

TTR

Traduction, terminologie, rédaction



Jacques Fontanille, Marco Sonzogni and Rovena Troqe, eds.
Special Issue: “Traduire : signes, textes, pratiques/Translating:
Signs, Texts, Practices.” *Signata: Annales des
sémiotiques/Annals of Semiotics*, 7, 462 p.

Ryan Fraser

Volume 31, Number 2, 2e semestre 2018

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1065577ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1065577ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Association canadienne de traductologie

ISSN

0835-8443 (print)

1708-2188 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Fraser, R. (2018). Review of [Jacques Fontanille, Marco Sonzogni and Rovena Troqe, eds. Special Issue: “Traduire : signes, textes, pratiques/Translating: Signs, Texts, Practices.” *Signata: Annales des sémiotiques/Annals of Semiotics*, 7, 462 p.] *TTR*, 31(2), 230–233. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1065577ar>

Tous droits réservés © Ryan Fraser, 2019

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

Érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

Jacques Fontanille, Marco Sonzogni and Rovena Troqe, eds. **Special Issue: “Traduire : signes, textes, pratiques/Translating: Signs, Texts, Practices.”** *Signata: Annales des sémiotiques/Annals of Semiotics*, 7, 462 p.

This volume of *Signata* makes an excellent companion piece to Roman Jakobson’s “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” (1959). The editors, while never really addressing Jakobson or the essay directly, end up paralleling his arguments very closely. Like Jakobson, they leverage the philosophy of C.S. Peirce toward the purpose of re-defining translation as a more compelling semiotic phenomenon than it is typically made out to be. Like Jakobson, again, they decline translation into the categories of intra-linguistic, inter-linguistic, and inter-semiotic transfers. Indeed, the contributions collected here are for the most part grouped into these same categories, comprising three of four major sections: 1. The concept “translation” expanded (“Semiotranslational perspectives”); 2. Accounts and challenges of intra- and inter-linguistic translation (“Transpositions between verbal semiotics”); and 3. Accounts and challenges of inter-semiotic translation (“Transpositions between verbal and non-verbal semiotics”).

The problem with “On Linguistic Aspects,” for all its vision, has always been its brevity. This collection, intentionally or not, adds much-needed depth to its arguments. Indeed, if one were to offer a seminar on Jakobson and his contribution to translation studies, one could append “On Linguistic Aspects” to this volume, and the result would be rewarding. I will give my sense of the stronger contributions, first, then end on a note of disappointment regarding the “memorium” for Umberto Eco, announced as the fourth major section of the collection.

Simply remembering the major arguments of “On Linguistic Aspects,” and the order in which they occur, gives us the best sense of this volume’s coherence: 1. Jakobson begins by rejecting the idea that we interpret signs in reference to the world, and proposes instead that we interpret them by “translating” them into other more developed signs. With this, translation is reconceived, in an echo of Peircian thinking, as an immanent hermeneutic process. 2. He then proposes and explains his three categories: “re-wording,” “translation proper,” and “translation between verbal and non-verbal sign systems.” 3. Finally, he argues against untranslatability: interpreting signs via a

development through other signs will always bridge the disjunctives between languages, but with concomitant transformations that are part of the process, not proof of its impossibility.

The first major section of the volume is entitled “semiotranslational perspectives,” and its contributions go straight to Peircian precepts. Translation is Peirce’s “interpretant” in action, the primary driver of the signifying chain reaction that he termed “semiosis” (Peirce, 1992-1998). Susan Petrilli and Dinda Gorlée see translation in all intelligent design. Their vision has a limitlessness to it, and at times a ring of the Dionysian (Petrilli’s title is “Translation Everywhere”). This is inspiring, but I confess to having been left wanting an Apollonian counter-distinction or two, to help me see translation as a *mode of signification* or interpretation, rather than as simply identical with these things. I find that much in this expansionist view—and I am siding with the unpopular position of Umberto Eco here (Eco, 2001, pp. 67-94)—has to do with a kind of taxonomic levelling whereby the hyponym (“translation”) and the hypernym (“interpretation,” “signification”) are made to collapse into identity, producing “ecstatic” descriptions that in the end are every bit as unproductive as the old “static” ones of the translator as a type of “copyist” or faithful reproducer of others’ texts.

