrusive aspects of localization are potentially deleterious and can give rise to stultifying provincialism.

The localization process is dominated by an overriding concern about the needs of the target system. Speaking of its practical aspect, Pym contends that "localization is the adaptation and translation of a text (like a software program) to *suit* a particular reception situation" (1; my emphasis;). At the initial stage of selecting texts for translation, the suitability of a given text for the target reader is assessed, which constitutes part of a larger consideration of local consumption. Localization in relation to translation entails various forms of adaptation for different reasons or purposes, which means restrictiveness and exclusivity, resulting in the separation of the source text from the target text.

While the benefits of adaptation are obvious, it is evidently detrimental to cross-cultural communication. The array of adaptations represents a type of colonization characteristic of cultural deprivation, which denies the target reader access to genuine otherness. If the level of adaptation is too high, the moral determination of the translator is called into question. Yet the fear of the possible dissolution of local culture under the weight of the conquering foreign culture, normally American popular culture with its debilitating and destructive effects, is entirely understandable. There is a painful dilemma here: on the one hand, in the context of the unstoppable tide of globalization, translation is absolutely necessary for the growth of local culture. On the other, cultural hegemony, taking on an oppressive nature, may infiltrate and undermine

the target culture through translation. Thus, translation is an important prototype for understanding glocalization pertaining to the multidimensional structure of cross-cultural interaction. When something not universally valid is translated into the target language, some kind of appropriation and adaptation is in order to make it convertible, among other things. For instance, sometimes it would be a serious mistake to read a text literally, but it may be relatively easy for the target reader to make that mistake without the relevant intertextual knowledge. Being aware of the risk involved, would it be an equally serious mistake for the translator to render it literally as well, knowing that the target reader may well read it incorrectly?

Moreover, localization is a sign of assuming some kind of editorial control of the text in translation not only to prevent the negation of the value of local culture, but also to enhance accessibility, which reflects the reality of the fundamental problem of cross-cultural engagement. Nevertheless, despite the necessity for resorting to localization in translation, the long-term disadvantage and danger of unrestrained localization are only too obvious. After all, it is only a superficial measure to counterbalance the possible impact of alienating the target reader, and in the long run, such a measure presents an impediment to translation as a means of cross-cultural exchange.

It seems easy to underestimate the cumulative effect of a translator's refusal to espouse Western values as part of globalization in many developing countries, including China, whose status or standing, admittedly, has become somewhat unclear with its rapid economic growth today. Western values are not, in any event, uncritically adopted and represented in translation. In relation to domesticating strategies, which, in Venuti's words, "are designed to reinforce dominant indigenous traditions in the translating culture," translation has a vital role to play (189). By citing the example of Lin Shu's translation of Rider Haggard's imperialist fiction into Chinese, Venuti elaborates on this point: "Sinicizing translations on behalf of the emperor eventually eroded the authority of imperial culture" (189). However, to make use temporarily of foreign notions to create the illusion that the Chinese emperor was even venerated by Westerners is a localizing rather than "domesticating" strategy

as claimed by Venuti (189). This "outrageous" act of localization was intended to transform the entire reading experience of Haggard's fiction. Here, not only are cultural differences deliberately eliminated, but the local replacement offered by the translator is beyond the imagination of the original author. Such culturally transformed translation radically alters cultural narrative.

Under particular cultural circumstances of production and reception, significant cultural or political requirements and prohibitions constrain the translator in his/her choice of strategies. Very often, it is the actual local impact and the interaction between the global and the local that determine how a translation task is completed. Douglas Robinson observes:

> Sent a translation job by a client or an agency, the translator has to *decide* what kind of text it is, what it will most likely be used for, and thus what norms will most likely govern the client's sense of how successful it is. Does it require localization—adjusting measurements from English to metric, date formats from month-date to date-month, and so on? (149)

The mounting pressure of globalization dictates the terms and conditions of translation practice. Localization is indeed desirable in many cases, but the reliability of translation may be called into question as a result. The average reader, however, is not as concerned about the accuracy of translation as about its accessibility and readability.

