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Abstract

Review of Regina Galasso & Evelyn Scaramella, eds. *Avenues of Translation: The City in Iberian and Latin American Writing*. Bucknell UP, 2019.

Keywords

translation, Spain, Latin America, urban, city

Regina Galasso & Evelyn Scaramella, eds. *Avenues of Translation: The City in Iberian and Latin American Writing*. Bucknell UP, 2019. ix + 170 pp.

In this volume of scholarly essays and creative writing focused on the city and translation, Regina Galasso and Evelyn Scaramella put forth a compelling collection that both goes beyond translating urban spaces as depicted in literary texts and enriches the usually excellent books published by Bucknell University Press. This book is the first of its kind, focusing on how translation unites literary scholars, texts, and cities to unravel new considerations of Iberian and Latin American urban centers. With the spotlight on the city itself, this collection builds on recent research, particularly Sherry Simon's groundbreaking *Translating Montreal. Episodes in the Life of a Divided City* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), keeps translation at the core of its theoretical framework, and explores spatial movement, linguistic interaction, and the limits of the city. Additionally, *Avenues in Translation* offers insight into urban cultural and literary production as understood by various translators of language and cultural practices. With a particular focus on the connections between travel and translation, the collection offers new insights on Spanish, Latin American, and Caribbean cities, given that international intellectuals interact and continue to live in those spaces, where they share their own cultural nuances. While listening, observing, and writing about cities, translators are able to capture a multilingual and multiethnic public space of interaction to reveal new dynamic urban realities.

Within this framework, the collection encompasses ten scholarly essays on translating the city in order to further our understanding of cultural production in this particular context. The chapters are framed by a prologue and coda by Suzanne Jill Levine ("The City and the Translator") and Peter Bush ("The City of a Translator's Mind"), both internationally renowned scholars for their work in translation studies and as translators. The collection opens with an autobiographical essay, "Un Walker en Nuyol: Coming to Terms with a Babel of Words," by Illan Stavans to focus on the city as a center of linguistic and literary interchange that ultimately alters the self. In "Translation as a Native Language: The Layered Languages of Tango", Alicia Borinsky focuses on Buenos Aires' tango and offers the reader a new, translated understanding of tango beyond its birthplace. Christopher Maurer, in "Lorca, from Country to City: Three Versions of *Poet in New York*," studies three versions of Federico García Lorca's *Poet in New York*, elucidating the personal and political situation that transformed the Spanish poet while in the United States.

In "Here Is My Monument: Martín Luis Guzmán and Pancho Villa in the Mexico City Landscape," Nicholas Cifuentes-Goodbody studies Martín Luis Guzmán's biography of Pancho Villa noting both the biographer's and the subject's relationships with Mexico City with regards to urban spaces and monuments.

Charles Hatfield, in “On Languages and Cities: Rethinking the Politics of Calvert Casey’s ‘El regreso,’” also looks at New York City, but in relation to Havana through Calvert Casey’s short story “El regreso,” ‘The return.’ Hatfield argues that the protagonist—and perhaps Casey himself—is responding to the structural otherness he feels in a New York City caught between varying languages and cultures. In “A Palimpsestuous Adaptation: Translating Barcelona in Benet i Jornet’s *La Plaça del Diamant*,” Jennifer Duprey explores a different type of alternate urban experience in Benet i Jornet’s *La Plaça del Diamant*, ‘Diamond Square,’ by considering the collective experience that this text and dramatic interpretation of Barcelona offers. Hugh Hazelton, in “Montreal’s New *Latinité*: Spanish-French Connections in a Trilingual City,” then examines the implications of a trilingual Montreal by studying French, Spanish, and English cultural influences in that particular space and how they producing new understanding. In “Translation the Local: New York’s Micro-Cosmopolitan Media, from José Martí to the Hyperlocal Hub,” Esther Allen offers a non-fictional perspective of translation in New York by studying marginal journalistic writing, media outlets, and their international audiences, all of which distinctly bridge the local and the global.

The final contribution is a second creative piece that combines a reflection on translation with poetic prose using a smartphone transcription. In this piece, “litoral translation traducción litoral,” Urayoán Noel explores the city as an English and Spanish text (recalling De Certeau’s “Walking in the City,” from the *Practice of Everyday Life*, 1984), simultaneously walking, writing, and translating, which both brings life to the city and inspires a new type of urban poetic expression. The volume closes with Bush’s “Coda: The City of a Translator’s Mind,” where he explains the various microuniverses in which he grew up. His understanding of the city was shaped by his family’s struggles, the realities of different social-classes, the demands of formal education, and his socialization characterized by being “proper”. Yet those influences were ultimately inauthentic, as his understanding of the city was in actuality fabricated in his mind.

As a result of the editors’ inclusion of creative, scholarly, fictional, and non-fictional ideas on translation from and about major cities of the Spanish-speaking world, this very unique collection allows the reader to appreciate the richness of translating Iberian and Latin American writers’ urban centers. Indeed, this collection sheds new light on translations that are only possible in cities while also uncovering how Latin American and Iberian influencers have transformed urban spaces by leaving their own cultural and historical marks. Scholars of Iberian, Latin American, and Translation studies will gladly add this outstanding collection of essays to their list of must-read books.

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