

BUJALDÓN DE ESTEVES, Lila, BISTUÉ, Belén, and STOCCO, Melisa, eds. (2019): *Literary Self-Translation in Hispanophone Contexts. Europe and the Americas / La autotraducción literaria en contextos de habla hispana*. Europa y América. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 378 p.

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représente plus de la moitié de l'ouvrage collectif (on peut identifier de nombreux liens entre les deux parties, comme l'attestent du reste les références explicites à certains auteurs tels que Chamoiseau ou Kourouma).

Cette constatation nous amène à proposer une dernière réflexion sur l'équilibre des problématiques tel que proposé dans l'ouvrage, comparé à ce qui est annoncé par la quatrième page de couverture et l'introduction. Premièrement, Madeleine Stratford, dans son introduction, signale que, dans le recueil, « [...] les liens entre culture et traduction sont envisagés [...] tous genres de textes et discours confondus [...] ». Nous aimerions souligner ici que trois parties sur quatre portent essentiellement sur le genre littéraire. Deuxièmement, la quatrième page de couverture prévient le lecteur que la majorité des contributions traitent des relations de pouvoir entre dominants et dominés, mais affirme toutefois qu'il serait peu à propos de réduire la question à cette perspective et que « c'est un peu l'idée que cet ouvrage cherche à relativiser ». De notre point de vue, cette relativisation n'apparaît que de façon marginale dans l'ouvrage, et surtout au début; elle disparaît complètement au fil des contributions. Bien sûr, on ne peut jeter le blâme uniquement sur les directrices de l'ouvrage: celles-ci sont tributaires des études qui se font concrètement dans la discipline. Toutefois, nous regrettons que le recueil n'inclue aucune conclusion, qui aurait pu développer ce point et mettre en avant une programmation pour la traductologie. (Notons qu'il s'agit vraisemblablement d'un choix des Éditions Garnier, puisqu'aucun ouvrage de la collection concernée ne se clôt par une conclusion.)

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BUJALDÓN DE ESTEVES, Lila, BISTUÉ, Belén, and STOCCO, Melisa, eds. (2019): *Literary Self-Translation in Hispanophone Contexts. Europe and the Americas / La autotraducción literaria en contextos de habla hispana*. Europa y América. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 378 p.

This collection is not merely what is conventionally known as "a welcome addition" but signals new venues for the study of self-translation into (and less often, from) Spanish, particularly where Latin America is concerned. Indeed, a wealth of research is already available about Spain, where both self-translation and translation studies (henceforth: TS) have boomed in the last thirty years.

The mention of "the Americas" in the book's subtitle refers to the presence of Chile, Argentina, Peru, and Paraguay (as far as South America is

concerned), but attention is paid as well to Central (Guatemala) and North America (Mexico). This continental perspective usefully complements work on bilingual writers and self-translators in the United States who mainly use Spanish and English (whether their background is Chicano or not). The European dimension mostly covers Spain, with the important exception of creacionista poet, Vicente Huidobro, who spent several years in Paris before returning to his native Chile in 1932. His choice of French as an Aufklärung-infused antidote against baroque Spanish is expertly studied here in the context of Modernist poetics by Marcos Eymar. Huidobro unintentionally appears as an outlier in a collection that for the most part addresses the topic of self-translation within the confines of individual countries. Huidobro's metaphorical crossing of languages, by contrast, is underpinned by the very real crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, a bit like the seasonal Italian workers known in Argentinian history as "swallows" (*golondrinas*).

Nor are his travels (and travails) politically motivated, unlike those of Agustí Bartra, who continued writing in Catalan throughout his long Mexican exile but was careful to prepare Spanish equivalents of several titles. *Xabola*, for instance, was first published in Catalan in Mexico, then turned into Spanish and later on "back-self-translated" into Catalan, on the eve of Bartra's return to Spain. Paula Simón's examination of this "double-self-translation" complements work by Azpeitia Ortiz (2017) while also deepening our knowledge of the Republican exile in Mexico, a topic that deserves to be studied anew in light of translational dynamics, if only because of the Catalan component. Many Catalan intellectuals were also active as translators in Mexico's literary field, Bartra being particularly prolific, providing Spanish versions of internationally recognized work in English or in French.