From the other side, how might local circumstances shape cultural translation? Some underlying cultural assumptions are no doubt responsible for an apparent lack of empathy, which can be demonstrably shown in a radical treatment of cultural items. In 1872, a Chinese newspaper *Shen Bao* based in Shanghai published a Chinese translation of "A Voyage to Lilliput" taken from *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift. The entire setting of the story is transplanted to China. As noted by Hanan:

> The narrator, whose name is not given, is from Dinghai on Zhoushan island of Zhejiang province. His background is only very briefly told. His father, a merchant, has introduced him

to the merchant's life. Whereas in the original Gulliver becomes a ship's surgeon—a profession that may not have been so common in China—his Chinese counterpart takes a post as a bookkeeper on a merchant ship. The last port of call, before the ship is blown off course, is in Hainan. (114)

The attempt to eradicate the defamiliarizing effect in the original displays a certain indigenous cultural superiority. In terms of culture, China was no one's colony, and thus it could afford to spurn intimate contact with the source text. In this case, predominant cultural norms of the target system were allowed to prevail in translation with indigenous place names replacing foreign ones. Such cultural configurations almost amount to cultural discrimination, but in reality manifest a profound cross-cultural anxiety surrounding foreign knowledge. And, it is also fair to say that it served as a transient strategy operating to assuage the traditionalist xenophobia and appeal to a certain cultural snobbery.

In any event, while foregrounding the local role, the changing nature of localizing translation motivates further considerations. Localization places more emphasis on replacement instead of focusing on reproduction. Yet localization and replacement are not the same: the former denotes that there is something readily available in the target language system that can easily "match" the relevant parts in the original, whereas the latter is essentially about absence, so a substitute needs to be produced locally to fill in the gap. Moreover, to transfer is not the same as to localize, although translation is an act of localizing a foreign content, and also possibly, its accompanying form. Linguistic nationalism is somehow part of the local workings of translation. According to Pym, "[t]ranslation is often seen as a small part of localization, and localization is occasionally viewed as an elaborate form of translation. The two terms, however, name potentially antagonistic ways of approaching cross-cultural communication" (xv). But it depends mainly on how complex and diverse criteria are negotiated, and how each relevant factor evaluated. Localization is an understandable response to translation but should resist the homogenizing tendency of institutionalizing such practice for the reason that it can do more harm than good for local culture.

V. Cultural Meaning and Glocalization

Increasingly, translation studies suggest that it should not be confined to mere language transfer so as to obscure its cross-cultural dimension. Translation at once facilitates and obstructs globalization in a seemingly contradictory game: on the one hand, it is through translation that information flows relatively freely to promote globalization at an incredible pace; on the other, it functions as a cultural filter to impede the otherwise directness of cross-cultural communication through suppression and appropriation, causing a virtual blockage to cultural understanding, intended or otherwise. Translation activity entails holistic performance that incorporates globalization and localization, thus expanding the cross-cultural flow. Cultural translation means that local culture everywhere incorporates "transculturality," to use Wolfgang Welsch's term. Consequently, it is increasingly possible to experience identity flexibility, and the concept of national cultures may be superseded by those of transculturality and deterritorialization. Of particular relevance to translation, therefore, is the preferred form of communication, or more precisely, (re)creation, of cultural meaning.

Cultural meaning is fraught with contingency because it is created through association. Yet associative meanings are rarely the same cross-culturally, and as a result of translation, cultural meaning is susceptible to change and fluctuation. As noted by Kenneth Allan, "Cultural meaning has always had at its core 'agreement reality,' people collectively agreeing upon a specified and restricted meaning" (88). The meaning which has been agreed upon collectively by source text readers needs to be agreed upon collectively again by a different group of people, namely the target readership. It has to be renegotiated and thus becomes open to a different interpretation. There can be faulty interpretations of cultural meaning and the difficulty of fathoming and reproducing it has been discussed by Sherry Simon, who argues that it "is not located within the culture itself but in the process of negotiation which is part of its continual reactivation" (138).

