

**ARDELEAN, Carmen. *Translating for the Future. What, How, Why do we Translate?* București: Tritonic, 2016, 203 pp, ISBN 978-606-749-133-3**

For someone who is not familiar or is little acquainted with Translation Studies, it is sometimes hard to anticipate the twists and changes from the mere sporadic interest in the insides of the translation process in the antiquity to what, in the 60s and the 70s, became a field in its own right and has more recently branched out to transform itself into an interdisciplinary area of study. Carmen Ardelean's book *Translating for the Future. What, How, Why do we Translate?* takes on the role of a trustful and knowledgeable guide along the way, contributing a welcome bird's eye view of a domain to which Romanian scholars have supplied studies more often written from single or tightly interconnected rather than holistic perspectives (see, for example, some of the books published in the 2000s: Arhire (2015), Chifane (2016), Dejica-Cartiș (2010), Cozma (2006), Dimitriu (2002, 2005), Greere (2003), Lungu-Badea (2005, 2007), Nicolau (2016), Pârlog et al. (2009), Postolea (2017), Vilceanu (2003, 2007), etc.). For the better informed readers, the essential points this book marks on the Translation Studies map serve as reminders of the current state of art and, at the same time, as suggestions of potential areas for further research.

Following her declared intention of providing answers to the questions formulated in the title, partly inspired, as she confesses (p. 13), by Christiane Nord's "New Rhetoric formula", the author divides her work into eleven chapters, to which a glossary of field specific terms is appended (many of which may serve as key words for the topics dealt with in the book).

The opening chapter pinpoints the landmarks of the translation activity per se and of the evolution of what is known today as Translation Studies: the dominance of the translation of religious texts (especially the *Bible*) into Latin up to the Middle Ages; the diversification of the process to include the translation of "profane" texts as well, in the 16th century, a period to which "the beginnings of theoretical studies dedicated to translation can be traced back" (p. 25); the establishment of clearer and clearer principles "aimed at defining a 'good translation' and the way in which such a translation should be achieved" (p. 28), by scholars such as John Dryden and Alexander Fraser Tytler, in the two following centuries; the awareness of source language vs. target language peculiarities and the difficulties these may pose to translators in the 19th century, when the focus still lay on the linguistic side of the translation endeavour; the "promotion" of translation from a component of language teaching or contrastive analysis to "its new status as a science in its

own right" (p. 32), with well-defined areas (Holme's division of the discipline into "pure" and "applied" sectors is, for instance, still referred to at present), in the 20th century.

Chapter two continues the discussion of the major lines along which Translation Studies have evolved in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in the 2000s, and builds on the idea that, in a time when the translation activity has diversified immensely in order to meet more and more complex requirements, the right balance between theory and practice must be struck (though the "trends are more in the industry than in the research" (p. 46, qting. Pym 2010, online), so that the number of translation practitioners is obviously much higher than that of theoreticians in this line of work. In establishing a sound theoretical scaffolding that should ensure a professional approach in the actual practice of carrying across messages from one language into another, a number of aspects are always worth considering. Of these, Ardelean pays some attention to the weight that cultural awareness has in the translation process (using the occasion to refer to some of Gideon Toury's and Anthony Pym's opinions on the matter), and to the fact that present-day translators do their jobs in a highly digitalized environment, being "individuals endowed with multiple skills, able to perform a number of technical procedures [...] besides the simple translation of text formats" (p. 45).

In the latter part of this chapter, the author points out that, along with the innovative approaches to Translation Studies, "old" concepts have also been reconsidered in light of the new developments in the field. Equivalence, a building block in translation, is one such concept. Revisiting old concepts and theoretical approaches comes natural, as long as "research in translation theory in the new millennium has [...] added new coordinates to an old field"; the widening of the social and international dimension of translation, observed by Gile et al. (2010) are some of these coordinates that the author chooses to talk about.

Irrespective of the directions in which theory develops and the issues it tackles, whether old or new, the value of a theoretical work should be assessed, according to Ardelean, by taking into account: whether the argumentation is convincing, the approach is novel, the author is a celebrated theorist, the research topics are clearly chosen and the theoretical work itself draws on practice and/or is relevant to it (p. 50-51).

The theory vs. practice debate is taken one step further in the next chapter, in which Ardelean brings forward the discussion to the problem whether the translators' flair and good knowledge of the working languages are the only ingredients in a successful translation product recipe, the translators' familiarity with the theoretical background of the field not being necessarily part of it. The conclusion she draws, in line with sonorous voices in the field, is that, although this may be shared belief among amateur

translators, professionals agree that, irrespective of the type of text they deal with – literary or specialized – “translators have to prove to themselves as to others that they are in control of what they do; that they do not just translate well because they have a flair for translation, but rather because, like other professionals, they have made a conscious effort to understand various aspects of their work” (p. 58, quoting Baker 1992).

