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Two Encounters with the Cultural Other: Paulo Coelho's *A Bruxa de Portobello* and its English Translation

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities,
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts in Translation

ABSTRACT

This study recognises the need for greater cultural interaction in a globalised world in which cultural identities are no longer contained within national borders. The aim of this dissertation is, therefore, to address concerns arising from the role played by literary translation as a cultural mediator within contemporary societies. The theoretical framework is drawn from the concept of an "in-between space" in the work of the post-colonial theorist, Homi Bhabha (1990, 2005), and Emmanuel Levinas's (1991, 1993) understanding of the relationship between the self (the Same) and an external other (the Other). The relevance of these theoretical concepts to the field of translation studies is explored and these are then practically applied to *A Bruxa de Portobello* (2006), a novel written by a contemporary Brazilian author, Paulo Coelho, and its English translation (2007). The analysis of the two novels considers the ways in which otherness is presented in both texts, from which conclusions are drawn showing that literary translation can be used as an instrument to promote greater cultural understanding.

DECLARATION

I, Sarah-Leah Marques Pimentel, declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Translation. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page Number

ABSTRACT ii

DECLARATION iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv

TABLE OF CONTENTS v

CHAPTER ONE – Introduction

1.1. Description of the Study 1

1.1.1. Translated Literature in English-speaking Countries 1

1.1.2. The Paulo Coelho Phenomenon 3

1.1.3. Aims 5

1.1.4. Theoretical Framework 6

1.1.5. Research Questions 9

1.1.6. Choice of Novel 9

1.1.7. Breakdown of Chapters 10

1.2. Paulo Coelho and his Position within the Global Literary Context 12

1.2.1 Background Information on Paulo Coelho 12

1.2.2 Literary Criticism 13

1.2.3. *The Witch of Portobello* 15

CHAPTER TWO – The Crisis in the Representation of Cultural Identities

2.1. Introduction 18

2.2. Translation as an Agent in the Formation of Cultural Representations 18

2.3 English as a World Language 21

2.3.1. The Translation of English Literatures into Foreign Languages 21

2.3.2. The Translation of Foreign-Language Novels into English 28

2.4 Overcoming Cultural Hegemony 34

CHAPTER THREE – Novel Ways of Encountering the Cultural Other

3.1. 'A Crisis of Identity' 37

3.2. Homi Bhabha: Encountering the Cultural Other in an In-Between-Space 40

3.2.1. Theoretical Framework 40

3.2.2. In-Between-Spaces in *The Witch of Portobello* 42

3.2.3. Representational Limits 48

3.3. Emmanuel Levinas: Encounter Between the Same and the Other as Presentation 49

3.3.1. An Overview 49

3.3.2. The Encounter Between the Same and Other in *The Witch of Portobello* 53

3.3.3 An Imperfect Relationship with the Other 57

CHAPTER FOUR – Encounters with An-'Other' in Translation

4.1. Introduction 60

4.2 The Reduction of the Other to the Order of the Same in the English Translation ... 63

4.3. Encounters with Irreducible Alterity in Costa's English Translation 70

4.4. Finding a New Space for Translation and Translators 76

CHAPTER FIVE – Conclusion

5.1. Summary 83

5.2. Conclusions 87

5.3. Challenges and Possibilities for Future Studies 88

APPENDICES

Appendix one: Email Interview with Margaret Jull Costa 91

REFERENCES 95

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

> "The up-world dreams are the currency that grips the city streets. I live there now but I have my own hidden somewhere deep inside of me. In between my father's fields and the citadels of the rule lies a no-man's land which I must cross to find my stolen jewel. They said I should learn to speak a little bit of English, maybe practise birth control and keep away from controversial politics to save my Third World soul." (*Third World Child*, Juluka and Johnny Clegg)

1.1 Description of the Study

1.1.1 Translated Literature in English-speaking Countries

I invite my reader to visit a good bookshop and peruse the bestseller collection. At the time of writing[1], all of the books in the bestseller section at both Exclusive Books and Fascination Books were English-language originals. The Top Ten list at one of the local branches of Exclusive Books on 4 October 2008 (Exclusive Books, 2008) included two children's novels by Meg Cabot and four adult novels by Stephanie Meyer, a novel by an Irish author and a further three authors from the United States. This means that nine of the ten novels on the bestseller list were written in the United States. In fact, the last time an Exclusive Books bestseller of the year list included a foreign-language text was in 1999, when Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*, originally written in Portuguese, claimed the number five position and the Spanish-language *Daughter of Fortune* by Chile's Isabel Allende reached number ten (Exclusive Books, 2008). Further research revealed that this trend is not unique to South Africa. Although I was unable to locate a comprehensive list for the last decade, many international English-language online bookstores provided their current bestseller list and, at best, the top ten novels of 2007. The 2007 bestseller list and the current top ten sales for Amazon.com (as on 7 October 2008) only featured novels written by authors from the United States and the United Kingdom, a trend that is replicated by Barnes & Nobel (2008), another bookstore in the United States. The bestseller list at HarperCollins

[1] October 2008.

(2008a) in Australia on 20 October 2008 also included an even distribution of English-language novels written by Australian, British and United States authors. Similarly, Hodder & Stoughton's (2008) bestsellers for the first week of November hail from the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The above observation questions the popularity among English-speaking audiences of foreign-language novels in translation. This study discusses some of the possible reasons as to why foreign-language translations are not as popular among English-speaking audiences as English-language novels originating mainly from the United States and the United Kingdom. This is not to say, however, that foreign-language novels are not available in South Africa and other overseas markets in which English is spoken. One only needs to examine the winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature (Nobel Prizes, 2008) over the last ten years to see that foreign literatures are valued. The winners include three British authors, including one born in Trinidad, writers from Turkey, Austria, Hungary, Germany, Portugal, Italy, South Africa's J.M. Coetzee and a Chinese-born author who also writes in French. The English translations of novels by the non English-speaking authors on this list are readily available from Exclusive Books' online store. During my visit to my local Exclusive Books branch, however, I was able to find only a scant collection of novels by the overseas English-speaking Nobel Prize winners, Doris Lessing and V.S Naipaul. As expected, J.M Coetzee was well-represented in the South African literature section but I was unable to locate any novels by the other foreign-language Nobel Prize winners. I did find various other translations of several lesser known foreign-language novelists, the majority of which dealt with human rights issues. The implications of these findings are discussed in Chapter Two of this study, but what is important to note here, at the outset, is that texts by foreign-language Nobel Prize winners, including the most recent winner, Jean-Marie Le Clézio, were not available at this relatively large branch of Exclusive Books and, more generally, foreign-language authors translated into English have not made enough of an impact on South African readers to reach bestseller status.

Richard Jacquemond (1992:139) conducted similar research, focusing particularly on the translation between French and Arabic literature, and observed that the popularity of translated texts follows the trends of international trade. In his research, Jacquemond found that countries

with greater economic power were less likely to translate literatures from countries with a lower economic currency, while less dominant economies were more likely to translate imported literatures. In summary, then Jacquemond observes that

> it is no surprise that the global translation flux is predominantly North-North, while South-South translation is almost nonexistent and North-South translation is unequal: cultural hegemony confirms, to a great extent, economic hegemony. (1992:139)

In his analysis, Lawrence Venuti (1998:160-161) extends the research conducted by Jacquemond by examining the status of literary translation in the English-speaking world. He found that most of the translation that has taken place since the end of the Second World War has involved English-language cultures. Yet, as Jacquemond also observed in relation to the predominance of French, most of these literatures were translated out of English into other languages. Venuti (1998: 160) refers to the 1987 UNESCO statistics which records the translation of approximately 65,000 texts of which 32,000, that is 49,2% were translated out of English, while the remaining 33,000 titles consisted of a wide variety of other language combinations. In a further example, Venuti tells us that in 1994, 51,863 novels were published in English, but of these, only 1,418 (that is, 2,74%) were translations from other languages. Venuti says that these results suggest the "marginal position" of translation in English-speaking cultures, adding that when foreign-language texts are translated into English, "writing in African, Asian and South American languages attracts relatively little interest from publishers (1998:160)" where greater interest is placed on European texts.

1.1.2. The Paulo Coelho Phenomenon

It is against this backdrop that Paulo Coelho appears as a significant exception. Paulo Coelho is a Brazilian author writing in Portuguese and his novels have been translated into numerous languages, including English, and have sold more than100 million copies (Coelho, 2008: inside cover). He has, accordingly, been described as an "alchemist of words," "a mass culture phenomenon" and the "most influential author of the present century" (Sant-Jordi, 2002). *The Alchemist*, originally appearing in Portuguese under the title *O Alquimista* (1988) and translated

into English in 1993, tells the story of a simple shepherd boy who dreams of a great treasure and travels through Spain to North Africa to find it. Originally, the novel only sold 900 copies in Brazil and the publishing house decided not to reprint. The relative success of his next novel, *Brida*, once again drew attention to *O Alquimista* and its translation into English launched Coelho's international career and by 1 September 2004, the translation had sold more than 1,2 million English-language copies (Sant-Jordi, 2008). In 2002, the executive director for HarperCollins, John Loudon, wrote to Coelho, indicating that "*The Alchemist* has become one of the most important books in our company's recent history" (Sant-Jordi, 2002). The Paulo Coelho biography included in *The Witch of Portobello* (2007:329-331) indicates that according to Portugal's most important literary authority, *Jornal de Letras de Portugal*, *The Alchemist* is the "most sold book in the history of language."

The phenomenal success attributed to Paulo Coelho seems to indicate that the translation barrier described above by Venuti has been broken, especially given that Chile's Isabel Allende also reached international bestseller status during the 1990s (Exclusive Books, 2008). This success further appears to refute Venuti's premise that "translation is a cultural practice that is deeply implicated in relations of domination" (1998:158) which he explains as a process that has been in place since the colonisation of the Americas, Asia and Africa by European countries. Translation, first used as process of communication between colonising and colonised cultures, became a means of forming cultural identities based on a representation of the foreign culture (Venuti, 1998:67). The dominance of English-speaking cultures such as that of the United States and the United Kingdom, however, promote the values held by these dominant cultures such that they are assimilated into less dominant cultures whereas the translations of foreign-language novels in dominant English-speaking societies "conform to the styles and themes that *currently* prevail in domestic literatures" (Venuti, 1998:67) as well as the stereotypes that these societies give to the representation of foreign otherness.

Paulo Coelho's writing adopts a style that appears to differ from contemporary literature in the English-speaking literary world. He uses the simplicity of style common to the popular English-language novel to express more complex philosophies, focusing particularly on the meaning of life and spirituality, themes which are not commonly explored in popular literature originating

from the United Kingdom and the United States. His overwhelming acceptance in the English-speaking literary realm suggests that either contemporary cultural and literary values have shifted or else the dominant culture has become more tolerant of alternative representations of foreign otherness and differing literary values.

It is clearly impossible to provide a definitive answer to any of these considerations without exploring a wide body of foreign literatures that have been translated into English and the influence these have exerted on dominant English-speaking cultures. This study of Coelho's writing, in particular, his most recent novel, *A Bruxa de Portobello*, and its English translation by Margaret Jull Costa, *The Witch of Portobello*, is merely a preliminary exploration of some of the current dynamics at play in the contemporary translation of foreign-language texts into English. In particular, I am concerned with the way in which representations of cultural otherness have been dealt with in contemporary literary translation and the way in which these interact with representations of otherness in the dominant culture.

1.1.3. Aims

My analysis of the representations of cultural otherness in *A Bruxa de Portobello* and its English translation aims to address the concerns surrounding the role that literary translation plays in cultural mediation.

Doris Bachmann-Medick (2006:36) reminds us that contemporary translation theory and its application are no longer concerned with translation as a faithful copy of a source text. Instead, the focus has shifted to translation as a mediatory tool in the interaction between cultures, what Bachmann-Medick calls "translation as a commitment to cultural understanding" (2006:34). She argues that in a world that is becoming increasingly globalised with the effect of producing far greater instances of inter-cultural interaction, it is necessary to find "strategies of cultural encounter or the negotiation of differences" (2006:34). However, she is aware that in the past, translation was used as a tool for the subjugation of less powerful societies by more dominant ones and recognises that the consequences of this must be taken into consideration whenever translation is used for the purposes of cultural mediation.

This study consequently considers the way in which translation theory has dealt with issues of cultural representation in the past and seeks to find alternatives that will promote greater cultural interaction in the future. Previously, the autonomy of the cultural subject residing outside of the dominant culture was ignored and I show that this is particularly true in the translation of literary texts into English. It is therefore necessary to find a new approach to translation that preserves the holistic identity of the foreign subject. In particular, two philosophers, Homi Bhabha (1990, 2005) and Emmanuel Levinas (1991, 1993 (ed. Pepperzak)) suggest different ways to engage with foreign culture subjects in contemporary literature, thus giving rise to a new relationship between these texts, their authors and translators. My exploration of this relationship, both in the analysis of Paulo Coelho's novel, *A Bruxa de Portobello*, and the differences arising from its English translation, shows that although, in theory, these philosophical notions present a useful approach to the depiction of cultural subjects, these theories are imperfect in practice unless we also find new strategies for the translation of foreign-language texts into culturally dominant languages, such as English.

1.1.4 Theoretical Framework

It is therefore useful for our purposes to examine the effects of the representation of otherness, particularly the other who is also culturally 'other,' in Western Enlightenment philosophy and the manner in which representations of otherness have contributed to the construction of individual identity, or the self. Twentieth century philosophers, such as Stuart Hall (1992, 1997), have argued that such formulations for the identity of the self are, ultimately, counterproductive because the identity of the subject is oriented around representations of that which he is not, while the identity of the other, as seen through the eyes of the self is incomplete, thus negating the true identity of the other. Tejaswini Niranjana (1992:171) summarises this ineffectual formulation of identity, in which "the Western subject is constituted not only through a repression of the non-Western other but also through a marginalisation of his own otherness."

So then, encumbered by its history, translation as "cultural construction" (Bachmann-Medick, 2006:36) has been viewed with a certain degree of suspicion. Recent theorists, such as Gayatri Spivak (2000) and Michaela Wolf (2000, 2002), have attempted formulate a different view of translation, on the basis that translation does not attempt to offer a definitive vision of cultural

otherness but rather allows a variety of often contrasting cultural voices to interact with one another so as to provide

> an anti-essentialist and anti-holistic metaphor that aims to uncover counter-discourses, discursive forms and resistant actions *within* a culture, heterogeneous discursive spaces within a society. (Bachmann-Medick, 2006:37)

Although Homi Bhabha, in this ground-breaking text *The Location of Culture* (2005) published in 1994, does not specifically refer to translation, he nevertheless proposes ways in which such "discursive spaces" can be achieved. He suggests that writers, especially post-colonial writers, do not and cannot reside within static representational spaces, calling rather for the need to "focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences" (2005:2). These differences he calls a 'beyond' (2005:4) that cannot be reached while operating from within a subject position. It is for this reason that Bhabha describes writers as 'migrants' who belong neither to one or another representational field but rather negotiate the differences between them from within an "intervening space" or "in-between-space (2005:10). The authorial voice is not a lone one, but rather participates in dialogical tension with numerous other such voices. It is within this space that a clearer picture of cultural representation can be gained, "such that the truest eye may now belong to the migrant's double vision" (2005:7-8).

Bhabha's work is far-reaching precisely because it holds true for a number of literary fields and extends beyond post-colonial locations to contemporary societies in a globalised world. For example, Paulo Coelho similarly displays a concern in writing from the perspective of the migrant. In an interview with Glauco Ortolano (2003), during which he speaks about his writing, Coelho explains that he rarely writes about Brazil, choosing rather to place his characters in other settings and describe these accordingly. He has said that he consciously makes the decision to write about other people and places on grounds that "it is one thing to write about Brazil and quite another to see the world through the eyes of a Brazilian – something that is present in each line that I write" (2003:58). Coelho's aim is achieved in *A Bruxa de Portobello* in which the main character is placed in a variety of European and Middle Eastern settings and each of these is described from the perspective of a Brazilian author, whose own reality is very distinct from

any of these settings. Here, Coelho provides a cultural representation which should not be understood as definitive but as one of many other contesting representations. For this reason, it is particularly interesting to analyse representations of cultural otherness in this novel from Homi Bhabha's perspective so as to examine how these representations are altered when the novel is translated into English.

However, many proponents of translation as an act of cultural mediation merely discuss the need for greater cultural interaction without providing practical strategies that can be employed in the translation of the cultural other. Cultural mediation is not possible if we persist in orienting the identity of the self in terms its opposition to the identity of the other. The theorists agree on this point, but do not provide, as we shall see, a satisfying alternative to the shortfalls in the construction of identity. It is perhaps useful to turn back to the post-World War Two philosophers, from which many of our contemporary post-colonial theories have emerged, in search of an alternative relationship between the self and the other. In this regard, Emmanuel Levinas is particularly useful. Levinas explains that the other is more than a physical entity, embodying, so to speak, a whole range of physical and metaphysical relations that reside outside of the self. He employs the term "the Other" to describe an otherness that is "absolutely other" (1991:39) and goes on to explain that, since representation operates from the perspective of the self, (or the Same to use Levinasian terminology), any representation of the Other reduces his inalienable otherness so that the Other becomes almost identical to the same. In other words,

> [t]he metaphysical relation cannot be properly speaking a representation, for the other would therein dissolve into the same: every representation is essentially interpretable as a transcendental constitution. (1991:38)

Levinas therefore argues in favour of an ethical relationship between the Same and the Other, but this cannot occur on the basis of representation. The only way in which this relationship can occur is if the Same refrains from representing the Other and allows the Other to present himself in his entirety. This requires that the Same present himself to the Other by offering up his selfhood and allowing the Other to take up residence in the Same (1993:25). This ethical relationship with the Other is explored at length in Chapter Three, but it is sufficient at this point

to state that a re-orientation of the relationship between the self and the other is necessary in developing an alternative strategy that negotiates cultural difference in translation and overcomes past injustices committed as a result of translation. Sandra Bermann argues that it is precisely because translation plays a role in shaping cultural and political values as well as cultural forms that it "foregrounds some explicitly ethical questions" (2005:5).

1.1.5. Research Questions

It cannot be denied that literary texts are, by nature, representational. This study, using *The Witch of Portobello* and its translation into English as an example, explores the way in which cultures are presented in literature and whether philosophers such as Bhabha and Levinas can offer some new paradigm so that literature, including literature in translation, can become a tool for cultural mediation. In my analysis of Coelho's novel, both in its original and translated version, I address the following questions:

1. What characteristics and presentations of cultural otherness does the Portuguese-language text provide?
2. Is the presentation of cultural otherness altered in the translation of the novel? If so, how?
3. How does the translator, Margaret Jull Costa, deal with the cultural other in the English version?
4. After considering the representations of cultural otherness in both the original source text and the translated target text, what assumptions can be made about Paulo Coelho's writing as an example of cultural mediation in the literary world, particularly one that is dominated by English-language literature?
5. Based on the example of *The Witch of Portobello*, what recommendations can be made for the presentation of otherness in translation so that it becomes an act of cultural mediation that responds to the call of the Other?

1.1.6. Choice of Novel

I have specifically chosen *A Bruxa de Portobello* because the central character, Athena, depicts the contemporary global citizen who appears to belong to the 'in-between-space' in Homi

Bhabha's philosophy, as she explores what she calls the "blank spaces" (2007:107) in her life. However, we never read about Athena's search from her perspective but rather from the perspective of other characters whose life journeys intersect with hers. The representations of Athena by the other characters, however, are organised by an unknown narrator. I show how these representations ultimately frustrate efforts to create a space in which cultural mediation can occur because the Other is presented in a way that merely resembles the Same, and therefore, I argue that the translation also perpetuates, to a degree, this reductive view of the Other, who is also the cultural other residing in a culturally hegemonic environment, and presents new facets of the cultural other that are not evident in the original text.

1.1.7. Breakdown of Chapters

Taking the above questions into consideration, this study is structured as follows. The remainder of this introductory chapter provides an overview of Paulo Coelho, the position he holds as a writer in the Portuguese-speaking world, particularly Brazil, his concerns as a writer, the extent to which his international success, particularly among English-speaking audiences, has transformed him from a popular writer to a literary phenomenon. I also explore his literary style and influences by referring to some of his other works, to show how they both differ from and are similar to *A Bruxa de Portobello* and contemporary popular literature in English.

In Chapter Two, I explore the role that translation has played in the English-speaking world during the colonial period and examine the effects of these developments on contemporary literary production at the start of the twenty-first century. I draw largely on research carried out by Lawrence Venuti (1992, 1998), Douglas Robinson (1997a) and Richard Jacquemond (1992) to substantiate my discussion. Their findings are then applied to my own investigation of the number of English translations of foreign-language popular fiction novels[2] in which cultural otherness is represented. This data is then compared with the number of English-language novels that have been translated into Portuguese, Spanish and French.

[2] In this study, I will use the term 'foreign-language' novels to designate all novels that are not originally written in English. These include novels written in South Africa's other official languages.

