
JONES, Francis R. *Poetry Translating as Expert Action: Processes, Priorities and Networks*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011, 227 p.

What is the job of a translator? This work, by Francis R. Jones, a Senior Lecturer in Applied Linguistics at Newcastle University in the United Kingdom who specializes in translation studies, addresses the strategies that experts take while translating poems: "This book aims to give a more detailed answer to this question using the techniques of translation studies combined with input from poetry translators themselves and their translations." The book contains 53 diagrams along with a table of figures at the beginning

of the book, illustrating many of the ideas of the author as well as different scans of his translation processes. Furthermore, the work contains a useful index and bibliography. The author states that understanding poetry translation is essential not only because it is enjoyable, but because it also helps bridge the divide between cultures. This study consists of seven chapters, covering topics from the Bosnian War, to processes of translating poetry, to interviews with young translators.

The graphs that Jones uses in his book reflect well on many of the ideas he chooses to elaborate. For example, he uses scanned images of his translations and of the original texts, complete with the markings made as he translated the poems, as a way of showing the

reader what happens during the translation process. He also uses different graphs to demonstrate, for example the places where the translations are most published, as well as time tables detailing how long it took his five translators to translate their poems, and even images from some of the poems he has translated.

Chapter 1, the introduction, defines many of the terms and ideas that will be used throughout the book. Jones defines expert action as the idea that “the poetry translator’s work, therefore, is complex and wide ranging, and can have rich real-world effects.” He justifies his definition an expert in poetry translation by comparing an expert to the layperson, being just the average citizen. The author defines why translation is worthwhile; “Reading poetry is a valued experience—because we enjoy it, because it moves or mentally enriches us. And with translated poetry, hearing voices beyond the boundary fence of our own language can give added value.” This chapter explains that no other book-

length study has been conducted to give a view of poetry translation that draws “a wider picture of poetry translation in textual, psychological, and social terms, bringing different research studies into a single narrative.”

Chapter 2, “Poetry in a Political Preface”, evaluates a case study by the author, and offers a guide for the later chapters. The author presents us with his case study on the Bosnian war, a study he will address throughout the entire book. He began his poetry translation as a student in Bosnia while it was a single-party Communist state under the rule of President Tito. After the death of the President, and a period of political unrest, as well as economic downfall, armed conflicts erupted among ethnic groups. In 1992, when Bosnia declared its independence, a war broke out with a Bosnian Serb ethnonationalist uprising. Eventually, Croats joined the rebellion. Sympathy soon grew for the civilian victims. This increased attention created a demand for English translated

works by Bosnians, and those involved in the war. All these historical factors stimulated the author's work with his translations of Bosnian poetry.

Chapter 3, "Poetry Translation Webs", analyzes more closely the interpersonal, intertextual and social context of the poetry translator's action. Again, he uses Bosnian poetry written during the war. The author discusses some of the ways that translation is achieved; through projects, teams, and career webs. Often, translators work in teams to engage in translation projects, using the Internet as a resource for such virtual meetings. These connections help share poems across cultures. Poetry translations always needs revising, and here the author provides tips as to the best ways to go about having translation works reviewed. The author feels very strongly that translation is not a solitary act, but rather depends on teamwork. Translators benefit by working in groups to produce their translations, in that, with different perspectives, better translations can be achieved.

Chapter 4, "Talks with Translators", highlights the translator as a subject. In this chapter Jones uses "data derived from interviews with five poetry translators about their working practices, focusing on the central cognitive task of how they translate poems." The interviews consider the translator as an individual, using ideas of self-evaluation, self-image, and identity as an example to stress the importance of translators understanding their true selves before being able to translate a work effectively. According to Jones, "...the translator is a thinking, feeling subject who mediates between sources and target poems."

In Chapter 5, "Five Translators Translate", Jones, presents how five translators worked while translating a Dutch poem into English. The Dutch language is chosen due to the author's specialization in both Bosnian and Dutch poetry. Jones describes the collective process in the following way: "They give detailed data about specific working practices, thus complementing the

whole-person, whole-career insights of Chapter 4.” It begins with a five-day expert workshop, followed by the five translators who are native English speakers, and two who are native Dutch speakers, translating the selected poem into English by means of several drafts. Jones also presents the outline that the translators undertook to translate the poem. “Task time”, describes the length of time necessary for translation. He discusses the issue of time-management throughout the process of making the numerous drafts. The chapter consists largely of images and graphs to demonstrate how the translators worked. Differences among the translations generally depend on the beliefs and cultural differences of the translator. The author discusses how the society in which translators are raised influences the way they read and translate poetry.

In Chapter 6, “Translating Rhyme and Rhythm” the author presents a case study, which consists of his own process of translating a poem from Bosnian

into English. Jones affirms that, “this chapter can also explore how far my working strategies and techniques might reflect the project’s interpersonal and socio-political setting.” Here he focuses on how changing the intrinsic form, the language pair, and the setting can influence translation. He supplies different graphs to indicate the time it takes for the drafts, as well as some images of his notes so that there is a visual correspondence to a translation in process.

In the conclusion, the author states, “This chapter discusses how Chapter 2’s provisional model of poetry translating has been enriched and modified in the light of the studies in Chapters 3-6, and assesses its potential as a foundation for future work.” The author offers suggestions to potential translators, explaining the different ways one can train to become a poetry translator. This book serves as a great tool for students seeking to pursue a career in translation. It offers a plethora of best practices linked to the translation of poetry. Fran-

cis R. Jones helps the reader understand the need for translation

in our world as a way of sharing cultural ideas.

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