
Nikolaou, P. and Kyritsi, M.. *Translating Selves: Experience and Identity between Languages and Literatures*. London and New York: Continuum, 2008, 202 p.

Paschalis Nikolaou and Maria-Venetia Kyritsi's work explores cultural identity and how it relates to translation. The book is comprised of twelve contributors, a two-page foreword, a sixteen-page introduction by the editors, and three parts (each consisting of three chapters, except for part 3, which has four). *Translating Selves* thoroughly discusses the importance of personal identity and self reflection in the study and application of translation. In the introduction, Nikolaou and Kyritsi state that "translation begins with and returns to experience, self-observation and active involvement," which is to say that those who read translations must translate what they think and how they think as well, then delve into their consciousness. The editors also quote Douglas Robinson who claims that "our use and reuse of language are all somatically marked because

we have a feeling for words and phrases, either when someone else is speaking of writing or when we are doing so ourselves, and that all our decisions about language including what word or phrase would be most equivalent are channeled through these feelings...". The editors explain that the translator's subjectivity is often suppressed in translation in order to channel the original voice of the author.

The first section of the book "Ways of seeing: self, translation and the literary", uses poetry and prose as examples of how subjectivity is portrayed in literary translation. The three authors in this first part are Maria Filippakopoulou, Clive Scott and Paschalis Nikolaou. In the first chapter, "Translation drafts and the translating self", Filippakopoulou focuses on drafts of translations in progress since the unfinished work is "elusive and definition-shy", she says, and therefore has a great deal to teach about how translation criticism can benefit from an awareness of successive drafts. Chapter two, Clive Scott's "Translating the art of seeing in Apollinaire's 'Les Fenêtres': the self of the translator, the selves of the languages and readerly sub-

jectivity,” addresses the translating consciousness by focusing on a poem by Guillaume Apollinaire and several paintings by Robert Delaunay based on that poem. In his chapter, Scott studies the mental connection between poet and painter, as well as how identity alters subjectivity, in that “the selving of the translator is a materialization of a particular dynamics of language peculiar to a particular text”. Nikolaou’s subsequent chapter, “Turning inward: liaisons of literary translation and life-writing”, goes into detail about how writing helps create a sense of self and how translation enhances it, using literary examples by J. Sallis and J. Olney.

Part two, “Language and translating between cultures and identities”, includes articles by Angelo Bottone, Juliane House and Rainer Guldin, and, overall, treats the relation between identity and multilingual consciousness. In Bottone’s “The ethical task of the translator in the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur”, the author demonstrates the ways in which Ricoeur perceives translation as a paradigm for communication as well as the basis for any kind of interaction among

different cultures and identities. Ricoeur believes that translation should be the standard by which we come in contact with others, culturally and linguistically. In “Global English and the destruction of identity?” Juliane House focuses on the hegemony of the English language and how other languages, such as German, are losing their identities when works are translated into English because the English-speaking world imposes its linguistic norms on others. House primarily studies examples of the socio-cultural influence in business and science texts which affects all genres, and she concludes that this unequal translation is the result of a growing globalized world. This idea regarding the heavy influence of the English language provides a good transition into Rainer’s chapter “Devouring the other: cannibalism, translation and the construction of cultural identity”, which describes how translation helps build cultural identity and literary subjectivity. As examples, he uses the works of Vilém Flusser, as well as Augusto and Haroldo de Campos, who all expanded upon Oswald de Andrade’s study of cannibalism and the way in which it sym-

bolized intercultural exchange. Rainer focuses on how colonialism affects cultural identity and the reinvention of translation in a post-colonial world.

Part three, “Case studies: experiences in translation and transition”, is a set of four chapters, all of which contain the personal anecdotes and experiences of authors and translators. Corinna Krause addresses the dynamics of personal versus communal identity, which in her case involved translating from Scottish Gaelic, a minority language, into English. Krause explores this struggle between a proud minority’s writing and a majority society reading this work in translation. In chapter eight, “Identity and humor in translation: the extravagant comic style of Rosa Cappiello’s *Paese fortunate*”, author Brigid Maher discusses the style of writing in Rosa Cappiello’s autobiography which describes the history of Italian immigrants to Sydney, Australia in the 1970s. In it, she concentrates on how Cappiello translates humor to show ethnic and national identity, as well as “multilingual consciousness in an intercultural space”. In chapter nine, writer

Alison Martin studies the revised translation of George Forster’s *Reise um die Welt* and how it is received by the public, comparing the new version to the original. In the final chapter, Daniel Raveh explores a text in ancient Sanskrit which asserts that the self deteriorates through multiple translations, and that the self is unable to be translated because “the power of both words and comprehension” are “unknown unless experienced”.

Translating Selves: Experience and Identity between Languages and Literatures, uses a vivid variety of global literary examples to portray the role that the self plays in translation. The goal of the editors is to show how the identity or consciousness of the translator is vital to translation because it provides more insight into what is being translated and serves as a kind of metaphor for the original author’s intentions. Through its illustrations and arguments, it is clear that identity, creativity, and personal experiences are an essential component of the translation process.

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