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POST-HEGEMONIC DESTRUCTIVE COUNTER-TRANSLATION

For the people of Gaza

ABSTRACT

We have been through a destructive post-hegemonic reactionary revolution. We witnessed post-hegemonic globalisation (not global) and post-socialist new wars, nearest to (post-)colonial wars. Subalternist Indian researchers talked about *domination without hegemony*, where the direct violence of domination is deadlier. In larger international political movements, attempted hegemony turns to war. In some cases, post-hegemonic patterns prevail. The EU seems to accept USA hegemony. Locally (from the Ukrainian perspective) hegemony is not tolerated any more. The counterpart: Putin's Russia, pretending to re-establish the former hegemony with domination, ends up opting for sheer domination with no hegemony. General silence about the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, after the destruction of Gaza. This requires much political translation. According to the preceding tacit translation contract, I would call this *counter-translation*.

If ideally translation is a relation with the other in a process, *counter-translation* strives to *change translation codes* and the value of words. Switching codes, it attempts to give reality another political garb. Hegemony wanes away if neither side accepts it, ushers in dominance, violence and war, trying to morph into a lower level less stable hegemony. If it cannot – we may have civil wars. It boils down to the *hegemonic language*, which is also the *national language*. A negotiation for hegemony is attempted between available languages. But hegemony is not working, and sheer violence is employed in separating the once common language into two, like in Ukraine, or into four or more, as in the Yugoslav space. *Self-renaming* of the dissident language becomes mandatory at a narrower level, and works as a war declaration.

A comparison between gender and rival languages negotiations is attempted in the paper.

KEYWORDS

regression, domination-without-hegemony, post-hegemonic counter-translation, national language, gendered language, identitarianism, counter-revolution, desemantisation, translation codes

Hegemony and language. An ultraconservative and far-right regression

From general premises, I will try to conclude with the issues of nation, language and gender, showing some similarities or parallelism in the way gender and language are framed by the nation, and why we must denationalise both. I will also draw on the experience of the Women's International tribunal on Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslav countries held in Sarajevo in 2015.

With the new turn of globalisation, since 1989 (or since the “end” of the historic Cold War, but actually since a process that had started a few decades earlier) we have been through a more than conservative revolution¹, which might in this case be called the *post-hegemonic turn*, or a *backlash counter-revolution*. We have also witnessed a series of *post-hegemonic or globalisation wars* of a new kind (not global world wars like WWI or WWII), not in the name of political ideologies, but with merely the nation, sometimes with religion, as “ideology”: this is where nationalism/ethnicism/identitarianism, religion and far-right temptations merge with extreme violence and group or state terrorism, where apartheid is imposed (Israel/Palestine) and not recognised, where massacres are tolerated, genocide² is perpetrated, all variants that accept economic neoliberalism and ideological-political unaccountability, and encourage political disorientation. I have also called some of these post-socialist wars, but there have been other patterns too, and old as well as belated post-colonial wars have included legitimate land conflicts resulting from land grabbing and from the end of empires intersecting with the rise of national states. This is where identitarianisms replace politics in the traditional sense; see the partition of Yugoslavia or today's *hindutvā* India. The easy transition from the older post-Westphalian formation to today's deadly identitarianisms displays a general embracing of mechanisms of bipolarity, regardless of the contents and implications. In her paper “The Anarchist Path is the only one that Still Remains Open” (Malabou 2022), searching for a solution to the political dead-end, Catherine Malabou invokes “*the now hegemonic language of anarcho-capitalism.*” Argentinian president Javier Milei and others personalise it today. According to Malabou, such anarcho-capitalism is now a fact, the state has already withered away while different oligarchies share the world among themselves and the social world is condemned to a horizontality of abandonment and entropy, which ended up being anarchic. And it would be a homeopathic or isomorphic sort of anarchism – supposedly *other* than capitalist? – that

1 A term that we have been using at least from the eighties on, but that I must reconsider for two reasons now. This is why: first, the phenomenon is not any kind of revolution in the progressive sense of this polysemic term, it is a counter-revolution. Second, it is worse than conservative, whereby “conservative” appears constructive and “caring” compared to the far-right turn the world has taken.

2 I consider this term as well as “terrorism”, “identity” and some others which we use today as unstable and unreliable, I use them conditionally and they will have to be regularly revised.

would be the only remaining path. The *hegemony of capitalism* and the market or “free trade”, as said by her, are still operative.

But in the cases we see today, hegemony *of the state* in relation to society and its population is not wanted by the concerned or not possible any more, when attempted, as by Putin in Ukraine, although it may be tolerated, as it is with regard to Gaza today, by both much of public opinion and states. There is no time for the construction of hegemony any more, because hegemony needs *longue durée*. When such supremacy does not work, we immediately get an extreme social and political polarisation. And, within globalisation, these features are contagious (or “*inherently transnational*”: Lim 2022). As Andrew Zimmerman writes, “the global, the imperial, and other transregional factors are neither static contexts of, nor all determining forces on, the local but rather ‘emergent dimensions’ of specific localities,” implying that “[t]ransnational approaches [...] help overcome the danger [...] that theory imposes [through] Eurocentric categories on any local history to which it is applied... Theory [...] becomes ‘an emergent dimension’ of multi-sited historiography, not some master schema standing over history.” (Zimmerman 2013) For example, the current Russian war on Ukraine, which can also be seen as a new imperial and colonial war, immensely repolarises post-Yugoslav societies that had remained divided since the civil wars in the nineties, reinforcing lasting possibilities of new local wars around unsolved issues in the Balkans. Not to forget possible different points of view, narratives or *cosmovisions*: “However fastidious they may be about facts, historians are engaged in storytelling, not in science.” (Menand 2022) New proxy wars are possible any time in the region. European public opinions are equally split on the issue, following the pattern of the war(s) in question. “While there may be necessary wars, there are no good wars”, says sociologist Vesna Pusić in an interview (Pusić 2022)³. Timothy Snyder writes: “The claim that a nation does not exist is the rhetorical preparation for destroying it. [...] Putin took a pronounced colonial turn when returning to the Presidency a decade ago. In 2012, he described Russia as a ‘state-civilization’ [...]. (Snyder 2022)” The building of a “Russian World”, a “Serbian World”, a “Hindu India” or a Chinese state-civilisation follow the same imperial pattern of “We” first.