The second section is organized thematically under a confluence of Jakobson’s first two proposed translation categories (re-wording and inter-lingual translation), and is called “transpositions between verbal semiotics.” Standouts here are Alessandra Chiappori’s “Raymond Queneau : Exercices de traduction,” Federica Massia’s “The Literary Prestige of the Translated Text: Collodi’s Re-writing of Perrault’s Contes,” and Yves Gambier’s “Traduction et texte : vers un double nouveau paradigme.” These three are models of an evolution of perspectives in translation studies from comparative stylistic analysis (Chiappori), to the type of manipulation-oriented analysis introduced by the Cultural Turn (Massia), and finally to the more recent questioning of the concept “text” (Gambier) in the technological age, which has led to multimodal analysis.

Appropriately, Gambier’s contribution comes at the threshold of the third major section of the collection, called “transpositions between verbal and non-verbal semiotics.” Here is Jakobson’s third proposed translation category. One contribution stands out as a welcome update on the state of research: “Intersemiotic Translation as Resemiotisation: A Multimodal Perspective” (Kay L. O’Halloran,

Sabine Tan, and Peter Wignell). Three others are true originals. We are used to seeing “intersemiotic translation” encompass media like news, theatre, cinema, video games, and the web; and there are indeed good contributions focussed on these things. But then comes the unexpected: translation between verbal sign systems and the sartorial language of cosplay (Emerald L. King); between poetry and mathematics (Loveday Kempthorne and Peter Donelan); and, most strikingly, between samples of semiotic protoplasm—signs degraded (à la Ernst Jandl, but beyond) into low-resolution “Blurr and Fuzz” (Richard Shiff).

The fourth and final section of the collection—announced as a major section on par with the others—is “In Memorium: Umberto Eco.” It turns out to consist only of a single translator’s commentary (Richard Dixon). This is a solid piece, but it stands alone, and represents by itself too little in way of a memorium, not only given Eco’s stature, but also given his well-known opposition to Jakobson. The Goggio lectures, and their formalization in *Experiences in Translation* (2001) and *Mouse or Rat? Translation as Negotiation* (2003), contain a strong scientific push against Jakobson’s expansionist views. Dixon should have had some company here at the end. A representation of Eco’s views on translation would have had a tempering effect on the limitlessness of this collection’s overall orientation, offering a space where more pragmatic points of view might be integrated. Eco’s interface with translation produced more than anecdotal reminiscences over the translations of his novels. They produced good scholarship. Something more substantial, and more scientific, should have been on offer, or nothing at all.

The semiotic perspective in *Translating: Signs, Texts, Practices* is decidedly a Jakobsonian one giving the concept “translation” the widest possible scope. The volume’s strength lies in the spirit of inclusivity that such a perspective extends toward all phenomena interpretable as translation. Its weakness lies in its reticence to extend the same spirit toward more pragmatic epistemological orientations. On balance, this is a fine collection, with strong contributions. The one thing that would have made it exceptional would have been the complement of Eco’s counterpoint to the perspective that informs it so predominantly.

References

Eco, Umberto (2001). *Experiences in Translation*. Toronto/London, University of Toronto Press.

- Eco, Umberto (2003). *Mouse or Rat? Translation as Negotiation*. London, Phoenix.
- Jakobson, Roman (1959). "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation." In A. Fang, and R. A. Brower, ed. *On Translation*, 23. Boston, Harvard University Press, p. 233-239.
- Peirce, Charles Sanders (1992-1998). *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings*, 2 vols. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

RYAN FRASER
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer, eds. *Border Crossings. Translation Studies and other disciplines*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 2016, xv, 380 p.

Border Crossings. Translation Studies and other disciplines represents a significant first step in an ambitious plan to study the interdisciplinary relations between translation studies (TS) and other disciplines. The initiators of this project and editors of the book are two renowned translation scholars, Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer. Starting with a list of more than fifty disciplines and sub-disciplines, the editors end up with sixteen contributions. Contributors and disciplines were selected on an *ad hoc* basis, i.e. partly based on the editor's own readings and partly on suggestions made from TS colleagues. In that sense *Border Crossings* does not offer a systematic study of the interdisciplinary ties between TS and other disciplines. That study is yet to come.

After a brief biographical presentation of the contributors, the book opens with a short historical outline of how TS evolved from a sub-discipline into a poly-discipline. Then follows a preliminary introduction into interdisciplinarity studies (IDS). IDS represents an emerging discipline that studies the compartmentalization of (academic) knowledge in terms of disciplines and other formats (Frodeman, 2017). To study interdisciplinarity presupposes agreeing on a working definition of the term "discipline." For example, the editors suggest defining the word as "a set of theoretical claims and assumptions and operational norms, practical rules which allow the exchange of experience and knowledge between the members of that discipline" (p. 7). Once disciplines are recognized as entities, one may