Postcolonial Polysystems, Anglo-American Canonical Hegemony and the Marginalization of Urdu in Translation

Jamil Asghar[1]
Muahmmad Iqbal Butt[2]
Ghulam Ali[3]

Abstract

Taking insight from Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, the paper looks into the ways in which the politics of Anglo-American canonical dominance influences English-Urdu/Urdu-English translation practices. The influence of this dominance has been shown to exist in a wide variety of forms ranging from marginalization to outright obliteration of Urdu not only as a source text but also as a target text. This influence has also been shown to exist in remolding and redefining the translational canons of Urdu by privileging Anglo-American notions of 'fluency' and 'transparency'. The researchers have analyzed the impact of sociocultural, textual and discursive polysystems on Urdu translations in line with the assumption that texts do not generate meanings solely though their power of expression born of their repositories of signifiers. In translation, the cumulative weight of longstanding Anglo-American translation tradition comes to bear upon the Urdu across a wide range of power differentials designated by such politico-discursive binaries as 'first world' and 'third world'. Getting translated into English remains one of the most daunting challenges for Urdu literary works to achieve international recognition. This recognition, however, comes at the cost of a massive domestication. Lastly, it has also been shown how an endemic practice of indirect translations of French, Spanish, Russian and Portuguese works into Urdu via English rigorously casts these works into Anglophone literary and ideological framings.

Keywords: *English, Urdu, polysystem, translation, power, postcolonialism, world literature*

[1] Department of Translation and Interpretation, NUML, Islamabad
[2] Department of English, Government Zamindar Postgraduate College, Gujrat
[3] Centre for Languages and Translation Studies, University of Gujrat

1. Hegemony, Representation and Politics of Polysystems

What does the politics of translation mean for Urdu literature in getting itself introduced at the world level? In pursuance of this question, the paper seeks to problematize the representation of Urdu literature via English translations. Translation from or into English is not a purely linguistic matter which could be approached from some supposedly *natural* and value-free perspective. Instead, it is compounded by myriad ideological and cultural issues. Today, the postcolonial context enables us to better appreciate the effects of translation by taking into consideration the asymmetrical relations of cultures and languages within the broader contemporary global settings (Simon & St-Pierre, 2015).

Now, as in the wake of colonialism and with the rise of globalization, translation into English has become virtually unavoidable, we can better evaluate the immense influence which English has on Urdu (Asghar, 2015). Moreover, the present-day hegemony of English should not be taken as just an isolated linguistic hegemony. The Anglophone linguistic hegemony becomes all the more subtle when we take into consideration a widely circulated yet specious belief that English just a language like any other language, say German, Hind, Persian, etc. This assumption is subconsciously nourished by the idea of the so-called translation pairs. In the words of Even-Zohar:

At the moment, the present linguistic stronghold of English is matched by the central position held by the Anglo-American literary tradition in Europe, sufficiently firmly established for translated literary works from other languages to be assigned more peripheral positions…Hence, for European literature[1] to travel successfully in translation into English, adjustments are often required in order to ensure that European literary imports fit the literary traditions prevailing in the receiving Anglophone target culture, not infrequently at the cost of reducing the element of foreignness in the original (see Anderman & Rogers, 2005, p. 3).

What Even-Zohar says of English translations of European literatures is also true of English translations of Pakistani literature. With reference to literary as well as cultural translations, there exists a wide asymmetry between Urdu and English. To be more accurate, any attempt to translate something from Urdu into English is to negotiate between the periphery and the center in which what is lacking is the middle ground which could accord parity to both the 'parties'.

[1] And more truly of Urdu literature as well.

