

---

---

Bourguignon, André; Cotet, Pierre; Laplanche, Jean 1992. *Traduzir Freud*, trad. de Cláudia Berliner. São Paulo: Martins Fontes. *Traduire Freud* 1989, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

---

*Traduzir Freud* is a critical report of a breathtaking translation project: the translation of the complete works of Sigmund Freud. Forged upon concepts which are well known to the theory of translation but very seldom found in its practice, the project headed by Jean

Laplanche is an example of professional and intellectual coherence. Professional coherence because there is a clear commitment to the style and meaning of the source-text, to say the least, intellectual commitment because all choices are products of expert group debates in which the main concern was to translate *Freud*, his science, his style, his concepts, his words and ideas as a whole and not as individually atomized written passages. For the goal of the group of translators involved in the project was to produce a consistent French translation of Freud's works in which one could evolve with the text in the same sense that Freud himself, his language and his discourse evolved with his psychoanalytical findings and conceptualizations.

Written with enthusiasm and in a jargon and style which resemble that of psychoanalysis — an influence of Freud's style upon the translator's own writing? — *Traduzir Freud* unfolds a thorough but condensed description of the theoretical translation principles behind the project. In its five short chapters, *Traduzir Freud* convinces both as a piece of writing and as a translation experience: it is very well argued for, the practice, as exemplified in the text, recognizes the connection between Freud's

theoretical concepts and his language and aims to maintain it in the translated texts.

As a whole the prevailing idea of Laplanche's account is that Freud as a thinker, writer and scientist cannot be split from his verbal expression that is, that there is a strong tie between his thoughts, his style and his discourse. Laplanche even compares Freud's writing to the writing of literature. For in the discourse of Freudian psychoanalysis, content and form are deeply intertwined: one enlightens and explains the other, just like they do in literary language.

According to Laplanche, such a discursive characteristic is particularly relevant in the great works of the geniuses who and which are innovative enough to forward new concepts which are matched or followed by their own verbal expression. And they are quite few — the works and the geniuses and the words (this last one is the *raison d'être* of neologisms). This has also always been true about language as such, about colloquial language: flexibility, matching and creation of words from old ones by adding, contracting, subtracting... It is only very difficult to find translations which aim, as Laplanche's project does, at preserving the reasoning and the original expression of the source-

text producer, which aim at constructing a target-text faithful to the *original metaphor*. That is precisely where the coherence of Laplanche's project lies: faithfulness to Freud: not just to his words or to his science, but to him and his work as a text-producer and researcher. The title reveals such an objective both in French and in Portuguese: *Traduire Freud/ Traduzir Freud* that is, to translate his verb, his mind, his expression, his metaphor through a holistic approach able to picture Freud's own view of human nature and deeds.

Of special interest to translation students and professionals is the last chapter of Laplanche's manifesto: *A Execução do trabalho*. For here the details of the project's organization are put forward: tripartite competencies of the expertise groups — knowledge of French, German and Freud -, historical research for the corpus and its organization in chronological order of production and not of publication, graphic shape of the text — few footnotes and explanations —, lexicographical research for the evolution of the concepts and their equivalent terms within the Freudian framework, selection of dictionaries in German

and French, group discussions about meanings and doubts, responsibility for forwarding the last word in moments of array, the duration of the project — 1983/89 (first part). *Traduzir Freud* is a must for anyone interested in translation. It rescues the work of the founding father of psychoanalysis which had been cut to pieces in exotic patchworks which shared little if nothing of their content or form. In this sense it may be useful as a guide for similar projects and/or for the revision of the translations of works of other similarly important thinkers. In its Brazilian Portuguese version, *Traduzir Freud* is particularly appealing and self-explanatory for those with a background in German and French. Contrariwise, readers who rely only on the Brazilian Portuguese text may finish their reading with a feeling of stress since in this translation many nuances of those two languages have to be explained through notes or within parenthesis. Besides being confusing, such fact diminishes and even contradicts the impact of Laplanche's account and argumentation.

Maria Cristina Schleder de Borba

UFSC