

Bridging Worlds: A Critical Reflection in Postcolonial Translation of “Retnaningsih the Dreamer”

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Abstract

This article examines the English translation of Rinto Andriono’s “Rencah Istri Sang Pangeran Diponegoro” as “Retnaningsih the Dreamer.” Using postcolonial perspectives, the analysis underlines the importance of an Indonesian translator’s self-reflection and cultural identity negotiation. It explores cross-cultural understanding, the Eurocentric framing and ideological manipulation frequently present in translation. The methodology combines textual analysis and reflective practice to assess the translation’s alignment with postcolonial principles. Through a critical reflection, key areas for improvement are identified, such as, (1) applying postcolonial agenda consistently, (2) navigating culturally specific terms, and (3) recommending the translator’s annotations to provide context and cultural nuances in translation. The article argues that postcolonial translation potentially fosters cultural dialogue and literary appreciation. Ongoing self-reflections and continual improvements in translation are therefore important.

Keywords

Cross-cultural understanding; improvement strategies; postcolonial translation; self-reflection notes; translator’s annotations

Introduction

In translating Rinto Andriono’s “Retnaningsih the Dreamer” (2023),² I embarked on a complex journey to navigate the intricate terrain of a postcolonial text. The short story explores historical women’s voices, injustice and oppression, focusing on colonialist violence and personal sacrifice. It also reveals patterns of similar

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² The original Indonesian version of “Retnaningsih the Dreamer,” titled “Rencah Istri Sang Pangeran Diponegoro,” can be accessed through the Bandung Islamic University-affiliated online journal here <https://kabarkampus.com/2021/04/rencah-istri-sang-pangeran-diponegoro/>.

experiences of struggle and resistance across time and space, for example, between the Javanese and the Acehnese in fighting the colonials. This reflective article aims to examine critically the challenges encountered during the translation process, declaring the imperfections and proposing strategies for improvement.

Men's dominance in historical narratives frequently overshadows the important roles women played in shaping history. Exploring lesser-known people, particularly women warriors, in historical literature can help readers gain a better grasp of women's achievements and provide a more balanced understanding of the past. Unfortunately, the experiences of women fighters are usually untold, resulting in distorted views of history, particularly in Indonesia. A history-based short story about a woman as an active agent is crucial in disrupting patriarchal historical texts that frequently delete or diminish women's achievements. The comparatively powerful position of a woman in a postcolonial narrative like Adriono's is important to translate. By spelling out the name Retnaningsih in the title, the translation reveals her individuality as an important character in her own right rather than a peripheral figure as the wife of Prince Diponegoro.

Rinto Andriono's "Retnaningsih the Dreamer" presents a unique perspective by exploring the life of Retnaningsih as a great support to the prince who led the Javanese war against the VOC (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) or the Dutch East India Company (Carey & Houben). Retnaningsih accompanied him throughout his exile to Makassar. Departing from the norm, Andriono wrote Retnaningsih's accounts of her involvement in the Java War. The Diponegoro War (1825–30) and the Aceh War (1873–1904) had impeded the Dutch's rule in the Indonesian archipelago and almost bankrupted the VOC. Cut Nyak Dien led the war from 1880 to 1905, with 1880 marking her second marriage to Umar; she had previously fought for her father's and late husband's cause. Andriono provides a new perspective by telling stories about the Javanese war heroine, narrated by an Acehnese warrior, which highlights the shared experiences of women in war across Indonesia's diverse regions.

The translation process of such a postcolonial text as "Retnaningsih the Dreamer" presents numerous challenges and nuances of postcolonial translation that are not easily understood. The story is postcolonial because it challenges colonial narratives by focusing on indigenous perspectives. It explores the anti-colonial struggles of Retnaningsih and other historical figures by showcasing gender dynamics and cultural identity. The narrative reclaims marginalised voices, particularly those of women in Indonesian history, highlighting shared experiences across ethnic groups (Javanese and Achenese). By postcolonial translation, I refer to the translation that challenges colonialism's influence in

language and cultural exchanges. Andriano's story is a counter-discursive interpretation of native women that resists cultural erasure and ideological domination by preserving the original text's unique identity. I would propose a self-reflective examination of the process, believing that examining the links between the writer's and the translator's thoughts is important, as literary translation is both literal and interpretative. While cultural aspects like customs and traditions might be readily understood by readers familiar with the source language, these nuances can be lost on foreign audiences. A translator must convey knowledge to readers outside the country who may not be familiar with the source language and its cultural context. As such, translators become crucial ambassadors for bridging cultural divides (Samuelsson-Brown), mediating and modelling the various worlds (Katan).