Chapter Three is dedicated to a discussion of developments in the Western understanding of identity. This discussion includes a brief overview of the way in which the identity of the subject was formulated during the Enlightenment period and the consequences that this held for the relationship between the self and the other throughout the colonial period, which persisted into the twentieth century, and its ties to a relationship of oppression. I show the way in which Homi Bhabha (2005) and Emmanuel Levinas (1991, 1993) conceive of an interaction between the self and the other that no longer subjects the cultural other to the reductive and stereotyped representations of the past. These theoretical concepts are then applied to a detailed analysis of *A Bruxa de Portobello* (2006) to determine the nature of the relationship between the self and the other in this novel, particularly the relationship between the narrator and the central character, Athena and the relationship that other characters have with Athena.

The relationship between the self and the other has become a central concern for translation theorists and in Chapter Four, I begin by analysing the slight differences between the *A Bruxa de Portobello* and its English translation and show how these differences simultaneously reduce and increase the distance between the Same and the Other, based on Levinas's and Bhabha's understanding of the relationship with otherness. This examination of the two texts forms the basis for an exploration of the 'cultural turn[3]' in translation studies by focusing on the work produced by Doris Bachmann-Medick (2006), Gayatri Spivak (2000), Michaela Wolf (2000, 2002) and Lawrence Venuti (1995, 1998, 2000). I make use of these theories to suggest ways in which cultural representation in translation can become increasingly conscious of the Levinasian relationship between the Same and the Other and thereby promote intercultural dialogue as advocated by Homi Bhabha (2005).

In my concluding chapter, I summarise the overall conclusions drawn from the study, assess both its successes and pitfalls and provide recommendations for further studies of this nature.

[3] This term was first used by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere in 1990 in their introduction to a collection of essays on translation, history and culture (in Bassnett, 1998:23)

1.2. Paulo Coelho and his position within the global literary context

1.2.1. Background information on Paulo Coelho

Paulo Coelho's agents, San Jordi Asociados (2002), provide a biography of Paulo Coelho's life and achievements on their website, giving us a better indication of the man behind the internationally successful texts. Born in 1947, Paulo Coelho is the progeny of a restrictive society and the dictatorship that governed Brazil between 1964 and 1985. His parents also worried that he did not conform to acceptable social norms and by the time he was seventeen, they had committed him to a mental institution on three different occasions where he also received shock treatment. After completing school, Coelho entered the theatre and also worked as a journalist. These two professions were also seen as breeding grounds for immorality and his parents, concerned for his well-being, once again admitted him to a mental institution.

In the 1970s Coelho worked as a lyricist for the well-known Brazilian singer, Raul Seixas, and the partnership gained considerable popularity. They also joined the Alternative Society "an organization that opposed capitalist ideology, defended the individual's right to do whatever he pleased and also practiced black magic" (San Jordi Asociados, 2002). At this time Coelho began to produce a comic strip subversively criticising the dictatorial regime and was consequently imprisoned and tortured. It was only in 1987 that Coelho wrote his first novel, later translated into English as *The Pilgrimage (The Diary of a Magus)*, after going on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. This first novel was relatively successful in Brazil despite a small print run. His second novel, *O Alquimista (The Alchemist)*, however, only sold 900 copies and drew little attention. With the publication of *Brida* in 1990, Coelho once again received significant media attention and this led to the re-publication of his previous novels, including *O Alquimista*. HarperCollins in the United States commissioned the translation of *The Alchemist* which went on to sell 50,000 copies in its first edition which the publisher described as "the largest ever print run of a Brazilian book in the United States" (Sant-Jordi, 2002). This success launched Coelho's international career and to date, he has sold more than 100 million copies of his novels in sixty-six different languages (Coelho, 2007: inside cover) and each new novel has become an international bestseller.

Coelho has also become the bestselling Portuguese-language author and is a popular writer in South America, including Brazil. His agents describe him as "a European phenomenon that has spread throughout the world" (San Jordi Asociados, 2002). He has also received various international literary awards, among them, the French *Chevalier des Artes et des Lettres* (1996), the Crystal Award (1999), Germany's BAMBI Award (2001) as well as the Club of Budapest Planetary Arts Award and the Best Fiction Corine Award (2002). Following significant controversy, in 2002 he was also elected to the Brazilian Academy of Letters, a prestigious association that aims to safeguard the Brazilian language and culture.

Coelho's work is characterised by a multi-cultural understanding that transcends national borders and it is perhaps for this reason that he was the first non-Muslim writer to visit Iran since 1979 and was invited to participate in the UNESCO program for Spiritual Convergences and Intercultural Dialogue (San Jordi Asociados, 2002). The creation of the Paulo Coelho Institute in Rio de Janeiro to care for underprivileged children and elderly people also displays his commitment to social development, an element that can be traced in his novels through his exploration of human identity and self-worth.

1.2.2. Literary Criticism

Over the last two decades, Paulo Coelho's work has received extensive literary criticism ranging from unreserved praise for his literary style and content to disparaging comments on the poor quality of his work and the simplicity of his literary technique, themes and characters. France's *Le Nouvel Observateur* has attributed Coelho's literary success to "his simple, clear and pure language" (San Jordi Asociados, 2002) which is deceptively easy to produce. Glauco Ortolano (2003) acknowledges that "critics simply disparage Coelho's narrative simplicity" but Coelho himself has commented on this approach, explaining that "I wanted to talk about ancient themes, but using modern language" (in an interview with Jessica Thind, 2007). Those who review his books, such as Jaya Ramesh (2007), suggest that Coelho creates captivating narratives that allow readers to explore "the hidden journey into the hidden power of our life" and consider more spiritual aspects of our common human experience.

Many other critics, however, feel that Coelho's work is substandard and have openly objected to his inclusion into the Brazilian Academy of letters. Marcelo Pen (2003) criticises Coelho's texts saying that they contain "um certo desapego à realidade"/*a certain detachment from reality*, giving him the liberty to "flertar com a fantasia"/*flirt with fantasy* in a manner that often lacks credibility. Ary Carlos Moura Cardoso (2008) also criticises the quality of Coelho's novels and although he acknowledges the writer's "capacidade nararativa"/*narrative ability*, he adds that much of Coelho's success can be attributed to readers' need to "buscar mensagens positivas para a vida"/*find positive life messages*. He admits that in some of Coelho's more recent novels, the Brazilian writer has begun to explore "problemas sociais e politicos inexistentes em livros anteriores"/*social and political problems that are non-existent in previous novels*, but the stories lack "inventividade narrativa"/*narrative creativity* and what he calls "mágico pop"/*pop magic* has been over-used in an effort to promote " uma mudança progressiva de imagem, após a consagração internacional"/*a progressive change of image following his international popularity*. Cardoso further accuses Coelho of creating characters that "falta, por exemplo, densidade psicológia"/*lack, for example, psychological substance* and says that the author provides answers to life's questions instead of generating further questions. As a result, he describes Coelho's writing as "literatura mediana"/ *popular literature* instead of "alta literature" *high literature*.

Cardoso makes another interesting comment, suggesting that Coelho's popularity abroad is attributed to the translation of texts that

> atravessam fronteiras e convocam diferentes pessoas a compartilhar as mesmas paixões, identificando-se com [as personagens].
>
> [my translation: *cross borders and allow different people to share the same passions and thus identify themselves with the characters*].

He adds that it is easy to translate Coelho's simple narratives and the translations are often of a better quality than the original text, which has helped to boost his image as a serious writer.

Cardoso therefore concludes that Coelho's success is a "expoente máximo da industria cultural"/*the ultimate product of the culture industry*.

Stephen Hart (2004:305) takes the various critics' arguments into consideration and explains that while Coelho's novels are replete with grammatical errors[4], "there is no doubt that Coelho is a sociological phenomenon" and his novels have changed readers' perceptions of the Latin American novel. He argues that Coelho adopts a "few delicate hints of magical realism" (2004:305), characteristic of many of the other contemporary literary texts that have emerged from South America over the last few decades, but he does not alienate his audience by delving too deeply into this mystical realm which uses "real objects in such a way as to reveal their hidden mystery" (2004:306). In addition to this, the simplicity of Coelho's style and narrative structure ensures that his texts are accessible to a much wider audience than some of his other Latin American counterparts. We can therefore conclude from the mixed criticism surrounding Coelho's writing that critics are still unable to assess whether the 'Brazilian phenomenon' is truly worthy of the acclaim he has received or whether he is merely a captivating storyteller with a winning formula.

1.2.3 *The Witch of Portobello*

This novel tells the story of Athena from the perspective of the other characters who knew her. She is born in Romania but is left at an orphanage by her natural mother and adopted by a childless Lebanese couple. At the start of the civil war in Lebanon, the family immigrate to England and settle in London. Athena takes on all of the characteristics of an English girl, but after marrying a man of Swedish descent, bearing his child and divorcing him, she begins to search for her roots and what she calls the "blank spaces" (2007:107) in her life. Her search takes her to various countries before she finally allows a metaphysical being, the Great Mother whom Athena calls the Hagia Sophia, to use her body as a vehicle from which to proclaim her message. This can be interpreted as the Levinasian relationship between the Same and the Other because Athena offers her selfhood to the Hagia Sophia, who in turn manifests her Otherness to Athena and those gathered around to hear her teachings. Her embodiment of a feminine divinity

[4] Incidentally, Coelho refuses to alter these grammatical errors on grounds that they alter the 'numerology' of the text (Hart, 2004:305)

draws much attention in Portobello Road, ranging from quasi-worship to hatred and condemnation. At the start of the novel, the reader is told that Athena is dead and the narrator proposes to write about her life from the perspective the people who knew her. However, as the novel draws to its conclusion, we realise that Athena is not dead after all and merely fakes her death to escape the overbearing media attention that her actions had stimulated. The decision by the unknown narrator, who we later discover is her long-time partner, to present the story of her life from the perspective of the other characters thus becomes questionable, since he decides to write her biography without her consent (even though he knows that she is alive and in fact, helped her to fake her death) and offer it to her as a surprise birthday gift. In Chapter Three, I consider the implications that this holds for cultural mediation and the relationship with the Other.

The novel has received varied criticism from newspaper and online critics both in and outside of Brazil. Marcelo Pen (2006) argues that *A Bruxa de Portobello* "naufraga em enredo desconexo"/*capsizes in an incoherent tangle*, calling it "um dos romances mais ambiciosos do escritor Paulo Coelho"/*one of Paulo Coelho's most ambitious novels* in which he attempts to provide a range of different narratives but "o problema é que não há basicamente muita diferença entre eles"/ *the problem is that there is essentially little difference between them* where

> O depoimento de cada personagem, seja de uma cigana analfabeta dos Cárpatos, seja de um douto historiador, soa-nos igual, com sua fé no sagrado, a naturalidade com que abraçam o sobrenatural e sua tendência em ver a tal bruxa de Portobello da mesmíssima forma.
>
> [my translation: *the testimony of each character, whether given by an illiterate gypsy or a learned historian, sounds the same to us, together with their faith in the sacred and the naturalness with which they embrace the supernatural and their tendency to see the so-called witch of Portobello in the same way*.]

Pen further criticises inconsistencies, linguistic errors and "bobagens ditas como verdades universais"/ *nonsense expressed as universal truths*. John Burgman (2007) writes that this novel

is testimony as to "why not every Coelho book is a winner" since the novel is "overloaded with platitudes about love and inner truth." These negative reviews are in contrast to others, such as that by Steven McEvoy (2007), who assesses that "part of what draws the reader in is the story itself and part is the very unique way it is written" and in conclusion we are told that "this book is better than some of Coelho's more recent offerings, and the narrative tool will draw you in and keep you turning the pages."

Although Paulo Coelho has received varied criticism, his writing nevertheless explores several contemporary social issues. In *A Bruxa de Portobello*, Coelho explores the notion of cultural, religious and personal identity, a theme which becomes important in Chapter Three as we analyse passages in which the identity of the main character is presented from the perspective of others. These perspectives hold particular implications for translation, especially the way in which cultural identities are handled in translation. Differences between the two presentations of this character's identity offer translators an alternative way of negotiating cultural identities across language-groups.

CHAPTER TWO – THE CRISIS IN THE REPRESENTATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITIES

2.1 Introduction

It has already been established that the translation of English-language fiction into foreign languages is far more common than the translation of popular novels from foreign languages into English. In this chapter, I extend this observation and show that not only does translation between English-speaking and foreign cultures tend to be unidirectional but that foreign literatures that *do* enter Anglophone cultures through translation tend to reinforce the stereotypes that the latter holds in relation to these foreign cultures. These observations hold several implications for the representation of foreign cultures in literary texts. One of the conclusions that can be drawn is that the almost insignificant quantity of literary translations into English limits the diversity of cultural representations available to English-speaking readers, which in turn influences perceptions of cultural otherness within Anglophone cultures. A further conclusion is that texts emerging from countries that are politically and culturally less dominant are more likely to be influenced by their more dominant counterparts in an attempt to replicate cultural representations existing in these societies so as to broaden readerships. These conclusions are not new and have, indeed, characterised the relationship between translation and the formation of cultural perceptions for centuries. It is therefore useful to pause for a moment and consider the role that translation previously played in the representation of cultural otherness.

2.2. Translation as an Agent in the Formation of Cultural Representations

If we examine the function of cultural representations within their historical context, we notice that the cultural group perpetuating the representation tends to show up the inferiority of the other culture in comparison with its own superiority. E.M Forster's *A Passage to India* is replete

with such representations. In one example, Ronny Heaslop, an English magistrate in India describes an educated Indian doctor in the following terms:

> Aziz was exquisitely dressed from tie-pin to spats, but he had forgotten his back collar-stud, and there you have the Indian all over: inattention to detail; the fundamental slackness that reveals the race. (1988:97)

The magistrate is in India to secure England's continued control over the colonised territory and therefore represents the educated Indian man in terms of this inferior 'Indianness,' contrasting it with the superiority of an English culture that *is* attentive to detail. Even Cyril Fielding, a schoolteacher distrusted by his fellow Englishmen for not sharing their imperialist attitude, cannot quite escape the tendency to describe India in terms of what it lacks. By thinking that "there seemed no reserve of tranquillity to draw upon in India" (1988:94-95), Fielding implicitly suggests that England, in contrast, does perhaps possess this quality.

Richard Jacquemond (1992:140) claims that "inequality is the main feature of the relationship between Western and Third World languages and cultures" and this inequality can be directly attributed to the role played by translation throughout the colonial period and which continues, to a lesser extent, in present day intercultural interactions. Douglas Robinson (1997a:8) argues that this is because translation was an "indispensable" tool for the imperial project of subjugating colonised peoples to the authority of the imperial centre. The purpose of translation in the colonial project is clear: it is first necessary to establish communication with the colonised subject so that the superiority of the coloniser can be made apparent to the colonised subjects. The process of subjugation, which is both physical and psychological, then follows. Psychological subjugation results from the colonised subject's realisation that he is inferior to the colonial power and a need for self-preservation causes him to become what Robinson calls a "cooperative subject" (1997:8).

It is clear from the above summary that communication between the coloniser and the colonised cannot occur without the participation of a bilingual party who is able to communicate with both groups. The question then is: to whom should the task of translation be entrusted? The colonial

power must decide whether it is better to send one of its own people to learn the language of the colonised peoples or to make use of a member of the subjugated culture for this purpose. In both cases, the loyalty of the translator to the colonial power must be guaranteed. Exploring the implications of each of these strategies, Jacquemond (1992:155) explains that in the first instance, the translator is an "authoritative mediator" who enters the language-culture of the dominated people for the purposes of communicating the values of the dominant culture to the servile subjects and securing their cooperation. As a result, the translator does not internalise the language and culture of the subjected other and further manipulates it to serve the dominating culture's purposes, thus "[consuming] the dominated linguistic-cultural subject" (1992:155). This means that the dominant culture represents the subservient cultural other in terms of its limited understanding of that language-culture. Alternatively, in the case where a member of the dominated culture takes on the role of translator, his task is not to question the values of the dominant culture or the way it views the colonised peoples but to transmit the dominant culture's values to his people. There is, nevertheless, a disjunction between the way in which the colonising culture views its colonised subjects and the way in which the native translator perceives his own environment. Jacquemond (1992:155) describes the consequence of this as schizophrenic because the translator must represent an incomplete or even false image of his own culture, fashioned by the dominant cultural group, without the power to reformulate these representations.

In either case, translation is used to subjugate the colonial other and represent the foreign culture with the sole purpose of furthering imperial aims. Clearly, these representations are not likely to correspond with the perceptions that the subjugated peoples have of themselves but they lack the power to contest these authoritative representations. While the processes described here can be applied to the relationship between any colonising nation and its subjects throughout history, the continued dominance, or hegemony, of certain European cultures in contemporary society can be directly traced back to the last European colonisation of Africa, Asia and the Americas. The role played by these different language groups and the translation dynamics between the colonised and the coloniser hold significant consequences for the formation of cultural representations in the globalised world at the start of the twenty-first century.

2.3. English as a World Language

One important consequence of British colonialism, in particular, is the ascendancy of English as a world language and its continued influence over other cultural and linguistic groups, a phenomenon that both Robinson (1997a) and Venuti (1998) call hegemony. Robinson adopts Antonio Gramsci's definition of hegemony as

> a salutary attempt to explain the continuing force of authority to shape the self-concept, values, political systems and personalities of whole populations long after the external source of that authority has been removed. (1997a:22)

This definition helps us to understand the continued authority of English-speaking cultures, even in relation to some of the other former colonial powers, such as France and Spain. The rise of the United States as an economic and political powerhouse after the Second World War signifies that although the British Empire no longer controls large parts of the world, the values of the English-speaking world continue to dominate other cultures. Translation also has a role to play within this context, where Venuti tells us that it "now serves corporate capital instead of a nation state" (1998:165) and accordingly, transmits the values of the hegemonic culture to the less dominant culture. Furthermore, it is in the interest of less powerful countries to adopt and imitate some of the political and economic structures of the United States in an attempt to gain greater political and economic currency. It is hardly surprising, then, that this assimilation also spills over into the realm of the cultural as the values of popular culture originating in the United States continually find their way into popular cultural movements in other countries. Similarly, the literary norms prevalent in the hegemonic culture also enter into the literatures of the so-called Third World, or developing countries, through translation and/or imitation as shown in the discussion below.

2.3.1. The Translation of English Literatures into Foreign Languages

The table below (Figure 1) gives an indication of the bestselling novels for the last week of October 2008 at various bookstores in Portugal, France, Spain, Germany, Brazil and Chile. Of particular interest to us is the number of novels which are translations from the English in

comparison with those written in the language of the country by national authors or translations from languages other than English. Translations (TR) are indicated alongside the title of the novel.