Subalternist Indian researchers theorised *domination without hegemony*, where the violence of domination is direct and much deadlier than when in combination with hegemony, whether the latter be imposed by negotiation or inflicted by force. *Sovereign state* hegemony seems to partly dissolve within accomplished globalisation, although this does not happen everywhere at the same time or place. As Bertrand Badie says, “we still act politically as if we were in the era of geopolitics managed by states, but nowadays and in the future it

3 One may wonder what “necessary wars” mean? While Pusić is certainly not a nationalist, in the Croatian mainstream national(ist) narrative the war of the 1990-decade was defensive: the nation and the state were supposed to be defended and built, which made them necessary to a patriotic view.

is to be expected that social movements will influence immobilised state actors that cannot even think how to stop the wars, let alone stop them”⁴. The globalisation victory may not have been a victory at all, as the conflict south-north slowly but surely replaces the cold war conflict socialism-capitalism.

And contemporary is not synonymous with simultaneous any more. As Boaventura de Sousa Santos writes, “All states remain formally independent, but only a few are sovereign.” (De Sousa Santos 2022) In political movements of a larger and international scope, hegemony may still be attempted, although this may turn to war through sheer force without consideration for historic depth. Locally, post-hegemonic patterns may prevail, but hegemony is more and more contested by the concerned. By “post-hegemonic” I mean that *neither negotiations (dialogue) nor surrender are tolerated* any more, which implies protracted wars. In his paper “A US Future for Europe?” Boaventura de Sousa Santos rightly critiques the EU’s forbearance for USA hegemony. USA’s hegemony may also seem to be declining, so why such a lack of political imagination of the EU that she should still want to follow them? There is of course immediately the counterpart: Putin’s Russia, pretending to re-establish the former hegemony with domination, chooses sheer domination (and destruction) in the end. No hegemony is negotiated or possible here or in Palestine. All of this requires much political translation, some of which, with regard to the *preceding* unwritten and tacit translation contract in hegemonic times, I would now call *counter-translation*.

There is a long degradation, desemantisation and confusionism in political language, which took years or decades preparing. It became visible since 1989 (end of the then “Cold War”), in particular in the case of the Yugoslav seven-fold partition. When Yugoslavia split, I found many similarities in the warring nationalisms, competing language disagreements over shared languages and their separate names (Markovina 2022), and in the limiting horizon of communalisms and contempt for the others: “Language is the name. It is about the *name* that the power of language goes mad” (Rebón 2014: 88).

The nation despises “ethnic minorities” just as the national language despises its other variants and neighbouring idioms, calling them “dialects”. The promotion of vernacular languages or de-standardised (and differently standardised) variants of a language through nationalist dissidence may be fed with anticolonial nationalisms, minority ethnicisms, but can also come from anticolonial, decentralising nationalisms as well as from colonial nationalism.

Language ideologies and new nationalisms

Nishat Zaidi uses the concept of *language ideologies* (which correspond to what we have called nationalisms in Europe when dealing with language) and gauges interestingly *vernaculars* thereby: “in the thoroughly multilingual literary and public spheres of South Asia, a recalibration of the notion of vernacularity

4 Public debate “Moments Palestine”, University of Paris-8 on May 13, 2024.

vis-à-vis language ideologies in the context of the on-going rise of literary Anglo-phonía in South Asia and post-liberalization India – seems relevant.” (Zaidi 2022)⁵

Retroactively, I also understood that this is what happened in the Indian or the Korean partition too, but it is probably a process, although at lesser speed (outside a direct conflict) in any *longue durée*. It is easiest seen through changes in language and significantly – in the *naming* of languages, such as Hindi and Urdu, Serbian and Croatian or Russian and Ukrainian etc. People still understand each other over neighbourly fences and borders, but the political *intentionality* of the (mainstream) language changes. Different standardisations of the same languages are introduced through state institutions, and they are pretty coercive. But “languages are not external to one another”, writes Saša Hrnjez. This can be said in spite of the difficulty of languages to correspond to each other. And “untranslatability” is itself a constituent of translatability, which is a basic feature of a language (Hrnjez 2021: 31 & 34). My afterword to the Croatian translation of my French book *Politiques de la traduction. Exercices de partage* (*The Politics of Translation. Exercises in Partage*) talks about that.

That our languages have generally been desemantised for decades has in particular become evident in 1989, with the apparent collapse of the binary “socialism-capitalism”, “east-west” (Lim 2022) or “black and white” pattern. I felt lost at that time, with no available language, or with languages that bore different implications and meanings than were available in my vocabulary or imaginary. And it was not just the vocabulary, it was much more complex. At that time I only knew of one great author, Radomir Konstantinović, who had dealt with the *appropriation of language*, although his efforts addressed problems in the aftermath of WWII (or, really, modernity in Yugoslavia and Serbia) and from the sixties on, preceding the collapse. I moved to France in 1991 “without a language”, and met French and other colleagues and friends *without an operative language*, whether *different or shared*. Derrida wrote “je n’ai qu’une langue, et elle n’est pas la mienne”⁶ (Derrida 1996-2016: 13). But languages don’t belong. Talking and working were approximations, search, improvisations and possible negotiation. What I left behind in a partitioned country was more violent, it was parallel conservative *counter-translations* attempting a sort of retrospective *un-translating*, or prohibition of translation – which boils down to *translation as violence*. I don’t want to idealise, the way we usually do, translation as a process and as relating to others. There is that, yes. But there is also, quite beyond this formula, *translation as failure* (beyond linguistic failure, political failure too), and the much more disturbing case of *counter-translation*, as if you could untranslate what has been translated and therefore thought and lived. It means prohibiting the other’s memory. But

5 Zaidi. 2022: In a call for papers (<https://networks.h-net.org/node/5293/discussions/6590285/cfp-language-ideologies-and-vernacular-south-asian-colonial-and>, accessed on July 11, 2025), a zoom conference she gave to the SARI association of scholars on February 4, 2022, and on other occasions. Also Zaidi 2015.

6 “I have only one language, and it is not mine.”

counter-translating is also a possibility of translation as liberation, much akin to counter-writing (*contre-écriture*, Diagne 2022: Kindle ed.: 81, speaking about Virago Diop). Through translation, language is ennobled, says Souleymane Bachir Diagne (Diagne 2022: 157).