Mexico's Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz is another important outlier, but from the point of view of chronology instead of geography. Born Juana Ramírez de Asbaje in 17th-century New Spain, she was the daughter of a Spanish captain and a Creole mother—using that word in its original sense of "European born in the colonies." Belén Bistué zooms in on a multilingual (Spanish, Latin, and Nahuatl) and multi-layered poem written by Sor Juana in 1676, on occasion of the Feast of the Assumption. In the closing piece of this *villancico* (as this particular type of poetry is called), the Mexican poetess proceeds to "translate" Mary in two ways, Bistué submits. First, she darkens her complexion (the corresponding section is written in a register of Spanish that "parodies the speech of African slaves") and later, she addresses the Holy Virgin in Nahuatl as Tonantzin, which is a way of

linking the Christian figure to the Aztec “sacred mother.” Bistué proposes to see these interventions “as a series of figurative self-translations” (p. 151). In doing so, she extrapolates from the only “actual self-translation” (p. 148-151) thus far attributed to Sor Juana, that is a bilingual epigram where she unwraps, first in Latin and then in Spanish, the theological topic of Mary’s co-redemption of Eva as inscribed in the palindrome *Eva/Ave*, which in turn echoes a line from the famous Medieval hymn, *Ave, Maris Stella*: “Mutans Evæ nomen” (see Leonetti 2012).

The rest of the book deals not with past but with contemporary issues, involving not “migratory” but “sedentary self-translators” (Grutman 2015: 11-12), in particular as they arise in Latin America or in Spain. Most striking is without a doubt what Julio-César Santoyo calls “the indigenous literary revival in Spanish America.” (p. 49) His article documents over fifty self-translators who are concurrently active in Spanish and one of Abya Yala’s numerous “native” languages: Guaraní, Quechua and Mapudungun in the South, Mexico’s “original languages” and the Mayan linguistic family in parts of Central America. Melisa Stocco and Eva Gentes take a closer look at self-translation among Mapuche and Mexican writers, respectively. Taken together, their three articles break entirely new ground by adding the hitherto barely explored native American “contact zones,” as Canadian critic Mary Louise Pratt calls “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths” (Pratt 1991: 34).

Stocco reminds us that nothing could be greater than the contrast between Mapuche culture, which goes back centuries, and Mapuche writing, which has only come to the fore in the last few decades. The reason lies in colonial and later State policies of systemic discrimination and displacement, which led to Mapudungun being marginalized and suppressed in Argentina and Chile. Hence her suggestion to consider self-translation as part of “post-interdiction bilingualism” (p. 107, 129), as a way of reclaiming—sometimes even recovering—what Liliana Ancalao calls “the silenced tongue” (*el idioma silenciado*). Telling in this respect is the fact that Ancalao and Elicura Chihuailaf (also studied here) speak from the position of “heritage learners” rather than native speakers of their ancestral language. They write in Spanish first and subsequently self-translate into Mapudungun, often having people with a firmer command of the language revise their versions. In terms of directionality, and of the prestige (rightly or wrongly) associated with each language, these “vertical self-translations” can be viewed as

flowing “downhill” (Grutman 2011). Like the water of a river, they flow from what students of diglossia traditionally call the H(igh)-language to the lower-lying L-language, from a language with considerable cultural clout and international influence, to minorized and marginalized Mapudungun.

Some signals of change can be detected in the Southern hemisphere since what is known as the “transition to democracy.” *Se ha despertado el ave de mi corazón* (Nepey ñi günün piuke) by Leonel Lienlaf, Chile’s first Mapuche book (Santoyo: p. 31, 57-58; Stocco: p. 103, 125), came out in 1989, at the tail-end of general Augusto Pinochet’s dictatorship. Around the same time, general Alfredo Stroessner lost his grip on power in Paraguay. Under Stroessner, Guaraní, the language of more than half of the country’s population and a national symbol of pride since the Chaco War (1932-1935), achieved “co-national” status in 1967. Full-blown official status, however, had to wait until the democratic Constitution of 1992, after which Guaraní was integrated in the national curriculum thanks to the *Plan Nacional de Educación Bilingüe de Mantenimiento*.