PORTUGAL (Bertrand Livreiros)			**BRAZIL (Veja.com)**		
Pos.	**Novel/Author**	**Country**	**Pos.**	**Novel/Author**	**Country**
1.	*A Vida num Sopro* – José Rodrigues dos Santos	Portugal	1.	*O Vendedor de Sonhos* – Augusto Cury	Brazil
2.	*O Jogo do Anjo* – Carlos Ruiz Zafón (TR)	Spain	2.	*A Cabana (The Shack)* – William Young (TR)	US
3.	*Sinto Muito* – Nuno Lobo Antunes	Portugal	3.	*Lua Nova (New Moon)* – Stephanie Meyer (TR)	US
4.	*A Lâmpada de Aladino* – Luis Sepúlveda (TR)	Chile	4.	*O Pequeno Principe* – Antoine de Saint-Expúry (TR)	France
5.	*O Archipélago da Insónia* – António Lobo Antunes	Portugal	5.	*Crepúsculo (Twilight)* – Stephanie Meyer (TR)	US
6.	*Um Homen com Sorte (The Lucky One)* – Nicholas Sparks (TR)	US	6.	*O Jogo do Anjo* – Carlos Ruiz Zafón (TR)	Spain
7.	*Brisingr* – Christopher Paolini (TR)	US	7.	*A Menina que Roubava Livros (The Book Thief)* - Markus Zusak (TR)	Australia
8.	*A Transição para a Democracia* – Diogo Freitas do Amaral	Portugal	8.	*Quando Nietzsche Chorou (When Nietzsche Wept)* – Irvin Yalom (TR)	US
9.	*Díario Secreto que Salazar Não Leu* – Ruí Araujo	Portugal	9.	*Ensaio sobre a Cegueira* - José Saramago	Portugal
10.	*O Vencedor Está Só* – Paulo Coelho	Brazil	10.	*Os Homens que Não Amam as Mulheres* – Stieg Larson (TR)	Sweden
SPAIN (Casa del Libro)			**CHILE (Antartica)**		
Pos.	**Novel/Author**	**Country**	**Pos.**	**Novel/Author**	**Country**
1.	*El Niño con Pijama de Rayas (The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas)* - John	Ireland	1.	*Harry Potter: Los Cuentos de Beedle el Bardo (The Tales of*	UK

	Boyne (TR)			*Beedle the Bard)* – J.K. Rowling (TR)	
2.	*Coltan: El Dinero Sucio de Sangre* – Alberto Vasquez-Figueroa	Spain	2.	*Brisingr* – Christopher Paolini (TR)	US
3.	*Crepusculo (Twilight)* – Stephanie Meyer (TR)	US	3.	Non-Fiction (Business)	Chile
4.	*La Muerte de Amalia Sacerdote* – Andrea Camilleri (TR)	Italy	4.	*Amanecer (Breaking Dawn)* - Stephanie Meyer (TR)	US
5.	*Los Hombres que no Amaban las Mujeres* – Stieg Larsson (TR)	Sweden	5.	Non-Fiction (History)	Chile
6.	*Amanecer (Breaking Dawn)* - Stephanie Meyer (TR)	US	6.	*Abejorros* – Francisca Valenzuela	Chile
7.	*Brisingr* – Christopher Paolini (TR)	US	7.	*Mil Soles Esplendidos (A Thousand Splendid Suns)* – Kaled Hosseini	US
8.	*El Arquitecto de Tombuctu* – Manuel Pimentel Siles	Spain	8.	*El Consumo me consome* – Tomás Moulian	Chile
9.	*El Sari Rojo* – Javier Moro	Spain	9.	Non-Fiction (Travel)	Chile
10.	*Tigre Blanco* - Aravind Adiga (TR)	India/ Australia	10.	*Tiempo de Morir (A Time to die)* – Wilbur Smith (TR)	Zambia/ UK
FRANCE (FNAC)			**GERMANY (Amazon.de)**		
1.	*Où on va, papa?* – Jean-Louis Fournier	France	1.	*Feuchtgebiete* - Charlotte Roche	Germany
2.	*Ritournelle de la faim* – Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio	France	2.	*Die Tore der Welt (World Without End)* - Ken Follet	US
3.	*Un Monde Sans Fin (World Without End)* – Ken Follet (TR)	US	3.	*Wer Bin Ich?* - Richard David Precht	Germany
4.	*Qu'ai-je donc fait* – Jean D' Ormesson	France	4.	*Die Leber wächst mit ihren Aufgaben. Kurioses aus der Medizin* – Eckart von Hirschhausen	Germany
5.	*Courir* – Jean Echenoz	France	5.	*Die Mütter-Mafia* – Kerstin Gier	Germany
6.	*Ce que le jour doit à la nuit* – Yasmina Khadra	Algeria	6.	*Die Letze Spur* – Charlotte Link	Germany
7.	*Là où les tigres sont chez eux* – Jean-Marie Blas De Roblès	France/ Algeria	7.	Non-fiction (Language)	Germany

8.	*Mon Évasion* – Benoît Groult	France	8.	*Bockmist* - Hugh Laurie (TR)	UK
9.	*L´élégance du hérisson* – Muriel Barberty	Morocco	9.	*Für jede Lösung ein Problem* – Kerstin Gier	Germany
10.	*Le Montespan* – Jean Teulé	France	10.	*Die Weisheit des Feuers (Brisingr)* – Christopher Paolini	US

Figure 1: Bestseller lists for fiction titles sold in the last week of October in Portugal, Brazil, Spain, Chile, France and Germany.

While the above bestseller lists, consisting of the top ten sales, are far from comprehensive, they give us an idea of the trends characterising the sale of fictional literature across a wide range of European and South American countries. It is evident that translated literature forms a common component on all of the lists and, in addition to this, each list includes the translation of one or more novels written by a United States author. The results for Chile are somewhat skewed as I was unable to find a bestseller list that only gave an indication of fictional titles. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that translation also makes up a sizeable portion of the texts that are sold at this Chilean online store.

The results show us that translated texts accounted for 40% of the novels sold by Bertrand Livreiros in Portugal, 80% of the titles listed in the Brazilian cultural publication, Veja.com, 70% of the fictional titles available at Spain's Casa del Libro and the number of translations at Chile's Antartica booksellers represented 50% of both the fiction and non-fiction titles that were sold during the last week of October 2008. In contrast, the number of translated titles for France's FNAC and Germany's Amazon.de were lower, representing 10% and 30%, respectively. It is possible that the dominance of mother-tongue texts in the German and French lists is attributed, in part, to strict language policies in these countries aimed at preserving national languages and customs. The average percentage of translated texts across these four language groups represents 46,67% of the total number of titles sold. This figure is similar to the statistics provided by Alexandra Assis Rosa (2002:175-191) in which she explored the number of translations at three large bookstores in Portugal over a six-year period. Rosa indicates that 37% of the fictional titles sold between 1994 and 1999 were translations, but added that many of these sales also included Portuguese novels used for academic purposes. In other words, a more realistic figure of the

titles purchased by Portuguese readers for personal enjoyment is likely to include even more translations.

She also found that in 1988 "novels by foreign authors were the second most frequently read genre, superseded only by novels by national authors" (2002:179). Our figures however, show that this is not the case, neither in Portugal nor the examples taken from Brazil, Spain and Chile. In fact, 50% of Bertrand's and Antartica's bestseller lists consist of national writers. The lists for Brazil and Spain were scantly represented by national authors, with only one and three national authors, respectively, appearing in the top ten positions. It is only on the French and German lists that numbers of national authors exceed translated texts, for the reasons previously suggested.

Rosa includes the bestseller list for Bertrand Livreiros in 2001 (2002:181) and it is interesting to note that there are only three Portuguese-language titles in the first ten entries and that the first Portuguese-entry only comes in at number three. Furthermore, three titles in the top ten are translations from Spanish texts and four are English translations, where the latter consists of three British authors and one from the United States.

	ST Author	***TT Title***
1.	J.K Rowling	Harry Potter e a Pedra Filosofal
2.	Isabel Allende	O retrato a sepia
3.	Miguel Sousa Tavares	Não te deixarei morrer, David Crockett
4.	Albert Uderzo	Asterix e Latraviata
5.	Laura Esquível	Tão veloz como o desejo
6.	Joanne Harris	Chocolate: Um (doce) romance de sabores e afectos
7.	Ricardo Sá Fernandes	O crime de Camarate
8.	Helen Fielding	O Diário de Bridget Jones
9.	Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa	Os evangelhos de 2001
10.	J.K Rowling	Harry Potter e a Câmara dos Segredos

Figure 2: From Bertrand Livreiros' 2001 Annual Best-Seller List (Rosa, 2002:181)

This shows that 70% of the texts in this list are translations and more than half of these translations are from the English language. The data collected in Figure 1 above suggests that

this trend is not unique to Rosa's findings. The Bertrand figures for Portugal at the end of October 2008 indicate that of the 40% of the translated novels, half of these are Spanish translations and the other half are translations of United States based novels. The Portuguese-language texts include Paulo Coelho's latest novel, *O Vencedor Está Só (The Winner is Alone*). However, the data for Brazil, Spain and Chile indicate a far greater interest in translated texts than those at the Portuguese bookstore and the origins of the source texts are far more diverse. The Vega.com list shows that of the only two Portuguese-language novels included, one is by the well-known Brazilian author, Augusto Cury. It is also interesting to note that Paulo Coelho, Brazil's international literary phenomenon does not feature on this list, even though his latest novel was recently released in Portuguese. 50% of the list accounts for English-language translations, of which four of the five titles are from the United States. The other translations include novels from France, Spain and Sweden (by Stieg Larsson). Similarly, 50% of the translations sold at Casa del Libro in Spain include three texts originally from the United States, one from Ireland and one from the United Kingdom. The remaining texts include the translation of Sweden's Stieg Larsson and an Italian novel. The translations on Chile's Antartica list are dominated solely by English language translations, of which two novels were originally written by United Kingdom authors (including the latest Harry Potter contribution in the number one position). Of the French and German titles sold during this period, even though translated texts did not features as highly as those on the Portuguese and Spanish-language lists, all of the translated titles except for one are translations of United States novels. The total number of translations from the English represents 35% of all the texts sold at these six bookstores in the last week of October.

One last observation that can be made from the bestseller lists is that novels by the United States author, Stephanie Meyer, *Twilight* and *Breaking Dawn*, featured in all of the Portuguese and Spanish-language lists and Christopher Paolini's fantasy novel, *Brisingr*, also written in the United States, was popular at all the bookshops except France. Incidentally, all of these novels were bestsellers at Exclusive Books at the start of October 2008.

There are various conclusions that can be drawn from our analysis of the above statistics. The first is that economic and political hegemony, particularly from the United States, clearly extends

to the literary domain and contributes to the cross-border dissemination of cultural values from the perspective of the United States. Rosa supports this notion, saying that it has been proven that translational norms "correlate with the power and prestige relationship between the source and target cultures in different historical movements" and further takes into account the "status of the source culture, author and text as well as the status of the target culture, translator, text, readership, editor, etc" (2002:187). This implies that representations of English-speaking cultures are exported en masse to foreign readerships and incorporated into local cultures. Yet Venuti tells us that these cultural representations are not necessarily accepted unquestioningly, saying that

> [d]eveloping countries have been the sites of translation strategies and cultural identities that assimilate those prevailing in Anglo-American cultures and yet deviate from them in remarkable ways, some with greater social impact than others. (1998:159)

Venuti's observation coincides with a further conclusion drawn from the above analysis, namely, that the overwhelming number of translations from English-speaking countries on the bestseller lists in the Portuguese and Spanish speaking-countries provides authors in these countries with a wealth of examples to draw from in their own writing. Rosa tells us that "writers are far more in contact with translations than might be supposed" (2002:185) and Paulo Coelho is a very good example of this. In his interview with Glauco Ortolano (2003:58), Coelho explains that his writing is influenced by the likes of Jorge Luis Borges, Jorge Amado, Henry Miller and William Blake and that these authors have shaped his literary identity. Each of these has had an enormous literary impact on the modern world, the first two being South American writers who have been translated into more than thirty languages (Fundação Casa de Jorge Amado, 2007), while Henry Miller is a twentieth century American writer and William Blake, an eighteenth and nineteenth century British poet and painter. Miller introduced a fresh literary style to twentieth century prose by interweaving surrealism, mysticism, social criticism, philosophical reflection and autobiographical elements into his novels (Henry Miller website, 2005). Elements of these techniques are evident in Coelho's writing, including *The Witch of Portobello*, where Coelho draws on the mystical nature of the female divinity, Hagia Sophia, to criticise a social order in

which people are not free to explore alternative forms of spirituality. It is also possible to see Coelho's own connection to Catholicism in his sympathetic treatment of the account by Father Giancarlo Fontana when he denies Athena the opportunity to receive the Eucharist because she is a divorced woman and recognises the judgemental quality of the religion to which he belongs. While further parallels could be drawn, such a discussion falls beyond the scope of this study.

A third conclusion that can be drawn from the disproportionate sale of translations from the English in comparison with literatures produced in less dominant societies is that foreign-language readers place greater value on translated literature than on texts by their own national authors. This conclusion possibly explains the reason that foreign-language authors are rarely translated into English, as seen in the next section. If foreign-language novels do not appear to be popular at home, it is not likely that publishing houses will invest large sums of money to have these translated into English and other overseas languages. In contrast, the popularity of particular English-language texts in their home cultures promotes their translation into foreign-languages, as has been case with Stephanie Meyer's novels, the first of which has also been represented in a feature film.

Finally, the comparatively lower number of literatures from countries such as Brazil and Spain gives rise to fewer local representations of the foreign-language culture and the adoption of cultural representations as portrayed by other, more dominant language-cultures. It is interesting to note, in contrast, that on the French bestseller list, although 90% of the novels are French-language originals, it includes texts from France's former colonies, Algeria and Morocco, thus increasing the diversity of cultural representations in the French language. Although this suggests that the increased presence of mother-tongue literatures gives rise to a wide range of cultural representations from diverse groups within that language class, the following section shows that although this may be true for French literatures, it does not describe representational patterns within Anglophone language-cultures.

2.3.2. The Translation of Foreign-language novels into English:

The above analysis and discussion of the type of cultural representations available within foreign language literatures suggests that if local texts are to draw international attention, they must

either be written in English or be translated into English (Bermann, 2005:3). Robinson (1997a:35) tells us that "[i]t is a commonplace that the only way to get read in today's world is to write in, or be translated into, English – or, secondarily, French or Spanish or German." This form of writing, however, comes at a cost to the literary culture in developing countries. In the first case, the writer residing within the less dominant culture writes in a language that is not his own and subjects the local culture to the style, themes and literary strategies of English-speaking cultures. Des Maxwell (cited in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:23-24) explains that this movement creates a disjunction between the location of the text and the language used to describe it, resulting in an "intolerable wrestle with words and meanings [which] has as its aim to subdue the experience to the language, the exotic life to the imported tongue" (1965:82-83). It could also be argued that, by attempting to write about his culture in the language of hegemony, the writer engages in a two-way translation. In the first instance, the writer expresses cultural attitudes in a way that is acceptable to the dominant culture, but he simultaneously translates elements of the dominant culture according to his outsider's perception of it. Once again, we experience the schizophrenic (cf. 20) role played by the writer as he attempts to negotiate both cultures.

Similarly, foreign texts that are written with the aim of being translated into English need to present the foreign culture by satisfying pre-established stereotypes held by the hegemonic culture. Venuti tells us that the selection of foreign texts for translation and the subsequent strategies that are employed includes texts that "conform to styles and themes that *currently* prevail in domestic literatures" (1998:67) to the exclusion of values that do not serve domestic agendas. He provides two excellent examples of this trend in the production of foreign-language texts for English-speaking readerships. The first example (1998:71-75) speaks of the selective process in the translation of Japanese literature into English during the 1950s and 1960s which resulted in a series of authors and texts focusing on a "nostalgic image of a lost past" (1998:72), emphasising the World War II era and the experiences of Japan's social elite. Venuti goes on to explain that this nostalgic theme did not correspond with literary trends in Japan during the same period and much of the alternative literature written in Japan at the time went untranslated. Since the canon of texts selected for translation into English remained virtually unchanged

throughout the 1970s and 1980s, interest for Japanese literature declined and eventually petered out.

The second example (Venuti, 1998:169-170) differs somewhat and appears to reflect a desire by publishers in the United States to explore alternative cultural identities that depart from stereotypes previously established by the hegemonic culture. The experimentation with magical realism in South American literature caught the attention of publishers in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, where a new canon of South American literature was formed by translating works by authors who had become well-known to the English-speaking world, such as Argentina's Jorge Luis Borges and Colombia's Gabriel García Marquez. Not only did these texts become very popular in the United States, but they also contributed to the creation of newness in the writing of contemporary English-speaking authors. As a consequence of this literary movement, new cultural identities were created that challenged pre-existing stereotypes of South American cultures. Yet, Venuti points out that the so-called South American boom was somewhat misleading because it did not result from an increased output of South American novels but rather an increased interest in South American literature on the part of United States publishers. In addition to this, the resulting canon of texts excluded other South American writers who did not employ this style or did not capture the interest of the publishers, such as Brazilian and female authors. Paulo Coelho himself disregards the notion of a Latin American boom, saying that "[t]he famous Latin American *boom* was an invention of the critics, and it never left the confines of Latin America" (Ortolano, 2003:59). He adds that each of the iconic Latin American writers, such as Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel García Márquez, employed different themes and styles and he adds that

> one cannot generalize or create a fad by using literature as a tool to catalyze: these authors gained notoriety because they have written quality literature and not because they came from the same continent. (Ortolano, 2003:59)

The underlying suggestion that is made by both Venuti and Coelho is that the marketing strategy called the 'Latin American boom' homogenises Latin American authors and the result is a

representation of cultural otherness that is restricted to a particular (and incomplete) understanding of cultural identities.

The result is the emergence of literature in which the cultural other is represented according to the values of the Anglophone culture. Furthermore, the writer is not writing for a local reader, but rather for consumption by a foreign audience who is intent on discovering the cultural other. Yet, the Anglophone reader encounters, not so much a representation of cultural otherness from the perspective of the foreign culture, but rather a representation that conforms to "hegemonic stereotypes" (Robinson, 1997a:32) and further provides "readers with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other" (Venuti, 1995:15).

Venuti based his research on literary trends in the United States, but we can extend his observations and argue that this phenomenon to is not unique to the United States. As indicated in the introductory chapter, a translated text last reached an annual bestseller status at Exclusive Books in South Africa in 1999 with Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* and Isabel Allende's *Daughter of Fortune*. Other English-speaking cultures also draw their perception of cultural otherness from its hegemonic centre, the United States. The table below provides an indication of the novels that are currently on bestsellers list at online bookstores in the United States, South Africa, the United Kingdom and Australia. Where possible, I tried to use the bestseller lists provided by HarperCollins, but where I was unable find the necessary information, booksellers that would attract a similar readership were selected. The lists are given for 25-31 October 2008.

AUSTRALIA (AU) (HarperCollins)			**SOUTH AFRICA (SA) (Exclusive Books)**		
Pos.	**Novel/Author**	**Country**	**Pos.**	**Novel/Author**	**Country**
1.	*The Independence of Miss Mary Bennet* – Colleen McCullough	AU	1.	*13 Uur* – Deon Meyer (Afrikaans)	SA
2.	*A Darker Domain* – Val McDermid	UK (Scotland)	2.	*Divine Justice* – David Baldacci	US
3.	*Being Elizabeth* – Barbara Bradford	UK	3.	*The Private Patient* – P.D James	UK

4.	*Rosewater and Soda Bread* – Marsha Mehran	US/UK/AU	4.	*Brisingr* - Christopher Paolini	US
5.	*The Edge of Desire* – Stephanie Laurens	AU	5.	*Deadly Intent* - Lynda La Plante	UK
6.	*The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* – David Wrobleweski	US	6.	*Keeping the Dead* – Tess Gerritson	US
7.	*Somebody Knows My Name* – Lawrence Hill	Canada	7.	*Most Wanted Man* – John Le Carre	UK
8.	*The Zookeeper's War* – Steven Conte	AU	8.	*The Shack* - William P. Young	US
9.	*Darkest Evening of the Year* – Dean Koontz	US	9.	*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* – Stieg Larsson (TR.)	Sweden
10.	*Cold Case* – Faye Kellerman	US	10.	*Cold Case* – Faye Kellerman	US
UNITED KINGDOM (Hodder and Stoughton)			**UNITED STATES (HarperCollins)**		
1.	*The Broken Window* – Jeffrey Deaver	US	1.	*A Lion Among Men* – Gregory Maguire	US
2.	*The Sleeping Doll* – Jeffrey Deaver	US	2.	*Here's the Story* – Maureen McCormick	US
3.	*My Wooky Book* - Russell Brand	UK	3.	*The Way of the World* – Ron Suskind	US
4.	*All the Colours of Red* – Peter Robinson	UK	4.	*The Given Day* – Dennis Lehane	US
5.	*Careless in Red* – Elizabeth George	US	5.	*Fleeced* – Dick Morris	US
6.	*Wish You Were Here* – Mike Gayle	UK	6.	*The Art of Racing in the Rain* – Garth Stein	US
7.	*The Reapers* - John Conolly	Ireland	7.	*Stolen Innocence* - Elissa Wall	US
8.	*Gigolo: Confessions of a Sexual Adventurer*	UK	8.	*Anathem* – Neal Stephensen	US
9.	*Songs of the Humpback Whale* – Jodi Picoult	US	9.	*The Mercedes Coffin* – Faye Kellerman	US
10.	*Second Glance* - Jodi Picoult	US	10.	*The Lace Reader* – Brunonia Barry	US

Figure 3: Bestseller lists for fictional titles sold from 25-31 October 2008 at four online bookstores in Australia, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The above lists account for 39 different titles. Of these, *13 Uur*, a South African novel by Deon Meyer (an author who has, incidentally, been widely translated into English and other European languages, including Dutch, French, German, Italian and Spanish (own research, 2007)) appears in its Afrikaans original. This is the only title on the bestseller list that is written in an official South African language other than English. The only other title that was not originally written in English is *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* by Stieg Larsson, a Swedish author. Of the 37 remaining titles, 24 of these are written by authors who are US nationals or have lived in the United States for a period of time. In other words, 64,9% of the 37 titles or 60% of the global list originate in the United States. The number of US novels in the individual lists is also particularly telling. The Australian list includes more local texts than any of others, with half of the list comprising Australian authors. With the exception of the Deon Meyer novel, the South African list does not include any other local text and the remaining texts include the English translation of the Stieg Larsson novel, five US novels and three titles from the UK. The United Kingdom list includes four novels by authors born or resident in the UK, including Ireland, a novel from Canada and five US novels. In contrast, all of the titles on the United States' HarperCollins bestseller list are texts by national authors. This once again provides an indication of the hegemony existing within popular literature in the United States.

Further analysis into the synopsis of the novels shows that most of them are set in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia. From this list, three novels, excluding Larsson's translation and the Afrikaans novel, are distinct in that they represent cultural groups other than those of the four English-speaking countries considered in the data. *Rosewater and Soda Bread* by Marsha Mehran tells the story of three Iranian sisters living in a small Irish community and explores issues of acceptance in a foreign country (Amazon.com, 2008). Mehran was born in Iran but has lived on five continents and now resides both in the United States and Ireland (Bookbrowse, 2008). Lawrence Hill's *Somebody Knows my Name* examines slavery in the United States by telling the story of a slave girl, Aminata Diallo, and her efforts to free herself (Amazon.com, 2008). Lawrence Hill has African-American roots but has spent his entire life in Canada. In *The Way of the World*, American author, Ron Suskind, weaves fact and fiction in a narrative about the involvement of the United States in international politics and warfare in an

attempt "to begin the process of restoring the values and hope – along with the moral clarity and earned optimism – at the heart of the American tradition" (Amazon.com, 2008).

