

SIMON, SHERRY. *Cities in Translation. Intersections of Language and Memory*. London: Routledge, 2012, \$39.95 paperback (ISBN 978-0-415-47152-7)/ \$145.00 hardback (ISBN 978-0-415-447151-0)

Sherry Simon's book, one of the latest additions to the Routledge series *New Perspectives in Translation Studies*, starts off at Hermes Street in Nicosia, which stands both as a border and a contact zone. The author uses this image in the Preface to present her object of study, that of "dual cities" divided by a linguistic fault line which separates "the community against itself" (xvii) leaving an imprint on the urban landscape.

Simon's first chapter, "Introduction: Turning up the Volume of Translation in the City", presents the focus of the author's research: to find areas of negotiation between language communities within the cities and to discuss the role of translators as they are required to create an in-between language or identity in order to act as mediators in that negotiation. Likewise, she presents the scope of her study, the evolution of translational culture in four different cities over different time periods, namely Calcutta (1800-1880), Trieste (1850-1918), Barcelona (1975-2000) and Montreal (1940-2000).

"Nineteenth-Century Calcutta: Renaissance City" goes back in time to Bengali Renaissance in a Calcutta effectively divided into a White Town, a Black Town and some grey areas. This separation shaped the cultural perception of translation, inasmuch as translations into English would be seen as instances of colonial subjugation or Orientalism whereas translations into Bengali would become tools of cultural nationalism through the appropriation of texts of authority. What Simon finds in her analysis of the work of several translators is a circular evolution, starting with the innovative Bengali adaptation of European drama by Herasim S. Lebedeff, going past the efforts to create a sufficient body of vernacular literature adapted to the Bengali experience, and closing the circle with the controversy of the adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore's work to the Western taste.

The third chapter, "Habsburg Trieste: Anxiety at the Border", first provides an introduction to the history of this Italian city, politically subjected to Vienna for several centuries. Simon accounts for Trieste's current status as a polyglot city and discusses the importance of several literary figures (including the prolific translators Alberto Spaini and Ervino Pocar), as well as the active role of Triestine women as literary and cultural mediators. After allowing for a brief digression into Prague, a city aptly likened to Trieste, Simon embarks on an extensive discussion of Italo Svevo's role as a mediator between German and Italian culture. In this case, what we find in terms of cultural negotiation is a taste for German culture which permeates Svevo's writing, as well as that of other Triestine authors also interested in the different German philosophical and psychological schools. The fact that the rise of Fascism in Italy had a sundering effect on this relation, with translation becoming an expression of distance rather than closeness, will also allow Simon to reflect on the interaction with the Slovene language and culture. The long-lasting neglect of the neighbouring Slovene literature becomes evident throughout the discussion of the disregard for Boris Pahor's work.

"Barcelona: The Cracked Mirror of Self-Translation" explores the frictions between Castilian and Catalan languages in the post-Franco era. Simon discusses here the historic, linguistic and political issues which have configured present-day

Barcelona. The case of Catalan writers allows the author to introduce other expressions of cultural negotiation, with some authors opting exclusively for one of the available languages and obviating the other's presence while others cope with the situation through the creation of double identities and/or self-translation. The symbolic dimension of Barcelona's urban planning is discussed, with great attention being paid to the creation of a "third space" where other languages come into play in the numerous passages of the city and the Raval area, which have already become a further point of friction but also of encounter.

The fifth chapter, "Montreal's Third Space", shows this city as a space shared by two communities: the Francophone and the English-speaking, which keep fighting (sometimes playfully) for symbolic dominance in spite of the fact that French has already been legally established as the standard language. Simon explores the territories and the impact on cultural negotiation of three different modernist movements which appeared separately during the 1940s: the Francophone "Automatistes", the Yiddish "Salonnières" and the English-language Modernist movement led by the poet Frank Scott. Simon discusses how, except for cases such as the ones of bilingual writer Mavis Gallant or visual artist Marian Scott, translation between the Francophone and the English-speaking groups is rare. As for the Yiddish community, the author emphasizes their active interest in translating both into and from Yiddish, for different reasons. She also notices a new phenomenon, that of transmigration, as new generations move between different communities and create a middle ground where divisions become blurred. To illustrate this point, she reflects on how links to the three traditions may be found in the work of Leonard Cohen.

The conclusion to Simon's study, "Language Landscapes and Memory", takes up the image of Hermes again, this time as the agent that provoked the confusion of languages. She briefly discusses other cases of dual cities, such as Istanbul or Antwerp, before closing her discussion by reflecting on the fact that, although in Trieste and Calcutta linguistic tension has been resolved and in Barcelona and Montreal a similar shift is tensely expected, dual cities face new challenges as third spaces multiply the places of contact between languages, identities and cultures.

Simon's work is to be praised for the profuse amount of illustration she offers to her readers, not only through her sharp text analysis but also through the many fascinating pictures, maps and photographs which are included in the book. Her insights on the reciprocally adapting strategies found in Calcutta, on German culture permeating Triestine writing, on the instances of self-translation in Barcelona or on the polite distance between the three Montreal communities, effectively succeed in demonstrating the social relevance of translation in dual communities. Lastly, thanks to the many reflections on the role of urban planning and architecture in the processes of cultural negotiation, Simon's work becomes also a valuable contribution to urban theory and place studies. Furthermore, *Cities in Translation. Intersections of Language and Memory* appropriately illustrates the convergences and encounters between disciplines, practices and discourses which ultimately characterize the field of Translation Studies.

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