

TRADUCCIÓN DE UNA CULTURA EMERGENTE: LA LITERATURA GALLEGA CONTEMPORÁNEA EN EL EXTERIOR

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Perhaps unwittingly, translation studies have contributed to the perpetuation of the center/periphery divide that has been challenged from within the discipline itself (see, for instance, Robinson's discussion of the project of provincializing the West). This is perhaps most evident when the question of European languages is brought to the table, particularly when the discussion is read from the Latin American context. Even—perhaps particularly—post- or de-colonial approaches to translation studies use the label to refer mostly to the languages that became vehicles for colonial domination, thus creating an immediate attitude of animosity. As a result, as Michael Cronin (2003) observed, “languages that were not involved in the colonial enterprise become synonymous with the very ‘lack of language’ attributed to the indigenous inhabitants of the New World” (p. 140). With this in mind, the reading of this work by Fernández Rodríguez et al. could lead to the establishment of a productive dialogue between Latin American translation scholars and other (marginalized) European cultures, more specifically that of Galicia. While the book is not addressed to, or in any way acknowledges Latin American (possible) audiences, the question of a desirable communication between cultures perceived as peripheral is indeed central to the book's argument.

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Traducción de una cultura emergente is the result of work by the BITRAGA Research Group from Universidad de Vigo in the autonomous community of Galicia, Spain. Their work has focused on the indexation, description and analysis of translations from Galician to other languages from 1980 to 2010. In order to present the conclusions of their study, the book is divided in ten chapters: the first three present the theoretical and methodological framework (chapters written by Luna Alonso and Fernández Rodríguez, respectively) and a historical contextualization (Montero Küpper), and the remaining seven chapters deal with specific issues of translation in the Galician context.

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As theoretical references, the authors have adopted the postulates of the Tel-Aviv school, most notably Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory and Gideon Toury's descriptive translation studies. In this context, the authors pay attention not only to a description of the translation process but also to elements such as the genres most commonly translated, the role of translators as cultural agents, and the conception of translation that underlies translational practice. Since in the case of the Galician system translation is seen as a primary activity (in Even-Zohar's terms), translators are expected to break norms in order to introduce innovating elements into the target culture. This process, however, is not exempt from power relations, and the works of authors such as Bassnett and Lefevere, and Gentzler and Tymoczko provide a framework for the discussion. They also draw from Henri Meschonnic's reflections on the articulation of language, ethics, and politics in the act of translation. At this point, they define one of their main goals: to determine the transformational power of translated literature, and the way in which it helps understand and shape the world.

With the so-called translator's turn in translation studies, particularly in translation historiography, the figure of the translator and the decisions they make have become the axis around which research and analysis revolve. Thus, this has obscured some other essential elements in the process. As an alternative, a sociological approach to translation, informed particularly by the works of Pierre Bourdieu, has brought attention to the question of how the translator interacts with other participants in the process and the norms that regulate their behavior. In this context, translation is presented as an activity belonging to the literary field that is regulated by market rules. In other words, translation responds to supply and demand pressures, so that profit becomes the goal, and projects that are not perceived as lucrative are

dismissed. This is a very real and pressing concern for minority cultures, which in the eyes of the market and cultural agents are not perceived as profitable. Another current within sociology that has been adapted to think translation is that presented by Bruno Latour in his actor-network theory. Within translation studies, the authors explain that H el ene Buzelin has adapted Latour's theory and pays particular attention to the role non-human agents play in the translation process. According to Buzelin, the study of translation should transcend the analysis of subjective elements associated with the translator, or objective elements imposed from the outside. She claims that translation should also be able to define how human, technological, and financial resources are articulated, and how they function when translation takes place.