For Urdu, translating *out of* and translating *into* English have always been two different procedures marked by two distinct sets of protocols. In the former case, major changes and adjustments in the source texts are not very common. It is expected, at least in principle, that the Pakistani readership schooled in Anglophone educational traditions would not be so unfamiliar with Anglo-American literary and cultural settings. All the more so because in Urdu there exists a vast amount of Anglicisms which are thought to facilitate the reading experience of Urdu readership. In the latter case, in contrast, scant understanding of Pakistani literary and cultural landscape on the part of English readership essentially requires radical linguistic and cultural adjustments of the source text to fit into the accepted definitions of Anglo-American canons and expectations.

This brings us to what Even-Zohar has presented as the polysystem approach to translation which posits the existence of complex systems in which the practice of translation, of necessity, has to operate (see Hermans, 2014). Taking insights from the theorizations of the Russian Formalist School, Even-Zohar presented this theory in which the overall literary (poly)system is taken to be constituted by diverse component systems that evolve continuously and interact hierarchically. Since this polysystem is innately *dynamic*, all of its (sub)systems are likely to bring changes in its position and influence over time depending upon central-peripheral and/or primary-secondary configurations.

Therefore, to Even-Zohar, translated literature is a distinct system which, however, is situated within the broader literary polysystems of the target culture(s). This is largely due to two reasons: (1) the choice of a source text is determined by the kinds of texts that are published at that time in the target language systems and (2) the 'norms, behaviors and policies' adopted by translators are also related to those of the target culture systems (Lefevere, 2016, p. 47).

These polysystems of translation complicate the Urdu-English translation practices particularly given a lack of linguistic proficiency on the part a large number of Pakistani translators. Although there are growing number of people in Pakistan as well who are of the view that the notion of the mastery of English is just a simplistic inner circle construct (Campbell, 2005), for a large number of Urdu writers and their translators mastery of English remains a formidable challenge.

Therefor like other translators and writers operating in the outer circle, they also have to translate into English and their success depends on a set of complex issues of proficiency, competence and acceptability. The kind of English used by Pakistani translators is mostly replete with formulaic phrases, unidiomatic expressions, bizarre collocations, Pakistanisms, and, at times, outright incorrect structures. Moreover, the lack of appropriate vocabulary to express nuances of cultural and literary landscapes has added to the difficulties of these translators.

2. Territory, Translation and New Imperia

For better or for worse, at present, only that literature makes its way to the world stage which gets translated into English. The rest suffers a fate of relative obscurity and in the long run a slow death. Strong as this statement may sound, yet it is hardly an exaggeration given the power and prestige which English currently enjoys. This condition has led to a predicament of identity and representation and it is largely due to this predicament that, notwithstanding all the hue and cry, the Empire is still unable to effectively write back. Contrarily, in the postcolonial world, the speechlessness of the subalterns seems to have entered a new reign of silence where they are heard only when *represented* by the translators. The territorial Empire may have gone, only to be replaced with a subtler and arguably more pervasive translatorial Empire.

Perhaps because of these reasons, Tejaswini Niranjana and Eric Cheyfitz consider translation to be a metaphor of Empire (Bassnett, 2013). In fact, it is not uncommon for translation to strengthen the rigidity of binaries by confirming the power of English over other less privileged languages. When texts from such languages as Urdu, Hindi, Persian, etc., are translated into English, they are largely imprinted with Anglophone cultural and discursive inscriptions.

In the contemporary world in which English is not just an international but a global language[1], the translators have assumed an ever important role. At present, one of the most effective tools through which English is exerting its influence, and that too without actually controlling the exact process, is translation. Never in

[1] It is important to maintain a distinction between an international and a global language. Any language which is used for communication across multiple nations is an international language. In this sense Portuguese, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic are also international languages. Each one of these languages is used by multiple countries. Just take the example of Arabic which is the official language of 26 countries. Therefore, the status of English is more than that of an international language and the apt characterization of its status is a global language. No other language can match its growth and influence (See Crystal 2012).