We can once again draw several conclusions from the above data. Firstly, foreign texts occupy a marginal position within the Anglophone literary system and it is curious to note that none of the lists include an English-language novel from other British colonies in Africa, Asia or the West Indies, where English is one official language among many other local languages, thus limiting the possibility for diverse cultural representations. This contrasts with the inclusion of French-language fiction from France's former colonies, Algeria and Morocco, on FNAC's bestseller list. Secondly, the overwhelming presence of novels originating in the United States shows that cultural hegemony within English-speaking cultures is even more accentuated than among the foreign-language cultures examined in Figure 1 above. In the English lists, only 2% of the texts were foreign-language translations, while the translation of novels other than English in the foreign-language list (Figure 1) accounts for 17,5%, thus suggesting that foreign-language readers are far more receptive to a variety of foreign texts and the respective representations of cultural otherness than their English-speaking counterparts. Thirdly, of the three texts depicting characters not originally from Anglophone cultures, two are written by Canadian-American and American authors, suggesting that their representation of cultural otherness is coloured by their participation in the hegemonic language culture. Lawrence Hill, although he may have African roots, holds a view of slavery that corresponds with the abolitionist rhetoric that has become popular in the United States (Lawrence Hill website, 2009). Similarly, Ron Suskind's perspective of world politics is coloured by his own political position within the United States culture.

2.4 Overcoming Cultural Hegemony

These observations point towards a poverty of alternative cultural representations and translations available in contemporary popular literature, thus supporting Venuti's claim that "translation projects construct uniquely domestic representations of foreign cultures" so that "the reader recognizes him or herself in the translation by identifying the domestic values that motivated the selection of that particular foreign text" (1998:75-77). Yet, after perusing the

fiction section at the local Exclusive Books branch, I discovered that a wealth of translated literature *is* available. Titles by the more popular Paulo Coelho and Gabriel García Marquez are plentiful and there were more than sixteen translations by a variety of other authors from Africa, Asia and Europe. In addition to this, a further thirteen English-language titles represented the cultural other from as far afield as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Greece, India, Iran, Korea, Nigeria and Poland. Certainly, this does not form a significant portion of all the fictional titles on the shelves, but it does suggest that translated literature is more common than the bestseller lists suggest. The trouble is that all of these texts are hidden away, together with the other English-language authors, in alphabetical order, and therefore are easily missed. More could be done to market these texts, such as placing them on display as is customary with new titles or foregrounding them as HarperCollins has done with Paulo Coelho by giving him a prominent position on their website.

Robinson (1997a:34) tells us that there is also a perception within the English-speaking world that foreign texts in translation are "alien," difficult to read and thus interesting only to a select and sophisticated readership. These texts are often accompanied by lengthy introductions and annotations, further making them off-putting to most readers. It is against this backdrop that Paulo Coelho's novels are refreshingly different because his texts in translation are easy to read and present the cultural other in a novel way. It is perhaps these two qualities that made *The Alchemist*, in particular, the bestselling Brazilian novel of all time (Sant-Jordi Asociados, 2002). The translation of his novels, although often accompanied by additional features such as interviews with the author, a brief biography and synopses of his other novels, do not include the cumbersome annotations alluded to by Robinson.

In addition to this, Coelho's representations of a variety of characters subvert hegemonic stereotypes of the cultural other. It is also arguable, however, that by writing for a foreign audience, his texts simultaneously fulfil readers' expectations, especially now that they have come to expect a particular writing style. This dichotomy leads us to the realisation that it is difficult to speak of cultural hegemony without also assuming that cultures are stable. However, cultures are not stable: they change over time and intercultural influences shift cultural boundaries and representations. It is against this background that contemporary literary

translation, given its engagement with diverse cultural representations, can produce alternative views of the cultural other within the literary domain of English-language cultures, thus eliminating hegemonic cultural stereotypes and becoming an agent for cross-cultural interaction. This does not mean that translation suddenly absolves itself of its past as an agent for cultural dominance but what it is able to do is overcome some of the narrow representations that it previously perpetuated.

We therefore need to find ways in which these diverse cultural voices can engage in meaningful dialogue and contribute to "cultural understanding," as advocated by Doris Bachmann-Medick (2006:34). In the next chapter, we examine the way in which Homi Bhabha's (2005) space for intercultural dialogue and Emmanuel Levinas's concept of a relationship between the subject and the other can further promote the role of literary translation at the start of the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER THREE – NOVEL WAYS OF ENCOUNTERING THE CULTURAL OTHER

3.1. 'A Crisis of Identity'

At the end of the last chapter we saw that although contemporary literature has produced a range of cultural voices, these are not being heard on a large scale, especially within the English-speaking world. This hegemonic tendency may be attributed, in part, to the attempted preservation of identity as a stable location into which the individual is born and in which he is rooted throughout his life time. Within this paradigm, alternative identities cannot penetrate the egocentric world in which the subject resides. Stuart Hall (1992:274-277) argues, however, that identity is no longer a fixed notion in which the subject can be constructed as a centred and unified being because the external world increasingly encroaches on the subject's inner world. Consequently, a "crisis of identity" (Hall, 1992:274) has ensued, compounded by the promotion of alternative identities that now threaten the unified subject. Diverse literary representations within national cultures and in translation reflect the tension between the stable inner world and a rapidly changing external environment. Venuti takes this argument further by suggesting that translation "threatens the assumed integrity" (2005:178) of cultural, national and linguistic identities because it is able to communicate foreign linguistic and cultural elements that differ from the fixed notions of cultural identity held by the home culture.

As humanity entered the modern age, characterised by constant change, there came a realisation that identity is not merely an internal experience, but rather also includes the subject's interaction with the "values, meanings and symbols" (1992:275) in the world around him and these contribute to the formation of his identity. This results in a conflict between the subject's inner world and the exterior environment in which he lives. Individual identity nevertheless continues to constitute an unshakeable inner core, representing the "real me" which centres the subject and constitutes his response to a changing external world. The observations made in Chapter Two suggest that this is the situation in which contemporary English-language literature finds itself.

Although modern technologies, particularly in the field of telecommunications, have made alternative cultural voices easily available and accessible, many of these still reside at the margins of the hegemonic centre which desperately continues to hold onto a notion of the "real" identity encompassed within North American or British cultural values. Simultaneously, a rapidly changing world that is no longer restricted by national borders is producing a plethora of cultural representations from within these hegemonic societies. Anthony McGrew (in Hall, 1992:299) describes this as a process which cuts across "national boundaries, integrating and connecting communities and organisations in new space-time combinations," thus moving away from an understanding of society as "a well-bounded system." It is only a matter of time before hegemonic societies follow the path traversed by post-modern humanity in which this fictitious 'centre cannot hold' and will 'fall apart,[5]' producing a new type of subject that is

> conceptualized as having no fixed, essential or permanent identity. Identity becomes a 'moveable feast': formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us. (Hall, 1992:277)

Here, Hall reminds us that the contemporary human subject is represented in multiple ways depending on the environment he inhabits at a particular moment and sometimes the individual simultaneously operates from within various contradictory identities, for example, professional and private identities. Similarly, literature in the twenty-first century can no longer be closed in on itself but needs to make way for the range of other voices that have emerged and vie with one another for recognition. In particular, translation becomes a means by which to transport alternative voices into the site of hegemony and thus introduces foreign representations into the domestic culture. Venuti (1998:77) tells us that translation in the English-speaking world previously attempted to bridge the gap between the local and the foreign culture by using domestication techniques, that is, by taking elements of the foreign culture and transforming them so that they become familiar to a local audience. In so doing, the foreign culture loses its foreignness and "encourages uncritical consumption of hegemonic values while maintaining

[5] Reference to W.B Yeats' *The Second Coming* and is also a metaphor that has frequently been used by post-colonial writers, such as Chinua Achebe.

current asymmetries in cross-cultural exchange" (1998:188). The danger of this kind of strategy is that the cultural other becomes a mere caricature of an unknown world. The unknown becomes known by reducing everything about the cultural other to a set of exaggerated and/or simplified features that are static and unchangeable even as the cultural terrain from which he emerges adapts to a changing world (Hall, 1997:258).

So then, we need to move away from single subject positions to a more inclusive paradigm that presents a variety of dynamic and shifting cultural voices, thereby avoiding unrepresentative representations of the cultural other from within the hegemonic centre. We need to look beyond strategies that present the cultural other as a more approachable entity and transform him into something that is more like ourselves if contemporary literature and translation is to become increasingly aligned with the trends of modern societies. Such strategies should simultaneously respond ethically to the otherness produced by the contexts and intertextual concerns of the individual languages involved in a particular translation project (Bermann, 2005:7). It is here that some of the literary movements of the post-modern world, and more particularly, the post-colonial world, have become a starting point for translation. In particular, Homi Bhabha (2005) explores an alternative relationship with the cultural other based on dialogue where divergent cultural voices interact with one another. Bhabha's exposition is particularly useful to translation because he often uses translation as a metaphor for the transformation that must occur prior to this reorientation in the relationship with cultural otherness. The discussion below shows that translation can assimilate Bhabha's theory on intercultural dialogue. I then examine how this theory can be practically applied by analysing the way in which multiple voices interact in Paulo Coelho's *A Bruxa de Portobello*. Relevant passages are given in English to facilitate the discussion of issues concerning dialogue among a variety of voices. However, the Portuguese original is provided alongside, should my reader wish refer to this dialogue in the original. A detailed analysis of differences between the original and translated text is given in Chapter Four, in which greater detail is paid to small divergences between the two texts.

3.2. Homi Bhabha: Encountering the Cultural Other in an In-Between-Space

3.2.1 Theoretical Background

Bhabha (2005:254) acknowledges that previously, the identity of the cultural other occupied two oppositional spaces – it either remained at the margins of the dominant culture or attempted to "[gain] the centre" of the hegemonic culture. With the advent of post-colonialism, Bhabha tells us that marginal cultural voices began to enter the space of what had previously been considered to belong solely to mainstream cultures. The result was "the emergence of a third space of representation" (2005:316), that is, a new system through which cultures express themselves and are often incongruous with the restrictive subject positions imposed by the traditional model. Consequently, "the West gazes into the broken mirror of its new global unconscious" (2005:316) as it faces up to the fragmentation of a subject that is no longer moored within stable predetermined representational paradigms. It is against this background that Bhabha calls for a shift towards an "enunciatory site" (2005:255) in which varied cultural meanings and previously "unrepresentable" (2005:310) narrative spaces can now interact.

Bhabha alternatively refers to these "discursive spaces" (2005:2) as an "in-between space" (2005:10), a "beyond" (2005:2) or even the "third space" (2005:310) and describes it as

> a liminal form of signification that creates a space for the contingent, indeterminate articulation of social 'experience' that is particularly important for envisaging emergent cultural identities. (2005:257)

He makes it very clear that this interstitial space is not governed by subject positions, requiring instead a "move away from the singularities of 'class' or 'gender' as primary conceptual and organizational categories" (2005:2) so that varied cultural identities can be expressed and these are able to interact with one another in a "beyond" that is neither a new location nor a "leaving behind of the past" (2005:1-2). This is Bhabha's direct criticism of much of the post-colonial theory that has been developed, in which he, like Anne McClintock, argues that post-colonialism, as its name suggests, "re-orients the globe once more around a single, binary opposition: colonial/post-colonial" where "colonialism is the determining marker of history"

(McClintock, 1994:292-293). The same could be said about representations of the cultural other that consciously challenge cultural stereotypes, in that the urge to contradict the stereotype again draws attention to the very skin it seeks to shed. In the "in-between-space," however, newness is created because the structures that previously determined "the original's structures of reference" (2005:326) are no longer the focal site of cultural orientation.

A further advantage of entering the 'third space' is that the fragmentation of prior paradigms for individual identity leaves the subject unmoored in an unknown terrain and in addition to this, the subject lacks the terms of reference necessary for the assimilation of the foreign other into his own conceptual framework. The alienation felt by the subject transforms him into a "migrant" (2005:7). Zygmunt Baumann (1996:28) uses the metaphor of a vagabond to describe the 'migrant's' view of identity in which the subject is described as "a stranger; he can never be the 'native,' the 'settled one,' with roots in the soil." Baumann adds that the vagabond does not choose to be a wanderer but has been forced into this position because the world has become such an unsettled place and "there are very few 'settled' places left" (1996:29). The subject's identity perpetually exists in a state of migration.

Bhabha argues that it is only in a state of migration that intercultural dialogue becomes possible, since the subject's representation of the foreign culture can no longer be assimilated into a stereotype, that is, a representation of a foreign other as imagined by the subject. The stereotype departs from the subject and as such, he recognises himself in an image that is "simultaneously alienating and hence potentially confrontational" (2005:110). Alienation produces an absence or lack within the individual and thus the foreign other is always seen as a threat to the subject's own identity. The subject then appeals to the stereotype in an effort to protect himself from an 'other' for which he lacks any terms of reference except those within his imagination. Yet, it is in this very absence that that the subject can encounter the cultural other because he is called to accept his alienation, abandon the stereotype, become a migrant in a foreign land and enter into dialogue with a cultural identity that is entirely unknown to him.

Homi Bhabha applies the "in-between-space" to literary production and authors are also called to become 'migrants' who belong neither to one nor another representational field but rather

negotiate the differences among them in this discursive space. The author refrains from representing the cultural other according to his own preconceived ideas and stereotypes, instead allowing his authorial voice to become one of many other such voices participating in a cultural dialogue. Bhabha adopts Salman Rushdie's view that the "truest eye may now belong to the migrant's double vision" (2005:7-8) because it is within the varied facets of cultural representations that a more complete vision of cultural difference can be created.

Adopting Anthony Pym's definition of translation as "the middle ground of interculturality" (1998:182) in which the translator becomes a bridge between two diverse cultures and challenges fixed representations, an intercultural space of translation can be equated with the 'third space.' Translation also offers alternative, if not necessarily consensual, representations of the cultural other and thus contributes to Bhabha's call for increased cultural dialogue. According to Pym, the translator, like Bhabha's migrant is a "marginal man" who is located neither in one nor another culture, but rather inhabits the world between these two cultures. In Chapter Four I examine how the 'in-between' space can be applied to the translation of Paulo Coelho's *A Bruxa de Portobello*. It is first necessary, however, to examine the way in which Coelho interacts with some of these concepts in the novel itself.

3.2.2. In-Between-Spaces in *The Witch of Portobello*

After reading Paulo Coelho extensively, I argue that he writes from the perspective of the "migrant's double vision" since he never writes about Brazil and has only ever used one Brazilian character in his novels[6], but even this character is quickly transported into a European setting outside of a Brazilian representational framework. This corresponds with Coelho's literary aim to interpret the world through Brazilian eyes (in Ortolano, 2003:58), thus pointing towards his acknowledgement that the representation of cultural otherness from a position of familiarity subjugates the cultural other to the limited paradigms of the subject's (and writer's) inner world. By exploring characters outside of his immediate environment, Coelho embodies the migrant who steps into an unknown space and "captures something of the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world, the unhomeliness" (Bhabha, 2005:13).

[6] Maria in *Eleven Minutes* (2003)

This is precisely what occurs in *The Witch of Portobello.* The principal character, Athena, is presented as a migrant who resides in a fictional recreation of Bhabha's "in-between space" since she does not belong to a specific culture, nor is she fixed in a particular setting. Heron Ryan, a journalist, said of Athena that "she was inhabiting other spheres, experiencing the frontiers of worlds that almost touch ours, but never reveal themselves" (2007:130)/*estava em outras esferas, experimentava as fronteiras de mundos que quase tocam o nosso, mas que nunca se deixam reveler* (2006:124). These frontiers are both geographic and metaphoric. From a geographical perspective, Athena is born in Romania but is abandoned by her natural mother and adopted by a childless Lebanese couple. At the start of the civil war in Lebanon, the family immigrate to England and settle in London where Athena takes on all of the characteristics of an English girl. It is only as an adult and a mother that she begins to search for her roots and what she calls the "blank spaces" (2007:107)/*espaços brancos* (2006:101) in her life. The multiple and conflicting cultural identities inside of her reveal an unsettledness that takes her to Dubai, Romania and Scotland before she finally returns to London and begins her life as a witch. Athena's "blank spaces" can be understood as those moments in her life that escape incorporation into a fixed identity. Her multi-faceted background gives rise to an equally multi-faceted identity, the elements of which are often contradictory. Yet, it is this internal contradiction that paves the way for a new understanding of identity that draws the subject into a new space of representation unhindered by fixed subject positions. It is this quality that allows Athena to travel between cultures with very little difficulty.

As the novel progresses, however, we see that Athena cannot settle into any of the new locations she enters, whether it is a physical destination such as Dubai or a spiritual space such as the Vertex dance (2007:58-70), because she is always searching for something more. Bhabha explains that the 'beyond' is not an attainable destination, but is rather a "moment of transit" in which cultural differences are continuously negotiated (2005:2). This interaction is not always harmonious since "the borderline engagements of cultural difference may as often be consensual as conflictual" (2005:3) and it is precisely within this nebulous space of consensus and conflict that meaning is created. It is also where cultures collectively experience something akin to wholeness. In an interview with Jonathan Rutherford, Bhabha explains that

> [m]eaning is constructed across the bar of difference and separation between the signifier and the signified. So it follows that no culture is full unto itself, no culture is plainly plenitudinous, not only because there are other cultures which contradict its authority, but also because its symbol-forming activity, its own interpellation in the process of representation, language, signification and meaning-making, always underscores the claim to an originary, holistic, organic identity. (1990:210)

The Witch of Portobello makes several references to the "blank spaces" which symbolically represent the "third space" that Bhabha considers paramount for cultural dialogue. During her stay in Dubai, Athena takes up calligraphy as a way of seeking closer unity with God, that is, the other. Her Bedouin calligraphy teacher, Nabil Alaihi, explains that although she masters the art of calligraphy within a year, she continuously stumbles on the spaces between the words. Alaihi tells Athena that

> although you have mastered the words, you haven't yet mastered the blank spaces. When you're concentrating, your hand is perfect, but when it jumps from one word to the next, it gets lost. (2007:99)

> [*E, apesar de você dominar as palavras, ainda não domina os espaços em branco. Sua mão, quando está concentrada, é perfeita. Quando salta de uma palavra para outra, ela se perde.* (2006:94)]

Athena is capable of mastering the words because they represent a world that can be categorised and controlled, much like hegemonic representations of culture. The spaces between the words symbolise the excesses that can neither be ordered nor represented. Her Bedouin teacher then adds that

> if all the words were joined together, they wouldn't make sense, or, at the very least, they'd be extremely hard to decipher. The spaces are crucial. (2007:99)

> [*Se as palavras estivessem todas unidas, elas não fariam sentido, ou complicariam muito o seu entendimento: é necessário que existem espaços.* (2006:94)]

This statement offers us an alternative understanding of the way in which meaning is created. It suggests that it is not so much the words that create meaning, but rather the spaces between them give meaning to the words by separating them from one another and giving each one a particular meaning. Furthermore, spaces also determine the relationship between the words and the context in which they are uttered, giving further meaning to a sequence of letters and words. In other words, the 'blank spaces' themselves do not possess meaning but give meaning the words, or representations, surrounding them. If we apply this discussion to Bhabha's understanding of the "in-between space," then we can argue that cultural representations from particular subject positions are depicted through language by means of a particular viewpoint, but there is always some element that resists representation. The "blank space," precisely because it is not representative, gives new meanings to the representation. If a range of new meanings are introduced, then the potential for dialogue increases as a variety of voices engage in conversation. If we apply this concept to the field of cultural representations, increased cultural understanding can be achieved. Translation operates in much the same way. A translation is never a faithful copy of the original, but is a semblance of the source text and, again, it is in the silences created by small incongruencies between source and target texts that meaning and cultural dialogue can be created. This is discussed at length in Chapter Four.

Athena goes in search of the "blank spaces" in her life by finding her biological mother. She is aware that her search may not bring her the fulfilment she seeks, but she feels that she needs to try anyway, because "if I don't at least try to do that...I won't ever understand the blank spaces" (2007:105)/*Se não tentar fazer isso...não poderei mais entender os espaços em branco* (2006:99). After she makes her journey to Romania to search for her mother, Athena begins to realise that those "blank spaces" may never be overcome because one part of the journey leads to another and she will never return to the psychological location she left behind. Bhabha reminds us that cultural understanding is not necessarily the goal and may be entirely unachievable, but the very process of going beyond opens up a new field of possibility for cultural encounters that

may extend the field of cultural interaction, thus enabling "intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest or cultural value [to be] negotiated" (2005:2). Indeed, Athena travels to Romania, meets her biological mother and tells her that "I've realised that those empty spaces were starting to get filled up. They were transformed into pauses" (2007:147)/*entendi que os tais espaços vazios começavam a ser preenchidos. Transformaram-se em pausas* (2006:138). This seems to suggest that Athena has made some progress but even at this moment, she acknowledges that "I'm not saying that I will go in peace...but I won't leave feeling bitter" (2007:147)/*não digo que irei em paz....Mas tampouco irei com amargura* (2006:138). Athena's initial description of the "blank spaces" suggests a nothingness beyond which she cannot see. A pause, by contrast, can be likened to a comma, indicating that there is something before and after that space. In a conversation, a pause suggests that one speaker has stopped talking in order to listen to another speaker. We can therefore argue that Athena's trip to Romania has helped her to listen and converse with the other. The experience changes her because she begins to realise that that which lies 'beyond' can never be attained, but the journey towards that imaginary boundary creates further possibilities that satisfy her desire to interact with a metaphysical other, culminating in her offering herself as a vessel through which a female divinity, the Hagia Sophia, can speak.