Not coincidentally, 1992 marked the 500th anniversary of Columbus’s transatlantic voyage leading to the “discovery” of the Americas. It would prove to be an opportunity for soul-searching and a landmark in a slow but steady process of linguistic revitalization. This is when “Abya Yala” first came up as an alternative for the Eurocentric label derived from Amerigo Vespucci’s name. By 1993, Mexico’s Indigenous writers’ association ELIAC was founded. That same year saw the creation of the *Nezahualcōyotl Award of Literature in Indigenous Languages* (*Premio Nezahualcōyotl de Literatura en Lenguas Indígenas*), which has been gaining traction and recognition ever since, and is seen as a reference by foreign publishers in English or French (Gentes: p. 82-83, 93-94). More than sixty of Mexico’s “original languages”—accounting for about fifteen percent of the country’s population—received some form of official recognition a decade later, in 2003, which is also when neighbouring Guatemala passed its *National Languages Act* (*Ley de Idiomas Nacionales*).

Still, there are stumbling blocks in terms of language engineering (standardization) and public visibility (what is known in Catalan sociolinguistics as “normalization”). Publishers have a hard time distributing books in native languages as bookstores refuse to stock them. This is where bilingual editions come into play. Imperfect as they are, they at least allow the “version created in their native language [to] become visible” (Gentes: p. 87). Nor are they aimed exclusively at Spanish speakers. The lack of bilingual literacy is also an issue for

Indigenous people who “cannot read texts in their mother tongue” (Gentes: p. 86).

Gentes examines Natalia Toledo Paz alongside fellow-Zapotec poet Irma Pineda Santiago and Maya-Yucatec poet Briceida Cuevas Cob. For them, as for most of the twenty-odd writers whose experiences she documents, “self-translation is the rule” (p. 87). State subsidies, literary awards and literacy classes foster writing in their mother tongues and create hitherto non-existing opportunities. At the same time, these writers feel they have no choice but to translate their work into Spanish if they are to be noticed at all. For unlike the Mapuche poets studied by Melissa Stocco, Mexico’s self-translators work into Spanish, “upwards” as it were. Santoyo identifies “supra-self-translation” (Grutman 2011) more generally as “a clear constant of indigenous literature in Spanish America” (Santoyo: p. 61, 34), considering that “all these bilingual texts, be they Mapuche, Mayan, Zapotec, Guaraní, or Quechua, [are] usually translated by their author into Spanish” (p. 72, 44). Attitudes among writers range from critical to rather resigned to favourable to the practice. Guatemala’s Humberto Ak’Abal, for instance, is on record as saying: “Mi poesía la pienso en mi lengua materna, el idioma K’iché; luego la traduzco al español para universalizarla” (Barrientos Tecún 2002: 56). He sees this “obligation” (Gentes: p. 88) as an “opportunity,” in other words. In doing so, he frames the issue through the admittedly Eurocentric lens provided by Enlightenment and Romantic discourse.

Metaphorically speaking, self-translation appears less often as a horizontal “bridge” between differences than as a slippery slope or a steep hill (depending on whether texts travel downhill or uphill). This is why on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, some of Spain’s self-translators are becoming increasingly critical of the “opportunities” afforded by supra-self-translation. Josep Ramis (2017: 95) recently spoke in this respect of “the failure of self-translation in Catalan literature.” In the early years of Franco’s dictatorship, publishing in Catalan was impossible (except in exile, as we saw with Bartra), and writers resorted to self-translation for “pragmatic” and even monetary reasons. This was supposed to be a temporary solution, but Franco’s regime lasted four decades, during which time all children were educated in Spanish (either exclusively or mostly). As a result, the language laws from the 1980s failed to turn the tide.

In fact, supra-self-translations are more common than ever in Spain. The essay co-signed by Garazi Arrula-Ruiz and Elizabete Manterola Agirrezabalaga documents the pressure put on Basque writers “to take care of the transfer of their [own] work into Spanish” (p. 271, 245). Some resist

the tidal wave by refusing to do so, even when they are bilingual and bicultural. Their attitude can be seen as a form of “language loyalty” (Weinreich) or as a way of protecting the autonomy of Basque literatures, as contended here by Joseba Sarrionandia (p. 278) and Ur Apalategi, for whom this “is an ethic-political matter” because “languages are immersed in power relations” (p. 279).