Translation strives to *change codes*, the value of words, stylistically and politically, without necessarily saying so. It attempts to give reality another political garb. As a result, you may have a dialogue of the deaf such as between Putin who qualifies Ukrainians as Nazis, and Zelensky who calls Russians fascists⁷, operating like a leap in time. There may be partial truth in both assertions, but it is not the whole truth, it is rather crushing and levelling history. Both have changed the once common translation codes. In more fanatic language standardisations, you would announce changes of codes and meanings and, as happened in post-Yugoslav countries, you might produce differential dictionaries of Serbian and Croatian and impose obligatory translations of documents by a registered translator, regardless of the minimal differences (In Serbia, Ćirilov 1989; in Croatia, Brodnjak 1991)⁸ and thus, *create* differences. The aim is to achieve greater differences and to standardise them, instead of encouraging the *co-presence of languages* and developing intermediary forms appropriate for polycentric idioms (Diagne 2022: 82).

Serbian and Croatian language politics (and new “translation” codes) operationally differ, but share the intention of *separating the language variants into distinct languages by renaming them* and introducing compulsory differences, while appropriating the language by a rising *narrower nation* after partition

7 On the “new meaning” of global Nazism and fascism today see, as an attempt towards translation, the panel at the “Summit of the End of the World”, 12-5-2022 between Srećko Horvat, Franco Berardi Bifo and Ece Temelkuran, claiming reimagining life: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eW4ehBh1Btg> (accessed on July 11, 2025).

8 The first differential dictionary was published in 1940 (during the WWII Ustasha Quisling regime) in Zagreb, Guberina & Krstić. 1940. *Razlike između Hrvatskoga i Srpskoga književnog jezika*, Zagreb, Matica Hrvatska.

N.B.: Petar Guberina was the celebrated linguist, friend of Aimé Césaire, Léopold Sédar Senghor and the Négritude movement, professor at Zagreb University after WWII and founder of the Phonetics School (SUVAG), of methodologies for learning foreign languages and especially of a “verbo-tonal method” of rehabilitating the auditively impaired and correcting pronunciation disorders, a method that spread worldwide, rejecting the sign language of the deaf (which is an altogether different school). He was member the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb since 1963 (created under that name in 1861 by bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer), but in the Croatian *Wikipedia*, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petar_Guberina (accessed on July 11, 2025) and elsewhere, it is said that he had been member of the *Croatian* Academy of Sciences and Arts. The latter, however, did not exist in 1963 (the Academy was Yugoslav then), but was renamed from the former after partition, in a year that is nowhere to be found on the internet. History is being “corrected” ex post. Namely, the word “Yugoslavia” has tacitly been banned since the partition of the country, and the street names, signs and institution plates were changed during an unknown night after Croatia’s “liberation from communism and Serbia/Yugoslavia”. Guberina developed his *Méthode audiovisuelle structuro-globale* (SGAV) with the French specialist Paul Rivenc in Paris.

– in the interest of new nationalist elites. In Yugoslavia, this amounts to publishers of a now very small readership, to a tragic process of multiple historic appropriations and tearing to pieces a once shared idiom and literature, impeding the outreach to a wider reading public or to the common history of literature. Needless to say that, combined with “national educations”, it also has fatal effects on learning over the four new states that once shared a language as federal republics, and especially in the area of history: the common history has now been erased, but excellent trans-Yugoslav historians are restoring it. Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina had no other option but to follow and rename their national languages too, after the war that also meant the violent divorce between Serbian and Croatian languages⁹, earlier understood as one. Croatian state and national linguists insist on building a separate vocabulary, proscribing once synonymous words. To achieve this, they have several stratagems. As a consequence, all history that doesn’t directly lead to today’s state of affairs or state of the language (“sovereign” post-Yugoslav states with now distinct languages) has become “useless history” (Šnajder 2019: 132) or, De Sousa Santos might say, “non-existent’ history”, with “absent subjects”, promoted by erased or non-national and enemy, non-existent subjects, beyond the “abyssal line” (De Sousa Santos 2018: 2).

The stratagems include the early differential dictionary of 1991 (at the very beginning of the war) and building differences into the structure of words (especially compound ones) resorting to nominal and verbal “roots” (or imaginary roots), the declension and conjugation, prefixes and suffixes, syntax, as well as resorting to “radical” Croatian words, often all the way to the Ustasha¹⁰ form of the language as an imaginary “ur-language”. Separatist language laws were passed. The past is thus “colonised” producing an imaginary national and state-ly history, mined for archaisms (which can also be invented), as in other times exoticism or orientalism may have been exploited to that effect. The “feeling” for the language that has thus been forced has much changed in thirty years, and the new standardisations work and have been accepted by now. The pronunciation, accent and diction gap has grown considerably between the two main variants since, in particular because there is no common measure to refer to in shared TV or radio programmes any more.

9 All have since intervened in the once shared language, introducing specific differences and claiming (and inventing) seniority for them. Montenegrin, for example, has added new letters to the local Cyrillic script. During Yugoslavia, the Cyrillic and Roman scripts were interchangeable everywhere in the Serbo-Croatian speaking area (in addition to Macedonia, now Northern Macedonia, where Cyrillic is the only script), although Cyrillic would be more used in Serbia than in Croatia. Official post-Yugoslav linguists have dropped one of the scripts. Serbia and Montenegro officially opt for only Cyrillic (although this holds poorly in practice), and Croatia for only the Roman script.

10 Ustashes were extremists of the Croatian nationalist quisling movement and state in WWII (1941-1945) under the tutelage of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. An equivalent in Serbia, with a different history, would be the militant nationalist chetniks. Both groups fought against the partisans by the side of Nazi and fascist occupation forces.

The language politics in Serbia have followed a somewhat different path, with similarly preposterous, linguistically absurd and aesthetically dubious results: Serbian has been claiming an ever-closer lineage from Russian, a different language, from old Slavonic, and an Orthodox religious vocabulary. Like in Croatian, the language cultivates “authentic” or pseudo-archaic and antiquated forms, sometimes invented out of linguistic ignorance. In the race for an “older” idiom, Serbian political and national linguists have developed a “theory” by which, yes, all the forms of the once common language do exist, but all are actually dialectal and degraded *political* offshoots of the pure *primary* and (merely) linguistic language – Serbian. It does not occur to them that others could think so of theirs, and that *any language can be seen as a translation of all the others*. The former shared language has been erased with the former common country, whose name is now unsayable without a vilifying attribute, of which the most violent one is “communist”, and the minimum – “former”. *Political forgetting, erasures and loss are organised*, so as to further build up from a *tabula rasa* instead of sharing a common heritage, because there is no common project. Language debates under these conditions nurture political conflicts.