As we approach the end of the novel, Athena comes under increasing pressure from the community in Portobello Road as a result of the choice that she has made to become a vessel for the Hagia Sophia. The choice does not affect Athena alone, but also those around her because she shatters their traditional understanding of identity: that it is a fixed space through which the subject expresses who s/he is. When Athena speaks, we are no longer certain whether it is Athena or the Hagia Sophia that speaks. This doubt breaks down the individuality and singular subject position upon which identity is founded. A local newspaper article expresses the fear that results from the breakdown of stable subject positions in Portobello Road:

> We're living in an age in which everything is allowed, and democracy is being devoured and destroyed by that *limitless* freedom (2007:270, my emphasis).

> [*Vivemos em um momento em que tudo é permitido; a democracia está sendo engolida e destruida por causa de sua liberdade ilimitada* (2006:246)]

Here we are once again reminded that the beyond is not a new destination in which new subject positions are created, but rather a space in which the possibilities of representation are infinite and that this poses a threat to a society ordered around the principle of categorisation and fixed subject positions. Society's response to Athena's "mission" (2007:287)/*missão* (2006:261) is to lay charges against her for being an inadequate mother and she risks losing her son to the courts. Shortly after this, Athena admits that "I've been receiving death threats" (2007:307)/*estou sendo ameaçada de morte* (2006:280) and two months later, her journalist friend, Heron, receives a phone call to say that "the body of Sherine Khalil, the Witch of Portobello, had been found in Hampstead. She had been brutally murdered" (2007:315)/*o corpo de Sherine Khalil, a Bruxa de Portobello, havia sido encontrado. Fora brutalmente assassinada em Hampstead* (2006:287).

Shortly before her death, Athena asks Heron to record a kind of last will and testament and during this self-reflective recording, she says that:

> Many of us are returning from a long journey during which were forced to search for things that were of no interest to us. Now we realise that they were false. But this return cannot be made without pain, because we have been away for a long time and feel that we are strangers in our own land. It will take some time to find the friends who also left, and the places where our roots and treasures lie. But this will happen (2007:310-311).

> [*muitos de nós estão retornando de uma longa viagem, onde fomos induzidos a procurar coisas que não nos interessavam. Agora nos damos conta que eram falsas. Mas esta volta não se faz sem dor – porque passamos muito tempo fora, achamos que somos estrangeiros em nossa própria terra. Levaremos algun tempo para encontrar os amigos que também partiram, os lugares onde estavam nossas raízes e nossos tesouros. Mas isso terminará acontecendo* (2006:283-284)]

Athena's exposition runs parallel to Homi Bhabha's recognition that the act of abandoning fixed notions of selfhood and identity can be likened to the migrant's quest, in which he undertakes a long journey to a foreign land. Upon attempting to return to the place of his birth, he realises that his homeland, too, has also become foreign. The migrant cannot return unchanged and it is precisely in this 'unhomeliness' (Bhabha, 2005:13) that the foreign or cultural other is able to speak. Athena expresses her confidence that this is possible. This ideal is juxtaposed alongside Athena's tragic murder, thereby suggesting that perhaps the ideal cannot yet be translated into praxis.

3.2.3 Representational Limits

This argument can be taken further by discussing some of the problems arising from this form of cultural representation. Bhabha's "third space" theory is useful because it provides a space in which various representations of cultural otherness can enter into dialogue. However, the question of identity has not been resolved. While Bhabha does acknowledge that the inner core of identity in the post-modern and post-colonial world has been disrupted by the intrusion of a rapidly changing world and offers an alternative for the interaction of a variety of often conflicting voices, he fails to indicate the manner in which the subject should respond to this intrusion.

A further criticism is the dubious nature of representation. In Chapter Two we saw that literary representations arising from hegemonic societies tend to subjugate the non-hegemonic other by employing stereotypes that reduce the full extent of his otherness. Cultural representations issuing from less dominant societies tend to imitate hegemonic values so that they can participate in the limited dialogue that is permitted, as ascertained by the type of foreign-language novel that was included in the bestseller lists both in and outside of the English-speaking world (cf. Chapter Two). This does not mean that alternative identities are not in circulation. They have simply not penetrated the realm of popular literature which has larger readerships than high-brow literary fiction. Yet the lack of cultural representations departing dramatically from the hegemonic centre still remain at the edges of mainstream English-language cultures, despite Bhabha's call for a space promoting dialogue and negotiation among diverging cultural voices. I maintain that this inequality persists because representation is always a 'speaking for' the cultural other rather

than an act in which the cultural other reveals himself. It is therefore more useful to search for a model that is not so much focused on the *representation* of the other as the *presentation* of otherness.

3.3 Emmanuel Levinas: The Encounter Between the Same and the Other as Presentation

3.3.1. An Overview

The philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas rose from the ashes of World War II. Having been incarcerated by the Nazis in a Jewish labour camp in France, Levinas emerged from this first-hand experience of man's inhumanity towards man with a more critical view of the Western understanding of identity and the relationship between the subject and the other (whom Levinas refers to as the Same and the Other, respectively) than that which he had held in his earlier years as an academic. In particular, he became a vehement critic of Martin Heidegger's work on the nature of being (Peperzak, 1993:1-7). Levinas presents an alternative approach to the relationship between the Same and the Other by incorporating the thought of his day with classical Greek philosophy.

According to Levinas, Western civilisation is characterised by human beings' necessity to affirm their autonomy by reducing and exerting power over all that exists outside of human control so it can be understood. This is what Levinas calls the "reduction of the Other to the Same" (Levinas in Perperzak, 1993:91). He argues, however, that the metaphysical Other, which he describes as the "absolutely other" (1991:33), cannot be reduced to the order of the Same because it exceeds the subject's understanding and resists his powers. The subject nevertheless desires to commune with the "absolutely other" but to do so, he must go "forth from a world that is familiar to us...toward an alien outside-of-oneself, towards a yonder" (1991:33). This kind of language reminds us of Bhabha's call for an 'in-between-space' of cultural encounter but Levinas appears to anticipate some of the practical problems associated with this form of a relationship between the internal subject and the external other. In encountering the 'absolutely other', Levinas points out that the subject is never completely fulfilled because the metaphysical can never be fully attained and the reaction on the part of the subject is one in which the absolute otherness of the Other (which Levinas defines as alterity) is "reabsorbed into my own identity as a thinker or

possessor" (1991:33) by means of representation. By its very nature, representation does not capture the singularity of the Other, but rather its generality, that is, the creation of stereotypes, and these do not ultimately embody the 'absolutely other'. In this illusory representation of the Other, the subject regains a semblance of control over the universe in which he resides. In reality however, the relationship with alterity "can not be properly speaking a representation, for the other would therein dissolve into the same" (1991:38).

Levinas goes on to explain that it is through the acquisition of knowledge that power over the other is exerted. Although the Same cannot possess the Other, he can possess knowledge of the Other and it is only in such possession that "the I complete[s] the identification of the diverse" (1993:98). In terms of Michel Foucault, knowledge is used as a means for the subject to constitute his own selfhood as an autonomous being (1984:42) and this is the reason for the subject's desire to know the Other. However, Levinas tells us that the Other is ultimately unknowable and any attempt to subject his otherness to our limited paradigms is a violation of the Other. This confirms the Western tradition "in which the Same dominates the Other, in which freedom, even the freedom that is identical with reason, precedes justice (1993:105). But it is precisely this concept of justice that Levinas seeks and thus he asks:

> Does justice not consist in putting the obligation with regard to the Other before obligations to oneself, in putting the Other before the Same? (1993:105)

In developing his own approach of an encounter between the Same and the Other which is not based on power but on justice and ethics, Levinas begins by explaining that the Other can never be fully known and the Same or the "I" is also not a static identity that is constructed "from a system of references" (1991:36). Instead, its very existence is derived from experiences "throughout all that happens to it" (1991:36), thus implying that the concept of the subject's identity is itself changeable. This further suggests that the subject is also not entirely knowable unto himself and in a sense is "to itself an other" (1991:36). Herein lies the start of the ethical relationship between the Same and the Other because the Same is no longer "at home" (1991:37) within himself and "my own most inward sphere of intimacy appears to me as foreign or hostile" (1991:38). It is this recognition that permits the Same to approach the Other and initiate a

relationship that is not characterised by domination and the representation of the Other by the Same. Instead, the Same exposes himself and allows the Other to *present* himself to the Same. Levinas says that the Other "presents me his face...with the total uncoveredness and nakedness of his defenceless eyes, the absolute frankness" (1993:110). In presenting itself, the Other defies representation and the Same can no longer exert power of him.

In response to the presence of the Other, the Same adopts what Levinas calls an "ethical resistance" (1993:111), which can be described as a relationship in which the Same no longer exerts power over the Other. Instead, at the moment of revelation, the Other makes a claim on the Same, calling the Same to be responsible for the Other. The only appropriate response by the Same to the call of the Other is generosity, a generosity that is

> incapable of approaching the other with empty hands. The relationship established over the things henceforth possibly common, that is, susceptible of being said, is the relationship of conversation (1991:50).

The conversation that Levinas refers to here echoes Bhabha's 'in-between-space" in which various cultural voices interact. The difference, however, is that, in the case of Levinas, the Same does not represent the Other, but allows him to reveal his alterity. This encounter between the Same and the Other suggests that a specific attitude is required. Levinas tells us that "to recognise the Other is to give" (1991:75). Adriaan Peperzak, in his introduction to Levinasian philosophy (1993:24), interprets this attitude as one which calls into question my possession of the world and further asks that I offer "my home, my food and beverage, my labour, and all my possessions of the earth...into the service of another." The most extreme evidence of this generosity is the gift of the self for the Other in which the Same is compelled to say "Here I am" so that the Other can take up residence in the Same and thus, selfhood becomes a "being-for-the-Other (1993:25). The ethical relationship is therefore one of complete "openness to the Other" (Robert Eaglestone, 2005:130) in which the Same cannot escape his responsibility towards the Other.

Another aspect of the conversation resulting from an ethical relationship between the Same and the Other is to "*receive* from the Other beyond the capacity of the I" (1991:51). In the same way as the Same offers the gift of himself to the Other, the Other offers a gift to the Same: that of instruction. It is through language and teaching that the Other is best able to present himself to the Same and it is in this moment that meaning is produced. Meaning is precisely the "face-to-face" (1991:71) encounter with the Other.

Emmanuel Levinas makes it clear that a relationship characterised by conversation is only possible through the medium of language. He tells us that language is universal because it establishes the basis for something which is held in common. It is also the medium through which the Same expresses himself and by approaching the Other through language, the Same "offers things which are mine to the Other" (1991:76). This last point is useful for our purposes as translators. Levinas does not differentiate between languages but rather operates from the premise that language expresses human experience and it is this quality that makes it universal and it is also the commonality that unites different languages. The Other is also far greater than one or another language and could in essence, converse in any language. The Other speaks in the language of the Same because it is the only means by which to establish a conversation and relationship between the Same and the Other.

Translation is the attempt to find a common language in which the Same and the Other can converse but the ensuing interaction is not necessarily harmonious. Indeed, Levinas warns us that discourse is the "constitution of truth in a struggle between thinkers" (1991:73). The struggle referred to here is the call of the Other, requesting the Same to engage in an ethical relationship with alterity. However, in order to achieve this, the Same must relinquish control of his common language so that he can no longer represent the Other. It is on these grounds that Levinas speaks about the "impossibility of translation (Eaglestone 2005:127). This does not imply that translation cannot occur but it "reveals our own alienation in our own language" (Eaglestone, 2005:136) where language fails the Same by resisting the reduction of the Other to the order of the Same. In an ethical relationship with alterity, the Same also cannot approach the Other empty-handed and, therefore, offers his language as a gift for the Other. In so doing, the Same is no longer able to speak for the Other, but it is the Other who adopts the language of the

Same to reveal himself to the Same. By using the language of the Same, the latter is alienated from his own language and in this unfamiliarity, the Same becomes "to itself an other" (1991:36). This echoes a statement made by Paul de Man in which he says that translation implies suffering or loss because in the moment we relinquish our use of language, we become alienated from ourselves and the world that is familiar to us:

> We think we are at ease in our own language, we feel a cosiness, a familiarity, a shelter in the language we call our own, in which we think that we are not alienated. What translation reveals is that this alienation is at its strongest in our relation to our own language. (in Eaglestone, 2005:135)

The above discussion suggests that translation promotes the encounter with the Other, allowing him to reveal his untranslatability, that is, his alterity in the language of the Same.

3.3.2. The Encounter Between the Same and Other in *The Witch of Portobello*

In *The Witch of Portobello*, we find the beginnings of an ethical relationship between the Same and the Other occurring at various levels. The first occurs when the initial narrator, who remains unidentified until the last pages of the novel, acknowledges that despite his wish to collate the events surrounding Athena's life and her brutal murder, he cannot write her biography because "the biographer's view inevitably influences the results of his research" (2007:1)/*a opinião do autor a respeito do personagem principal termina influenciando o resultado das pesquisas* (2006:9). In other words, the narrator recognises that a biographical account of Athena-as-Other, coloured by his own view of the world, will merely provide a representation of her that would ultimately reduce her to the order of the Same. At the end of the novel, when we realise that her would-be biographer is, in fact, her long time partner, then his decision to refrain from representing Athena appears to constitute an exercise in allowing the Other to present herself through the eyes of the various people who played a significant role in her life, rather than represent his 'knowledge' of her. One can argue that representation still occurs as each of the characters gives his or her interpretation of who Athena truly was. However, if he merely works as an instrument to "transcribe what people had told me" (2007:1)/*transcrever aquilo que me tinha sido contado* (2006:9), then the biographer is allowing different accounts to interact with

one another and it is in the "plurality" (Levinas, 1991:73) of voices that the Other can present herself.

Athena also enacts the role of the Same who allows the Other to present itself to her and explores the ethical relationship between the Same and the Other, to the extent that the Other takes up residence inside of her in the form of a female divinity, the Hagia Sophia. In her mother's account, we are told that from an early age Athena engages in conversation with the metaphysical and one on occasion, Samira Khalil says that

> from very early on we discovered that she had a religious vocation – she spent all her time in church and knew the gospels by heart...I picked her up from school one day, and she told me that she had seen 'a woman dressed in white, like the Virgin Mary.' (2007:23)
>
> [*Aos doze anos descobrimos que tinha uma certa vocação religiosa – vivia na igreja, sabia os evangelhos de cor...um dia fui buscá-la na escola, e ela me disse ter visto 'uma mulher vestida de branco, parecida com a Virgem Maria'* (2006:28)]

This encounter with the Other becomes more pronounced as Athena increasingly moves 'beyond' her comfort zone and finds different ways to enter into conversation with the metaphysical and increasingly offers herself for the Other. Her narrator, this time a priest, Father Giancarlo Fontana, recalls Athena's declaration that she is "a *vessel* in which the Divine Energy can make itself manifest" (my emphasis, 2007:40-41)/*um vaso onde a Energia Divina pose manifestar-se* (2006:42). As a vessel, Athena opens herself up to the presence of the divine, not only for the purposes of communicating with the metaphysical but also allows the Other as a real presence to take up dwelling inside of her. Father Giancarlo explains that such experiences are "known as 'possession by the sacred'" (2007:38)/*a possessão criativa pelo sagrado* (2006:40). They are characterised by the act of "surrendering completely to love, be it human or divine" (2007:38)/*Entregar-se por complete ao amor, seja ele divino ou humano* (2006:40) and this "means giving up everything, including our own well-being or our ability to make decisions"

(2007:38)/*significa renunciar a tudo – inclusive ao seu próprio bem-estar ou a sua própria capacidade de tomar decisões* (2006:40), echoing the gift that the Same makes to the Other at the moment that he places all of his possessions at the disposal of the Other.

Athena's ex-husband, Lukas Jessen-Petersen also recalls one of the comments that Athena made concerning her relationship with the divine life and the way in which the Other presents, not represents, himself to her. She indicates that "there are moments when I feel that everything is being revealed to me" (2007:34)/*Há minutos em que sinto que tudo me está sendo revelado* (2006:37). It is interesting to note here that the Other does not present merely a few aspects of himself to Athena, but rather "everything." The characters who relate Athena's life seemingly agree that this was a difficult process in which Athena increasingly offers her whole self for the service of the Other. Her first step is to abandon the structures of organized religion, precisely because it creates a representation of divinity but is unable to recognise its presence. Father Giancarlo appears to be aware of this, as he muses on what Jesus, as the Other, would say about modern-day churches, namely that "it's a very long time since they allowed me in there" (2007:57)/*Há muito tempo eles não me deixam entrar ali* (2006:580).

Athena therefore takes up a number of activities that induce the divine presence. These include a dance called the Vertex which, in the words of Pavel Podbielski, the man who taught it to her, "will cause you to lose your identity and your relationship with space and time" (2007:64)/*fazer com que percamos a nossa identidade, nossa relação com o espaço e o tempo* (2006:64). By allowing herself to be caught up in the trance caused by the rhythmic motions of the dance, Athena is no longer bound to the world of structure, which Homi Bhabha criticised as the representation of the world from a single perspective. In fact, in this dance, there is no longer any representation at all, as time and space, the structures in which representations occur, fall away. The Vertex prepares Athena to encounter the Other, a relationship which is deepened by her desire to master calligraphy, an activity her teacher, Nabil Alaihi, describes as "my way of approaching Allah" (2007:91)/*Minha maneira de me aproximar de Allah* (2006:87), that is, the Other.

After a long and arduous inner journey that includes an exploration into her own identity, Athena finally relinquishes possession of her own self and allows the female divinity, Hagia Sophia, to take possession of her body. She is advised by her teacher to "let the Mother take possession of your body and soul; surrender yourself to dance or to silence or to ordinary everyday activities..." (2007:181)/*deixe que a Mãe possua o seu corpo e sua alma, entregue-se através da dança ou do silêncio, ou das coisas comuns da vida* (2006:167). The first time that the Hagia Sophia uses Athena as an instrument, she speaks through Athena to her son, Viorel, explaining the transformation that has taken place, saying:

> You stopped laughing and dancing when you saw me embracing your mother and asking to speak through her mouth. But you know that I wouldn't be doing this if she hadn't given me her permission. (2007:230)
>
> [*Você parou de rir e de dançar quando viu que eu abraçava a sua mãe, e pedia para falar através de sua boca. Saiba que ela me deu permissão, ou eu não estaria fazendo isso* (2006:212)]

Not only does Athena freely allow the divine Other to take possession of her body, but she also extends this to her relationship with the people around her, in which every other also becomes the Other. One of them is her student, Andrea, who struggles to accept Athena's authenticity and on one occasion asks Athena to undress in front of her, to see how far she will give herself for the Other. Andrea comments that

> she continued to undress, first her blouse, then her jeans, then her bra. I noticed her breasts, which were the most beautiful I'd ever seen. Finally she removed her knickers. *And there she was, offering me her nakedness* (my emphasis, 2007:244).
>
> [*Mas ela continuou a despir-se. A blusa, a calça* jeans*, o sutiã – reparei em seus seios, as mais belos que tinha visto até então. Finalmente tirou a calçinha. E ali estvava, oferecendo-me sua nudez* (2006:225)]

Here again, we can find echoes of the Levinasian relationship between the Same and the Other, in which the same presents both her body and soul completely as a gift to the Other and thereby engages in a conversation with the Other by using the language in which human beings express themselves, in this case, the language of the body.

3.3.3. An Imperfect Relationship with the Other

Although the relationship between the Same and the Other is evident in *The Witch of Portobello*, a closer reading also reveals its imperfections. This should not, however, discourage us from approaching the Other and allowing it to present his otherness to us, but should rather help us to identify some of the problems associated with such a relationship so that relevant solutions can be found.

Towards the end of the novel, the characters question whether Athena's intention to become a vessel through which the Hagia Sophia can speak is honourable or whether she uses this relationship for her own personal glory. Andrea, her most ardent critic, accuses Athena of "allowing yourself to be seduced by vanity" (2007:297)/*Você se está deixando dominar pela vaidade!* (2006:271), while Deidre, her teacher warns her of becoming "too fascinated by the world she was just starting to discover" (2007:268)/*fascinado demasiado pelo mundo que começava a descobrir* (2006:244). If she indeed uses her relationship with the Hagia Sophia to achieve personal fame, then her relationship with the Other is not characterised by an attitude of generosity and she, too, has fallen into the trap of reducing the Other to the limited boundaries of the self. Athena's biographer suggests that this is not true on grounds that "Athena wants, not fame for herself, as many (including Andrea) thought, but that the mission should be completed" (2007:322)/*é isso que Athena desejava; não sua projeção pessoal, como muitos pensavam (inclusive Andrea) mas que a missão seja cumprida* (2006:293).