To see if the translated work conveys the richness and cultural context of the original story, I will evaluate my translation and identify areas for further consideration. As for the methodology, textual analysis and reflective practice are applied in this study. The textual analysis compares major cultural elements in the source text (ST) and their rendering in the target text (TT), with a particular focus on culturally specific terms, metaphors, and historical references. Reflective practice involves collecting notes during the translation process, focusing on cultural negotiation and annotation strategies to analyze gaps in postcolonial agenda application and then locating which parts of the translation to refine. Combining textual analysis and reflective practice is useful for assessing the translation's effectiveness in balancing cultural authenticity and accessibility. This combination strategy promotes continual improvement by providing a framework for dealing with cultural negotiations and systematically addressing inconsistencies. It is particularly relevant for translators working in diverse postcolonial contexts.

Drawing on Said's *Orientalism* (1978), postcolonial scholars see translation as a form of rewriting that stresses the relationship between language, culture, and power, criticising Eurocentric frameworks that fail to recognise marginalised voices from the periphery. Postcolonial translation emphasises the ethical responsibility of representing the voices and cultural specificities of the Other or the non-Western by striking a balance between fidelity to the ST and accessibility for the TT. Maria Tymoczko's article "Post-colonial Writing and Literary Translation" investigates the relationship between postcolonial writing and literary translation, arguing that translation's crucial component is creating meaning in both writings. She rejects traditional translation theories that treat translators as neutral intermediaries, viewing translation as a political act that may empower marginalised cultures.

Like Tymoczko, André Lefevere examines the politics of translation in postcolonial contexts. Analyzing the translation of three Dutch texts into English, he introduces the intertwining concept that becomes the basis of all types of writing – such as a “conceptual grip” and a “textual grip” – to guide postcolonial translators in addressing cultural representation and textual fidelity while ensuring an accurate representation of the ST’s context and ideology (Lefevere 75). Lefevere’s view reaffirms his much earlier claim that translators must be aware of their own biases and ideological forces. The role of “patronage” (target culture’s ideology) is important in literature and literary translation (Lefevere, *Translating* 15).

Lefevere’s concepts provide a theoretical grounding for latter-day scholars of translation studies. Susan Bassnett’s perspective on postcolonial translation, for instance, departs from the power dynamics theory that is central to postcolonial translation: dominant systems can suppress or alter the voices of the less dominant cultures. Translations can either challenge or perpetuate colonial narratives. The task of the translators is to navigate unequal power relations in postcolonial texts. Translators should preserve cultural specificity and resist homogenisation by empowering marginalised voices and introducing them into global discourses. She considers translation as a cultural and political act, highlighting the translator’s responsibility in bridging different worlds. Her works can be used to show that postcolonial translation does not have to alienate cultures, as it has the potential to help bridge gaps and promote cross-cultural understanding.

Bassnett’s views align with Lawrence Venuti’s concept of foreignisation. According to Venuti, translation is an interpretive act that reflects an ideology or agenda; and opting for foreignisation means an ethical stance against dominant cultural narratives. Translation is thus a rewriting of ideological positions and cultural contexts. This approach encourages critical examination of the text’s cultural richness.

Given that (colonialist) translation frequently entails ideological manipulation and Eurocentric framing, postcolonial translation practices should allow the sharing of values and perspectives from diverse cultures. To challenge Eurocentrism, postcolonial translation theories emphasise the need for translators to express the voice of the original culture while keeping relevant to the intended audience. For example, in an interview with Mohammad Shafiqul Islam, the renowned academic and translator Mohammad A. Quayum decided to translate Begum Rokeya’s works into English to dispel stereotypes about Bengali Muslim women and to show that feminism is not a Western construct. The works of this Bengal Renaissance, like those of Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath

Tagore, Sarat Chandra, Kazi Nazul Islam, and others, challenged patriarchy and emancipated women. Inspired by Rokeya's courage and fortitude, Quayum believes that translating her works would provide an excellent role model for his daughter and Bengali girls in the diaspora (Islam 187).