A new “Declaration about the limits of the Serbian language” by the Serbian Academy and educational institutions posits the superior status of the Serbian language in comparison with the other variants, in a hierarchic relationship. Serbian would be a “linguistic” (“natural”) first language, while other pretenders to the status of a language (Croatian, Bosnian, Montenegrin) would only be “political” (“unnatural”, or “artificial”) languages of a lower status. This presentation of the language is linked to the “Law on the protection of the Cyrillic script” (2021) passed in the context of the homogenising political project of a “Declaration about the survival of the Serbian nation” (Vučinić 2022: 8). In such a context, the nation always sees itself as threatened, *but never as threatening*. The identification of the language and the nation works in favour of nationalist homogenisation, where local cultural elements are subsumed under the dominant “higher” instance (Serbian or Croatian as the *Ursprache*). None of the nationalists are able to imagine a common country whether in the past or in the future anymore, and political complexity has been reduced to an impoverished ahistorical binarism without historic depth or nuances. (And binarisms *deny* differences.) Likewise on the other, Croatian, side. *Hindutvā* (the “Global Hindu World”), the so-called “Serbian World”, the “Russian World”, China’s Belt-and-Road Initiative etc. (“civilisational discourses” (Ong 2022: 7)) and any ethno-nationally limited world of any ethnic denomination, is a *closure* in itself, in an imaginary glorious supremacist past, and in the province of one’s own limited mind unshared with others. The recent “Declaration about the limits of the Serbian language” explicitly advocates radical self-limitation and closure. It is no better on the other side. The Serbian parliament also passed a law introducing “Gender-sensitive language” (2021). That law, together with the one on the script, provoked endless polemics and the fury of all national institutions in addition to the patriarch of the Serbian

Orthodox Church, who condemned it in his Easter 2023 address (Savić 2020-22; Mandić 2023; Zidarević 2023).

Translation, which is also synonymous with thinking, is there to undo hegemony and de-nationalise the language in the best of cases. It also means dis-appropriating it and decentring oneself in doing so by overcoming the binarism induced through nationalism. Translation is the “mother of languages”, says S.B. Diagne quoting Ngugi Wa Thiong (Diagne 2022: 159). Translation, as a possibility of all languages, precedes them.

National language and the mother tongue as hegemonic. Language and everything else

When a tired hegemony becomes untenable, *exclusionary polarisations* occur. This is one of the results of the collapse of the Cold War political binary, which had been hegemonic in maintaining a sort of equivalence between the parts. It is also the attempt to create alternative realities with alternative languages outside that hegemony-and-domination setting, possibly by establishing another hegemony at a lower level. Hegemony fades away if it is not accepted by both sides, though differently, any more. It ushers-in dominance, violence and war, and tries to mutate into a weaker and less stable hegemony. If it cannot – we may have civil wars. This leaves devastation behind, as in post-colonialism and post-socialism. Linguistic nationalism may appear, especially if the languages, now renamed, are close. The *hegemonic language*, which is either the colonial or, now, the *national language*, is favoured by the state or the nation-building separatisms and rebellions. The national language is established and determined by or in view of the national state, its institutions, academies and education system, and begins by being *renamed*, at the expense of all others. Even a *lingua franca* may not be accepted any more, such as a colonial language or a local deterritorialised language, which will be seen as violence. Diagne gives the example of Wolof, a deterritorialised language spoken in Senegal, Gambia and Mauritania: “The silent violence that a language like Wolof, by its very nature as a deterritorialised *lingua franca*, can exert against an idiom that the small number of its speakers makes vulnerable is not a counter-argument to the ethics of connecting languages through translation. On the contrary, the work of translation is one of the responses to the consequences of linguistic domination. [...] Nor is it a matter of ignoring the fact that translation can be malicious and sometimes presents itself as a veritable declaration of war.” (Diagne 2022: 162) The colonial language, the once majoritarian idiom, imposed, or even just the practical *lingua franca*, is felt as injury and insult, leaving a linguistic wasteland and inadequacy as Cécile Canut has shown (Canut 2021)¹¹. “Those that we know as standardised national languages are nothing else but a historico-social product, a system of norms

¹¹ See Canut on this and related issues about French as the colonial language in Africa, and on the colonial politics of language and translation.

and conventions that hegemonise the dialectical, vernacular and idiomatic plurality”, says Saša Hrnjez (Hrnjez 2021: 89).

In such conditions, within the hegemony by the state or the nation, the *mother tongue* is one of the possible options of identification with the national language, imposed, romanticised, instrumentalised as supreme, forcefully proposed as comfortingly “homely”, and narrowly monitored. However, “Por el corazón maternal de la lengua materna todas las lenguas son cercanas y parientes.”¹² (Rebón 2014: 58 and further). But the first language, the supposed language of our dwelling, does not necessarily itself have a whereabouts. It demands a name (aspiring in principle to *untranslatability* yet to *exhaustiveness* too), but it need not be territorialised. The national language and the mother tongue are not the same, but with linguistic nationalism there is a violent effort of the nation (and/or the state) to *identify them* and to strive for an *absolute* language or translation – which is impossible. It is also where some of us, as in France, are taught that we can never properly learn a foreign language, *as part of the nationalist linguistic project*. As Jacques Derrida or Naoki Sakai have shown, the mother tongue turns toxic when instrumental to the recognition of a nation(alist) but not liberatory cause. This is the case with Croatian or Serbian linguistic nationalism, and many others.

Language as such is a chance, yes, but not so necessarily the mother tongue: any language is, though diversely. The sacralisation of the mother tongue makes a promise that is best not believed, because it works as its nationalist appropriation. There is no motherhood in the mother tongue. What the mother transmits is not her language, but the language of power, from patriarchy to the state to the nation. Therefore, Souleymane Bachir Diagne calls for a *translation that works against domination* and in favour of decentring oneself and the language, although it can also impose domination¹³. In (unqualified) language lies its core - translation, as its best possibility, but totally unwarranted. In that language, *which is not “ours”* because it is colonial or appropriated by the nation, Derrida nevertheless wrote his work translated into other languages. Translation has indeed one of its obvious modern origins in colonialism. The violent *slave trade* from Africa was also a translation/displacement/transfer of people. At the end of the day, no idiom is ours, not only because some are the father’s, the state’s, colonial or repressive, languages of power, but also because even the language that we consider our own (or, worse, our *right*), and therefore “good” – escapes us, since *we cannot say everything* in it. And why cannot we say everything in it? Because *language is part of that “everything”*. Our first language is a mother tongue only for other languages it harbours and that we can learn thanks to it, because it welcomes and transmits them with “motherly” care, shares them and translates them. In front of us, however, that

12 “Through the maternal heart of the mother tongue, all languages are close and related.” NB: If not stated otherwise, all translations are by me., sometimes with the help of DeepL Translate.