The terms of self-translational engagement in the Basque Country thus appear even harsher than in Catalonia, where self-translating also happens mostly into (and not from) Spanish, but where two-way traffic is not uncommon, in particular among today’s playwrights (Ramis: p. 354). But there are important precedents: Sebastià Juan Arbó appears here as a “paradigmatic example” of “bidirectional continuous self-translation” (p. 357) because he kept rewriting the same work across languages. For Arbó (like for Bartra, p. 352), self-translation became an integral part of the writing process, with the dizzying result that some titles are available in six, seven or even ten different editions.

The impetus for this dynamic can be provided by a so-called “allographic” translation (that is, done by somebody else). Ramis (p. 360-361) briefly recalls the example of Terenci Moix but it happens in Galician literature as well, as Xosé Manuel Dasilva shows here by disentangling the four versions of Xavier Alcalá’s novel, *Nos pagos de Huinca Loo*. Alcalá wrote the novel in Galician and had it translated by Antonio Santamarina before revisiting the Galician text and transferring it again, albeit it much later, into Spanish: G1982 > S1983 (allographic translation) > G1992 > S2016. Dasilva first compares these two text pairs, then the two Galician “originals,” and finally, the two Spanish translations. His analyses confirm the much-vaunted freedom of self-translators but not what is known in TS as the “retranslation hypothesis” (Berman 1990).

A few other essays also consider the ways “in which both language versions mutually enrich each other,” as Eva Gentes (p. 90) shows a propos of bilingual editions by Toledo Paz and Pineda Santiago. Paula Simón (p. 229-234) documents the stylistic changes made by Bartra in the various versions of *Xabola* and concludes that self-translation gave him the option to keep on correcting, prompted by “the modalities of another language” and propelled by “the passing of time” (in the words of his widow, Anna Murià, quoted p. 234).

On the whole, however, this volume is more about contexts than about texts, more about the politics involved in self-translating than about a potential poetics of self-translation. Which is not meant as a criticism. Quite to the contrary, this emphasis makes perfect sense in a book entitled, “Literary Self-Translation in Hispanophone Con-

texts,” which, in addition, is part of a series on “Translation History.” The prevailing perspective simply stems from the asymmetrical relationship that obtains whenever Spanish comes into contact with any of the languages discussed here. For the most part, they can be labelled “minority languages,” but that notion needs to be put in perspective. As we saw, writers in Catalan bend under the weight of Castilian but do not have to bend over backwards as much as their Basque compatriots, not to mention their herman@s writing in Abya Yala. When considered from the bird’s-eye view provided by the “world language system” (De Swaan 2001), the relative nature of minority statuses becomes even clearer. The most recent edition of Calvet’s “World languages barometer” (Calvet and Calvet 2017) lists Spanish in third place, behind English and French, but ahead of Catalan (in 23rd position) and even more so of Galician (50th) and Basque (52nd).

In all minority contexts, self-translations are a double-edged sword. They lend visibility but in doing so downplay the fact that the work was first created in a “minor” source-language, thereby reinforcing the dominant position of the “major” target-language. But there are important differences between “minorities.” Catalan, Galician and Basque are officially invisible in the European Union because their recognition within the Spanish State is on a regional instead of a federal (national) level—as opposed to Irish, which (with far fewer native speakers than any of them) has official status in the EU because it does so in Ireland. However, in terms of cultural funding, educational possibilities (including at the post-secondary level) and literacy policies more generally, the position of Spain’s minority languages is infinitely more comfortable than that of any of America’s original languages, only half a dozen of which even register on the Calvet dial. Quechua (in 143rd position, almost one hundred steps “lower” than Basque) is closely followed by Aymara (146) and Guaraní (147). Mapudungun (223), Nahuatl (253) and Mayan from the Yucatán peninsula (281) appear even farther removed from the English Sun of this Solar system (to use De Swaan’s original metaphor of the “galaxy of languages”) and are much less able to resist the formidable force of Spanish.

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Eleanor Rosch would probably say that dictionaries are like birds: just as some birds are more birdlike than others—think robins versus emus—some dictionaries are more dictionarylike than others. The general language dictionary might be the prototypical robin for English speakers or sparrow for French. The dictionary we have here is perhaps closer to a penguin, if we have been listening to Juliette Gréco¹: it swims rather than flies, being highly adapted to its environment and what it does, it does very well.

Most dictionaries have lots of words. This one only has twelve. But they are keywords. They are the words that designate the concept of homosexuality, starting from Biblical *sodomy* through to contemporary *queer*. In fact there are twelve *pairs*