What is involved in translation is a complex dynamic interaction between two cultural systems. The translator is expected to understand "the way language is tied to local realities, to literary forms and to chang-

ing identities" (Simon 138). Local realities vary considerably from culture to culture, and determine, to a large extent, the literary forms as well. Such forms are associated with cultural values and aesthetic preferences. Cultural meaning boils down to cultural particulars that can be both fascinating and unsettling. The seemingly insurmountable hurdle for the translator is the virtual impossibility of transferring a frame of reference for cultural meaning because ". . . each culture's point of reference is distinct, and the meaning of a given event will be very different depending on who the observer is" (Villareal 231). Thus to translate a text loaded with cultural meaning is singularly unnerving due to its potentially transformative (or undermining) power in two ways since translation is formed as both colonizing and colonized.

Translation entails alternative forms of expression, something which pinpoints the fleeting and illusory nature of cultural meaning. For this reason, a diasporic imagination of the cultural meaning of otherness is essential to enable the target reader to perceive and experience other realities. To that end, cultural boundaries are constantly crossed and the local distinctiveness of both source and target cultures virtually annihilated. Increasingly, translation is characterized by both continuity and change while it is expected to ease growing tensions between cosmopolitanism and nationalism in a globalized context. However, the multiple affiliations of the translator suggest that even the most cosmopolitan of them needs to pay attention to national attachments so as to lead to cultural glocalization. In many third-world countries, including China, "foreignizing" translation with minimal localization is symptomatic of Westernization and also of globalization. Acts of cultural translation are placed in the global context to increase shared or universal external references and to prompt more cosmopolitan visions of cross-cultural communication.

However, if a globalizing (Western) and colonizing culture is involved in translation, there are bound to be conflicts between the colonizing and colonized identities. At the very least, different modes of communication may well result from translation, thereby creating a somewhat diluted monoculture. On the other hand, cosmopolitan visions of translation help revise our perception of the local in relation to the global.

On account of the composition of the target audience in the global context changing considerably, this local-global-local connectivity is truly significant and shows that globalization brings together different forms of culture together in a process of interaction, which in turn influences all aspects of local culture. To go from the global to the local and back again without serious impediments engenders cultural hybridity from the pluralistic solutions to tensions and conflicts between the global and the local.

In addition, translation is perpetually challenged by cultural difference, and with an increasing global awareness, cultural concepts are modified and changed from time to time. The cultural consequences of globalization, whether viewed positively or negatively, are attributable, at least in part, to translation. The seeming outrageousness of cultural globalization certainly has one positive impact: it curbs homogenizing nationalism. It is after all possible to benefit from foreign (often referring to Western) expertise without being culturally uprooted as in the case of Chinese cross-cultural practice. The danger of a homogenized culture is only too obvious: economic, political and cultural stagnation resulted when the China was insulated from the outside world, and the limited amount of foreign content being imported to China was severely and unduly localized. An overemphasis on cultural protectionism is inimical to local culture in the long run while a championing of cultural transformation is no doubt a sensible course of action.

Resulting from translation, recontextualization, from a local point of view, brings out the potential of the target culture in response to a different knowledge system. A positive cross-cultural attitude enables the translator to "discover" and activate the potential powers of the target language. David Harvey's account of his experience is worth noting: "Translation requires that I be as faithful as I can to ideas expressed in other languages while in no way abandoning the powers of my own.… translation properly conducted can reveal hidden powers within my own language and so alter the balance of its meaning" (122). Linguistic and cultural alterations, whether radical or slight, make a significant impact on the target language and culture. Translation must strike a balance between assimilation and accommodation, and make fine dif-

ferentiations between the defining limits of cultural meaning. So an otherwise undifferentiated situation becomes a site of semantic and cultural contestation, together with a sharpening sensitivity, on the part of the translator, to alternative or competing ways of translating. More specifications create more differentiations, which in turn makes the target language richer and more precise as testified by the Chinese cross-cultural practice.

