Document généré le 16 avr. 2024 06:25

Meta
Journal des traducteurs
Translators' Journal

META

ROBINSON, Douglas (1991) : The Translator's Turn, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 318 p.

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Volume 38, numéro 2, juin 1993

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/004184ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.7202/004184ar

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Éditeur(s)

Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal

ISSN

0026-0452 (imprimé)
1492-1421 (numérique)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Slote, D. (1993). Compte rendu de [ROBINSON, Douglas (1991) : The Translator's Turn, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 318 p.] *Meta*, *38*(2), 355–356. https://doi.org/10.7202/004184ar

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■ ROBINSON, Douglas (1991): *The Translator's Turn*, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 318 p.

This remarkable book was like a breath of fresh air to this reviewer who, I'm afraid, is a little tired of the endless, tedious debate over translation theory and practice.

Robinson, however, takes bold issue with the very core of the polemics involved here, brushing aside the whole Occidental view of translation which we owe to Saint Augustine, to claim that we have built the edifice of the mind and its rationality into a false structure. False because it excludes the all-important aspect of what Robinson calls the somatics of translation, *i.e.* the intuitive, body-feeling we have for language but which the theorists mistrust or refuse to reckon with for "scientific" reasons.

Robinson dismisses the Nida, Taber, Chomsky system (which of course is a summary of Western theory of translation from Cicero and Horace through Augustine and Jerome and Luther to the present), and offers an alternative "paradigm" for the study of translation: one that is not mentalist but "explicitly and complexly physicalist." He argues that we are all taught to look upon reason as mind, akin to spirit and thus to God, and therefore superior to emotion, which is body, akin to the flesh and its temptations and degradations and thus to Satan. Reason is the immortal in us, while emotion is part of our mortality. Robinson is concerned with the ways in which the body signals to us what we know and how we should act upon it; we have a certain strong "feeling" about a situation or a person. We are guided, he thinks, much more powerfully than our mentalist theories will let us recognize by autonomic responses called "intuitions" or "gut reactions."

What Robinson refers to as "the neurology of translation" stems from these observations, namely that a model of translation theory should utilize more complexly "human realities" than the mentalist/cybernetic one favored by many recent translation theorists. His point is well taken, in the sense that theorists often, in their attempts to abstract out of practice a systematic set of principles, rules, and procedures for translators to follow, inevitably alienate themselves from practice, which explains the translators' charge that theorists do not know what they are talking about. Unfortunately, on the other side of the coin, intuitive certainty in a translator can easily crack under the onslaught of a carefully reasoned theoretical argument, and translators often end up apologizing for their work: it was intuitively right but it did not obey the rules. And Robinson sums up his position by stating that intuitively — and not just for translators but for all language users — sense is not cognition but sensation.

The author is fair and doesn't load the dice completely in favour of his argument: the translator's intuitive genius must not be "hogtied" by theory, but conversely the theorist's analytic systematization must not be muddled by too much attention to practical detail. The solution to this dualism is an integration of opposites: feeling and thought, intuition and systematization.

The book is divided into two parts; the first part lays the foundation for the discussion of various translational theories and ideologies to be discussed in the second part where Robinson explores how translators actually "turn" their texts in a series of translation models (tropes and versions) that, as he says, "begin to hint at the astonishing complexity and variety of the translational field."

In conclusion: a fascinating book, intelligent and original, with solid models offered for examination in the second part of the book. The variety of creative "turns" the translator actually makes with regard to both the source text and the target text is intended by the author to suggest that, in translation theory, it is now the translator's turn. Theorists (*i.e.* ideally translators themselves) should offer tools not rules, and not tools derived from Christian theology and the dogmatic demands placed on Bible translating, but from what translators actually do when they translate.

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