In the third chapter, Montero K upper presents an overview of Galician culture and politics, focusing particularly on matters of literature, linguistic policy, and the publishing industry. The author laments the fact that the political relations between the Galician autonomous community and other cultures are mediated by "mainstream" Spanish culture, which leads to the erasure of cultural diversity in the Spanish State.¹ In her historical excursion through Galician history and culture, Montero K upper explains how Galician as a language diminished in literary importance after the region faced political decadence and Castilian supplanted the vernacular language. A *Rexurdimento* of Galician letters was experienced during the 19th century, championed by authors Rosal a de Castro, Manuel Curros Enr iquez, and Eduardo Pondal. As was the case with other minority languages, during the Franco era, Galician was heavily repressed. But after the fall of the regime, a new linguistic policy favored the use of the language in education, administration, and the media. To this day, however, the use of Galician has decreased among younger population, which has

¹ It is perhaps not a coincidence, although it is somehow paradoxical, that this book is written in Spanish. As the authors have observed, most Galicians prefer to read in that language. By using it, the authors have ensured a wider audience for their work (to be fair, that this review is written in English is also telling). The timely questioning of the hegemonic role Castilian/Spanish has in Spain is not undermined by this fact.

led to the closing of traditional media published in the vernacular. Additionally, the author presents an overview of the Galician publishing industry, highlighting the production of children's and youth literature. Most translations of Galician literature are done outside of Galicia by major Spanish publishing houses, and there is an increase of translations of Galician literary works into other European languages.

Chapter 4, by Galanes Santos, presents the BITRAGA catalogue, which was developed to offer a quantitative analysis of the translation of Galician literary works. Through the catalogue, it can be established that while it is true that a greater number of works are imported through translation, the percentage of works exported to (translated into) foreign cultures is far from negligible. It is apparent that Spanish is the language from and into which more works are translated, pointing to the peripheral position Galician occupies in respect to that language. However, it is noteworthy that the other official languages in Spain are also vehicles through which Galician literature is exported. While an account of the languages into which Galician works have been translated certainly illustrates the extent to which Galician literature is received abroad, it does not offer a complete image of the way in which these texts have been received, or if they are read at all in the receiving cultures. A more thorough model for the reception of translated literature should transcend the mere indexation of translations from a culture into another language. Perhaps an interesting addition to this type of catalogues, which would make a more rigorous analysis of reception possible, is a section on critical texts written about the translations in question. While these are harder to come by and categorize, they would certainly offer a more realistic picture of the reception of a translation in a particular context.

The question of the insertion of Galician literature into what has been called world literature is discussed in the following chapter. In this section, Montero Küpper reiterates how most of the flow of

literary works translated from Galician goes into Spanish (Castilian); the second most important audience for these works in Spain is Catalan. Abroad, anthologies are produced by translators and editors who want to offer an overview of Galician literature and culture in foreign contexts. Currently, most of the authors that are translated abroad correspond to those who enjoy a certain level of critical recognition and acclaim in the Spanish literary system. Additionally, an important number of translations into English of Galician literature correspond to publications sponsored by cultural institutions that are trying to encourage a greater dissemination of Galician literature in the rest of the world. At this point, the question of canonization is essential, particularly when concerns among Galician intellectuals emerge that question the fact that this canonization necessarily passes through the filter of Spanish. Thus, the author suggests that the internationalization of Galician literature should not come at the expense of the recognition of the singularity of their culture.

In chapters 6 and 7, Luna Alonso presents an overview of Galician children's and youth literature and the question of self-translation, respectively. First, she presents theoretical considerations about the translation of this genre and the place it occupies in the literary polysystem of any given culture. It is only logical that children and young adults are chosen as one of the main audiences for translated literature because reading literary works in their own language, at an early age, would contribute to a greater sense of identification with the culture in question. This is also profitable for publishing companies, as the educational system constantly requires mandatory reading in the schooling system. In the following chapter, the question of self-translation is explored. In the context of diglossic cultures, it is tempting for authors to translate their own works. As they may want to "preserve" the integrity of the original text, authors reveal a suspicious attitude towards translation. Here, the question of asymmetrical power relations between languages plays a key

role; author-translators tend to blur or dispense with cultural specificities in order to make their work more acceptable or familiar to the readers of the dominant language and culture. Another important section in this chapter explores the main names in the field of translation of Galician literature. Luna Alonso points out that most translation projects and efforts depend on the good will of scholars working in various institutions abroad who take it as their own mission to get foreign audiences, mostly in academic contexts, acquainted with some of the most important Galician authors.