13 Diagne, “Introduction. La traduction contre la domination” in *De langue à langue*, op. cit. and in particular page 16.

“first language” *recedes* like a phantasm. It is wrongly called “mother’s” – but it is a *language imposed by power*. It is experienced as unitary, unifying and enforced. In any case, it is *insufficient*, as any language is, as well as overinflated. So that we remain foreigners, even in “our” language.

But that is good, as it is what gives it expressive and sometimes literary power, although without a guarantee, since *translation is necessarily indeterminate*. Diagne suggests that our categories of thinking are determined by the categories of our language and not the opposite (Diagne 2022: 44), which also gives our language the power of resistance. Putting oneself in a position of foreignness, strangeness (*étrangeté*), even in one’s first language, is the only reliable method of linguistic and political autonomy, freedom and independence. This foreignness or displacement allows us to avoid the mutilations of an imposed, maddened and distorted language, called mother’s. “[...] [M]ultiplicity lays the foundations for a universality which is in contrast with that form of universality that historically gave birth to the sovereignty of the nation-state. The language of this universality would be translation itself.” (Hrnjez 2021: 100)

The mother tongue is a risky and often disparaging phantasm. Not so language as such, but the illusion of a mother’s “protective” cocoon that radically separates us from externality and otherness. Even more than the “mother tongue”, it is the *national language* that does it, referring to linguistic “purity”, and assuming natural possession of the language. Like the mother tongue, the national idiom is a *spectre* in the sense in which the *palanka* (parochialism’s aspiration) is one in Konstantinović (2021), or in which it is a *ghost* or *spectre* or *phantasm* in Derrida, i.e. something longed for but unattainable. Political “theorists of language” always burden the national language not only with a purist command, but also with the “*recognition* of an original sin in language” that is demanded of the “illegitimate” speaker¹⁴. The latter, the “illegitimate” speaker, is determined by the language police themselves, for example the French Academy, a school or proofreading services in their divine judgment. However, this “primordial mistake or original sin” is not located in the accused speaker, but in the imposed *truncated monolanguage* – the *monolangué*. Counter-intuitively, monolingualism often leads to *diglossia* or bilingualism where one language is subordinate to another. *It is the dominated who have two or more languages, not the dominant*. But a colonial situation of languages can also carry *linguistic insemination* and the impregnation/enrichment of languages by one-another, where the colonial language too (French, English, Japanese etc.) can be fertilised (Diagne 2022: 78 and 82; Mbembe 2016), and not only the subdued language. The latter, considered incomplete by the colonial language, is actually never incomplete *because no language is ever incomplete*¹⁵. Or all are equally incomplete. *Languages are actually all complementary in their*

14 I pride myself to be an illegitimate speaker by definition, having lost my primary language (Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian) and writing in foreign languages that are no less mine.

15 According to Diagne, 2024: 123, referring to Benveniste, languages are *complementary*, while De Sousa Santos says of knowledges what could be said of cultures and

reciprocal incompleteness, as each is out of focus and “displaced” towards the other, but each is being built with/through other languages too. Thus, a monolingual human being speaks a spectral language that is denied to her/him and that has no original edition (for which he/she is wrongly sentenced), so s/he is thrown *over* and *beyond* the language itself directly, into a supposedly absolute translation from that *missing linguistic origin*. And absolute translation is, of course, totalitarianism, the very totalitarianism (which does not stop at the linguistic dimension but can go further) that was offered and imposed by *denying it as a language without a given model*¹⁶.

There is no nation without nationalism, as Etienne Balibar reminds us. But a “cosmopolitics of cultural hybridity” in *active internationalism* should invite hospitality to foreigners (as well as to “foreign” languages) and diversity in the sense of a “politics of the human species”¹⁷. Meanwhile, nationalism operates through promoting a national language distinct from the parent languages.

Denying the word communism any descriptive capacity today for example, Etienne Balibar now calls “communism” a movement rather than an account – translation or the metamorphosis we undergo (Balibar 2022b). This is the case as well since the “conservative” revolution, or the reactionary historic turn in the 21st century, that our knowledge system has undergone. As a praxis of theory or as a political activism, when aiming at changes in society or in the state, *translation* may have to contain violence, which makes it violent too. The presupposition is that within plural and diverse knowledges, there is no definitive knowledge, but only temporary proposals of consecutive understandings. This is also what I always thought when working on deconstructing binaries and in particular the western one between theory and praxis, or gender. The concept of *reciprocally incomplete cultures* (but one could also say, of *complementary* knowledges and languages) can be deduced from all the historic failures of hegemonic knowledge, language or translation regimes – and can therefore be a premise to start from. Thus, for E. Balibar, and since translation or metamorphosis concerns humans too, translation implies – *becoming (an)other (devenir autre)*, which now stands for being a communist, as “being in transformation”. Because there is no such thing as a communist society (and the utopia has been dismissed by many), communism must be a movement, a *transition* to a new type of humanity. We could call it a *communist transition*.

The national language abhors the sister-languages it splits away from, and artificially nurtures its differences in vocabulary, style, references etc. Writers,

languages too - languages are also only “*reciprocally incomplete*”. (De Sousa Santos. 2014 & 2018; Mbembe 2016).

16 This and the preceding paragraph, as well as a few other thoughts, come from my afterword “About Language out of its Mind” (*O jeziku izvan sebe*) to the Croatian edition of my book on translation politics (Iveković. 2022. *Politike prevodenja* 2022), as well as from some of my other recent papers.

17 One could wonder about this anthropocentric restriction to the “human species” instead of life or the living (which would require, however, more engagement in issues of ecology, climate change and other forms of life. See Balibar 2022a).

literatures, references, histories and historic figures rise and fall with national languages, they are elevated or erased from the “national canon”. In doing so, the *male line* is always favoured, whether in falling or in rising. National languages have ruined us, have ruined our languages. They exist through self-promotion, distortion and a constant mockery of the other language, through closure and self-limitation (Rebón 2014), construction of barbed fences and borders, and the constant appeal to “culture”. The latter is naturalised and essentialised, of course. The impossibility of any cultural self-sufficiency goes unnoticed. Certain names, concepts, ideals and words are prohibited, especially in wartime, but not only then. Hegemonic languages and mind-sets self-pauperise themselves by refusing any “influences” (real or imaginary) of the language they are seceding from. Such a complex is especially present with recently established “sovereign languages”, but can subsist with well-established older languages like French. Post-Yugoslav nationalists will be proud to know English, but unwilling to speak or recognise the neighbouring language they speak better and the alternative script once all indifferently used. Some of us have refused the new names of the once shared language (formerly Serbo-Croatian in English), and have called it simply the “common language”¹⁸. Such an endeavour requires systematically deconstructing language as property (Rebón 2014: 88), refusing and deconstructing its appropriation, rejecting its sanctification as the national language or mother tongue, which amounts to language necropolitics. *A language does not belong and does not need territory*. It circulates among its speakers who may also be foreigners, and who do not exhaust it as a community. A language cannot be reduced to a national community or even to a community of speakers. In its historicity, it encompasses and transcends them.

