



**Situatedness and Performativity. Translation and Interpreting Practice Revisited, Edited by Raquel Pacheco Aguilar and Marie-France Guénette. Leuven: Leuven UP, 2021. 220 pp.**

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In the last decade, the humanities have begun to turn away from considering merely discursive and interpretive practices to analyzing instead how such practices exist within, and impinge on, material realities. In “Translation and the Materialities of Communication” (2016) Karin Littau brought that discussion to the field of translation studies. *Situatedness and Performativity* is also a response to this material turn. Gathering a fascinating variety of linguistic and national contexts, and employing sundry methodologies, Pacheco Aguilar and Guénette endeavour to expand the understanding of translation and interpreting beyond a hermeneutic process, to a “performative-oriented approach [...] from a less essentialist perspective” (11-12). As the introduction states, the editors look to bring out “the performers, and the material aspects involved in translation or interpreting events,” in other words, “the situatedness and performativity of translating and interpreting” (12). This new approach also entails paying attention to political, ethical, and historical dimensions and employing methodologies that consider perspectives from fields such as the “sociology of translation, history of translation, performance studies, and even translation and interpreting education” (12-15).

Nine essays are organized into three main parts that address the political effects of translation and interpreting practices, the people involved in translation events, and the temporal and spatial situatedness of translation. The focus in the first part ranges from textual analysis, to analysis of multimedia performances, to framing analysis of translated news stories. In “A Different Story for a Different Readership: a *Skopos* approach to the Translation of Julio Ramón Ribeyro’s *Alienación*,” Ellen Lambrechts looks at a novel from Peru in the 1950s, a politically charged period in that country’s history. Lambrechts assesses how the translator adapts and assimilates the text for a contemporary North American context, thus creating an instance of intercultural communication. Audrey Canalès’s “Performative Translation and Identity, from Poetics to Politics” analyzes the Canadian singersongwriter Feist (stage name of Leslie Feist) and the Mexican American performance artist Guillermo Gómez Peña. Canalès brings these performers’ vastly different temperaments into dialogue by examining how they link their creative processes to translation. Feist’s use of collaborators she calls her “amplifiers” creates a web of relations that “translat[e] Feist’s artistic identity in performances” (40), and Gómez-Peña’s highly politicized use of verbal creations, clothes, and body language reinvents the border as a translation and cultural contact zone, thus initiating a debate of performance as translation. Yuan Ping’s “News Translation as (Re)framing: A Critical Framing Analysis of the 2014 Hong Kong Protests in *Reference News*” presents a case study of the news frames, framing devices, and factors contributing to the framing process. Ping demonstrates how “RN mainly constructs its stories around several news frames of *justice*, *conflict*, *economy*, and *responsibility* not salient in the STs [and portrays] different social realities from those in the STs, reflecting the ideological differences involved and conveying RN’s attitudes” (60).

Part 2 focuses on “people involved in translating events.” In “‘Handy, the Middlemen!’ Mediating Afrikaans Literature in the Low Countries,” Marike van der Watt analyzes the backgrounds, knowledge, and actions of Dutch translators of Afrikaans prose. Relying on the notions of “habitus” and performativity, van der Watt concludes that, particularly in this case where peripheral languages are involved, translators feel a social responsibility and go beyond the call of duty to act as cultural mediators between the groups they represent (104). Also addressing the peripheries of the literary polysystem, Paola Gentile’s “Publishers, Translators, and Literature Foundations: The Selection, Reception, and Image Building of Translated Literature from the Low Countries to Italy” considers the agents in the literary field and the role they play in bringing Dutch literature to Italian audiences. The article draws on the sociology of translation (the products and processes of translation), reception studies (the dynamics of how literary works are received in target cultures), and imagology (how literature constructs and disseminates national images) (112). Gentile’s work reveals that grant managers of literature foundations act as cultural mediators and that translators are key in the choice of which novels should be translated. The article also concludes that “despite the high number of translations, the image of [Dutch] literature and culture is still very vague in Italy” (124). Employing Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and cultural capital, Wenqian Zhang’s “The Making of a Translator’s Brand in International Literary Exchanges: The ‘Discoverer’ Howard Goldblatt” explores how

Goldblatt created a “brand” that exerted power and influence in the field of Chinese translation. A translator, professor, editor, and reviewer, Goldblatt singlehandedly “brought modern and contemporary Chinese literature to Western readers” (136), including Nobel laureate Mo Yan. Goldblatt built a “trademark in the field of Chinese-English literary translation” around a “distinctive, positive, and trustworthy image as perceived by other agents, rather than sales figures or profitability” (143).

The third part of the collection tackles the temporal and spatial situatedness of translation. In “Restoration Through Historicist Translation,” Marie-France Guénette, the volume’s co-editor, looks at French translations of *Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave* by Aphra Behn (1640–1689), the first English female writer to make her living by the pen and one of the first abolitionists. *Oroonoko* was first translated in 1745 by the writer and translator of Shakespeare, Pierre Antoine de La Place, yet instead of an abolitionist text, La Place’s version was read as a story of lost love. Guénette analyzes the French retranslations by historian and translator Bernard Dhuicq (1956–2013), who contributed to restoring the image of Behn for contemporary readers. Guénette employs the concept of transhistoricity to gauge “retranslation in light of previous translations and the original work” (152). Also examining the historical effects of translation, Ehsan Alipour’s “Translation and Culture Planning in Nineteenth-Century Iran: A Study of State Actors as Planners” borrows from Itamar Even-Zohar’s and Gideon Toury’s concept of culture planning in analyzing the role of translation in the reign of three Qajar kings from 1797 to 1896. During this period, translators were keen on texts dealing with political modernization, specifically Western ideas of democracy. Alipour concludes that “[t]he role of translation in the culture planning endeavors, which eventually lead to the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1911, varied and ranged from familiarizing the people with modern political ideas to undermining absolute monarchy” (182-183). The final chapter, “Deconstructing the Tensions Brought on by Cultivating Translators and Interpreters,” by Raquel Pacheco Aguilar, the other coeditor of the volume, deals with the pedagogy of translation by exploring two German functionalist authors of translation textbooks, Hans G. Höning and Paul Kussmaul, and bringing “the disciplines of T & I didactics and educational philosophy into a dynamic interaction” (189). The analysis shows how some of the textbooks shift focus from equivalent linguistic structures to communicative actions as well as considering “the nature and function of education in relation to the concept of translation” helping to “situate translation teaching practices in time and space” (205).

The pieces are carefully crafted and organized, which speaks to the care the editors have put into the collection, and the dialogue with many disciplines is evident. The multifarious contexts and approaches may strike some readers as not sufficiently focused. Still, such variety also attests to the dynamic nature of the driving concepts of the volume, namely, situatedness and performativity. Pacheco Aguilar and Guénette can be credited with opening up such a space for dialogue that other translation scholars will likely follow.

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<https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/tc/index.php/tc>

## REFERENCES

Littau, Karin. "Translation and the Materialities of Communication." *Translation Studies*, Vol. 9, no. 1, 2016, pp. 82-96.