We are never sure, however, whether the biographer can be trusted. In the final pages of the novel, he reveals himself as Athena's long-time lover and also tells us that Athena never died and he helped to fake her death when media pressure surrounding her activities became too overwhelming. It is disturbing that he has used the various accounts under a false pretext and, furthermore, he has others *represent* Athena but does not allow her *present* her own version of

events. We can argue that Athena is the Other and she has been denied the opportunity to reveal herself and has instead been represented by various personages, who are themselves clouded by their own feelings towards Athena. Andrea is a perfect example of this. She clearly states at the beginning of her account that "[i]t's very difficult to be impartial and to tell a story that began with admiration and ended in rancour" (2007:171)/*É muito dificil tentar ser imparcial, recontar uma história que começou com admiração e terminou com rancor* (2006:159). We also find that the various accounts, which initially provide the possibility of an alternative space in which various presentations of otherness can interact, are very similar, with the exception of Andrea's clearly angry account. All of the characters present Athena as an exceptional person who has been misunderstood by society. This form dialogue is futile because the negotiation of difference cannot occur when all of the voices presenting the Other speak in unison.

Not only does her biographer, an investigator working for Scotland Yard, deceive the reader by allowing us to believe that Athena is really dead and denies her the opportunity of presenting her version of events, he ultimately also betrays the purpose of his narrative aims. His biography does not stem from of his desire to offer her a birthday gift, but out of his need to understand Athena and his relationship with her:

> At the start of my investigations, of which this transcript is the result, I thought I was reconstructing her life so that she could see how brave and important she had been. But as the conversations went on, I gradually discovered my own hidden side, even though I don't much believe in these things. And I reached the conclusion that the real reason behind all this work was a desire to answer a question to which I had never known the answer: why did Athena love me, when we're so different and when we don't even share the same world view. (2007:322)
>
> [*No início de minhas investigações que resultaram neste manuscrito, pensava que estava levantando sua vida para que se soubesse o quanto foi corajosa e importante. Mas, à medida que as conversas prosseguiam, eu ia descobrindo também a minha parte oculta – embora não acredite muito nessas coisas. E chegava à conclusão de que a razão principal de todo este trabalhão era*

responder a uma pergunta que nunca soube explicar: por que Athena me amava, se somos tão diferentes, e não dividimos a mesma visão do mundo? (2006:293)]

This is his first error: he attempts to understand the Other through representation rather than allowing her to present her alterity to him. The second flaw in the biographer's relationship with otherness is that, in as much as he loves and wants to understand Athena, he also seeks to understand himself better. This is precisely the central criticism that Levinas directs towards the Western philosophical tradition, that is, the subject's quest for a deeper understanding of himself and the formulation of his identity supersedes his desire to engage in ethical conversation with the Other who exceeds the limited world of the Same.

Our examination of these two theories in which the Same and the Other can enter into dialogue has revealed its imperfections but we can nevertheless argue that the mere presence of several elements presenting an alternative relationship with otherness is already a start. Both Homi Bhabha and Emmanuel Levinas have indicated how a new space that is no longer bound by singular subject positions can be navigated and they lay the foundations for a relationship between the Same and the Other. The very imperfection of this relationship indicates that the encounter with the Other is a journey. Athena's life exemplifies a journey that that is both slow and not always successful. Her 'social death' suggests that although attempts are being made to enter into veritable conversation with the Other, they have not yet been perfected.

Similarly, we can say that the presentation of cultural otherness is a process that is not yet complete, but a start has been made and literature becomes the site for cultural mediation. Translation is another such site and the first part of the following chapter examines how Bhabha's and Levinas's thinking operate in the translation of *A Bruxa de Portobello* into English and how this affects the subject's relationship with the Other.

CHAPTER FOUR – ENCOUNTERS WITH AN-'OTHER' IN TRANSLATION

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter explored two alternative approaches towards a re-orientation in the relationship between the Same and the Other, allowing for increased interaction between diverse cultures and a more respectful relationship between the subject and the external other within the realm of literature. Various problems were, nevertheless, encountered when these theoretical concepts were applied to an analysis of Paulo Coelho's *The Witch of Portobello*. The principal concern was the violation of Athena-as-Other by her Scotland Yard partner because he neither permitted nor created a space for Athena to present her version of the events that ultimately led to her withdrawal from public life. The methods Athena herself uses to enter into a relationship with a metaphysical Other are also viewed with some scepticism because the reader is never entirely certain whether she truly desires to engage with the Other or whether she exploits this relationship to search for the "blank spaces" in her life, thus approaching the Other in order to discover her own identity. If the latter is the case, then Athena has fallen into the trap which Levinas identifies as the downfall in the Western approach to the Other (cf. Chapter Three, 48). The novel is, nevertheless, a good example of an imperfect relationship between the Same and Other because the different voices create a space in which the negotiation of contrasting positions can begin but the ensuing dialogue is not necessarily harmonious or conclusive. Its importance lies in the potential of the dialogic space to reveal multiple presentations of the Other.

The issues arising from the characters' attempts to engage with the Other becomes a metaphor for the relationship with alterity in which the reader-as-Same is also called to enter into a dialogic relationship with the Other. The Other, in this case, is composed by the characters in the novel who merely present an aspect of the foreign and cultural Other. By allowing the reader to

believe that Athena is dead until the very last pages of the novel and not giving her the opportunity to reveal herself, the reader is continually frustrated in his efforts to know a character that ultimately resists all his attempts to know her. The very fact that she comes from a cultural and geographical space that is completely foreign to the average Brazilian reader, Athena becomes the "absolutely other" who cannot be assimilated into the reader's world. The novel, therefore, becomes a metaphor for the relationship with the Other that extends into contemporary societies where cultural borders and identities can no longer be categorised. In the same way as the characters adopt an imperfect ethical relationship with the Other, the reader is called to do the same and participate in the dialogue generated by contesting cultural positions formed by disjunctions between the reader, his context and his interaction with the text. The degree to which the reader is able to negotiate these differences and engage in this relationship further reveals the imperfection of the relationship between the Same and the Other.

An analysis of the translation of the Portuguese text into English further reveals differences in the way that the Other is presented. Michaela Wolf (1995:123) suggests that perhaps translation in the traditional sense, that is, where the target text is a facsimile of the original source language text, "may not even exist," but rather that what we call translation is really a "rewriting" or "cultural textualization." Viewed from this perspective, translation does not present an identical Other in a new language but instead, presents new facets of the cultural other and it is precisely these versions of the Other that form the basis for dialogue among different voices and perceptions of otherness. This dialogue not only reveals differences within texts, but also the characteristics and dynamics of the cultures in which these texts reside. For the purposes of this study, only two cultural voices, Portuguese and English, are negotiated, but if we were to consider all of the translations for Coelho's *A Bruxa de Portobello* that have been published, cultural dialogue and the presentation of alterity becomes even more diverse. This corresponds with an observation made by Wolf that "translation as a linguistic and cultural practice...in fact produces the Other" (2002:180). Doris Bachmann-Medick has also shown in her work that

> the relationship between cultural translation and representation of the Other...offers important basic principles for contemporary concerns around

> cultural globalization with its world-wide circulation of symbols and images. (2006:36)

In an email interview with Margaret Jull Costa (2008), the translator of *A Bruxa de Portobello*, she was asked whether there are gains and/or losses in the translation of the novel, to which she replied that it is not possible to

> measure or quantify loss and gain in a translation. The translation is not the same thing as the original – it can't be – the test, it seems to me, is whether the translation works as a text in its own right, and has a convincing voice and style." (Costa, 2008).

An analysis of the translation of *A Bruxa de Portobello* into English indeed produces a somewhat different view of the Other compared to the one contained in the original text. In some instances, the distance between the Same, in his role as the reader, and the text-as-the-cultural-Other collapses as a result of the British context in which the English-language translation is produced and this threatens to reduce the Other to the order of the Same, again constituting the malaise that Emmanuel Levinas identified in modern Western thinking. However, there are also a number of elements in the English text that enlarge the distance between the Same and the Other, thus showing greater respect for the alterity of the Other. Cultural tensions are revealed in the interplay between textual elements in the Portuguese and English versions of Coelho's novel, in which the distance between the reader and the characters as well as the distance between the reader and the cultural Other simultaneously increases and decreases. These tensions must be negotiated before cultural understanding can be reached and it is therefore in the "third space" or "in-between space" explored by Homi Bhabha that tensions are discussed, thus paving the way for intercultural dialogue and the mediatory role played by translation.

In discussing the shifts between the Portuguese original and the English translation of *A Bruxa de Portobello*, the novel as a metaphor for cultural dialogue is extended to include English-speaking readers. They are also invited to interact with a cultural other that has been removed from its original site of enunciation. Although the Athena character continues to operate as the Other, she is now somewhat more knowable to a British reader who shares several common

geographic and cultural spaces. Nevertheless, she still resists representation and prevents the readers from assimilating her into their own conceptual paradigms. Divergences between the two texts imply that the Portuguese and English versions of the novel do not speak in unison and this creates the possibility for dialogue that investigates different views of the Other but also raises issues that are relevant to translation. In this regard, the manner in which Athena is transported into a culture that is not her own becomes a powerful metaphor for translation in which the source text is transported into a new context that cannot be fully assimilated by the Same-as-reader.

The discussion below begins by exploring elements in which this distance between the two texts is reduced and this is followed by a similar discussion of differing elements that heighten the alterity of the Other. The chosen excerpts are given in both and English and Portuguese so that these differences become clear to the reader. In some cases, it is necessary to re-translate elements of the original Coelho texts so that the reader can grasp the nuances that affect the relationship between the Same and Other.

4.2 The Reduction of the Other to the Order of the Same in the English Translation

This section examines elements in the translation that not only reduce the distance between the Same and the Other but also eliminate some of the unfamiliarity between the text and the English-speaking reader. The Portuguese-language novel provides a setting that is very clearly foreign to the average Brazilian reader, who is far more likely to have access to an American English-language culture than a British culture. The London setting therefore remains "absolutely other" (Levinas, 1991:39) and contributes to the 'unhomeliness' (Bhabha, 2005:13) of the text, which Bhabha considers to be essential for the creation of an "in-between space" (2005:10), the site of intercultural dialogue. In contrast, the translation of the novel into English reduces this distance. English-speaking readers, and this is even truer for British readers, are far more familiar with the British culture and environment in which the novel is set and they therefore encounter the other with certain pre-conceived ideas formed by their own context-based experiences and this may influence the reader's attitude towards Athena, an immigrant fleeing the civil war in Lebanon.

Asked whether the British setting made a difference to the translation of the novel, Costa replied that "the setting is only British in the sense that there are British place-names and street-names. So, no, it made no difference" (Costa, 2008). Despite Costa's statement, the translation of this novel into English *does* reduce the alterity of the Other because the reader is not called to take on the position of the migrant and step into a foreign setting. The best example of this is the reference to the Robert Frost poem, "The Road Not Taken," in the original source text:

> Diante de mim havia duas estradas
> Eu escolhi a estrada menos percorrida
> E isso fez toda a diferença." (2006:37)

To the Portuguese-speaking reader, this is simply a poem (the name of the poet is not important) illustrating Athena's individuality and her sometimes bizarre decisions. The translation of the poem into Portuguese further heightens the sense of the foreign for a Brazilian reader. Many English-speaking readers, however, are familiar with the opening verse of Frost's poem as it is often included in school curricula:

> Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
> I took the one less traveled by,
> And that has made all the difference. (2007:35)

The familiarity of the poem immediately calls on the reader to take note of the reference, given to us in its original form, and is therefore more likely to recall it each time Athena makes an unusual decision.

A close comparison of the Portuguese and English texts, revealed number of omissions in the English translation. Some of these omissions were related to historical inaccuracies in the original. One of these refers to the dates and duration of the civil war in Lebanon. The Portuguese text (2006:32) tells us that the war lasted two years between 1974 and 1975 but the English translation (2007:28) omits this information. Further omissions in the English text eliminate chronological flaws in the original. On one occasion, Andrea and Athena go shopping

together and Athena has just purchased some lingerie. As Athena buys the lingerie, we are told in both texts that "she paid for the lingerie and put it into her bag" (2007:216)/*Foi até à caixa, pagou a* lingerie, *colocou-a na bolsa* (2006:202), but in the Portuguese version, the two women continue walking when suddenly, Athena "parou, com o *lingerie* na mãos" (2006:203) [my translation: *stopped with the lingerie in her hands*].

It is clear that these flaws in the original text rob Coelho's novel of some of its legitimacy and corresponds with some of the criticism directed at the author in Brazil. Marcelo Pen says that in *The Witch of Portobello "*também se perecebe a falta de cuidado que Coelho dispensa a seus textos" (2006) [my translation: *the lack of care that Coelho takes with his texts is also noticeable*]. In a review of a book by Janilto Andrade (Diversão e Cultura, 2008) criticizing Coelho's writing, Andrade comments on "contradições na narrativa" [my translation: *contradictions in the narrative*] and that the "maior pecado entre os pecados é não ter coerência interna nenhuma" [my translation: *the most significant of all its sins is a lack of internal coherence*].

Costa (2008) indicated that although "I never change anything without Paulo's permission," decisions of this nature are made to rid the text of unnecessary flaws. Costa added that

> obviously, it's up to the author to get these things right, but, then, no one is perfect. In Britain and America, there are eagle-eyed editors, copy-editors and proof-readers to catch this kind of thing. Generally speaking, books from Spain, Portugal and Brazil are not well edited and there do tend to be slips and errors and inconsistencies. (Costa, 2008)

It is clear that the omissions constitute an attempt to correct errors in the original so as to improve the quality of the translated text and Costa further admits that "if there were...errors in my English translation, the editor/copy-editor would put this down to sloppiness on my part" (2008). Nevertheless, these deliberate omissions ensure the credibility of the English text as the reader is entirely unaware of its internal inconsistencies. As a result, the reader does not question the credibility of the text and this forges greater unity between the reader and the text. Had the

inaccuracies persisted in the translation, the reader may have questioned the validity of the narrative and this doubt would increase the gap between the reader-as-the-Same, the narrated Other and the source text author.

The most interesting omission, however, is found towards the end of the novel in which one and a half paragraphs are entirely deleted in the English translation. In this passage, Deidre O'Neill, Athena's Scottish teacher is explaining how parochial news events in London, such as the protests against Athena in Portobello Road, rarely reach Scotland and in the Portuguese version, she then proceeds to express the Scottish desire for independence from the British monarchy. The following paragraph is entirely omitted in the English translation:

> É patético que nesta época ainda utilizamos o mesmo código telefônico da Inglaterra, seus selos de correio, e tenhamos ainda que amargar a derrota da nossa rainha Mary Stuart na batalha pelo trono.
>
> Ela terminou decapitada nas mãos dos ingleses, sob o pretexto de problemas religiosos, é claro. O que a minha discipula estava enfrentando não era nenhuma novidade (2006:255)

> [my translation: *It is pathetic that in this day and age we still use the same telephonic code as England, their postage stamps and still have to pay dearly for the defeat of our Queen Mary Stuart in the battle for the throne.*
>
> *She was finally beheaded at the hands of the English, under the obvious pretext of religious differences. What my disciple was facing was nothing new.*]

The omission of this passage may well have been an editorial decision rather than an independent decision made by the translator. It is, nevertheless, interesting to consider the reasons behind the omission. Deidre's comment is clearly anti-British. It may have been left out because it introduces a political dimension to the novel and does not really fit with the central themes of spiritual enlightenment and social criticism. Her statement may also have been eliminated as it does not reflect contemporary Scottish attitudes towards England. Whatever the reason for this omission, it nevertheless betrays Coelho's intention to present the dynamics

between various cultural groups in the United Kingdom and further approximates the reader and the text, again making it familiar to a British reader. The omission also eliminates the possibility for intercultural dialogue that is not necessarily harmonious and which, according to Homi Bhabha, is necessary for cultural understanding. A third point to consider here is the criticism made in Chapter Three (cf. 58) that all of the characters' voices come across as very similar and in this omission, some of Deidre's cultural personality is eliminated, and her voice also becomes very similar to that of the other characters in *The Witch of Portobello*.

Inasmuch as there are elements in the translation of Coelho's *A Bruxa de Portobello* that reduce the distance between the reader and the characters, as well as the distance between the reader and the text, there are also elements that increase and decrease that distance simultaneously. The most telling example of this is the front cover of the Portuguese and English novels (see Figure 4 below).



Figure 4: The design of the front cover for the Portuguese and English editions of *A Bruxa de Portobello* respectively.

The design of both front covers plays with the reader's assumptions about witches and witchcraft. The Portuguese-language cover evokes a greater sense of innocence than the English edition. The infant's finger points towards the nipple on the bare female breast, foregrounding

the concept of woman as mother and nurturer. The sepia-coloured front cover and the size of the woman's chest and stomach does not draw attention to her sexuality, with the exception of her left breast, which can be seen as a source of life for the young child who points towards it rather than a symbol for eroticism. The focus of the English edition is far more exotic and sensual, even though the woman's nakedness is more subtle than on the Portuguese edition. The sharp contrast between the royal blue background, the woman's orange hair and the paleness of her skin draws our attention to her nakedness and the concept of woman as a mystical and sensual being. The blue gypsy-style skirt which blends into the background conjures up the reader's stereotypes of the Salem-type witch who defies social norms.

In other words, the Portuguese-language cover presents a particular vision of womanhood, that of motherhood, which corresponds with one of our first encounters with the adult Athena, in which she tells her parish priest that "I know that I have a mission which I have long rejected, and now I must accept it. That mission is to be a mother (2007:42)/*Sei que tenho uma missão que recusei por muito tempo, e agora preciso aceitá-la. Esta missão é ser mãe* (2006:43-44). This image is further linked to the Catholic devotion to Mary[7], the mother of Jesus, to whom the novel is dedicated: "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for those who turn to you. Amen" (2007:vii)/*Oh, Maria, concebida sem pecado, rogai por nós que recorremos a Vós. Amém* (2006:6). This almost religious image of Athena as mother on the front cover directly challenges the title given to her in this novel: *bruxa*, a witch, as it contradicts the virginal quality of Athena's mission to become a mother. The similarities between Athena and Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus in Catholic theology, are accentuated. In Father Giancarlo Fontana's account, he tells us that Athena would often come into the church and "spend some time there singing to the Holy Virgin before going off to her classes" (2007:38)/*ficar pelo menos algum tempo cantando para a Virgem antes de ir para a universidade* (2006:41). When Athena announces her desire to marry at the age of nineteen, she makes a point of telling Father Giancarlo that she is still a virgin. The priest further explains that, after giving birth to her son, "[s]he *devoted* herself to looking after Viorel (my emphasis, 2007:51)/*dedicava-se a cuidar de Viorel* (2006:53) and he further describes her as "that young woman with the child in her arms, a kind of Virgin Mary, the miracle of motherhood and love made manifest in abandonment and solitude" (2007:54)/*aquela*

[7] Paulo Coelho is a devout Catholic and many of his novels carry Catholic imagery.

moça com seu filho no colo, uma espécie de Virgem Maria, o milagre da maternidade e do amor manifestos no abandono e na solidão (2006:55). These contradictions between the witch and the virginal mother figures prevent the reader from making any assumptions about the central character and she remains "absolutely other" (Levinas, 1991:33).

In contrast, the English-language cover introduces us to an older and angrier Athena, the one who was rejected by the Catholic Church and went in search of other ways by which to approach the Other. The image on the cover corresponds with Western readers' stereotypes of the witch, a female archetype which Deidre O'Neill describes as an entity who "justifies her existence by going in search of complete and limitless pleasure" (2007:15)/*a Bruxa vai em busca do prazer complete e ilimitado – justificando assim sua existência* (2006:21). This description of the witch conjures up images of deviant social practices that display little respect for others in the quest for "limitless pleasure." Some time after Athena's 'death,' Deidre and Heron, Athena's admirer, attend a ceremony to pardon "81 people – and their cats – who were executed in the sixteenth and seventeenth century for practicing witchcraft" (2007:2)/*o perdão official a 81 pessoas – e seus gatos – executados por prática de bruxaria entre os séculos XVI e XVII* (2006:9). Deidre criticises the ceremony, suggesting that the pardon reflects society's justification for having put the witches to death in the first place and remarks the witches were not criminals but the "innocent victims" (2007:2)/*inocentes* (2006:10) who were killed for their actions. The novel introduces the concept of witches by opening with this conversation between Deidre and Heron. Together with the depiction on the front cover, this passage steers the reader towards a perception of Athena that is very different from the Portuguese text because she is immediately associated with social deviancy. The witch-like figure, replete with red hair and gypsy-skirt, consolidates this perception and therefore, Athena-as-Other is reduced to the order of the reader's preconceived associations. Yet, the bare-backed woman in the picture is also exotic and thus also subconsciously presents a character residing outside of the rational realm, characteristic of the Western world, who symbolises the unknowable Other. We can therefore argue that this visual clue simultaneously increases the distance between the reader and the text. Consequently, the reader is unable to pass judgement on Athena until he learns more about her.