Translation creates a different experience of a different reality that reflects different beliefs and cultural values. In the context of globalization, the real challenge of cultural translation is to mediate and reconcile different needs, interests, desires, and traditions, yet the practice of translation still needs to be attuned to local concerns. A text is always produced locally but perhaps also for global consumption. So translation, in some way at least, is genuinely emblematic of heterogeneity and diversity as reflected in different modes or degrees of localization in translation. In general, the target reader is the local reader supposedly with expectations for the specifics of different local culture. It is the subjective and emotional experience of a cultural actuality that makes up cultural meaning in the process of reading translation. Cultural meaning is highly dependent on cross-cultural communication, and on whether there is sufficient interaction between cultural differences to allow the target reader to share, imaginatively and cross-culturally, experiences of others and otherness. There is no denying that it is not easy for the subjective experience of people of one cultural system to be shared by people of another. While increasing globalization brings people of different nations together, translation is a temporally and spatially regulated practice making it possible for an insider-outsider perspective to be constantly revised and even reversed.

Translation represents a culturally reproduced reality that has become increasingly characterized by glocalization instead of Westernization. Local accessibility to exotic influences centres on the re-creation of intertextual relations, and universalistic versus particularistic claims can revitalize local as well as global culture. Powerful global influences pose a challenge to local production, and local response to it results in cultural hybridity. Also, when a body of knowledge from a given source is trans-

ferred to the target language, the possibility of hybridity exists partly because the knowledge involved is not completely new or alien. Such interconnection, while reducing identity rigidity and intolerance, foregrounds a multicontextual, multidimensional, and multiperspectival environment in a form of glocalization. Changing cultural presuppositions signifies that translation functions sometimes more locally than globally or the other way round. Because the literary quality of a text is shown through allusion, the act of meaning construction in translation risks crude reductionism in dealing with cultural and literary references. Nevertheless, increasing glocalization creates a sense of empowerment to do a better job with cultural characteristic modes of local operation in the age of globalization.

Globalization provokes localization, which is probably a reflection of a fear of cultural hegemony. Evidently, in many local contexts, global solutions simply do not work and the importance of a counter-hegemonic local knowledge is duly recognized. Deeply entrenched cultural preferences are indicated, in the form of rewriting, by the translator in a participatory way. Local knowledge and practices lessen culturally objectionable features inherent in the source text. But translation entails cultural change, however slow or imperceptible, and also a transformation of the local through the global so as to contribute to the global through the local. This dynamic interaction between the global and the local is characterized by negotiation and mediation to reconcile cultural differences and to reduce cultural tension, thus representing a new hybridized cultural reality grounded in local history in the process of increasing globalization.

VI. Concluding Remarks

Globalization forces itself on almost every nation. More relevant to translation is the disquieting tendency towards cultural globalization, which is widespread and widely dreaded. The perils and possibilities of global connectivity are deeply rooted in antipathy for cultural globalization, something which suggests an awareness of the profound and unavoidable dilemma at the core of translation. Yet anti-globalization is not a pragmatic option in dealing with a mix of global influences on many

aspects of the local. Translation is unlikely to amount to a unified global cultural discourse; it mediates between different cultural traditions, necessitating a cultural dialogue under globalization and fostering cultural diversity, which acts as a perfect antidote to cultural homogeneity. In the process of glocalization, cultural identity is constantly reinvented and globalism adapted to local reality. In addition, effective localization requires global knowledge just as localization, paradoxically, also helps promote globalization. Such a process is essentially about accessibility, namely making things easy to be accepted on local terms by the local while rendering "selves" subject to change and transformation.

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