

FOLKART, Barbara (2007): *Second Finding. A Poetics of Translation*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 562 pages

Sherry Simon

Volume 54, Number 4, décembre 2009

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/038911ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/038911ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal

ISSN

0026-0452 (print)

1492-1421 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Simon, S. (2009). Review of [FOLKART, Barbara (2007): *Second Finding. A Poetics of Translation*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 562 pages]. *Meta*, 54(4), 887–888. <https://doi.org/10.7202/038911ar>

plupart le fruit des observations des praticiens et des discussions théoriques. Elles ne sont pas le fruit de recherches de type *scientifique*. Cette direction vers laquelle pointe V. Dam est au diapason avec les efforts pour renforcer le volet de la recherche dans les programmes de doctorat en traductologie. Le forum en ligne sur les programmes de doctorats organisé par Anthony Pym (accessible sur *YouTube*), ainsi que les tables rondes organisées dans le cadre du XXII^e congrès de l'ACT réalisé en mai dernier à Ottawa confirment que la consolidation de la traductologie au sein de l'université, voire de la société, exige cette nouvelle direction. Évidemment, comme le disait Jean-René Ladmiral dans le même congrès, il ne faut pas oublier que la traductologie est une science de l'homme, une science humaine, et il serait dommage de la confondre avec une science exacte.

ÁLVARO ECHEVERRI

Université de Montréal, Montréal, Canada

RÉFÉRENCE

TIKKONEN-CONDIT, Sonja (2004): Unique Items – Over – or Under-represented in Translated Language? In: Anna MAURANEN et Pekka PUJAMÄKI, dir. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 177-184.

FOLKART, Barbara (2007): *Second Finding. A Poetics of Translation*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 562 pages.

Published in 1991, Barbara Folkart's *Le conflit des énonciations. Traduction et discours rapporté* rapidly became a classic of translation theory. It remains to date the most rigorous and complete demonstration of the presence of the translating subject in the translated text. *Second Finding* concentrates this time exclusively on the translation of poetry. Though different in tone and style, this second book is, like the first, a strong and necessary intervention in translation studies.

Folkart provides from the start two affirmations that serve as the basis for her commentaries and critiques throughout the book. First: contemporary theories are unequal to the task of dealing with the translation of poetry because proponents of foreignization neglect the fact that poems are inherently foreign even to the language out of which they have been crafted. And second: what is needed is not more readerly perspectives on poetry in translation but analysis which gives insight into the business of *making*. In brief, the translation of poetry is a process of appropriation by poets who "write out of their own passionate and embodied understanding of the originals, in

order to re-embody, in a new artistic medium, the deepest truth-values of these originals" (p. xiii), or, "[t]he vocation of the poem is to break out of the already-said, to force its way through the wall of language and to put us into more or less unmediated contact with fragments of world" (p. 2). The rest of the 500-some pages of this book involve restatements, demonstrations and arguments that support the idea that the translation of poetry cannot fulfill any particular ideological agenda, but has to do with the emotional responses of a poet who is also a perceptive reader.

The clarity of Folkart's arguments is a mark of the maturity of this book. This a rich and provocative study, the result of much reflection. Like Antoine Berman, who in his study of John Donne felt the need to *demonstrate* through careful critical reading the principles that he had been defending, Barbara Folkart here offers in detail the *working out* of the principles that she has formulated through her own reflection and practice. The book flies in the face of many orthodoxies – having little truck with many of the well-rehearsed truths of contemporary translation theory. Folkart admits at the start that the book has a "cantankerous" side, generated by irritation at the indignities inflicted on poetry in the name of theory. However, most of the book consists of engagement with poetic works, with close readings and proposed translations. Stunning formulations abound. The readings are a result of an intense attention to words, of a passion for poetry. "Writing is driven by intuition – the intuition of a competent poet being a more complex, more complete, more highly organized and finely tuned grasp of what makes a poem than anything a theorist can aspire to formalize" (p. 13).

For instance, it is a treat to read the poems of Charles d'Orléans, in various translations, including those of Folkart herself. It is easy to agree with Folkart that one of Richard Wilbur's translations of d'Orléans imparts a veneer of *oldness* which leads to "grossly inauthentic results": "arch diction, end-stopped tetrameter and thin, uncommitted imagery that Wilbur would never dream of using in a poem of his own." The demonstration is conclusive, and Folkart shows that Wilbur has adopted an unwittingly patronizing stance towards the medieval poem, a condescending attitude she calls "translating down." It is more a comment on the original than a poem "forcing us in the raw and radical experience of the poem" (p. 39).