The need to deterritorialise language and let it go as property

These are epistemological questions. By losing a language and its name, we lose an epistemological framework and a system of cultural references. We have been in this shaky epistemological limbo for more than thirty years now (it is an episodic and periodical historical condition) – not to mention the comparable epistemological conundrums of minorities, indigenous populations or

18 The language once had two names, depending on the perspective: Serbo-Croatian, or Croato-Serbian (ignoring two of the republics where it was also spoken). Two more appellations were added to the same after partition: Montenegrin and Bosnian. Many of us from the four Yugoslav republics using the language (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia & Croatia), as well as others, signed the “Declaration about the common language” (*Deklaracija o zajedničkom jeziku*) in 2017, which said: “the fact that a common polycentric language exists does not question the individual right to express belonging to different nations, regions or states”. It called against any type of language segregation and said that *one* language was spoken in those countries, designated as “a common standard *polycentric* language spoken by several nations in several states with recognisable variants”. <https://www.krokodil.rs/eng/text-of-the-declaration-on-common-language-in-english/> (accessed on July 11, 2025).

(post-)colonial realities. This is the *epistemological kinship between the post-colonial and the post-socialist situations*, now all dumped into one, simultaneous without ever having been contemporary. In addition, in post-hegemonic conditions, although there is a permanent push for binarisms, there is also the parallel tendency to break at least sexual binarism (gender). Hence the increasingly frequent occurrence of claiming trans-identities (Verónica Gago). In so doing, especially Latin American transnational feminism these days operates a South-centric feminist epistemology through a critique of North-centric feminism¹⁹. Other binarisms (east-west) are also shaky or being reconstructed otherwise (Lim 2022).

Silvia Federici has shown all of this admirably in her own way, and through a new perspective for many – that of women and the feminised. It is interesting to see how, in these post-hegemonic times, the female element steps in some parts of the world leading to broader social movements (Iran, Latin America etc.; #MeToo, #NiUnaMas and other similar engagements) through contesting the *patriarchal unquestionable hegemony* and the current backlash (Federici 2004). Has it come to an end? I do not think so, but it is now shaky in some parts of the world. The parallel backlash against the equality and humanity of women appears in the repatriarchalising of the state and society through the restoration of capitalism (Burcar 2020) in post-socialist countries. *Patriarchy is violently striking back with new forms of capitalism as a reaction*. The whole array: femicide, mass rape in war but tolerated rape in peace too, hunting, trafficking of women and girls, enslavement, with political, legal and societal acceptance of violence against women. As part of the conservative counter-revolution, the *post-hegemonic* and *post-socialist* wars share one important purpose (often central – see Afghanistan) – that of re-imposing hard patriarchal domination when not hegemony, as well as militarising, masculinising and primitivising society. But largely, extreme violence against women, such as femicide (killing women *because they are women*)²⁰, appears with yet greater intensity in conditions of a generally heightened level of violence in society, such as war, civil war, massacres and genocide (Mander 2022; Iveković 2024a; Iveković 2024b)²¹.

The destiny of women, badly struck today, naturally encounters that of other rejected or inferiorised groups, such as the undocumented and migrants, where alliances are possible and are made. Among the latter, there are many

19 “South” and “north” in these expressions are epistemological concepts rather than geographical.

20 One can see the kinship between *genocide* and *femicide*, which has also been called *gynocide* (Dworkin 1976; Jardine 1985).

21 Although I find the term problematic because of its frequent appropriation and instrumentalisation in politics to self-denote only one group, here is a minimal description of genocide: mass killings of a particular group, ethnicity or nationality *because of* belonging to that group. Genocides are usually announced or made plausible ahead of the events, as in Rwanda, Yugoslavia, India, Palestine etc. An inherent link between genocide and femicide can be observed.

women who migrate for the same reasons as everyone else, but also because of gendered violence. “Women experience sexist and macho violence that pushes them to leave their country, to cross borders. During their migratory journey, they will also experience gendered violence, and then when they reach European countries, it is not the end of the violence. Structures and institutions are not all suited to listening and hearing what they have experienced. *And part of this violence is due to the fact that there is no legal route to get to Europe*²². ‘Human traffickers, in particular, take advantage of this!’; continues [a witness]. ‘[...] I travelled from Iran to Europe, alone. It was really tough. I often feared for my life. I experienced extreme violence, especially in Greece, where I was secretly detained, tied up and beaten by border police. I was rejected 6 times trying to find protection in Europe. At the EU border, no one wanted to know who I was or hear about my asylum applications. They wanted us to be silent. They wanted us to disappear.’²³

It is difficult to pretend nowadays that these new wars may not aim at reinstating patriarchy. In intersectionality, they need to be studied as the permanently violent *gendering* that wars, but societies too, have always been. The national language battle participates in this too.

The women’s issue as translation in Korea and elsewhere, and the problem of the national language

The feminist struggle for gender justice, equality and democracy necessitates a *translation battle for denationalising the national language*, separating society from the nation, and the nation from an obstetric language. It is *strategically* necessary to temporarily and critically separate the ethnic or national question (which are problems in themselves) from the issue of the condition of women, although they are part of the same process and are intertwined. *The ethnic or national approaches exploit the women’s issue as a fixed, essentialised and irrevocable gender binary, and proceed through appropriative interventions in language to fix identities as definitive.* For example, in the Korean “comfort women”²⁴ case during the Japanese imperial occupation of Korea, which was internationally disclosed only in 1991, South Korean state and nationalist public opinion vampirised the “comfort women’s” issue in the interest of the national question. It is a kind of masculinist state *translation* of the industrial exploitation of those women’s conditions, also metaphorical of the *general* condition of women, which, however, was *not recognised* by the same state as such. The question it raises is – does the state care for *all* women, or just for

22 Or to other countries of desired immigration [my comment.]

23 CADTM. 2022. “La campagne Feminist Asylum”, emphasis added.:

<http://www.cadtm.org/La-campagne-Feminist-Asylum-Changer-ce-systeme-d-asile-qui-oblige-les-femmes-a> (accessed on July 11, 2025).