Therefore, translation involves interdisciplinary, interlingual, and intercultural activities (Dewi), functioning as a negotiation channel to maintain distinct national identities in a global cultural context. The essence of postcolonial translation lies in this inevitable global-local, cultural border crossing. Therefore, translation must comply with recognising different cultures in the global context. The following auto-criticism is examined through the above theoretical foundations.

Auto-criticism and improvement strategies

This section is a self-critical examination of "Retnaningsih the Dreamer" as a translation product, acknowledging its potential discrepancies and challenges encountered. The aim is twofold. The first is to provide a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of the cultural narrative within the translated text. The second goal is to identify flaws in carrying out the translation task. Refinement strategies for future translations are also provided. In this way, theoretical aspirations and practical applications are reconciled.

Contribution to cross-cultural understanding

Indonesian short stories often have numerous references to indigenous culture, which serve to frame the translation endeavour. I intended to preserve the original Indonesian text's cultural depth and diversity. Translating this work using a postcolonial outlook aims to maintain the text's diverse cultural richness. I took a balanced approach, keeping local terminology while promoting cross-cultural understanding through explanatory inline comments.

The original text of "Retnaningsih the Dreamer" is rife with Javanese phrases that have no equivalents in Indonesian or English. For example, Andriono uses the untranslatable phrase *mati sak jroning ngaurip*, which was coined by the Javanese poet Ranggawarsita (1802–1873) in his *Serat Kalathida* or, literally, letters in the age of doubts. Rooted in Javanese philosophy, Ranggawarsita's work offers wise advice on navigating life's challenges, highlighting the wise attitudes of the poet (Rahayu). The difficult expression – *mati sak jroning ngaurip* – mentioned above means to die while still alive. It alludes to the peak of a human being's existential search. It is a state of mind in which a person, while still alive, consciously and deliberately enters the realm of death. Such a person thrives to keep away from earthly pleasures and desires in

pursuit of spiritual strengths. This aphorism is more closely related to a proverb which has the qualities of being concise and memorable, expressing a general reality accepted by Javanese society. In translating this culture-specific phrase, it is more negotiable to keep the original and explain it, instead of creating an equivalent of the original in the TT. By leaving the aphorism untranslated, I attempted to maintain the Javanese cultural nuances and traditions that might otherwise be ignored or oversimplified in a conventional, literal translation.

Using Barbara Cassin's notion of "untranslatability" to analyze Bible translations into Aranda's Indigenous language, it is demonstrated that the Lutheran mission and colonial interaction had a significant impact (Cohen). Thus, postcolonial translation allows for a critical examination of the impacts of colonialism and how marginalised cultures are depicted. I, therefore, employed local language elements to align with the postcolonial stance, distinguishing it from using local colour as a stylistic linguistic device that may serve colonial agendas.

The use of all cultural words in the TT is meant to preserve postcolonial perspectives. Postcolonial writing employs defamiliarisation by conveying a minority culture's language to readers from a dominant culture (Tymoczko). Indeed, no culture can be represented in a literary piece, and no translation can fully represent the ST. As a result, the method adopted here is postcolonial translation. For example, I kept the Javanese *Gusti Allah* as in the ST while translating all allusions to the Divine as "God" in the TT, given the phrase's cultural and religious significance to Javanese Muslims, which combines native Javanese traditions with Islamic practices. Meanwhile, the translation of *Tuban* elsewhere in the ST as "God" in the TT is not an act of cultural erasure but rather an attempt to retain clarity for the English-speaking reader while preserving the cultural and spiritual significance of the TT. The translation attempts to balance the postcolonial pursuit and readability (Lefevere).

