

# DOCUMENTATION

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## Comptes rendus

WOODSWORTH, Judith (ed.) (2018): *The Fictions of Translation*. London and New York: John Benjamins, 307 p.

As a book title, *The Fictions of Translation* may be misleading at first glance; a layperson may think there is something fictitious with translation. But for those who are familiar with the concept of ‘pseudo-translation’ by Gideon Toury (2012: 45-59), or that of ‘self-translation’ (Grutman and Van Bolderen 2014), there is nothing new. What is rather new is the gathering of several contributions on the topic in a single book, which comes as a result of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Transfiction Conference held in Montreal, May 2015. Edited by Judith Woodsworth, a prominent translation studies scholar and the founding chair of the Canadian Association for Translation Studies (CATS), the book is made up of sixteen chapters and is divided in two balanced parts of eight chapters each.

Part I is entitled “Translators and translating: Status, identity and process,” and it scrutinizes various aspects and status of translation and translators. In chapter 1, Rainier Grutman is interested in the self-translator as author, through the works of Federman, Lakhous and De Kuyper, three contemporary bilingual writers who have translated their own books. Grutman mainly examines paratexts (a letter, an interview and an afterword) from the three authors who have in common the fact they were all raised in bilingual communities either as immigrants, or because they grew up in a bilingual country. Rainier comes to the conclusion that self-translators are not freer than translators of literature. Indeed, self-translators are also subject to the linguistic and cultural constraints of the target language in which they write (p. 27).

In chapter 2, Judith Woodsworth examines the paradox of translation with insights into Gertrude Stein’s translations of Flaubert, Hugnet and Pétain, which inspired Stein to write her *Autobiography*. Though Stein’s translations were not successful, “her engagement with the idea and process of translation, regardless of the actual outcome, yields fruitful insights into the complexities of both the writer and her body of works” (p.46). Still in the area of biography, Brian Baer, the author of chapter 3, goes on to focus on real life stories, namely biographies, autobiographies and memoirs written

for or by Russian translators and interpreters. The period covered starts with the Soviet Regime and ends with the current era of Putin. Baer presents the translator’s biography in Soviet Russia and examines the ways some political and cultural contexts have shaped the translation of these life into writing (p. 50).

Chapter 4 discusses the issue of polyglossia. As did Baer, Esther Allen delves into autobiographical analysis to examine the notion of polyglossia, taken from her personal experience as a literary translator. The notion itself is borrowed from Bakhtin (1981) who considers the polyglossia as an alternate approach to a central view of Saussurian linguistics, i.e. an arbitrary relation between the signifier and the signified. From her analysis, Allen remarks that translators of English texts into Spanish have adopted a policy of distance as far as polyglossia is concerned as they want to reread the contemporary literature of Spain and Latin America. (p.80). She finally states that domestication and foreignization strategies are not adequate to explain the policy of translation in this very context.

In chapter 5, Angelina Tiziana Tarantini brings transcultural conversations into practice through the analysis of Mence’s plays she translated into Italian. She considers her collaboration with the author as a third space. Therefore, she states that “the transcultural conversations between author and translator in practice can result in the author of the source text becoming the co-author of the target text, even in a language that is alien to him/her” (p. 87).

Jane Coustas uses the image of selfie to describe Nancy Huston’s self-translation in chapter 6. Coustas demonstrates how Huston, as a Franco-Canadian author and self-translator, positions herself in a “dual belonging, allegiance and cross-overs between languages as if caught between one’s self and one’s reflection in the Lacanian mirror” (p. 104). This privileged position of self-translator is also discussed in chapter 7 authored by Elisabeth Saint. Drawing from the Francophone playwrights and self-translators in the Saskatchewan province, Saint states that the privilege of the self-translator can be shown in the fact that unlike the translator who has barely access to previous resources of the original text, authors who are also self-translators have access to the notes, drafts and bibliographical references used while writing their books (p. 119-120). Using Vermeer (1989/2000: 222), Elisabeth Saint states that self-translators, as any other trans-

lator, and despite their privileged position, are also agents of intercultural communication. Part I closes with chapter 8 in which Arvi Sepp examines minority voices in the light of Yoko Tawada, a bilingual Japanese-German author who lives and works in Berlin, and Emine Sevgi Özdamar who was born in Anatolia and grew up in Istanbul, then settled in Germany. The author defines their works as moving texts and considers these texts as “a window onto the intricate relationship between nation, language and identity” (p. 151).