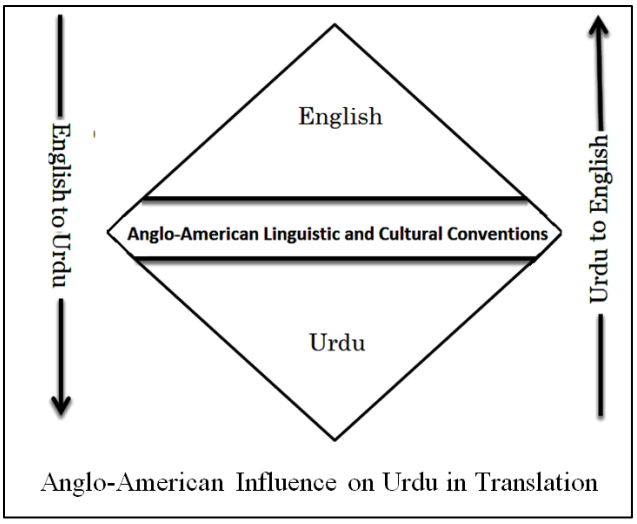
human history was a world so flooded as ours is today with translations effectively deciding the viability not just of literary canons and principles but also of literary works. Translators today are not just inter-lingual/cultural mediators; rather, they have assumed the extremely important status of the arbitrators and communicators of literary values and conventions.

This role of translators has colonial roots and Niranjana has rightly pointed out that the colonized India was represented by translators and through a well-placed system of colonial education these representations were continuously reinforced (1992). Bassnett corroborated the same contention in these words:

> The repression of the 'vernaculars' (as the native languages of the colonies were disparagingly called) was a well-defined policy of the Empire. How this linguistic policy was enforced in the colonies and what were its ideological implications can be seen from the play *Translations* by Brian Friel. The play also shows how the rejection of language results in the rejection of a whole culture. It is also a well-documented fact that at the height of the imperial age, English was perceived as being more important than many other languages, a language to be exported around the world, and there was no comparable importation of other language and their cultures into English" (2013, p. 18).

3. English-Urdu/Urdu-English Asymmetry: A Veritable Lopsidedness

The asymmetry between English and Urdu is real and calls for a nuanced analysis which should take into consideration not just linguistic aspects but also larger cultural and social factors. Translation subconsciously as well as functionally evokes a sociolinguistic equivalence. Therefore, whenever the phrase Urdu-English/English-Urdu translation is talked about, one is likely to think of a correspondence between these two languages. This however is not the case and there exists a veritable lopsidedness which the following diagram illustrates:



Anglo-American Influence on Urdu in Translation

This diagram illustrates a two-way effect of translation whenever English and Urdu are paired together in any vertical translational direction. When the translation is from English to Urdu, it mostly tends to be an effective dissemination of sociocultural values and literary norms which English stands for. These Anglophone values and norms easily find their way to target text (Urdu).

However, interestingly, even when the translation is from Urdu to English, the same process comes into play, albeit in an inverted way. Urdu source text, instead of introducing its own values into the target text is assimilated and domesticated by English target text. Therefore, in both the cases, the decisive, canon-formational and value-generative role is primarily played by English. This results into an asymmetrical process of othering and marginalization in which English is privileged to act as a subject and Urdu is restrained to behave like an object. The cultural and linguistic leverage available to English is not available to Urdu which has to face the brunt of Anglophone domesticating tendencies.

This two-way domesticating translation tradition has its roots in the heyday of British Imperialism in India, as has been noted by many postcolonial scholars (Niranjana, 1990; Robinson, 2014; Cheyfitz, 2018). This was the time when the very notion of translation went through subtle but far-reaching transformations. However, it was about a century and a half later that the exact role and influence of this colonial translation tradition was recognized and the practice of translation in general was seen in a new light. Bassnet and Trivedi identify these problematics of translation in the following words:

For too long translation was seen as purely an aesthetic act, and ideological problems were disregarded. Yet the strategies employed by translators reflect the context in which texts are produced. In the nineteenth century, an English translation tradition developed, in which texts from Arabic or Indian languages were cut, edited and published with extensive anthropological footnotes. In this way, the subordinate position of the individual text and the culture that had led to its production in the first place was established through specific textual practices (2012, p. 6).

