

**Pym, Anthony, Shlesinger, Miriam & Zuzana Jettmarová (eds) (2006). *Sociocultural Aspects of Translating and Interpreting*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins, pp. viii, 255. 105 € ISBN 9027216754**

This edited volume contains a selection of papers presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Translation and Interpreting organised by the Institute of Translation Studies, Charles University, Prague, 11–13 September 2003 under the title “Translation Targets”. The focus is on the role played by translators and interpreters as social agents in a variety of settings, e.g. literary translation, asylum hearings or sign language interpreting. The book starts with a thorough introduction written by one of the editors, Anthony Pym. It then contains seventeen contributions from scholars from North America, Europe and India, and it is divided into eight sections: (1) Agents behind translation, (2) Social histories, (3) Perceived roles and values, (4) Interaction of inner and outer contexts, (5) Power relations disclosed, (6) Power distribution and cooperation, (7) Constructing systems, and (8) The view from Interpreting Studies.

**Section 1** contains three papers. *Stella Linn* analyses the translation flows from Dutch into Spanish in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She is able to identify social, commercial and individual factors that condition these translation activities. *Pekka Kujamäki’s* paper discusses how ideological and aesthetic norms affected the way Finnish literature was translated into German in the 1920s and 1930s. *Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth’s* paper is a very interesting analysis of the role played by censorship in the translation of children’s and youth literature in the former East Germany. **Section 2** looks at the translation of Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* in Portugal and Romania. *Maria Goreti Monteiro* suggests in her contribution that omissions in the first Portuguese version can be explained by the translator’s self-censorship due to his previous conflict with the Inquisition. *Rodica Dimitriu* takes a look at the numerous translations, adaptations and imitations of *Robinson Crusoe* in Romania and analyses the possible social reasons behind them. In **Section 3** *Gabriel Louis Moyal* gives an interesting insight into cultural and ideological factors influencing translation in England and France in 1815-1848, whereas *Rita Kothari’s* contribution shows that translation not only unifies cultures, as is commonly thought, but that it can also be used to create separate cultural identities. **Section 4** moves on to literary translation in Canada. *Agnès Whitfield’s* paper sketches the history of the reception and translation of the Canadian novel *Two Solitudes/Deux Solitudes* by Hugh MacLennan. *Daniel Gagnon’s* contribution raises several important issues dealing with the practice of bilingual translating/writing, expatriate writing, and post-modern and post-colonial practices of the multilingual text. In **Section 5** *Michaela Wolf’s* contribution highlights the increasing role played by feminist translation in German-language countries. Empirical data are

discussed against the background of the theory of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. The role of translators as active agents in global communication is the focus of *Ieva Zauberga's* contribution on the translation of proper names.

**Section 6** moves from translation to interpreting. *Sonja Pöllabauer's* article deals with the role played by interpreters in asylum hearings. The author analyses empirical data in the light of some of the cornerstones of the concept of '*translation culture*', *Translationskultur*, introduced by Erich Prunč into Translation Studies (i.e. co-operativity, loyalty and transparency). *Guillermo R. Navarro Montesdeoca* describes his experience as an interpreter in an immigration detention centre in Spain, focusing on the power relations that mark the communicative process in this context, whereas *Mette Rudvin's* paper explores how identities are built and negotiated in medical interpreting. **Section 7** deals with interpreting in Belgium and Austria. *Katrien Lannoy* and *Jan Van Gucht's* paper presents data from a study on the interpreting and translation services provided to social welfare institutions in Flanders, while *Nadja Grbić* investigates the practice of sign language interpreting in Styria, Austria, focusing on the social system in which interpreters for the deaf interact. Finally, **Section 8** contains a paper by *Franz Pöchhacker* in which the author reflects on the state of the art in Interpreting Studies and highlights the growing interest of researchers in the social contexts in which interpreters work.

The book is a very valuable contribution to the sociology of translators and interpreters. It has the particular merit of addressing both written translation and interpreting. It demonstrates convincingly how sociocultural approaches may allow us to better understand and to explain a wide range of translational phenomena. Last, but by no means least, I would like to warmly recommend the reader to take a close look at Anthony Pym's introduction. Not only does it raise many important questions (e.g. on the relationship between the social and the cultural), but it also offers plenty of interesting suggestions for future research.

Alexander Künzli, Department of French, Italian and Classical Languages,  
Stockholm University.

[alexander.kunzli@fraitu.su.se](mailto:alexander.kunzli@fraitu.su.se)