The core of the book is Chapter 6 – 140 pages devoted to the translation of St-John Perse, "The Poetically Viable Translation." Folkart excels here in describing the strengths of the poetry and the translation, transfixed as she is by the beauty of both St-John Perse's work and that of T.S. Eliot.

This is an extremely illuminating chapter on the way translation can be used to “free up the mind,” to be exposed to a new image field. The translation, says Folkart, shows Eliot becoming Eliot. Here the intuitive nature of the contact with the poetry, the emotional associations are built into a compelling dialogue with the poem and with Eliot’s translation.

The multi-layered work of appropriation, the process of insinuating yourself into a text that at times refuses itself, involves a number of successive, concurrent and recurrent stages: deciphering, visualizing, entering into the world behind the words, giving voice to it with a music of your own making – and pleasuring in it, as intensely as possible (p. 232).

The combined frustration and exhilaration of the translator are here evident – as she struggles to understand both “what was in it for Eliot” and what the exercise might mean for herself. As inconclusive as this dialogue might be, it is also inspiring in the broad considerations it brings into play, in the keenness of observation demanded by the task. Other chapters are critiques of theorists such as Venuti. For Folkart, foreignization cannot be a byword for the translator of poetry. Her message: there is no excuse for interrupting the esthetic program of the text.

Full of enlightening comments, insights, and opinions, structured around themes that have immense resonance (visibility, intertextuality), this book is very readable, often inspiring. There are, however, unfortunate repetitions. Identical comments on Auden’s poem *the Three Companions* turn up barely 50 pages apart. Folkart’s translation of Charles d’Orléans is cited twice. Though treated under two different rubrics, the repetition nevertheless seems unnecessary.

The result of many years of independent reflection on poetry and translation, *Second Finding* is a coherent and eloquent statement – presenting a position which must now be addressed by theorists of poetry in translation. Deliberately iconoclastic, somewhat vitalist in its affirmation of intuition and personal taste, drawing on a vast range of references and erudition (the list of acknowledgments includes over sixty poets), based on a very direct and personal relationship to the translated texts, *Second Finding* is the work of a poet and a thinker. After *Le conflit des énonciations*, which demonstrated in rigorous scholarly terms the role of the translating subject, *Second Finding* takes a different route to discuss another form of translating subjectivity. It is tempting to see each book as an expression of the constraints and possibilities of its language, or perhaps of stages in the career of a productive writing life – the tight argumentation

of the French, the more relaxed and personal tone in English. Taken together, the two books make a lasting contribution to translation studies.

SHERRY SIMON
Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

CHIARO, Delia, HEISS, Christine, and BUCARIA, Chiara, eds. (2008): *Between Text and Image: Updating Research in Screen Translation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 292 pages.

DÍAZ CINTAS, Jorge, ed. (2008): *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 263 pages.

“Audiovisual translation comes of age,” proclaims Jorge Díaz Cintas in his introduction to *Between Text and Image: Updating Research in Screen Translation*, citing the ubiquity of the screen in modern society and the technological developments that have made audiovisual products pervasive in the past decade. The need for audiovisual translation (AVT) to bring these products to wider audiences has grown accordingly; this has occasioned a corresponding surge of interest in research on AVT as a subdiscipline of translation studies, one that has its own concerns and methodologies. Evidence of the current enthusiasm for AVT can be found in the decision by John Benjamins to publish two edited collections of essays on this field in 2008: the previously mentioned *Between Text and Image*, which grew out of a conference on recent research in screen translation held in Forlì, Italy; and *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation*, a volume edited by Jorge Díaz Cintas that focuses on translator training for audiovisual material.

The first publication, edited by Delia Chiaro, Christine Heiss and Chiara Bucaria, highlights the pioneering role of the University of Bologna in bringing together research on film and on translation starting as early as 1993. The Department of Interdisciplinary Studies in Translation, Languages and Cultures recently developed Forlìx 1, a multimedia corpus that combines electronic versions of films with transcripts of the dialogue and subtitles to allow researchers to extract data on audiovisual translation patterns and strategies. As of June 2006, it contained 30 feature-length fiction films, including original productions in Italian, German, and French; the transcriptions amount to about 300,000 words, making it comparable in size to other Italian spoken corpora. Two articles on Forlìx 1 are included in the first section of *Between Text and Image*, along with a paper describing INTCA, a prototype for a Catalan-English elec-