> From these telling insights, Bassnett and Trivedi move on to a conclusion which is crisp and persuasive: "Translation was a means both of containing the artistic achievements of writers in other languages and of asserting the supremacy of the dominant, European culture" (2012, p. 7). However, with regard to the specific influence of Anglo-American canons and conventions on Urdu in translation there is one significant yet lesser appreciated fact. Today a large number of French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Greek, Czech, Hungarian, even, to some extent, Arabic, Persian, and Hindi works available in Urdu translations are, in fact, retranslations from the English versions of these works.

Take the example of *The Alchemist*[1] by Paulo Coelho which has a few notable Urdu translations. However, none of the translators knows Portuguese which is the original language of the novel and, upon quizzing two of them, it was revealed that they invariably translated it from Alan R. Clarke's English translation. This is how an Anglo-American filter is placed between works from different non-English literary traditions and their Urdu translations. Let us have a look at a specimen of one such Urdu translation which is by Umar Al-Ghazali:

Original Portuguese Version	**Urdu Translation**
O *rapaz chamava-se Santiago*. *Estavacomeçando* a *escurecer* quando *chegou* co m *seu rebanho diante* de uma *velha igreja abandonada*. O *teto tinha despencado há muito tempo* e um *enorme sicômoro havia crescido* no *local* que antes abrigava a sacristia.	لڑکے کا نام سن تیاگو تھا۔ جب وہ متروک چرچ کے پاس پہنچا تو شام ڈھل چکی تھی۔ اس چرچ کی چھت عرصہ ہوا گر چکی تھی۔ اور جہاں کبھی پادری کا منبر ہوتا ہوگا، وہ جگہ انجیر کے ایک بہت بڑے درخت نے لے لی تھی۔

When compared with the original Portuguese version, one can trace many

[1] For our present purpose, it is interesting to note that *The Alchemist* (Portuguese: *O Alquimista*) got the world attention only when its English translation appeared. To be precise, the novel was published in 1988 but it had to wait for five years to be a global thrill, only after having been translated into English in 1993. Such is the importance of English for a work to gain global recognition—one of the central premises of this paper.

discrepancies in translation. In the Urdu translation, the dusk had fallen ("شام ڈھل چکی تھی") and the translator is using the perfect tense. However, that is not the case with the original Portuguese text which clearly uses the continuous tense—"Estava começando a escurecer" (English: "It was getting dark…"). One is also surprised to see the phrase "پادری کا منبر" (English: "a pastor's podium"). What, in fact, is in the source text is considerably more than a pulpit. The Portuguese word used in the source text is "sacristia" (English: "sacristy") which denotes a room in a church where a priest prepares for a service, and where articles of worship and vestments and are placed. What the translator is rendering as "انجیر کا درخت" is in fact "جمیڑ" in the source text—"*sicômoro*" (English: "sycamore").

Another prototypical example of this phenomenon can be found in the currently available Urdu translations of *War and Peace*. There are quite a few Urdu translations of *War and Peace* but almost all of them are based upon its various English versions. The most notable of these Urdu translations is the one by Shahid Hameed. Shahid Hameed was one of the most acclaimed translators of Pakistan, yet his translation is also not based on the original Russian version of the novel. Hameed relied on various English translations of the novel. In 2013, a translation came out by a certain Faisal Awan, a fellow having no proficiency in Russian at all. Look at this comparison which juxtaposes Awan's Urdu translation with Russian source text:

Original Russian Version	**Urdu Translation**
[Ну, что, князь, Генуа и Лукка стали не больше, как поместьями фамилии Бонапарте. Нет, я вас предупреждаю, если вы мне не скажете, что у нас война, если вы еще позволите себе защищать все гадости, все ужасы этого Анти- христа (право, я верю, что он Антихрист) – я вас больше не знаю, вы уж не друг мой, вы уж не мой верный раб, как вы говорите.] Ну, здравствуйте, здравствуйте. Je vois que je vous fais peur, [Я вижу, что я вас пугаю,] садитесь и рассказывайте.	"اچھا، تو شہزادے گویا جنیوا اور لوکا کی حثیت اب بونا پارٹ خاندان کی ذاتی جاگیروں سے زیادہ نہیں رہی۔ نہیں، میں تمہیں خبردار کرتی ہوں کہ اگر تم نے اسے جنگ نہ سمجھا اور اس دجال کی بدنامی اور سفاکی سے نظریں چرائیں تو میں تم سے کوئی واسطہ رکھوں گی نہ تمہیں اپنا دوست اور وفادار غلام سمجھوں کی جس کا تم ڈھنڈورا پیٹتے رہتے ہو۔ خیر، یہ بتاؤ تم کیسے ہو، میرا خیال ہے کہ میں تمہیں ڈرا رہی ہوں، بیٹھ جاؤ اور مجھ سے گفتگو کرو"۔

One can see glaring discrepancies in the original text and the Urdu translation. Plausibly these discrepancies are, to great extent, attributable to its (indirect) translation from English and its utter disregard of the actual source text. Look at the Urdu world "گویا" which is a subordinating conjunction meaning "as though/if". It has no origin in the source text and seems to be a superfluous

qualification on the part of the translator. The phrase "اگر تم نے اسے جنگ نہ سمجھا" is also a distinct example of mistranslation. The original Russian phrase "если вы мне не скажете, что у нас война" actually means: "…that if you do not tell me that we are at war". All these semantico-syntactic dislocations in the target text are indicative of that damage which can be caused to the source text when it is not directly accessed.

Another striking discrepancy is the omission of the elliptical details which are present in the source text but absent in the Urdu translation. Therefore, one does not find "право, я верю, что он Антихрист" (English: "upon my soul") in the target text. The act of omission in translation is not an innocuous oversight on the part of the translator. It is a politics-laden and ideology-driven move which has been equated with an act of exclusion and silencing (Tymoczko & Gentzler, 2002). Apparently such exclusions are made to ensure the fluency of the target text but, according to Lawrence Venuti, this fluency itself is an ideological construct born of the global influence of Anglo-American tradition of translation. This is how he puts it succinctly:

> Fluency emerges in English-language translation during the early modern period, a feature of aristocratic literary culture in seventeenth-century England, and over the next two hundred years it is valued for diverse reasons, cultural and social, in accordance with the vicissitudes of the hegemonic classes. The dominance of fluency in English language translation until today has led to the forgetting of these conditions and exclusions, requiring their recovery to intervene against the contemporary phase of this dominance (2017, p. 35).

What Venuti says characterizes most of the indirect Urdu translations available in Pakistan and almost same is the case with the Urdu translations of the works of such literary giants as Gabriel García Márquez, Marcel Proust, Albert Camus, Umberto Eco, Orhan Pamuk, Naguib Mahfouz, Czesław Miłosz and a host of others. There are very few exceptions like Muhammad Hassan Askari who were true polyglots and who translated directly from the original texts. Askari translated *Madam Bovary* and *Le Rougue et le Noir* from their original French versions. It is because of this direct access to the French source texts that on the one hand one can clearly notice a streak of Frenchness in the translation and on the other hand the target text does not seem to be imprinted with Anglo-American textual and cultural inscriptions.

4. Self-Translations, Transformations and a Case of Two Tagores

If indirect translations or retranslations can result in a considerable damage to the source text, what is about self-translation? Apparently, when the writer himself/herself is the translator, the probability of domestication should be, at least theoretically, substantially low. This however is a widespread fallacy and fact of the matter is that even if the writer himself/herself is the translator, the possibility of domestication is real and immediate. The reason for this possibility of domestication largely lies in the very nature of translation which is inherently transformative and political. To illustrate this fact, we have taken the case of legendary Bengali poet, short story writer and artist Rabindranath Tagore.