These two very different depictions of Athena on the English and Portuguese covers and the respective associations initiate dialogue, thus creating an "in-between space" in which tensions between the Same and the Other can be negotiated.

4.3. Encounters with Irreducible Alterity in Costa's English Translation

The above analysis of the two front covers leads us towards a more detailed examination of those elements in the translation that broaden the distance between the Same and Other. It is interesting to note the number of times that foreign places (that is, those outside of England) are named in the translation whereas in the original text, these foreign locations are mostly referred to indirectly through the use of imagery that denotes familiarity. When Samira Khalil, Athena's mother, travels to Romania to adopt a child, she says that "my first instinct was to adopt them all, to carry them off to Lebanon, where there was sun and freedom" (2007:20) while the original refers to Lebanon as "nosso pais" – our country (2006:26). In a later reference, Beirut (2007:106) is simply referred to as "casa" – home (2006:100). The familiarity of 'home' and 'our country' reduces the distance between the reader's culture and Athena's Lebanese roots, while references to Lebanon and Beirut in the English translation increase that distance, reminding Western readers that Athena's adopted Middle Eastern roots are very different from their own.

The use of emphasis in the English translation further widens the gap between the reader-as-Same and the world of the Other, that is, the novel. In the first example, Vosho "Bushalo," the restaurant owner in the Romanian town of Athena's birth, is outraged by the way in which Athena speaks about gypsy culture as if it were her own, given that she grew up far away from her people and their culture and accordingly he tells her not to speak of 'our' history because "it's *my* history, the history of *my* wife, *my* children, *my* tribe. You're a European" (emphasis in Costa's translation, 2007:126). The wording in the Portuguese is identical but lacks the italicised emphasis: *Não é nossa por favor. É a minha, da minha mulher, dos meus filhos, da minha tribo* (2006:119). The emphatic stress on the possessive adjective in the English translation creates an additional distance between the culture and lifestyle of the gypsies and the potential British or European reader.

In another example, emphasis is also used to describe Samira Khalil's relationship to the city that had been her home before the family went into exile. She tells us that Athena's "home had been Beirut, when it *was* still our home" (2007:102). The italicised verb and the possessive adjective "our" reminds us that the land that is foreign to the reader was the site of 'homeliness' for the speaker and this further extends the distance between the reader and the characters in the novel. The original text does not place any extra emphasis on any part of that sentence, saying only "seu lar tinha sido Beirute quando ainda era um lar para todos nós" (2006:97; my translation: *her home had been Beirut when it was still a home for all us*). By placing the personal pronoun "us" at the end of the sentence disassociates the family's relationship to the "home" site. Since this site is also foreign to the reader, the characters are drawn closer to the reader. The use of the possessive adjective, "our" in the English translation, however, suggests ownership and the bond between Athena's family and Beirut. Since the reader is not included in this reference, the distance between the reader and the characters is emphasised, particularly if the former is British. Furthermore, the Portuguese language does not use a personal pronoun in front of the verb to refer to the subject if the subject of the sentence is clear from the surrounding content. Therefore a word for word translation of the above quotation is: *her home had been Beirut when still was a home for all of us*, further eliminating the subject 'it' that is doubly emphasised by the italicised 'was' in the English translation and this further increases the distance between the reader and the location described by Samira Khalil.

In some parts of the translation, time collapses and the reader becomes uncertain as to Athena's real age or the 'real time' in which events occur. We have already mentioned that the dates for the Lebanese civil war (2006:32 and 2007:28) were omitted because, as Coelho's translator points out, "I seem to recall that the dates of the civil war in Lebanon were wrong, and the age of Athena's son fluctuated" (Costa, 2008). It is interesting to note, however, that Costa's choice to omit these references rather than correcting them, result in a text that resides in a kind of limbo, detached from the 'real world' of chronological time. For example, where in the Portuguese text, Samira says that "aos doze anos, descobrimos que tinha uma certa vocação religiosa" (2006:28; my translation: *at the age of twelve, we discovered that she had a certain religious vocation*), the English text omits the reference to Athena's age, saying only that this discovery was made "very early on" (2007:23). In another place we are told that Athena "must have been a little more than

twenty years old" (2007:110) whereas the original text qualifies that statement with an editor's note, which is omitted in the translation, saying that "Athena tinha 23 anos quando foi visitar a Romênia" (2006:104; my translation: *Athena was twenty-three when she visited Romania*).

The dissolution of real time is reminiscent of one of Bhabha's arguments that chronological linearity endows people and nations with sociological and cultural identity (2005:201). However, he recognises Edward Said's observation that "no one single explanation sending one back immediately to a single origin is adequate" (Said as quoted in Bhabha, 2005:202) and therefore states that "another time of *writing*" must be found to describe the "ambivalent and chiasmatic intersections of time and place" that characterise the formation of identity in contemporary literature (2005:202-203). Many post-colonial writers, such as Salman Rushdie, have found alternative ways of writing about time and history, always with the intention of disrupting previously accepted notions of chronological time and historicity. This disruption heightens the alterity of the cultural other because the reader is no longer able to identify with the events contained within the narrative since they are not rooted in a time that is chronologically "real".

I am not in any way suggesting that Costa's decision to omit inconsistent dates is a deliberate attempt to disrupt chronology and present Athena as an ultimately unknowable and unattainable Other. Nevertheless, there is an unconscious distancing between the reader and the narrated Other which, combined with the novel's reflections on the nature of time, location and history, produce a sense that the Other cannot be contained within the real world in which the text is read. In *The Witch of Portobello*, Vosho explains that he speaks in the present tense "because for those who travel, time does not exist, only space" (2007:125)/*para aqueles que viajam o tempo não existe – apenas o espaço* (2006:119). It is therefore appropriate that the present tense is used in the English version, when Vosho decides that Athena must really be Liliana's real daughter "because the certificate gives her full name and address" (2007:127). The use of the present tense suggests that the past in which Liliana gave her daughter up for adoption is indistinguishable from the present. This nuance does not exist in the Portuguese text where Vosho uses the past tense to explain that the certificate contains "o nome inteiro dela e o lugar onde vivia" (2006:120, my translation: *her full name and the place where she lived*). The use of

the past tense in Coelho's original text suggests both that Liliana no longer lives at the same address and, in this case, the present is distinguishable from the past, thus betraying Vosho's assertion that "time does not exist" and approximating the reader and the text.

A final observation on the use of biblical passages in Coelho's text and Costa's translation also heightens the sense of the 'absolute otherness' of the Other in the translation. The Bible translation used by Coelho is very informal and modern compared to the one that Costa selected for her translation of the novel. If we consider biblical references such as the reference from Luke 11:33 which can be found on the page before the novel begins proper, Costa uses a translation that reads as follows:

> No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. (2007:v)

Costa indicated that she took all biblical references from the King James Version because that "it is the most familiar one to British readers. There is also always the difficulty of deciding which of the many modern versions to use" (2008). The language used in this translation is very antiquated and formal and although it may be familiar to a reader who has frequent contact with biblical texts, it also has the effect of alienating readers who are not as familiar with this kind of literature. Brazilian readers do not encounter this problem as the translation that Coelho has used contains language that is far more accessible to modern-day readers and is a closer translation to the New International Version (NIV) in English:

> Ninguém acende uma lâmpada e a põe em lugar oculto ou debaixo da amassadeira, mas sobre um candeeiro, para iluminar os que entram. (2006:vii)

> [NIV translation: *No-one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he put it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light.* (1990:1043)]

The King James translation is used in all of the biblical quotes included in the English version of the novel (2007:55,78, 276) and the collection of passages written in an antiquated style not only increases the distance between the reader and the text but also de-familiarises the religious context to which these quotations refer. Religion is often seen as a means by which to enter into a relationship with God who is a metaphysical entity, or in Levinasian terms, the Other. The use of the King James language gives the impression of an Other who cannot be assimilated into the human condition and is ultimately unknowable which, according to Levinas is a necessary characteristic for an ethical relationship between the Same and the Other. In one of her sermons, Athena, attempts to recreate a vision of Jesus as a human person, one who can be assimilated into the human condition. She explains that:

> Jesus Christ, whom we all know, turned to the woman taken in adultery and said: "Has no man condemned thee? Neither do I condemn thee." He healed people on the Sabbath, he allowed a prostitute to wash his feet, he promised a thief that he would enjoy the delights of Paradise, he ate forbidden foods, and he said that we should concern ourselves only with today, because the lilies in the field toil not neither do they spin, but are arrayed in glory. (2007:276-277)
>
> [*Jesus Cristo, que todos nós conhecemos, virou-se para a mulher adútera, e disse: "Ninguém te condenou? Pois eu também não te condeno." Curou aos sábados, permitiu que uma prostituta lavasse seus pé, convidou um criminoso que estava sendo crucificado com ele para gozar as delícias do Paraíso, comeu alimentos proibidos, disse que nos preocupássamos apenas com o dia de hoje, porque os lírios do campo não tecem nem fiam, mas se vestem com glória.* (2006:252)]

In this passage, Jesus-as-Other is given very human characteristics, making it easier for the Same, be it Athena's audience or the reader, to enter into a relationship with an Other that is very like ourselves. But yet, that distance cannot be entirely bridged because the formal and antiquated manner in which Jesus is made to speak prevents the reader from ultimately approaching the Other as an equal.

The numerous examples provided thus far do not aim to compare the English translation of Paulo Coelho's *A Bruxa de Portobello* with the original, or to point out faults in one or the other text. These differences or slight shifts merely indicate that, although the plot and themes of the original text are maintained, the two texts reveal slightly different aspects of the Other and the relationship between the Same and the Other. In some cases, the distance between the reader-as-Same and the Other in one or the other of the texts is narrowed, thus calling on the Same to see the alterity that resides within himself, rather than creating a preconceived image of the Other. In other places, this distance is increased, forcing the Same to offer his selfhood as a means to enter into that relationship with otherness.

It is precisely this continuous interplay between the elements that distance the reader and draw him closer to the foreign Other that produces the potential for dialogue between the Same and Other in the two texts. The nuanced differences in the presentation of Athena in the Portuguese and English versions imply that the central character is not a static entity that remains unchanged even as the textual context in which she resides changes, but rather that her identity is what Stuart Hall (1992:277) describes as a "moveable feast" (cf. 38) which that allows for a discussion on the nature of changing cultural identities. If we consider the novel as a metaphor for translation (cf. p 62-63), then the "in-between space" can also be used at the level of translation to negotiate tensions emerging from disjunctions within the contexts in which the original text and its translation are produced. It is only by discussing these conflicting differences that cultural understanding can be reached.

These differences give rise to cultural dialogue without requiring this interaction to be harmonious. It is precisely the negotiation of cultural differences between the two texts that make the creation of an "in-between space" possible. If this is true for two different versions of the same novel, then we can only imagine how much further this dialogue could develop if we were to consider *A Bruxa de Portobello* in all of its different translations to date.

Although we have examined some of the issues in the translation of *The Witch of Portobello* that influence the relationship between the Same and Other and increase the possibility of cultural dialogue, it is also necessary to consider some of the practical strategies that can be applied to the

translation of all literary texts that depict the cultural Other so as to facilitate interactions between foreign-language texts and authors and their translations, translators and audiences. It is also necessary to become more reflective of the tensions between cultures and increasingly promote cultural dialogue. The discussion below addresses some of these concerns.

4.4. Finding a New Space for Translation and Translators

The production of texts involves a range of decisions and this is even truer for the production of translated texts. We touched on some of these in Chapter Two by considering the selection of foreign-language texts for translation on the basis of their popularity in their home cultures and the demand of publishers and readers for particular types of novels. It is also important to clarify what exactly we mean when we speak about translation. Michaela Wolf argues that translation, per se, does not exist but rather, the act of translation produces versions of a particular text. She indicates that within the act of translation,

> the raw material (the foreign language text) is transformed through a transformative act (a certain theory) into a product, the translation. (1995:129)

She explains that these transformations are "conditioned by ideology" which are in turn motivated by cultural and social forces that make texts more "consumable" for a particular audience (Wolf, 1995:129). To a certain extent, we can see this happening in Costa's translation of *A Bruxa de Portobello* into English in, for example, the different depictions of the front cover and the decision to omit inaccurate information. Therefore, Wolf argues that we can no longer consider only the text when comparing foreign-language texts and their translations. It is also necessary to challenge "classical concepts like *text*, *author* or *meaning*" (1995:130). The relationship these concepts have with the social and cultural contexts in which they reside should also be taken into consideration. Wolf adopts the strategy proposed by Holz-Mänttäri that the translator, the publisher commissioning the translation and the target audience should all participate actively to determine the specifics of the translation project and take "the culture specific and social phenomena of the societies involved" into consideration (as cited in Wolf, 1995:130-131).

In the real world of translation, however, there might be some interaction between the translator and the commissioning publisher but if we examine the vast audience that a literary translation project aims to satisfy and the time constraints of both the author and translator, this is hardly realistic. Even Costa admits that she does not

> 'collaborate' with Paulo on the translations, but he is always enormously helpful when I write to him with any queries, which are usually queries about the exact meaning of a word, apparent inconsistencies of plot and other minor points" (Cota, 2008).

While collaboration of all those involved in a translation project would be highly beneficial, it is not practical and translators remain the "first readers" (Wolf, 1995:128) of texts commissioned for translation. Wolf tells us that the task of the translator is to "represent the other in a primary process" (1995:128) by decoding and reconstructing elements in the original text so as to produce meaning which is acceptable to the cultural values of the target audience. She reminds us that the target readership does not have access to the original and the translated text becomes the source text for that audience.

This suggests that translators bear a number of responsibilities, both towards the original text (including its author) and the target audience. Translators are therefore faced with the problem of negotiating differences between various cultural voices in both the original and translated texts. Wolf opposes Homi Bhabha's view that it is necessary to collapse subject positions if cultural mediation is to take place, saying that it is necessary "to admit that binary oppositions can never be totally abandoned" (2002:181). In other words, the cultural Other must necessarily be "filtered and arranged through the...translator's consciousness" (2002:181), as he is the first to access the source text. This process of filtering cultural values residing in the two systems implies that "'other' meanings are transferred to cultural practices which are themselves embedded in and shaped by institutions and traditions" (2002:183).

It is precisely the representation of otherness in a different culture that has been problematic for translators. Wolf argues that the Self is also constructed each time the Other is presented and it

is therefore impossible to separate the Same from the Other. The overlap between the Same and Other points towards a solution for the different nuances we identified in the two versions of *A Bruxa de Portobello* – that it is not so much the differences between source and target texts that are important but an awareness of how the Same and Other are presented in different cultural spaces. Wolf understands Bhabha's notion of the in-between-space as a "place where cultures merge and create new spaces" (2002:186) and translation thus becomes a location for the "reciprocal interpenetration of the Self and the Other" (2002:186) in which the distinction between the Same and Other dissolves.

Such a relationship raises questions about the ways in which knowledge of the Other is produced and how these further reflect the values of the social structures in which texts and their translations are located. Reflection on these matters therefore extends the traditional view of translation which Wolf describes as a "strategy to consolidate the cultural Other" and maintain existing ideologies (2002:188). She therefore calls for all those involved in the translation process to become more reflective of their decisions and the effects that these have within contemporary social structures. She suggests that greater attention should be paid to the following questions:

> Who is responsible for the selection of the text to be translated? Who is responsible for their publication? Who selects the translator? What are the relations between these factors and the corresponding factors in the so-called source culture? What are the criteria for 'marking' the translated text? (2002:188)

According to Wolf, it is the reflective process of searching for answers to the above questions that forms the starting point for more applicable and appropriate translation strategies in a post-colonial world. This reflective process further produces a discursive space in which "conflicts are acted out and margins of collaboration explored" (2002:189), in other words, the dialogical tension alluded to by Bhabha in Chapter Three (cf. 60).

It is, however, necessary for this 'third space' of cultural negotiation to move beyond its theoretical framework and be applied to translation practices. Wolf (2002:189-190) provides several suggestions of how this can be done. One strategy is to consider the ideology informing the selection criteria for the translation of texts by examining the legitimacy that is accorded to translation products. In this regard, it might be interesting to return to the observation made in Chapter Two (cf. 34) that translated texts are rarely placed in a prominent position in South African bookshops. This suggests that English-language texts are accorded greater currency than foreign-language texts in translation. Other important elements to consider are the norms, criteria and agendas adopted at each stage of the translation process and how these affect identity formation and the cultural relations that ensue as a result of the translation. Douglas Robinson, for instance, points out that culturally oriented translation theories have become increasingly interested in the way that ideologies shape the translation process and he provides several examples. For instance, he says that "descriptivists are neutral, dispassionate, striving for scientific objectivity," while "feminists and post-colonialists are politically committed to the overthrow of patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism" (1997b:233) in an attempt to side with minority cultures that continue to be oppressed. Basil Hatim (2001:138) argues that such ideologies are often added to texts that already exhibit the original author's ideology and questions whether translators are "entitled to hijack the target text" or whether a "more responsible stance" is required in which translators take responsibility for their own subject positions and do not impose these on the text. In doing so, they are responding to the call of the Other, that is, the foreign text, to offer themselves for the Other without imposing their own assumptions or interpretations of the Other.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2000:397-416) provides some practical answers to these questions by suggesting ways in which the translator can approach the text. Although she speaks from her own experience as a translator and describes techniques she has employed, these can be instrumental for translators. Firstly, she allows the boundaries of language to fall away so that she no longer controls language (2000:398). By adopting this attitude, she can enter into a communicative relationship with alterity and she indicates that it is only under these conditions that translation can occur. She adds that it is in the rhetoric, or conversation, that occurs between the translator and the Other that the "silence between and around the words" is revealed, thus

showing what is and what is not possible in terms of a translation that respects alterity. This reminds us of Athena's desire to approach the Other through dance or learning calligraphy. Yet the Other eludes her, sending her in search of the "blank spaces" or silences in her life. Only when she admits that she does not have a clear-cut strategy for approaching the Other, and therefore stops controlling her interaction with alterity does the Other possess Athena and speak through her. This extends our observations of the novel as a useful metaphor for translation. It is in the absence of a translation strategy or ideology that otherness truly reveals itself.

After relinquishing control over the text, Spivak "[solicits] the text to show off the limits of its language" (2000:400), that is, that the silences or 'blank spaces' which cannot be represented by language. She adds that certain tools are necessary for the text-as-Other to present its alterity to the translator-as-Same. She explains that the translator must, first of all, be "strictly bilingual" (2000:404) and be able to speak of intimate matters in the languages of the cultures between which she travels. A second requirement is to "be sufficiently in touch" (2000:404) with contemporary literary trends operating within those languages. Finally, translators must be able to "discriminate on the terrain of the original" (2000:405) so that cultural and ideological constraints can be negotiated in translation.

Once she has surrendered to the language of translation, its text and the accompanying cultural context, Spivak translates "at speed" saying that if

> I stop to think about what is happening to the English, if I assume an audience, if I take the intending subject as more than a springboard, I cannot jump in, I cannot surrender. (2000:406)

Only after she has translated the text in this fashion, does she go back and revise it into what she calls a "sort of English" (2000:406). Spivak argues that it is impossible to translate from a "position of monolinguist superiority" (2000:410) because translators must acknowledge that every text has an element of "*un*translatability," thus suggesting that there are nuances that cannot be translated and that translations are not, as Wolf reminds us, facsimiles of original texts, but rather are rewritings of a text originally produced within a unique linguistic and cultural

context. This is precisely the argument used by Emmanuel Levinas when he says that the ethical encounter with alterity is possible because the Other resists translation, that is, being assimilated into the Same (cf. p52-53).

All of the practical strategies presented thus far are very useful in guiding the translator's approach to the translation of a literary text and raise pertinent questions about the context in which both the original and translated texts are produced. However, none of these strategies have raised one of the central concerns addressed in Chapter Two, namely the role that power plays in hegemonic cultures and the consequences it holds for the translation act. This is one of the issues raised by Doris Bachmann-Medick, who acknowledges that literary translation and the translation of culture "is closely intermeshed with power relations and thus, in most cases, with relationships of cultural inequality" (2006:35). She sees translation as an act of cultural construction, in which texts are interpreted in terms of the cultural currency that they hold within particular societies. Translation theorists are, therefore, called to examine what Bachmann-Medick describes as "the multi-layeredness and overlapping of different cultures, affiliations and identities" (2006:37) so as to examine the relationship between varying cultural constructions and power relations. She understands translation as

> a concept of relationship and movement, in a way that takes palpable, spatial shape in [Salman] Rushdie's metaphor of the migrant as a 'traveller between worlds.' (2006:40)

She argues that when translation moves between two worlds, a productive middle space emerges allowing for a pragmatic approach to the "cultural networks and entanglements" (2006:40) that characterise the relationship between texts and their translations.