Part II of the book entitled “Texts, paratexts and contexts: Reality and fictions” opens with chapter 9 in which Klaus Kaindl discusses the role of fiction in translation studies. In an attempt to remake the translator’s reality, Kaindl digs deeper in the area of translation studies and its various sub-disciplines to bridge the gap between fiction, research and reality. In this regard, the fact that “the possible applications of fictional works in the didactic field are numerous, ranging from lectures on translation theory to practical exercises” (p. 168) represents a clear indication of the intersection between fiction and reality.

Véronique Béghain explores the transfictions of Jack London in chapter 10. She points out some stylistic features of Louis Postif’s French translation of the seventeenth century’s American novelist and investigates the reception of these translated works in France. In her analysis, Béghain highlights some misinterpretations by the translators and some introduction of pathetic tone and metaphysical overtones that are not found in the source text” (p. 174). Therefore, she inscribes London’s translated works into the period of *Belles infidèles*.

Isabelle Poulin authored chapter 11 in which she examines the notion of infidelity in relation to Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* and Proust’s *In search of Lost Time*. The author thinks that “la figure de l’infidèle pose ainsi la question du devoir de traduction comme ‘un infini littéraire’” (p. 195). Quoting Blanchot (1959), Poulin considers the first novel as being the fiction of translation and the second the fiction as translation.

In chapter 12, Sabine Strümper-Krobb questions the notion of pseudotranslation in two novels from various epochs: Wieland’s *Der goldne Spiegel* (1984) and Somoza’s *La caverna de las ideas* (2005). In his novel, Wieland “employs pseudotranslation as an elaborate narrative strategy [in which he] expresses his wish that the author should remain a secret, at least for a while, but he was realistic in his assumption that it would most probably be uncovered” (p. 201).

Katrien Lievois’ article, the 13<sup>rd</sup> chapter, brings in new insight into pseudotranslation. Makine’s *La fille d’un héros de l’Union soviétique*.

Here, it is the author who claims to have been translated: “Andrei Makine, toutefois, a procédé autrement: il n’a pas créé un auteur supposé, mais a inventé un traducteur” (p. 216). In other words, it is the translator who is fictitious in this case, not the author. Exploring translations into English, Dutch and German of the novel, Lievois comes to show strategies used by the author to authenticate translations of the novel, especially with the translators’ notes (thirty-five notes for 193 pages).

Rachel Weissbrod and Ayelet Kohn (chapter 14) are interested in intersemiotic translation in two illustrated versions of *Anonymous Belfi ha-Gadol* by Yossi Banai. They claim that “[i]llustrations that accompany a written text can be regarded as intersemiotic translation” (p.233) and therefore considered as a form of translation. In their analysis, Weissbrod and Kohn show how the illustrations and the written texts are two distinct works as far as their interpretations are concerned.

Still in the intersemiotic translation, Nicole Nolette analyses transformations of poetic narrative in Desbiens’ *L’homme invisible* and its English translation *The Invisible Man*. She examines the different modes of interpretation and translation as main features of the performances. Using many illustrations from Desbiens’ book and its translation, Nolette finally states that “the translation fiction of *L’Homme invisible/The Invisible Man* had complicated relations between source and target communities as much as it has enlarged of the translation” (p.269).

The 16<sup>th</sup> and last chapter of the book by Gillian Lane-Mercier questions institutional translation in officially bilingual or multilingual countries, especially the implementation of some translation policies in these countries. The author takes the example of Canada Council for the Arts’ translation grants programs to investigate official fictions of translation dictated by the *Official Language Act*. For Lane-Mercier, there is no way to avoid official fictions even though they can be often regrettable but at times salutary, for they may lead back to fact and truth.