In addition to the expressions for which no equivalent can be found in the English language, the ST presents the wealth of vegetation on the island of Java that is not only edible but also proved to have medicinal properties. Inline notes are added to italicised local names throughout the TT to emphasise their foreignisation. They generally comprise names of vegetation and food like *brotowali* "bitter twig and root drink," *manggar* "coconut flower," *growol* "staple food," *bubur leri* "spicy, thick gruel," *wedang uwuh* "traditional herbal drink," *ganyong* "edible root," and *benguk* "velvet beans." Institutional names include *lurah* "village head" and *dayah* "the Nanggroe children's boarding school." Here, italicisation and supplementary information are placed within the translated short story to

reduce distraction. This will visually distinguish them from the surrounding English text, allowing readers to recognise each item as a distinct term.

Andriono narrates Retnaningsih's struggle to obtain food by describing how the prince's wife made good use of otherwise unpopular, ignored crops. Here, the translation retains the word *growol* to acquaint English-speaking readers with the home culture by describing the painstaking preparation of turning poisonous tubers into an edible meal. Retnaningsih's culinary skills make *growol* a substitute for rice during famine or harvest failure. Thus, the word on one hand functions as a metaphor for the malice of the forced cultivation system of the coloniser, and on the other hand symbolises the survival of the colonised. Here, postcolonial translation aims to defamiliarise the dominant culture and to give the marginalised people a space (Venuti).

However, believing that translation serves as a bridge rather than a wall, I came across moments where simplification and erasure of local terms were more convenient to reach Western readers. To quote Quayum, "Translators are bridge builders, they link people and cultures, and that requires some degree of pliability on the part of the translator" (Islam 182). What follows is a reflection on the difficulties in navigating clarity and complexity.

Discrepancy in applying postcolonial agenda

This section explains my initial translation of Rinto Andriono's "Retnaningsih the Dreamer," which involved deleting some culture-specific terms, particularly the Javanese aphorisms. Admittedly, in maintaining the postcolonial approach, I should have secured the aphorisms' cultural resonance and foreignisation model to retain authenticity to the ST and foster cross-cultural comprehension.

Andriono's short story contains Javanese phrases that are deeply rooted in the source language but have no direct English equivalents. Attempts were made to preserve their cultural richness and resist domestication. However, several errors occurred due to the difficulties in presenting their complete meaning in the target language. For example, Andriono employs an aphorism directly borrowed from the vernacular language *jauh ratu dekat batu* or, in Javanese, *adob ratu cedhak watu*, which literally translates as "far from the kingdom, close to the rocky mountain," or, to be more rhyming, "far from the throne, close to the stone." This terse and witty expression conveys a message which is generally regarded as a universal truth, especially by populations in Gunungkidul, a regency in the southeastern part of Yogyakarta. According to the *Encyclopedia of Gunungkidul: From Myths to Ethos* (Kantor Perpustakaan dan Arsip Daerah Kabupaten Gunungkidul), the saying is the manifestation of people's attitude in exercising humility by living close to, and learning from, nature about the true

meaning of life while shunning luxury. The expression alludes to the fact that working-class people, mostly farmers, are geographically not close to the centre of government (read: palace). This is to state that *jauh ratu dekat batu* in the ST has no equivalent in English. The phrase is used by an aide of Prince Diponegoro when he muses about his master:

Sepemahaman Banteng Wareng yang jauh ratu dekat batu, menjadi pangeran yang lantas membumi adalah lebih mulia daripada menjadi rakyat biasa yang membangun nafsu yang berkuasa dan merebut tahta untuk dirinya sendiri.

To settle the above, the deletion of the phrase is compensated by explaining the character's humble behaviour in the TT:

For Banteng Wareng, who was a servant himself, being a down-to-earth prince was more noble than being one who lusted for power and seized the throne for himself.

In retrospect, I realised that removing *jauh ratu dekat batu* contradicts the postcolonial goal of allowing the minority voice to assert itself. Including the aphorism and providing a brief explanation would have kept the original's cultural resonance while also encouraging intercultural sensitivity. This technique would have been more consistent with postcolonial translation, which tries to defamiliarise the dominant culture and provide room for the marginalised voice to be heard.

A comparable case is the English translation of "Rita and the Rifle," a poem by the Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish (1941–2008). In light of postcolonial viewpoints, the erasure of words like "Eid" and "basil" in the TT has neglected Palestinian culture and values, framing them in a Western worldview. This ignorance may result from adhering to dominant standards and oblivion of cultural experiences in the host culture. The "politics of translation" in the translated work may have compromised the source's nuance in favor of ease of reading for the intended reader (Kullab et al.). While readers who are familiar with the ST may understand the vocabulary used in such cultural features, international audiences may overlook these nuances.