24 Korean and other women and feminists engaged in this issue rightly resent and reject this term, given to them by the Japanese colonial military: therefore the quotes here, as well as my apologies for not finding better.

“comfort women” (facing Japan in a national issue of a “higher”, nationalist, interest than the women’s)? Today we know that *a feminist translation of that history* is possible and necessary, and that it is put into practice through interventions in language and a different grid of non-national(ist) translation. *Nobody is outside translation*, free from translation, and in particular not the hegemon. Although it happens, ethnocentric translation is inadmissible. Souleymane Bachir Diagne pleads for a “horizontal” translation *de langue à langue* instead of the “vertical” one which transmits god’s (or the hegemon’s) language (Diagne 2022: 147). Different from the state’s version, the feminist narrative about “comfort women” expresses a strangeness, an *alterity* invisible to the nation or the state, but which is suddenly possible now, and becomes obvious once a new feminist translating code is proposed. The whole past event which is being narrated and retranslated becomes approachable under a new translation regime and with a new “participative co-subject” at its origin, which opens a new vision of the event which is also a new *cosmovisión*. At such crossroads or intersections of reading and translation, new (literary) genres may happen too, and new senses of life and new meanings to words can powerfully usher with them. In the *deconstruction of language as property*, we need to be able to strategically and permanently *separate language from the nation*. Much as feminists need to strategically separate the women’s issue from the nation in their activism, for example in the history of Korean “comfort women”, or in the case of women being raped at war generally (and in peacetime regularly too), as in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina/Yugoslavia (Iveković 2024a and 2024b), Rwanda, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Palestine²⁵, Israel etc., gender and nation cannot be separated. Methodological distinction between the two is necessary in spite of the two being structurally intertwined, interdependent and coexistent. The *strategic separation* needs to be performed, lest the women’s issue, or the linguistic issues, be drowned and invisibilised by the “higher office” of the “nation”²⁶.

The “Jeju uprising” (on April 3, 1948 in Jeju Island, Korea) was immediately followed by extreme repression, a tragic event in which many men were killed, while many women remained widows. It had been “framed as an incident incited by communist rioters. Thus, the *holeomeongs* [widowed victims of the massacre] refrained from speaking out of fear that the deaths of their husbands would serve only to implicate their sons; the women locked away all accounts within their bodies for years in order to conceal that their families had been implicated with those who died in the Massacre”, writes Kim Eun-Shil (Kim

25 As I write about conflicts and wars starting from my own experience of a bloody partition, and while I have no “preference” for some victims rather than others, I cannot but think of *civilian* Palestinians, later Lebanese and then Iranians, killed indiscriminately (by the thousands in the case of Gaza) in a war by the Israeli military that they did not provoke.

26 See the conversation in the wake of the 2022 commemoration of the Korean “comfort women” exploited by the Japanese military in WWII: “Women’s Solidarity in Our Troubled Times of Gendered Violence and War”, Interview Rada Iveković by Young-Gyung Paik in 2022, Korea, <https://kyeol.kr/en/node/467> (accessed on July 11, 2025).

2018: 3). Or, as Jie-Hyun Lim writes: “South Korea [...] suffered from the anti-communist political genocide and brutal suppression of the memory of victims.” (Lim 2022: 52) It is only in recent years, as language and political space became available and their scope enlarged, that elder women started to talk about it. Likewise, the “comfort women” scandal of the Japanese occupation and WWII became available in words uttered by the once victims, become witnesses and finally the subject only in 1991. Those women survivors had broken the chain of stigma and shame, and re-appropriated their own history by making it public. But it then became a *national* cause and was again taken away from them, this time by the state and the nation. Younger Korean feminist researchers have been working on the *feminist political translation* of the tragic events (these and others) that formerly could not be discussed. One observes the same situation of the second or third generation of feminist scholars having worked, since 1998, on the Indo-Pakistani partition and the destiny of not only language, but women too, being treated as property of the masculine nation (Butalia 1998; Menon & Bhasin 1998; *Transeuropéennes* 19/20, 2001; Iveković and Glasson Deschaumes (eds.) 2003; Shree, *Tomb of Sand* 2003) which had made those events un-representable to those who suffered them. Eun-Shil Kim writes: “The public discourse of the Jeju April Third [1948] became both masculine and institutional” (Kim 2018: 15), which made mourning impossible. But when *language is rescued from the state and the nation*, women can also access it and be released. The proscribed Jeju rebellion was renamed a state massacre, and that history was in need of being rewritten. The years-long silence had been like a prolonged state of exception, extending all the way into normalcy (Kim 2018: 24). Kim concludes further: “[...] [T]he widows experience instability of their identities and confusion over the boundaries of life and death. I see this as the effect of power and a trauma in which the sovereignty of necropolitics makes illegal those who have died and at the same time assigns social death to the living.” (Kim 2018: 36)

As Kim Eun-Shil says elsewhere, from the epistemological point of view, introduced starting from the 1970s and then massively in the 1990, “Called upon to function as critical discourse and a new world-view to criticize and deconstruct patriarchal traits and male-centrism in Korean society, women’s studies is caught in a trap between nationalism and modernization” (Kim 2009: 9); and further “women’s studies was under constant pressure to answer questions on the particularity of Korea. The underlying social ethos of the 1970s and the 1980s in Korea was characterized by a defiant nationalism, accompanied by the democratization movement against the military dictatorship.” (Kim 2009: 11-12) And finally, Kim writes, “[...] there is a great risk that without any critical reflection on the epistemology of the nation state to frame the problematic of such research, women will be treated as signifiers of political and economic inequality between state boundaries. In this way, the women’s issue in Korea will be avoided [...]” (Kim 2009: 29)

Still talking about the “comfort women” issue in Korea, Young-Gyung Paik says: “In Korea, the official language used by the patriarchal state and society

in the past was incapable of grasping wartime sexual violence as a crime, as in the ‘comfort women’ issue. Over the years, the situation in Korea has been changing, so that the suffering of women can be discussed less as a matter of shame and dishonor for women than as a violation of their civil rights.