*The Fictions of Translation* sheds a light onto new paradigm of translation studies, as far as transfiction is concerned. One of the book’s most important inputs is undoubtedly the gathering of several points of views in various domains on the question of self-translations and pseudotranslation. Some scholars may point out the eurocentrist aspect of contributions as a weakness. But translation studies scholars and students, as well as researchers in disciplines such as literature, linguistics and political science will find a lot of interest in reading this wonderful book. Finally, it is hoped that the concept of translation will be

a subject of further research in translation studies and many other facets of this area will be further explored.

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GAMBIER, Yves and RAMOS-PINTO, Sara (2018): *Audiovisual Translation: Theoretical and Methodological Challenges*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 146 p.

There have been numerous publications about audiovisual translation (AVT) in recent years, notably the book by Diaz-Cintas and Nikolić (2017) and the handbook by Pérez-González (2019). And this is besides the constant publishing of special issues devoted to AVT. There is even now a journal exclusively dedicated to AVT, the *Journal of Audiovisual Translation* (n.d.). One has to wonder, then, whether everything has been said and done, and if this book provides more than the usual (but still relevant!) convention of the case-study approach.

Gambier's and Ramos-Pintos' edited book was previously published as a special issue in *Target* 28:2 (2016). In that sense, the decision to publish that issue as a book is perhaps difficult to understand at first: there are no major changes between the special issue's chapters and the book's that could be identified right away, as the same chapters are included, and the content of each seems to be the same. The differences between the special issue and the book are that the former has the "book reviews" section, and that certain articles have translations, whilst the book does not. These translations are, specifically, Burchardt,

Lommel, *et al.*, and Taylor, which were translated into Chinese; Braun, and De Marco, which were translated into Hungarian. These translations, however, were not available for download on the Target website at the time of writing this review. If those translations do exist, it is a pity they were not included in the book. Overall, besides trying to reach a wider audience by publishing the special issue in book format, no specific reasoning for publishing this book is provided, and it is a pity that the special issue online actually has more content.

The book, however, rapidly shows that its aim is to provide the reader with as much quintessential knowledge in as little space as possible. In the introduction, the editors place the book inside Translation Studies (TS), although they do mention the possibility that AVT may now be a field in its own right, apart from TS, because of the exponential and multidisciplinary growth it has experienced. Besides presenting an overview of the volume's contents, the editors also explain that they aim to find a balance in the book between "pure and applied research" (5).

Chapter 1, by Rosa, deals with Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) and AVT. Rosa searches the *Translation Studies Bibliography* for keywords related to DTS and AVT, and presents the cases in which these two areas have intersected. The author also deals with various aspects related to AVT (semiotics, multimodality, corpora), but does not specifically relate them to DTS. Instead, she ends up stating that there has not been much work in AVT studies that uses DTS as a theoretical basis, and posits that despite its limitations, DTS could be used "for empirical, descriptive context-oriented fundamental research on AVT" (21). As a reader, however, I was not entirely convinced by Rosa's argument, as the author concentrated more on why DTS has not been included much in AVT studies, instead of explaining *why* it should be included.

Chapter 2, by Burchardt, Lommel, Bywood, Harris and Popović, concentrates on a much-needed area of research in AVT: machine translation (MT). Few articles have been written about AVT and MT, and considering how developed the area of MT already is, it is high time to read an article dealing with MT quality in an audiovisual context, involving not only researchers, but also practitioners of the art. The authors include a relevant summary of MT theory, and state that, "despite the relatively high level of technological support for the AV translator [...] AV translators do not routinely use TMs [Translation Memories], despite their widespread use in translation" (27). Burchardt, Lommel, *et al.* then explain issues related to the use of "automatic translation of subtitles" (29): Domain and genre; Lack of visual context; oral style; and, lack of context (29-32). A