A woman is one of the founding figures of Galician literature. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the question of women's writing is central to the discussion of this matter. In chapter 8, Fernández Rodríguez highlights the influence of Rosalía de Castro on both the feminist and identitarian movements in Galicia. Another segment of this chapter explores Galician women writers who are mostly poets and whose works have been translated into other languages. Once again, personal interest is one of the key motivators of the translation projects. In some cases, particularly that of translator Manuela Palacios, a dialogue is established in which translation serves as a way to tease out the parallels and common concerns of translational gender issues, particularly those shared by Galicia and Ireland.

The question of empathy developed at the end of this chapter is central to Chapter 9. Here, Galanes Santos explores the relations between peripheral cultures within the Spanish State and abroad. According to the data obtained from the BITRAGA catalogue, relations between peripheral literatures within the same polysystems are more frequent than literatures within different polysystems. This explains to some extent why languages such as Catalan and Basque are the target languages for many Galician texts. However, it is puzzling that the opposite is not true; according to their catalogue, these languages are not near the most common source languages for Galician

translation, with English and French surpassing them. Be that as it may, translations between peripheral cultures are explained in this context in terms of ideological and cultural empathy. The function of translation here is two-fold; it increases the symbolic value of a given literary system and strengthens a particular political project. By way of illustration, the author presents the case of the translation of the novel *Made in Galicia* into Turkish and Kurdish. The novel resonated with the target audience not only in terms of the theme but also in terms of the ideology underlying it as both contexts had experienced political repression of linguistic and cultural minorities and the novel invited the majority culture to revise its prejudices against diglossia.

The final chapter offers both a summary of the main points developed throughout the book and a timely reflection on the dangers globalization poses to emerging cultures. This chapter also presents translation as a means to resist globalization and its homogenizing and reductive forces. With this in mind, the efforts to have a marginal literature recognized as part of a world literature canon already imply a political position. By inserting a work that resists immediate consumption and assimilation to the values of the dominant cultures, the literary canon and preconceived notions of the readers of such canon are challenged. This movement may seem at first to oppose most common reading practices, which obey a consumerist urge to appropriate texts that correspond to the image of the Other extant in the dominant culture. As Douglas Robinson (1997) explains:

A hegemonic culture will only translate those works by authors in a dominated culture that fit the former's preconceived notions of the latter; authors in a dominated culture who dream of reaching a large audience will tend to write for translation into a hegemonic language, and this will require some degree of compliance with stereotypes (p. 32).

A double movement takes place among peripheral writers when seeing themselves and their practice; if they want to be published and read in the "First

World” (and one must bear in mind that World Literature IS First World Literature), they have to conform to a certain stereotype that readers (publishers, critics, public in general) hold for them regarding what those cultures should be. We can draw here a parallel to Benedict Anderson’s (1998) idea of creation of seriality—in this case the Other as a series: through the introduction of these works the idea of a “natural universality” (p. 120) in which difference can be subsumed is transmitted to the dominant public; such a level of naturalness is reinforced by the development of a standardized vocabulary that creates categories in which different, diverse elements from different parts of the world are juxtaposed. Gayatri C. Spivak (2000) states the problem in the following

terms: “all the literature of the Third World gets translated into a sort of with-it translatese, so that the literature by a woman in Palestine begins to resemble, in the feel of its prose, something by a man in Taiwan” (p. 372). This situation creates a vicious circle, where Third World writers—being interpellated as storytellers and narrators of a magical world—can only produce what they are expected to produce and in a certain way, write to be translated and read in the hegemonic culture. The final three chapters of *Traducción de una cultura emergente* offer achievable alternatives to this perverse, self-replicating system. Hopefully, an effective “South-South” dialogue will be established, in which translation and translators will have a lot to contribute.

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