BOOK REVIEW

THE GREAT UNSAID

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Translation under Fascism, edited by Christopher Rundle and Kate Sturge, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 285 pp, 106.99€ (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-230-20354-9, 67.40€ (e-book), ISBN 978-0-230-29244-4.

Translation Under Fascism, published in 2010, was one of the first works to place translation at the centre of the study of fascism, remaining one of the classics on this subject to this day. The book contains a compilation of essays that examine the nature of censorship and its effect on translation under four authoritarian regimes: Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, Francoist Spain and Salazarist Portugal. Both editors have extensive experience in the area where translation and fascism overlap and their choice of contributors, an eclectic and interdisciplinary group of researchers, lecturers, historians, artists and translators, helps the reader to look at translation from different perspectives and contextualise it within the literary, artistic and cultural realities of each regime.

Recognising that translation had consistently been overlooked in research on the cultural milieu and context of fascism, this book was a first step towards filling this gap, defending that translation can provide valuable insights into the inner workings and cultural policies of fascist regimes. Under fascism, translation was often viewed as a tool for national renewal and cultural expansion abroad. The relationship between fascism and translation was often a difficult one: translation could be a means to enrich one's culture, but too much translation could be regarded as a weakness that undermined the country's cultural prestige. Translation also brought with it the threat of "cultural pollution", since it was a way for unwanted ideas and ideals to cross both borders and languages and "infect" the country. The book raises this important and often overlooked aspect of racism and "racial purity" and their relationship with translation, more specifically in Germany and Italy.

In addition, translation played a relevant role in the history of publishing, since foreign fiction was often more successful than domestic fiction. This created a cultural and literary power struggle involving both the regime and national authors, who claimed that these poorly-written, cheap translations, easily available to a broader audience, were a threat to the integrity of both culture and language. This meant that the publishing industry had to find a way to balance the economic success brought by these popular translations with the publishing of national authors and books approved by the regime.

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The forms of censorship employed by the four regimes are also explored in depth. Each regime had its own methods, which were employed through different processes, in different areas of culture, with different degrees of flexibility. Sometimes strict guidelines were provided, but the rules of censorship would mostly vary from censor to censor and throughout the years, thus promoting a climate of instability and fear. Authors, publishers and translators were often also expected to "self-censor", which was considered a "voluntary" form of censorship. However, if they failed to comply, their livelihoods, freedom or even lives would pay the price.

Even though the book does not dwell too much on the semantics and complex definition of the term "fascism", it does make sure that the reader is aware of what is meant by it. The editors recognise the shortcomings of using the same label to define all four regimes, and explain that they "use the term 'fascist' speculatively, therefore, with a view to initiating a productive comparison of the four regimes through the lens of translation history" (p. 5). Moreover, their use of the term "is informed by a body of historical research which, while making all the necessary distinctions, includes these regimes in the debate on comparative fascism" (p. 5).

The book is divided into four parts. Part I is an introduction by Rundle and Sturge, where they lay out the reasons for compiling these articles, explain their main objectives, and provide an overview of the book and its main themes. Part II provides a bird's-eye view of the history of translation in each of the four regimes, offering the necessary context and allowing the reader to better situate the relationship between translation and censorship within its respective socio-historic context. These chapters analyse the number of translations published, the most frequent source languages, the target languages into which national works were translated, percentage of translations within the literary market, the cultural, political and literary relationships between countries, the mechanisms of censorship imposed and the different strategies employed by translators and publishing houses in order to circumvent them.

Jeroen Vandaele's "It was what it wasn't: translation and Francoism" is a particularly interesting chapter. Vandaele offers a very thorough analysis of censorship and translation of different media and makes a very interesting connection to Translation Studies, touching on Evan-Zohar's polysystems theory and Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. He also suggests areas of research that still need to be explored and raises some interesting questions, some of which in relation to the possible effect of translation on the fascist system. He also gives one of the best examples of why translation can be such an important means to further our knowledge of the cultural reality of fascism:

> First, what makes translation special among other interpretive "acts of meaning" is its relative explicitness. In translation, a written or spoken end product bears testimony to the interpretation that has taken place; for a researcher in cultural studies a translation has the advantage of constituting a materialized trace of interpretation not provided by other forms of cultural production. The original text offers an explicit point of comparison against which to measure cultural (in this case, translational) practice. Secondly, translation allows us to

> study what does not exist in a given system, although it could in principle have existed. Translation is a means to study the *non-dit*, the cultural unsaid. (p. 89)

Part III is a collection of interesting case studies that explore more specific facets of translation raised in the previous chapters and dive deeper into certain issues of translation under fascism. Mario Rubino's "Literary exchange between Italy and Germany: German literature in Italian translation" analyses the translation of German works, especially literary fiction, in Italy, as well as the cultural and political relationships between these two countries. Francesca Nottola's "The Einaudi publishing house and fascist policy on translations" focuses on the history of the Einaudi publishing house in Italy and how both the political context and censorship affected its translation and publishing process. It explores Giulio Einaudi's turbulent relationship with the regime and how he fought to publish translations under heavy censorship. Frank-Rutger Hausmann's "French-German and German-French poetry anthologies 1943-45" again raises the issue of translation as a means of cultural expansion and a measure of cultural strength, by examining the story of two poetry anthologies compiled by the German Institute in Paris, with the aim of establishing a form of cultural cooperation between Germany and occupied France. Rui Pina Coelho's "Safe Shakespeare: performing Shakespeare during the Portuguese fascist dictatorship (1926-74)" provides a very interesting study of the concept of censorship and describes the theatre scene in Portugal during the first half of the 20th century, focusing on the choice and translation of Shakespeare's plays for a Portuguese audience during the Estado Novo regime.

Part IV contains the closing chapter of the book, Matthew Philpott's "The boundaries of dictatorship", which highlights the lessons that can be learned from the preceding chapters and explores the concept of "boundaries" from different perspectives: the boundaries imposed by censorship, the boundaries crossed by translation, the boundaries that divide but also connect ideas, cultures and historical events.

Coelho ends his article on a note of hope, with the manifesto written by theatre professionals after the revolution that ended the dictatorship. The last paragraph reads: "Those among us who belong to the generation that was sacrificed by the outgoing regime during their most creative years salute the new generations who are coming of age and fervently desire that their recently won freedom will never be lost again" (p. 229). How many other artists, writers, publishers and, of course, translators patiently waited for better days during those dark times of fear and censorship? How many embody the hope that those times never return? As Rundle and Sturge put it in the Introduction, "translated works are magnets for censorship" (p. 7), so it is worth remembering that translation can often be the canary in the coal mine. Therefore, the analysis of censorship in translation is an important tool not only to study the values and mechanisms of past authoritarian regimes but also present ones. What novel, more subtle forms of censorship might it reveal? Which of the old ones are still rampant or returning? How is the manipulation of the translated text affected by the values of the target culture and its historical context? When does this manipulation stop being localisation and start to become censorship?

Vandaele argues that a study of what is left out of a translation, what he calls the "cultural unsaid", is a good insight into what the Francoist culture actually was. I wonder, if we were to look at contemporary translations, what would the unsaid say about us?

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