The story of Tagore becomes all the more relevant when we take into account that he was the first Indian recipient of the Nobel Prize in literature. A colonial literary giant receiving a most prestigious canonical award of literature aptly illustrates the tale of a great genius who was simultaneously helped and transformed by the politics of translation. For almost the first half of his life, Tagore remained a 'local' Bengali/Indian writer of little international import. His fame reached outside Indian frontiers only in the 1910s when his writings reached European readers through English self-translations[1].

However, his self-translations were assessed critically and a different Tagore was perceived to exist in translations who was "tied to an ideology associated with colonialism and cultural domination" (Choudhuri, 1997, p. 442). It has also been suggested that in his English translations he was taken as a mystic destined to fulfill the Orientalist expectations of an exotic India (Sengupta, 1995, p. 62). This is elaborated as under:

There are (at least) two Rabindranath Tagores. One is the most consequential Bengali writer of the century, the author of poems, plays, short stories, songs memoirs and essays of enduring popularity and importance; the other was a literary sensation in England, America, and Europe in the wake of the publication of *Gitanjali*…These two figures have alarmingly little in common, and it is tempting to identify the former as the real Tagore, and the latter ass the product of a collectively overheated orientalist imagination… (Kothari, 2014, p. 134).

Tagore's translations into English and their effect and acceptability teach us two

[1] The fact that the *Preface* to the translation of his collection of poems titled *Gitanjali* was written by W. B. Yeats, is also noteworthy. A foremost Anglo-Irish poet writing a preface to the English translation of a Bengali poet was of great help in bringing the latter a greater attention of the Anglo-American readership.

things. First, no matter how great and effective a literary writer is, the gateway to international recognition is to be translated into English. Secondly, translation (even self-translation) has its own subtle ways of transforming a writer in myriad ways. This tendency becomes all the more powerful if the writer happens to come from a less privileged, non-European language—in this case Bangla. In spite of the award of the Nobel Prize, Tagore's self-translations continued to be judged harshly. Yeats wrote of him:

> …he thought it more important to know English than to be a great poet, he brought out sentimental rubbish and wrecked his reputation. Tagore does not know English, no Indian knows English. Nobody can write with music and style in a language not learnt in childhood and ever since the language of his thought (sees Hogan & Pandit, 2003, p. 89).

E. M. Forster while reviewing Tagore's novel *The Home and the World* noted: "The theme is so beautiful", but the charms have "vanished in translation," or perhaps "in an experiment that has not quite come off" (Paul & Prasad, 2007, p. 7). This is how English has been proving to be a kind of congenital disability for millions across the globe whose language is not English. Interestingly, Tagore himself was aware of his peripheral situatedness vis-à-vis the politics of translation which he saw unfolding under the overarching dominance of the English language. He was also aware of the transformative nature of translation and once he voiced it in these words:

> [T]he French language will not answer the needs of your soul once you uproot it from the nature of French life…I can use a lion's hide to make a rug or drape the wall, but I cannot swap my skin for his" (see Al-Musawi, 2017, p. 16).

Tagore like countless wirters was, in fact, compelled by an urge to achieve a wider recognition. However, this urge was fulfilled at a cost and this predicament of getting translated into a dominant language for the sake of wider recognition was aptly summed up by Czech translator and writer Joseph Skvorecky when he said: "What would have happened, for instance to Mark Twain if his mother tongue had not been English, if he had been born in Bohemia instead of the US?" (see Anderman, 1988).

