

BOOK REVIEW

Ideology, Censorship and Translation

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With the increasing ubiquitousness of translation that has become indispensable in disseminating world information and knowledge across cultures and countries, ideological interventions have been insinuated into the translation processes and products. Ideology – construed as belief systems (van Dijk 1998) – ‘resides’ in the translator, the receiving audience, as well as the institutional and socio-political context (Tymoczko 2003), incurring censorship manifested as omissions, obliterations, distortions, and fabrications in the translated texts of various genres. Such nexus between ideology, censorship, and translation have been out there for centuries; yet, they have not been studied sufficiently in Translation Studies (TS) to date.

Unequivocally devoting the collection to the role of ideology and censorship in the acts of translation, Martin McLaughlin and Javier Muñoz-Basols, the two editors and contributors of individual chapters, present case studies (Chapters 2-8) from various chronological periods with an array of genres, themes, and audiences, as well as a theoretical analysis (Chapter 9) that elevates this line of study to an epistemological level.

In the Introduction, McLaughlin and Muñoz-Basols open this volume with their penetrating insights into the inexorable links between ideology, censorship, and translation. As they acutely observe, it is the translation activities that *enable* the information accessibility cross-culturally/linguistically, meanwhile, they *disable* faithful information dissemination through omission, distortion, and fabrication of texts for ideological reasons and censorship. They drive home this point with case studies of classic literature translation in the 1950s and present-day media translation – indeed across genres and temporality – heralding the wide scope covered by the eight ensuing chapters.

Chapter 1 by Carmen Acuña-Partal (*Notes on Charles Darwin's thoughts on translation and the publishing history of the European versions of [On] The Origin of Species*) reveals the repercussions of ideological manipulation, censorship, and publishing strategies on the reception of the translated European versions (1859-1872) of a scientific masterpiece – Charles Darwin's *[On] The Origin of Species*. Selectively tracing Darwin's autobiographical writings, his correspondence with translators and publishers, and historians' works, the author examines Darwin's persistence and failed attempt to control the dissemination of his theories due to overt ideological manipulations in translation. As the author felicitously notes this book's proliferation and global publishing success only came posthumously in a book market that is not immune to censorship for ideological mediations. This



historiographical study unearths many little-known facts regarding the translation and publishing processes of Darwin's book.

In Chapter 2, with a provocative title (*"¡No Pasarán!": Translators under siege and ideological control in the Spanish Civil War*), Marcos Rodríguez-Espinosa casts the treacherous life of seven women who worked as translators and interpreters against the backdrop of Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), revealing their indispensable roles as translators/interpreters alongside their vulnerable positions in politically tumultuous contexts. The author harnesses a plethora of historical scholarship, biographies, memoirs, and fictional texts to investigate the biographies from their translation work that served the "cause" during the Spanish Civil War. Through exploring the translators' political indoctrination, linguistic training in the USSR, and their exile, the author discloses the multiple roles they assumed surrounding their linguistic mediation as well as their susceptibility to accusations of treason and persecution. This study is a poignant reminder of the political implications of wartime translation and interpreting work.

In Chapter 3 (*The censorship of theatre translations under Franco: the 1960s*), Raquel Merino-Álvarez examines the censorship of imported theatre through translations in Spain under Franco's rule (1960s) when censorship was obligatory and ubiquitous. This dictator period, as the author incisively observes, was paradoxically marked by the political openness of the Ministry in charge of theatre censorship in parallel with growing dynamism on the Spanish stage. The author fittingly connects such contextual reality with a case of E. Albee's *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962) translated by Méndez Herrera, whose translated versions are often deemed controversial. With relevant documents from censorship archives, the author demonstrates the complex process of censorship applied to this play by excavating historic evidence: the censors' multiple cuts and alterations of religious contents and profane language.

In Chapter 4 (*Between ideology and literature: Translation in the USSR during the Brezhnev Period*), Emily Lygo interrogates the fate of translated literature during the USSR's stagnant, 'door-closed' Brezhnev years (1965–1981), which, stands in stark contrast to the previous Thaw, known as 'decade of euphoria'. The author first reveals general ideological interventions in literary translations. Then, her close examination of a highly liberal journal *Novyi mir* proves otherwise: the translated Western literature is anything but stagnant. Through demonstrating the specific strategies deployed by different agents (the journal's editors and translators) to get the texts past the censor from ideological authorities, the author penetratingly points out the balance the editors had to achieve between ideology/censorship and accommodating Soviet readers' demand for Western literature. This study sheds interesting light on the literary translation as activism that circumvents censorship.