Likewise, I deleted *jauh ratu dekat batu* fearing that the aphorism might sound strange to the English ears. Rather than removing the seemingly unfamiliar term, I should have retained it along with its cultural implications. By focusing on readability and eliminating potential "strangeness" for the intended audience, I unwittingly rejected domestication. According to Venuti, translation is an interpretive act that reflects an ideology or agenda. Translators who choose foreignisation take an ethical position against hegemonic cultural narratives.

Foreignisation preserves the essence of the text and helps Westerners appreciate the diversity of cultures beyond their own (Venuti). Adopting Venuti's

foreignisation model in future translations will balance the ST's fidelity and TT's accessibility. This strategy promotes deeper interaction with the text while maintaining culturally significant expressions and minority perspectives. Admittedly, my past decision to domesticate culture-specific terms contradicts the postcolonial translation I intended.

I shall now revisit the omission of several Dutch loanwords in "Retnaningsih the Dreamer," acknowledging the contradiction with the postcolonial agenda I set out initially. It was typical for people to speak more than one language in the Netherlands Indies which becomes the setting of Andriono's short story. At that time, different demographic groups spoke Dutch or Malay as a lingua franca which was rich in Dutch-language vocabulary (Robson; Salverda). The history of colonial linguistic contact in Indonesia has left considerable lexical traces, with the Dutch language acquiring 500 Malay words and Indonesian borrowing 10 times as many. Today, Dutch loanwords can be found in ordinary Indonesian, such as "rekening" (bill) in a restaurant and "karcis" (ticket) for a movie (Salverda 809).

Among the short story's Dutch loanwords that can be readily translated into English are *pakansi* "vacation" and *upas bui* "prison guard." Unfortunately, both loanwords are omitted in the translated short story.

Lastly, I chose a simplified version even though it meant sacrificing some cultural nuances. I deleted *gagaban* from *perang gagaban di medan laga* "a courageous war on the battlefield." The deletion was meant to create a more accessible rendition that the English audience could understand. As a result, the translation lost some of the depth and cultural nuance inherent in the source culture. As a matter of fact, in *wayang kulit*, *gagaban* refers to a dance movement performed by the male warrior in his valiant battle (Rahayu).

At this point, it becomes clearer what it means to stay faithful to the ST yet accessible to the TT audience. Therefore, to fulfill the postcolonial agenda of preserving the cultural depth of the ST, the inclusion of more culturally specific terminology in future translations should be made, either through footnotes or some brief, contextual explanations. Upon reflection, I should have juxtaposed the Dutch loanwords in the ST and their translation in the TT. In the future, certain phrases having historical-etymological traces should be retained to emphasise the verisimilitude of the narrative.

Correction of common translation flaws

As someone who does not speak English as their first language, I have often encountered typical language problems throughout the translation process. Examples of the issue include run-on sentences, language style, and unidiomatic

expressions. They may distort meaning and reduce the quality of translation. In this self-reflection, I shall look at these typical errors in “Retnaningsih the Dreamer” and suggest ways to prevent them.

One specific problem arose when attempting to shorten a long statement from the ST, resulting in an odd run-on sentence in the initial translation, not to mention the unidiomatic expression and inefficient usage of the transitional term. The ST states, “*Saat bulan puasa, pasukannya menyertai perundingan sang pangeran di Bukit Menoreh, dan mereka hanya punya sedikit jagung dan banyak bayam liar berduri.*” The TT is as follows.

During the fasting month, the troops **that accompanied** the prince for the negotiation meeting on Menoreh Hill had **very little** corn. **However**, lots of wild, spiky spinach grew in the area.

Not only does the preceding translation contain a run-on sentence, but it also includes the unnecessary word “very” for emphasis, which does not appear in ST. The author’s original style of juxtaposing tiny corn with spiky spinach is therefore ignored.

It would seem that breaking the sentence into smaller parts would improve the readability and clarity of translation. The term “yet” would have produced a stronger, more fluid transition in place of “however.” Furthermore, it is more accurate to translate *sedikit jagung* into “a meager supply of corn” rather than “very little corn” to accentuate the shortage of corn. The translation below makes more sense.