Milan Kundera had to "authorize" the French translations of his works after purging them of inaccuracies in such a way that he finally declared them *equal in*

authenticity to Czech texts. However, this authorial authenticity is still a matter of debate (Venuti 2002). Russian-American poet and essayist Joseph Brodsky took issue with legendry English translator Constance Garnett for distorting the authorial intents of Russian writers: "The reason English-speaking readers can barely tell the difference between Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky is that they aren't reading the prose of either one. They're reading Constance Garnett" (Remnick, 2005, p. 98).

To sum up, this entire controversy is symptomatic of a wide range of contextual, cultural, historical, associational, semantic and extra-linguistic factors which inevitably come into play at any interface of (post)coloniality and translation.

5. Elitism, World Literature and the Politics of Prizes

What in fact Tagore was interested to be included in and heard from was the vantage point of what is commonly called 'world literature'. He was not content with his introduction as an Indian or a Bengali writer. Tagore was not alone in this aspiration and this desire continues unabated even today (Damrosch, 2018). There are critics and scholars who are of the view that we should rethink the entire paradigm born of the very notion of world literature in which literary works across an extremely broad sociolinguistic spectrum are routinely translated, retranslated, back-translated and mistranslated. At present, world literature is a dominant theoretical framework in the humanities and, to a considerable extent, is driven by the market forces of global publishing industry and universal notions of readerships (Apter, 2014). What, therefore, is called as 'world literature' is largely a commercial enterprise which has resulted from Anglo-American politico-military clout and grounded in market-driven, apparently innocuous notions of readability and universality (Venuti, 2016).

The researchers are of the view that in our age, the so-called world literature has assumed the status of an elitist club and its membership is open only to those texts which fulfill two conditions: first, they obediently abide by its Anglo-American literary canon and, second, they get translated into its undeclared official language, English. But these two conditions are extremely marginalizing for what is condescendingly called "The Third World Literature". Small wonder, When an Urdu novel written in Lahore or Delhi which deals with the high culture of the early 20th-century Subcontinent, is translated into English, it begins to sound like an average bourgeois work of late Victorian fiction. The foreign texts, hence, routinely go through a homogenizing process and lose much of their distinctiveness and otherness (Pym 2006).

Arguably one of the most compelling anti-thesis to world literature came from Emily Apter in her groundbreaking book *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (2014). Apter presented her case with lucidity and argues for a radical rethinking of the world literature paradigm. To her, the real problem is that of the fair representation of all the literary traditions which, in fact, gravely suffers when the canonical perspectives of literary studies tend to overlook the politics of *the untranslatable*. By *the untranslatable*, Apter means the realm of those literary works which come from less privileged literary traditions and are 'fated' to be translated, retranslated and mistranslated (p. 13). This is how these works keep roaming from language to language without getting their belongingness vindicated anywhere.

The English language, however, is just one out of many protocols of the elitist club. Another equally imposing protocol which guards the gatekeeping of this elitist club is the procedure for awarding the literary prizes to the works of 'exceptional merit'. The way these literary prizes are awarded reinforces a politics of exclusion of non-English, non-European works. Here we will discuss only two prizes vis-à-vis the politics of translation: The Man Asian Literary Prize and the Nobel Prize.

The Man Asian Literary Prize used to be awarded annually to the 'best' novel by an Asian writer, either written in English or translated into English. It was reserved mainly for the so-called third world countries including Pakistan whose first language is not English. It used to be Asia's most prominent literary prize which eventually ceased in 2012. The very criterion laid down for its award puts the non-native, non-English writers at the mercy of translation. There have been quite a few accomplished writers from the Third World who could not make it on account of the poor translations of their otherwise extremely good novels.

Take the example of *1Q84*, a dystopian novel written by Japanese writer Haruki Murakami in 2009. This novel was a major sensation and great success immediately after its publication and the day it came out, its entire first printing was sold out the same day. Within a month its sale reached one million copies (Bosman, 2011). In a review published in *The Japan Times*, it was insightfully predicted that the novel "may become a mandatory read for anyone trying to get to grips with contemporary Japanese culture" (1Q84 Review, 2012). The novel was longlisted for the 2011 prize but could not be shortlisted. Some of the critics and reviewers attributed this failure to the incapacity of the translation to capture

the essence of the text (Kelts, 2013).