In Chapter 5 (*Censorship and the Catalan translations of Jean-Paul Sartre*), Pilar Godayol examines the Catalan translation of the oeuvre by Jean-Paul Sartre – a famous philosopher, an existentialist, and pro-Marxist writer – under the Franco dictatorship from the 1960s to early 1970s. Godayol concentrates on eight censors' reports from the General Archive of the Administration. The author's use of this approach is underpinned by Munday's (2014) concept of 'micro-history' that emphasises using individuals' history to understand the bigger picture of the social and political contexts surrounding translation. Her close interrogations of the primary sources not only enable her to reveal the non-



monolithic structure of institutional censorship but also identify specific reasons why the dissident Sartre and other intellectuals were able to make their voices heard via translated Catalan in Spain.

In Chapter 6 (*What is an author, indeed: Michel Foucault in translation*), Jeroen Vandaele draws readers' attention to the understudied translations of Michel Foucault's works on critical theory. After establishing the relevance of TS with pivotal concepts in the field, Vandaele compares a chapter from *Surveiller et punir* (1975) with its English, Spanish, and Norwegian translations. Distinguished from other chapters, the author in this chapter goes considerable length to contrastively analyse the texts at the word/sentence level, through which Vandaele pins down several meaningful shifts. Based on textual analysis, the author incisively posits that, in translation, tenses are modified to historicise statements and syntactic alterations render Foucault's work similar to an instruction book.

In Chapter 7 (*Censoring Lolita's sense of humor: when translation affects the audience's perception*), Patrick Zabalbeascoa conducts a micro-textual analysis of comical (humour) translation by comparing Stanley Kubrick's 1962 big-screen version of Nabokov's provocative but well-recognised novel, *Lolita*, with Adrian Lyne's 1997 film. Working with the theoretical framework of audio-visual translation, the author focuses on several subtitle examples, disclosing the censorship effect induced by problematic comical translation. This study offers invaluable insights into the insurmountable challenges in comical translation alongside censorship, taboo, and ideological misconceptions, which collectively affect the audience's perception.

The collection concludes with the thought-provoking Chapter 8 entitled *The crooked timber of self-reflexivity: Translation and ideology in the end times*, through which, the author Stefan Baumgarten injects evocative innuendos. As the title suggests, Baumgarten critically problematises the 21st-century translation practices and scholarship by reflecting on the role of self-flexibility in TS – as a discipline – against the background of capitalist globalisation; the capitalist/Anglophone dominance alongside profit-driven marketplace permeate scholarly discourses and constitutes what he dubs as 'hegemonic non-translation'. The author intends to inject this notion into the discourse of TS, highlighting the importance of 'self-reflexivity' and 'critical economics' for future research. Though the study is devoid of concrete cases, the author skilfully covers a large theoretical ground at a higher, epistemological level.

One notable contribution this book makes is methodological: extra-textual analyses (surrounding translation processes) and 'forensic' textual analyses (of translation products) are deployed in connected ways. The former is implemented with what Munday (2014) conceptualises as 'micro-history', where many little-known facts in history are unearthed by researchers via extra-textual sources: dossiers, censors' reports, and other archive sources. The latter, then, is concerned with close textual analysis to reveal nuanced ideological shifts and censorship.

There are arguably two areas that need improvement if a critical eye is used. First, the concept of ideology remains somewhat vague. Readers would have a more lucid conceptual preview if the editors could demarcate this concept in the introduction chapter. In addition, the Euro-phonic tilt towards Spain, Russia, France and Scandinavia may limit the geographic scope of the book. A possible expansion to include investigations in Asia, where ideology and censorship also permeate the acts of translation, could add intriguing perspectives to this collection as well as reach a wider readership.



Overall, against an exuberantly covered ground across nine chapters, the editors and contributors potently demonstrate the ubiquitous and pivotal role of ideology and censorship in the acts of translation. Pulling together diverse genres (science fiction, literature, theatres, and comics) and traversing vast historic periods, this volume establishes ideology and censorship as the ‘invariable’ that conditions myriad of ‘variables’ in TS. Through archive studies and close textual analysis, the readers are presented with the richness of authentic translation activities, little-known historical facts, and penetrating insights regarding ideological issues in translation.

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