During the fasting month, the troops accompanying the prince for the negotiation meeting on Menoreh Hill had a meager supply of corn. Yet, lots of wild, spiky spinach grew in the area.

Meticulous proofreading is thus essential for recognising and correcting all sentences, assuring accurate message delivery, and preserving the author’s voice.

Moreover, a careful balance between language style and cultural accuracy is required in translation. A translator must communicate knowledge to readers outside the country unfamiliar with the source language and its cultural nuances without sacrificing linguistic elegance. While it is important to convey the ST’s cultural nuances, relying too much on culture-specific terminology or complex brackets might detract from the TT’s readability and its visual appeal. The term “kumpeni” appears several times in ST and is deleted in TT. In contrast to the generally favourable and neutral term “farang” in Thai, “kumpeni” is a derogatory word used in Indonesia to refer to the Dutch trading corporation VOC, given its considerable influence throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. I decided to remove “kumpeni” from my translation and used inline notes instead. However, the words in brackets in the TT below are ineffectual and distracting.

The Nanggroe forest was our blanket. Thistles kept us out of reach of the VOC's (Verenigde Oost-Indische Companie [Dutch East India Company]) gunpowder. My heart aches when I think of my daughter roaming about the forest. She is still a pebble in the VOC's shoes.

In lieu of footnotes, using VOC's full name once and then the abbreviation for the remainder of the sentence would increase the TT's clarity and readability, as shown below.

The Nanggroe forest was our blanket. Thorns kept us from the VOC (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie), the Dutch East India Company gunpowder. My heart aches when I imagine my daughter wandering through the forest. She's still a pebble in the VOC's shoes.

The revised sentence is easier to read while maintaining clarity. It also effectively communicates the notion that the VOC has frightening power.

The final correction is a mistranslation of a technical term, particularly, a cultural and scientific accuracy in the short story's translation. I decided to break the ST "Itulah penderitaan mereka selama perjalanan mengalun gelombang laut bersama Kapal Pollux melintasi separuh Nusantara" into two sentences as follows:

Thus, was their suffering during the journey on a ship riding rolling waves across half of the archipelago. They sailed toward the Big Dipper.

Although the TT is readable, there is a significant inaccuracy in translating "Pollux," a fixed star, as the "Big Dipper." Given the navigational and symbolical weight of the term in TT, mistranslating it as the "Big Dipper" shifted the cultural reference intended by the short story writer. Pollux, like its twin Castor, refers to mythological twins and provides a complex metaphor that is lost in translation. Additionally, the reference highlights regional navigational customs that are quietly criticised in the context of colonialism. On the contrary, the term "Big Dipper" is more Eurocentric. This is to say that the postcolonial translation agenda of maintaining cultural specificity fails. Retaining Pollux would highlight the local navigational methods often undermined in the context of colonialism. Removing the term thus contradicts the short story's postcolonial disposition shown, among others, in the use of local names.

Given the above observations, to comply with the postcolonial translation strategy, technical and scientific terms must retain their cultural character, particularly if they hold local knowledge and/or historical implications. Thus, it is important to carefully synchronise the writer's and translator's concepts. A self-reflective approach is necessary. First, it is intended for correction in future improved translations. Second, retaining cultural and technical context accentuates the ST's local knowledge systems, metaphors, and

cultural markers. It would allow readers to interact more fully with the text and its context, rather than simplifying its meaning to ease the foreign readers. Literary translations should allow foreign readers to share the original culture's pleasures and pains without alienating them. To follow Tymoczko, Lefevere, Bassnett, and other translation researchers, balancing foreignisation with domestication is necessary. Such translation flexibility is required to preserve culturally significant terms without completely alienating the TT readers. The discussion now turns to strategies for establishing a balance that preserves the ST's cultural richness while reducing disruption for the TT readers.

Translator's notes as a solution

Achieving a balance between readability and cultural specificity is the aim of postcolonial translation. It is important to preserve the context of cultural and scientific references, especially when they have deeper metaphorical or historical significance.