Michaela Wolf takes this discussion onto a more concrete plane, arguing that even in a post-modern and post-colonial world, translation is still, to a certain degree, imprisoned by its role in consolidating the cultural Other so as to preserve "prevailing ideologies" and function as a "cultural filter" that suppresses "any autonomous dynamics of cultural representation" (2002:188). In other words, despite all of the strategies examined above, the politics of

translation is still at the mercy of more dominant cultures and agencies of power that determine what is translated and the conditions under which this translation will proceed. It is for this reason that Lawrence Venuti argues that in translation the source message is always "interpreted and reinvented" (2000:484). However, Wolf and Bachmann-Medick do not see this as the failure of translation to forge a new direction for the discipline. Instead, they focus on those elements that resist translation, what Spivak calls '*un*translatability' (2000:410) and Venuti refers to as the "remainder" (2000:484), from which an "in-between space," promoting cultural dialogue is created. It is precisely within this space that issues of power, hegemony, the constitution of cultural communities, values, beliefs and norms can be negotiated and reflected upon.

Perhaps then, translation is no longer the safe domain, the homely realm of the Same, in which individual cultures occupy particular spaces and linguistic strategies to ensure that the translated text is as identical to its original as possible. Instead, contemporary translators are faced with the very real possibility that translation is the unknown land of the Other, for which there are no maps or neat strategies for overcoming the difficulties that they, as migrant sojourners into this foreign territory, encounter. There are only questions and possibilities that must be examined in the hope that there may one day be a new site for translation, but translators simultaneously acknowledge, as does Bhabha, that the hoped-for destination of a future home is forever elusive, the "sustaining myth of the middle years" (2005:2) which no longer hold true at the start of the twenty-first century. Yet, this journey is strangely comforting because it "becomes a space of intervention in the here and now" (Bhabha, 2005:10) in which experimentation continuously produces new spaces for a discussion of the external effects of translation. Douglas Robinson succinctly describes the simultaneous ease and unease that the translator-as-cultural mediator experiences:

> The more 'culturally literate' we become, the more *and* the less at-home we feel in foreign cultures. More, because, we accept our difference, our alienness, our lack of belonging, and learn to live with it, even to cherish it, to love the extra freedom it gives us to break the rules a little and to be a little more idiosyncratic than the natives. Less, because that freedom in alienation, that idiosyncrasy means not belonging. (1997b:230)

CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

Although the world is becoming far more globalised and the advent of the internet and other modern technologies have made access to other cultures far easier than ever before, this study shows that the English-speaking literary domain is still conspicuously resistant towards the publication of foreign literatures in translation. In this study, I showed that English-language societies are still largely hegemonic and the fact that relatively few foreign-language literatures have been translated into English points towards limited intercultural interaction within the English-speaking world. However, increased interaction between cultures and the crossing of national borders has become inevitable. Whereas thirty years ago, it would have been almost impossible to move freely between countries in Eastern and Western Europe, today many of these countries belong to the European Union, they share the same currency and open borders have made it possible for a Slovakian, for example, to live and work in Spain and enjoy the same rights as other Spaniards. As China extends its international influence, it is no longer uncommon to find large Chinese communities living in various metropolises in South Africa, the United States, Brazil or Germany.

Increased global interaction therefore requires greater efforts to achieve cultural understanding and translation, as a discipline that travels between cultures, has a significant role to play in this regard. Accordingly, this study examined new ways of viewing literary translation as a cultural endeavour that can assist in overcoming hegemony and, thus, stimulate intercultural dialogue. I have, hopefully, been successful in raising some of the issues regarding the discrepancies in the status accorded to English and foreign language texts in both English and non-English speaking countries. I also examined ways in which these discrepancies can be overcome by presenting an alternative understanding of the relationship with the cultural Other, showing how these concepts can be applied to the translation of contemporary literature and applying these to a specific Brazilian novel that has been translated into English.

In Chapter One, after considering the aims of the study, its research questions and the theoretical framework to be adopted, the observation that the translation of English-language fiction into a variety of foreign languages is far more prominent than the translation of these foreign literatures into English was explored. Although the initial observation was made after visiting Exclusive Books, this was supported by similar findings that had already been made in the 1990s by Lawrence Venuti (1998, 2000), a trend that was again confirmed from the extensive bestseller lists discussed in Chapter Two. The relevance of Venuti's findings was questioned as a result of the recent prominence of several foreign-language authors in English translation, among them, Paulo Coelho, whose novel, *A Bruxa de Portobello*, and its English translation form a significant portion of this study. Coelho's popularity, in Brazil and abroad was explored. Although he is widely acclaimed as an author whose literature is relevant to contemporary society and was elected into the Brazilian Academy of Letters, some critics have downplayed his literary prowess, saying that he is merely a good narrator. Nevertheless, his novels have been translated into more than sixty-six languages and the English translations of his novels have become bestsellers in South Africa and other English-speaking countries.

Two principal concerns were discussed in Chapter Two. The first of these is the role that translation continues to play in consolidating cultural stereotypes held by culturally and economically dominant societies at the cost of less dominant cultures. The perpetuation of stereotypical images in translation, confirming the dominant culture's perspective of cultural otherness shows that contemporary translation studies have not yet been fully successful in finding strategies that employ an alternative orientation to literary translation, which Doris Bachmann-Medick describes as "commitment to cultural understanding" (2006:34).

In the second part of Chapter Two a detailed analysis was conducted into some of the fiction produced in 2008 that has become popular and reached bestseller status in various countries, namely, Portugal, Brazil, Spain, Chile, Germany, France, South Africa, Australia, United Kingdom and the United States. The findings confirmed initial observations, made in Chapter One, that the majority of texts on sale at these ten bookstores were written by United States authors and this clearly points towards the dominance of United States culture throughout Europe, Africa and the Americas. These statistics also proved that observations made by

translation scholars in the 1990s and the start of the present decade, such as Richard Jacquemond (1992), Lawrence Venuti (1998) and Alexandra Rosa (2002) are still relevant, despite the increasing popularity of some foreign authors such as Paulo Coelho. Far more importantly, the collected data resulted in a detailed discussion of some of the consequences of US-based hegemony, particularly, the limited availability of a wide range of cultural representations which, in turn, limits cross-cultural interaction and respect for cultural differences. Furthermore, literary hegemony holds various implications for national authors as they are unlikely to be translated abroad if they are not first popular at home. If, however, audiences are not reading local authors, they will not be in a position to challenge literary hegemony. Therefore, the poverty of alternative cultural representations further consolidates the literary dominance of more powerful societies. Based on these findings, Chapter Two concluded that it is necessary to develop an alternative paradigm through which to view the cultural other and engage in intercultural dialogue.

The central concern of Chapter Three was a reorientation in the traditional understanding of cultural otherness. The opening argument showed that cultural inequality partially stems from a crisis in the Western understanding of individual identity, in which selfhood is constituted in terms of stable differences between the Self and an external Other. However, the reordering of the modern world threatens this understanding of identity because it is no longer determined by fixed subject positions. This instability provides an opportunity for intercultural dialogue and the post-colonial thought of Homi Bhabha (1990, 2005) is particularly relevant. It is precisely this sense of "unhomeliness" (2005:13) that gives rise to what Bhabha calls an "in-between-space" (2005:10) of intercultural dialogue. He explains that this dialogue may not necessarily be harmonious, but the new site of enunciation allows alternative cultural values to be represented. Bhabha's "in-between-space" is particularly useful for translation because the translation act is itself an exercise in the production of new cultural voices for consumption by readers other than the original audience. Despite the many possibilities for cross-cultural interaction in translation, concern for Bhabha's dialogic space was expressed as it tends to *represent* foreign cultures rather than allowing the cultural other to *present* itself.

Consequently, the second part of Chapter Three was dedicated to an exploration of the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas (1991, 1993) which calls for a relationship between the subject, (the Same), and an external other, (the Other), which does not represent the Other, by reducing the alterity of the Other to the paradigms of the Same. An explanation was given to show how this relationship is characterised by a mutual giving of the Same for the Other and vice versa. Accordingly, the Other presents his otherness, or alterity, to the Same who in turn, refrains from representing the Other according to his own limited experience of the world and offers his selfhood to the Other. These two theories were applied to an analysis of Paulo Coelho's *The Witch of Portobello* in an attempt to determine the extent to which the relationship between the Same and the Other occurs in the novel and the degree to which this facilitates cultural dialogue, so as to permit an ethical relationship within cultural interactions. The imperfect interaction between the Same and the Other is indicative that it is not yet fully possible to achieve equal cultural interaction. However, the dialogue generated by elements that are simultaneously harmonious and conflictual is in itself a development in cultural relations within the literary domain.

Chapter Four was dedicated to the application of Bhabha's and Levinas's theories to literary translation. Differences in the relationship between the Same and the Other in the Portuguese and English versions of Coelho's *A Bruxa de Portobello* were explored. This analysis revealed that even slight variations in the two texts offer readers different views of the cultural other and therefore, the two novels engage in intercultural dialogue. Nevertheless, it was shown that further awareness on the part of translators, authors and publishers is required if we wish to extend the dialogue that has begun. This was followed by a discussion into some of the issues raised by contemporary translation theorists who have called for a new orientation to the way in which translators think about and engage in translation. Michaela Wolf (1995, 2002) suggests that the criteria for the selection of texts undergoing translation must be re-thought and that translators should also reflect more deeply on their responsibility as the "first readers" of texts. They are called to acknowledge that subject positions cannot be entirely eradicated and must therefore employ strategies that negotiate and filter cultural values and perceptions of cultural otherness. On this topic, Gayatri Spivak (2000) provides several useful suggestions that translators can use to surrender to the text under translation and therefore avoid imposing their

own ideologies on the new text. Douglas Robinson (1997b), however, argues that target culture ideologies, power relations and cultural inequality will always, to a greater or lesser extent, be present in translation. Doris Bachmann-Medick (2006) consequently suggests that translation should be a tool for cultural construction so that these inequalities can be negotiated.

5.2. Conclusions

This study revealed that although cultural hegemony within the literary domain extends to translation, this does not imply that translators are powerless to change the status of translated fiction, particularly within the English-speaking world. On the contrary, translation and translators have a unique opportunity to present alternative images of foreign cultures so that hegemonic societies are forced to acknowledge the presence of the cultural Other in fictional texts that would previously have been inaccessible to these cultures, in particular, English-speaking audiences. It is for this reason that translation can no longer be considered as an imitative exercise and translators are therefore called to reflect on what Lawrence Venuti (1998:67) calls the "enormous power" of their contribution to the "formation of cultural identities." It is through the interaction of various cultural identities that Homi Bhabha's vision of cultural dialogue can be achieved and this will, in time, "precipitate social change" (Venuti, 1998:79) and challenge the cultural values and stereotypes of hegemonic societies.

Furthermore, greater exposure could be given to foreign-language authors within English-speaking societies, through translation, so that their contributions to the formation of culture, ideas and identities can travel further than their own immediate, national or continental environments. For example, it is worrying that of the many contemporary popular South American authors to have received various accolades in their own countries, the only names that are fairly familiar to South African readers (and this may well be true for readers in other English-speaking countries) are Colombia's Gabriel García Marquez, Chile's Isabel Allende and Brazil's Paulo Coelho. Greater efforts could be made on the part of publishers, bookstores and other cultural institutions to give greater prominence to foreign-language authors that are not so well-known among local audiences. It is laudable that a film is being made of Coelho's *The Alchemist* and García Marquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera* was recently produced for the

silver screen. More projects of this nature will further spotlight other, lesser known foreign authors.

It is only by presenting various views of the cultural other that we can work towards a truly responsible and ethical relationship between cultures in present-day hegemonic and developing societies, or to adopt Emmanuel Levinas's terminology, the creation of a relationship based on conversation between the Same and the Other.

5.3. Challenges and Possibilities for Future Studies

After reflecting on some of the challenges faced during the course of my research and which have, consequently influenced this study, I have identified three main challenges and shortcomings which can form the basis for further studies on this topic.

Firstly, I would have liked to contact Paulo Coelho personally in order to gain greater insight into his writing process and the relationship he enjoys with Brazilian and foreign publishers, agents and translators. I feel that this would have helped to determine, to a greater extent, whether there is perhaps greater interaction between these various participants in the domain of literary production than I may have concluded from my limited interaction with HarperCollins and Margaret Jull Costa, the translator for Coelho's *A Bruxa de Portobello* and several of his other novels. I am very thankful for the availability of various people at HarperCollins who put me in touch with Margaret Costa, who herself, provided very interesting and useful information. Upon contacting Coelho's agents, San Jordi Associados, I was told that it would be difficult to communicate with the author as a result of his time constraints and they were also not very helpful in providing additional contacts that might have been able to help me. Future studies may be able to provide further insight on some of the issues raised if they are able to collaborate more closely with the publishing houses, translators and authors.

A second difficulty I encountered was the collation of the bestseller lists in the ten English-speaking and foreign-language countries. It was largely difficult to find bestseller lists on the websites for bookstores other than those I ultimately used. Often, these lists were incomplete

and provided very little information about the novels they advertised. In this regard, the various Amazon and HarperCollins websites were the most complete. I would also have liked to collate lists for bestsellers in the years prior to 2008, but with the exception of Exclusive Books, these were unavailable. In most cases, I was only able to locate current bestsellers for the week or the month. For this reason, I selected and worked with bestseller lists for the last week of October 2008. Again, I am certain that my results would have been more complete if I had been able to find more extensive lists across a wider range of bookstores within a particular country and I may also have found that there are more translated texts on the bestseller lists. Bestseller lists merely point towards the most popular titles but do not reflect all of the sales made at a particular bookstore. It would, therefore, also be interesting to analyse global sales figures for particular bookstores and this would provide a greater indication of the total number of translations sold in comparison to mother-tongue texts.

Finally, my analysis of Paulo Coelho's *A Bruxa de Portobello* only included the original Portuguese-language text and its English translation. However, given that Coelho has been translated into over sixty languages, it would interesting to analyse the various presentations of the relationship between the Same and the Other within the narrative as well as the relationship between the cultural values presented in the Portuguese original and a wider selection of translations. Translations other than English would have been particularly interesting to analyse because they may reveal the perceptions that other language cultures have of British society and these texts then contribute to Coelho's attempt to present the world from the "eyes" of the Other (cf. Ortolano, 2003).

Nevertheless, given the challenges and constraints posed by this study, my discussion has contributed to translation studies by raising some of the concerns posed by other contemporary translation theorists. In addition to this, I provided an alternative orientation for the relationship between source texts and cultures and their respective target systems, by incorporating Levinasian philosophy and practically applying these principles to the recent translation of a contemporary novel. My results also confirmed the need for the discussions begun in the 1990s by translations scholars to be transformed into praxis to a greater extent. Most importantly,

many of these changes require the participation of literary publishers in both dominant and developing societies, a need that Lawrence Venuti had already identified in the late 1990s:

> Because developing countries are notable sites of contest between cultural sameness and difference, they can teach their hegemonic others an important lesson about the functionality of translation. The value of any translated text depends on effects and functions that can't be entirely predicted or controlled. Yet this element of contingency increases rather than lessens the translator's *responsibility* to estimate the impact of a project by reconstructing the hierarchy of domestic values that inform the translation and its likely reception (my emphasis, Venuti, 1998:189)

APPENDIX A – E-MAIL INTERVIEW WITH MARGARET JULL COSTA

S-LP: Not all of the English translations of the Paulo Coelho novels were translated by you. Is that a decision made by the publisher, or is it as a result of individual translator constraints or preferences? Do you see this as a downfall in the quality/consistency of the English translations in general?

MJC: I don't know why there have been so many translators. I was contacted in 1997 or so by Paulo's agent, who asked me if I would like to translate *Veronika decide morrer*. I didn't translate *O Demónio e Miss Prym* because I had too much work at the time, but have translated all his novels since then. Personally, I think it's always preferable for one translator (assuming they're any good!) to stick with an author. That way, the translator gets a real sense of the trajectory of an author's work and gets used to his or her linguistic tics and references, etc. As to whether this shows a general decline in quality and consistency of English translations, I think it's just something that happens with popular authors (it's the same with the Spanish writer, Arturo Pérez-Reverte), when the publisher needs to get the next novel translated and published as quickly as possible. So, I suppose, yes, it can affect the quality of the translation. It's more indicative, I think, of some commercial publishers' attitudes towards translation and translators, the foolish idea that any translator will do (publishers often find out to their cost that this isn't the case) and that a good translation is something that can be dashed off over a weekend!

S-LP: Since various translators re-work Coelho's novels into English, do the individual translators (or at least in your experience of translating his texts) collaborate to ensure that a specific "Coelho-style" is carried over into the English texts?

MJC: No, I haven't had any contact with the other translators and I'm sure there is no attempt to ensure a specific 'Coelho-style' in English.

S-LP: In your translation of some of his other novels in general and of *A Bruxa de Portobello*, did you collaborate with the Paulo Coelho? In our first communication, you briefly

indicated that you had worked in conjunction with the author. What was the extent of the collaboration? What kind of input did he provide?

MJC: I don't 'collaborate' with Paulo on the translations, but he is always enormously helpful when I write to him with any queries, which are usually queries about the exact meaning of a word, apparent inconsistencies of plot and other minor points. (see my answer to your question 8)

S-LP: Many of the translation theorists speak about strategies for translation, ideologies that inform the said translations, concerns for the target audience, faithfulness to source and target audiences, foreignisation vs domestication, and so on. How much of an influence do these strategies have on your work in general and on the translation of this particular text? What is your principal concern as you approach a text such as *A Bruxa de Portobello*? How did you approach the translation of the *A Bruxa de Portobello*?

MJC: Translation is always a delicate balancing act between capturing letter and spirit, between perhaps leaving in a foreign word or term or replacing it with another that the target-audience is more likely to understand. For me, the only hard and fast rule in translation is to produce the best and most convincing translation one can while remaining as true as possible to the letter and spirit of the original.

S-LP: What in your opinion, does *The Witch of Portobello* lose and/or gain in translation?

MJC: How does one measure or quantify loss and gain in a translation? The translation is not the same thing as the original – it can't be – the test, it seems to me, is whether the translation works as a text in its own right, and has a convincing voice and style. Unpolished translations have no personality, and it takes a lot of work to give a translated text as much personality as the original. It may not necessarily be the same personality.

S-LP: Does the predominantly British setting in this novel make the text any easier to translate for a British audience?

MJC: The setting is only British in the sense that there are British place-names and street-names. So, no, it made no difference.

S-LP: Do you know if your translation was edited/changed in any way for distribution in the UK, US and other English-speaking countries? If so, what kinds of changes were made?

MJC: As far as I know, my translation (which I produce for HarperCollins UK) is not changed for other English-speaking markets.

S-LP: In our first communication, you indicated that there are some discrepancies between the source text and the translation and that these had been made in conjunction with Coelho. I noticed, for example that a reference to the start of the civil war Lebanon in the original (included in an "editor's note") was omitted in the translation. Several Portuguese-speaking critics commented that *A Bruxa de Portobello* is historically inaccurate. Were these kinds of "inconsistencies" omitted in the English version for a reason?

MJC: Yes, I seem to recall that the dates of the civil war in Lebanon were wrong, and the age of Athena's son fluctuated. I haven't, alas, kept my correspondence with Paulo on this, but I do have one list of queries I sent to him on *Bruxa* (attached), which will at least show you the kind of thing I ask him.

Needless to say, I never change anything without Paulo's permission, and he is always the soul of helpfulness. Paulo's are not the only books to be plagued by inconsistencies. Obviously, it's up to the author to get these things right, but, then, no one is perfect. In Britain and America, there are eagle-eyed editors, copy-editors and proof-readers to catch this kind of thing. Generally speaking, books from Spain, Portugal and Brazil are not well edited and there do tend to be slips and errors and inconsistencies. Also translators are working under such pressure in those countries that they don't have time to correct or perhaps even notice such errors.

S-LP: Another criticism that has often been made of Coelho's work in Portuguese is that it is grammatically flawed, often attested to the fact that Coelho writes his novels within a very short period of time. These grammatical "errors" (I argue that it is a deliberate disruption of "acceptable" norms for writing) are not replicated in translation. Do you think that this, in part, contributes to the acclaim that Coelho has received outside of the Portuguese-speaking world (that is, in comparison to the criticism he receives at home)?

MJC: If there were grammatical errors in my English translation, the editor/copy-editor would put this down to sloppiness on my part and not to any 'deliberate disruption of acceptable norms'. I would only find some English equivalent for such 'disruption' if I felt it to be intrinsic to the original text. I have to say that I do not feel this to be the case with Paulo's novels. I simply try to match the simplicity of the original Portuguese. I also translate José Saramago, António Lobo Antunes and Lídia Jorge, writers who do play with language a great deal, and there I have to find ways of replicating that playfulness in my English version.

As to the books' reception in Britain, I would say that most critics here rarely notice whether a book has been well translated or not, indeed, they often fail to notice that it has been translated at all, so I can't honestly say whether the translations make any difference or not. Also I wouldn't say his books are acclaimed here. He often gets some very rude reviews indeed - not about his language, but about his plots and his ideas.

S-LP: Like its original, *The Witch of Portobello* is written in a somewhat informal style to depict the eye-witness accounts of those who knew Athena. By contrast, the biblical quotation included at the start of the novel comes from an older and more "formal" translation of the Bible, whereas the original is more accessible to the reader and, in part, sets the tone for the novel. What was the reason for using the older translation in *The Witch of Portobello?*

I used the King James version because that is the most familiar one to British readers. Plus there is always the difficulty of deciding which of the many modern versions to use.

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