This is how the writers who write in their own language and are subsequently translated into English are disadvantaged. There are other such examples too. The second problem was the insufficient attention given to the translated novels. For example, the 2011 shortlist had only two translated novels, whereas number of novels written directly in English was six.

The Nobel Prize is also surrounded by this politics of translation but in an inverted fashion. Literature composed in distinctly different traditions is less likely to be accepted in English translation. This may explain the reasons behind mild to severe protestations in the Anglo-American world at the choice of a writer writing either in a non-European language or a little known European language (see Anderman & Rogers, 2005). There protestations were mild if the work followed Anglo-American literary norms but severe if these norms were 'violated'.

Even-Zohar has realized this problem with unparalleled perceptiveness. To him, literatures composed in distinctly different linguistic and literary traditions are markedly less likely to be welcomed by the English readership. This kind of exclusive attitude can account for common situations in which eyebrows are frequently raised in the Anglo-American world at the award of the prize to a writer from some non-European language. His following quote suitably sums up this section:

> We have no choice but to admit that within a group of relatable national literatures, such as the literatures of non-European nations, hierarchical relations are soon established, with the result that within this macropolysystem some literatures take more peripheral positions (Even-Zohar, 1978, p. 121).

6. Conclusion

In this paper it has been seen how translation *from* or *into* English is not purely a linguistic matter which could be approached from some supposedly *natural* and value-free perspective. Particularly when it comes to Urdu-English/English-Urdu translation, the situation is compounded by myriad ideological and cultural issues. Currently, the present linguistic stronghold of English is matched by the central position held by the Anglo-American literary tradition which has a built-in tendency to relegate the translated works from other languages to more peripheral

positions. There are asymmetrical power relations between Urdu and English which impact upon their mutual translations. Moreover, translating *out of* and translating *into* English have always been two different procedures marked by distinct sets of protocols. This asymmetry between English and Urdu is real and calls for a nuanced analysis which could take into consideration not mere linguistic aspects but also larger cultural and social factors.

When the phrase Urdu-English/English-Urdu translation is talked about, one is likely, at least subconsciously, to think of a sociolinguistic parity between these two languages. This however is not the case. There is a two-way effect of translation whenever English and Urdu are paired together. When the translation is from English to Urdu, it mostly tends to be an effective dissemination of Anglophone values. Interestingly, even when the translation is from Urdu to English, the same process comes into play, albeit in an inverted way. This results into an asymmetrical process of othering and marginalization in which English is privileged to act as a subject and Urdu is restrained to behave like an object. The cultural and linguistic leverage available to Urdu is not available to Urdu which constantly faces rigidly domesticating conventions strong enough to rewrite it in the image of the target text. This Anglophone tradition of domestication was developed in the heyday of British colonialism in India when the very notion of translation went through subtle but far-reaching transformations.

It has also been seen how the practice of retranslation and indirect translation into Urdu is filtering out the distinctiveness of literary works from such traditions as French, Portuguese, German, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, etc. Along with this, the researchers have also viewed the politics of prizes, subtleties of self-translations and the elitist nature of world literature with its protocols of exclusion and marginalization. The following statement by one of the most perceptive translation scholars of our times furnishes an apt dénouement for this paper:

> [T]he ideology of a translation resides not simply in the text translated, but in the voicing and stance of the translator, and in the relevance to the receiving audience. These latter features are affected by the place of enunciation of the translator: indeed they are part of what we mean by the "place" of enunciation, for that "place" is an ideological positioning as well as a geographical or temporal one. These aspects of a translation are motivated and determined by the translator's cultural and ideological affiliations as much as or even more than by the temporal and spatial location that the translator speaks from (Tymoczko, 2010, p. 83).

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