The translator's notes may become a solution to bridge the communication gap between local and global cultures. Their explanatory comments are useful for handling references with greater care and accuracy while aligning with the postcolonial agenda of resisting cultural erasure and retaining the richness of the ST. The notes help clarify and reflect the TT's technical accuracy and its metaphorical depth. Translation notes, while serving as a tool for critical analysis and cultural commentary, may also disclose the translator's views and biases. They can also investigate the complex relationship between language, culture, and power, especially in postcolonial studies where translation from marginalised cultures is viewed as cultural appropriation. Translators may support the postcolonial agenda of resisting cultural erasure in the TT and maintaining the richness of the ST by offering notes to ensure that references are tackled cautiously and accurately.

As an auto-criticism, the writing style, particularly the parenthetical translation and excessive explanation via inline notes in "Retnaningsih the Dreamer" is often distracting. Venuti supports foreignising texts, but cautions against overly intrusive interventions, whilst Tymoczko advocates for seamless incorporation of cultural elements or external annotations. Andriano's translated short story should be improved in the future by providing the translator's notes without necessarily reducing the narrative flow and reading enjoyment. To mention but one example, the translation into Indonesian of Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol* was done by the prominent Indonesian poet Sapardi Djoko Damono. Sapardi, as he is more known in the country, provides not only a scholarly introduction to the translated book but he also gives footnotes to a

few Acholi words in each poem left untranslated by the Ugandan poet (p'Bitek). It is worth noting that it is important to balance informative notes and a comfortable reading experience. Overly obtrusive or distracting notes can disrupt the narrative flow and reduce the pleasure of reading.

For example, the short story's narrator Cut Nyak Dien refers to Teuku Umar as "suamiku" in the ST. While it is sufficient to translate it as "my husband" in TT, translator's notes could elaborate on the significance of this term, pointing out that Teuku Umar was her second husband. Such notes can annotate that while the ST does not qualify the husband's identity and status, the notes can articulate that Cut Nyak Dien was a widow when marrying Teuku Umar (Rahmadaniati & Kurniadi). This additional information can amplify Cut Nyak Dien's pain of the struggle of having already lost her first husband in their fights against the Dutch. It can help the reader comprehend the intensity of her suffering and the difficulties she experienced in her struggle against the colonial forces. Indeed, postcolonial studies today should be relevant and successful in addressing colonialist expansionist policies as well as the victims' suffering (Hasan). As a translator with ambassadorial responsibilities, I shall allow the TT readers to understand the grief and resilience of the ST's culture in colonial times without being alienated by linguistic and cultural unfamiliarity. The intercultural communication approach frequently focuses on monocultural communication, which claims that culture is superficial and has comparable similarities.

The translator's notes can give a better context for the short story's translation. Translators may support the postcolonial goal of opposing cultural erasure and maintaining the richness of ST by offering clarifying remarks to guarantee that references are handled with more care and accuracy. It is recommended that the translator's notes be expanded to a full tandem article in itself to accompany the future, revised translation.

Conclusion

This article provides a thorough examination of the translation process, recognising its theoretical basis and identifying areas for improvement. First, it has recapitulated several problems that arose during the translation of "Retnaningsih the Dreamer" which include complexities in handling culture-specific terms, inconsistency in applying the postcolonial translation approach and several syntactic and grammatical mistakes. The addition of translation annotations is also discussed to break down cultural communication barriers. The translator's notes may provide a better context, explanation, and critical analysis for a deeper understanding of the ST and its cultural significance. This self-reflection underlines the evolving nature of translation and its crucial role in

bridging linguistic and cultural barriers. Given that no translation can fully capture the essence of a source text or its cultural context, “Retnaningsih the Dreamer” may hopefully increase cross-cultural understanding and appreciation for our respectively unique worlds.

This article can be seen as a testament to treating translation as an ambassadorial task. Operating in the postcolonial space, I must reflect on this metaphor of reconciling Indonesia’s diverse cultural influences with the expectations of an international readership. Translation becomes a negotiation of identity as translators must strike a balance between the necessity to properly connect with the outside world and the preservation of local culture. In the end, this reflection and auto-criticism serve as evidence in favour of using translation as a cultural bridge. Finally, I invite other translators and readers to work toward the goal of continuously enhancing cross-cultural communication through writing.

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