Even so, the problem is that the state still tends to be seen as a savior of women and an ultimate guarantor of women’s rights. As you know too well, the bodies of female citizens are still being treated as the territory of their state or ethnic group.” (Paik, Young-Gyung in conversation with R. Iveković, 2022, <https://kyeol.kr/en/node/467>)

In his recent rethinking of translation and communism (as a movement, *communist transition*), Etienne Balibar has come to explicitly recognise the feminist analysis of reproduction and the expropriation of women’s reproductive capacities – as irrefutable (Balibar 2022b). It seems to me that *one prior step would actually be needed* here in addition – *rejecting*, as in feminist analyses by Silvia Federici, Judith Butler, Alisa Del Re, Verónica Gago and many others, of the classical separation of production and reproduction which had been framed as *normative* in early Marxism but also generally in capitalism, and has been maintained: in this separation of the two, we first have a firm *postulation* of the binary as definitive, after which the latter is taken for granted as a unique historic scenario, and becomes normative. The description of biased capitalism is then taken as the only possible option for gendered/racialised relations. In her critique of the latter, Verónica Gago, among others, has developed the idea of the *homogeneity of labour* that efficiently deconstructs the theoretical separation of production and reproduction, which is also the framework of women’s enslavement. As a political aim, this is elaborated in the reshuffled concept of the *feminist strike* (Gago 2020).

The uneasy relation between *production* and *reproduction*, built as a *natural* configuration of an unproblematic hegemonic gender-arrangement, was one of the missing links and unaddressed problem in Yugoslav attempts at building self-management (workers’ control) too. Both the Yugoslav and the Algerian projects (to take these two) were failures, of course, but failures we can learn from. Thinking ahead mentally from *within* the system, production and reproduction were made into *separate* areas where the inclusion of women into *citoyenneté* (citizenship) and the political sphere appeared as nearly impossible (although this was never said), because the decisive pattern was not *the hypothetically possible*, but *the existing* as if it had been a given, and unquestionable. A similar reasoning was worked out by Mohammed Harbi in the introduction to his book *L’Autogestion en Algérie*. In it, he analyses the failure of attempts to *self-management in agriculture* in the socialist sector of Algeria (mentioning also Yugoslavia, China and Cuba), because it seems difficult to convert the farmer to socialism and to the *intérêt général* (general interest) (Harbi 2022). There is a parallelism between how these two issues – gender (women) and agriculture (farmers) (Wang 2011; 2014; 2016) – are made *unthinkable* in the available theories of self-management and the construction of socialism. It is not that women (or farmers) cannot be integrated *in principle*, but rather that

the socio-political construct, *as it was*, prevented them from participating as equals. This is also an epistemic conundrum, a question of the *knowledge regime*, but which Balibar or Harbi may have escaped on these two issues. It is “the status of socio-economic formation that determines the condition of humans with a reproductive capacity, and not the opposite”²⁷, not the fact that they are women, to paraphrase Balibar.

Knowing that democratic translation cannot be guaranteed, that it is likely to be nationalist, colonial and patriarchal, and that it discriminates, forbids and chastises “minor” languages²⁸, but that this can also be extended to non-hegemonic political narratives and theories with *alternative cosmovisiones* (such as feminism, the migrants’ saga, those from the global or local south, marginalised classes, etc.) – we must be concerned. *No existing translation regime* has ever been universal. It has been usurpation. We must then imagine how to practice cognitive fairness and justice under the specific conditions of the constitutive *inequality* of languages, which implies practicing corrections at every step. This indeterminateness makes language and translation *political*.

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27 “Nous sommes alors amenés à pousser jusqu’au bout l’idée que *c’est le statut des frontières qui détermine la condition d’étrangers*, le sens que comporte le fait d’être un étranger’, et non l’inverse.” (Balibar, 2022a: 249)

28 Balibar rightly says: “[...] *translation* [...] is *not* an egalitarian praxis, on the contrary: relations of *domination* and *nationalist political ruling* (*règlements*) have *forbidden* certain *languages*, or have *discriminated* against them, calling them *inferior*”. Balibar 2022: 251 (emphasis added.).

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Rada Iveković

Posthegemonijski destruktivni kontra-prevod

Apstrakt

Prošli smo kroz destruktivnu posthegemonijsku reakcionarnu revoluciju. Svedočili smo posthegemonijskoj globalizaciji (ne globalnoj) i postsocijalističkim novim ratovima, najbližim (post)kolonijalnim ratovima. Subalterni indijski istraživači govorili su o dominaciji bez hegemonije, gde je direktno nasilje dominacije pogubnije. U većim međunarodnim političkim pokretima, pokušaj hegemonije prelazi u rat. U nekim slučajevima preovlađuju posthegemonijski obrasci. Deluje da EU prihvata hegemoniju SAD. Lokalno (iz ukrajinske perspektive) hegemonija se više ne toleriše. Suprotno tome: Putinova Rusija, koja se pretvara da ponovo uspostavlja nekadašnju hegemoniju dominacijom, završava tako što se opredeljuje za čistu dominaciju bez hegemonije. Opšta tišina o etničkom čišćenju Palestinaca, nakon razaranja Gaze. Ovo zahteva mnogo političkog prevođenja. Prema prethodnom prećutnom prevodilačkom ugovoru, to bih nazvala kontraprevodom. Ako je idealno prevođenje odnos sa drugim u procesu, kontraprevod nastoji da promeni prevodilačke kodove i vrednost reči. Menjajući kodove, pokušava da stvarnosti da drugo političko ruho. Hegemonija iščezava ako je nijedna strana ne prihvata i dovodi do dominacije, nasilja i rata, pokušavajući da se preobrazu u niži nivo nestabilne hegemonije. Ako to ne uspe – možemo imati građanske ratove. Sve se svodi na hegemonijski jezik, koji je ujedno i nacionalni jezik. Pokušaj pregovora o hegemoniji vodi se među dostupnim jezicima. Ali hegemonija ne funkcioniše, i čisto nasilje se koristi u razdvajanju nekada zajedničkog jezika na dva, kao u Ukrajini, ili na četiri ili više, kao u jugoslovenskom prostoru. Samopreimenovanje disidentskog jezika postaje obavezno na užem nivou, i funkcioniše kao objava rata. Rad pokušava da poredi pregovore o rodu i pregovore o rivalskim jezicima.

Ključne reči: regresija, dominacija-bez-hegemonije, posthegemonijski kontra-prevod, nacionalni jezik, rodno obeležen jezik, identitarizam, kontra-revolucija, desemanitizacija, prevodilački kodovi