And when they do understand these aspects, chances are that they can successfully perform their duties in the most diverse contexts, including that of cultural diplomacy, in which, as cultural mediators, they play a crucial role in how soft power is exerted. If they are masters of their profession, in this particular situation, they become “essential [...] diplomats of our time” (p. 71). This is the central idea of chapter four of Ardelean’s book.

Mastering the profession is the equivalent of being competent in one’s work field. Translation competence and translation quality (the latter encapsulating the former), are the two key concepts discussed in chapter five. As the author observes, both these concepts have suffered changes as the scope and means of translation have diversified. If translation competence was initially equated to possessing good language knowledge and above average creativity, at present, it is viewed as “a manifold entity made of a number of sub-categories, each having its own importance for the achievement of optimal results” (p. 85). It is explained that, with the switch of focus from the innate gift to the acquired skills, the language sub-competence has come to play as important a role as the intercultural, information mining, thematic, and technological sub-competences (the weight of knowledge about how to use, for example, electronic dictionaries, translation memories, terminology management software or cloud-based platforms in today’s translation contexts is discussed later in the book, in chapter ten). Translation quality, on the other hand, is now subject to standardization and is assessed on the basis of many more criteria than the mere satisfaction of the reader/end-user, though this remains the key element to consider. Ensuring a satisfactory quality of a translated text so that it is validated by the client who commissioned the translation also takes a lot more than it used to in the past: the text content and meaning should be well-understood by the service provider, a team of reliable translators should be chosen to fulfil the task by the deadline, and the necessary resource(s) for revision (editing and proofreading) should be made available. An appealing idea that Ardelean exploits here is that of the end-user competence. Does s/he need the same competence(s) as those required of the translator in order to assess the product s/he is presented with? It seems s/he does not – in his/her case, “competence is replaced by motivation [...]: the client is motivated by the importance of the translated document from a legal, economic or social

perspective” (p. 101). It is this type of motivation that ultimately governs his/her decision about the financial reward offered to the translator.

Since, unlike flair, translation competence is not innate, it follows that translators have to undergo institutionalized training in order to become professionals. Irrespective of whether such training takes the form of undergraduate, postgraduate programs or cycles of both, if they rely more on textbook-like materials or monographs to lay the theoretical basis for the actual translation practice, if the approach to teaching they promote is gamification, or instructors do not walk off the traditional path, what is to be remembered is that the role of a translation school is not to train students for specific positions in the translation industry, but rather to equip them with certain general abilities that they will be able to use in no matter what translation context in the future (chapter six, following Mossop 2003). One way of achieving this is to focus “on enabling students to use a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic tools in accordance with Toury’s words: ‘Each type of situation should produce a different set of constraints and norms’. Consequently, the greater the variety of situations that a translator is put into, the greater the range and flexibility of his ability to perform, or adapt himself to changing norms is going to be” (p. 113-114, qting. Toury 1994: 191).

Chapter seven goes back to the theory-practice issue in translator training, with emphasis now placed on a central topic in translation theory, namely that of translation methods, strategies, and techniques. Quite a number of scholars have dedicated their attention to pointing out, on the one hand, what they consider to be the difference (mainly in terms of focus and level of text implied) between them and what exact sub-categories each of them includes, on the other. Ardelean mentions well-known points of view in this respect (Nida, Schriber, Newmark, Neubert, Delisle, Molina and Hurtado Albir are among those whose opinions are reviewed); she concludes that, despite the sometimes blurred borders between translation methods, strategies and techniques, what matters most is not what name they are known by, but rather how they are put to use in making appropriate “case-by-case [translation] decisions” (p. 124).

In the next chapter, the author tackles two areas in which this is most evident – translation in the advertising industry, now very often considered “transcreation”, and the translation of digital information. In the former case, it is demanded of translators “to leave the security of conventional, standardized patterns in favour of accepting a challenge of creativity” (p. 129), since, after understanding the marketing or advertising messages, they have to transcreate them (i.e. to completely recreate them in the target language) so as to make them “resonate on the local markets”, where they should “deliver the same impact as the original” (p. 128, qting. Ray and Kelly 2010: 3). The matter of resonance on the local markets, or, in more general terms, that of

cultural adaptation and, consequently, adaptability and relevance in the target context, is insisted upon in chapter nine, where the author highlights the idea of translators as social actors and socio-cultural mediators who are not engaged in mere neutral transfer of information from one language into another, but rather in “a communicative action involving choice and, thereby, decision-making at a linguistic, social and cultural level” (p. 142). In the latter case, the trained translators’ task is to counterbalance the massive amount of unprofessional translations (sometimes done resorting to automated translation software) that threaten to bear a negative impact on both the sender and the receiver(s) of information on websites, blogs or forums.

All chapters, up to the last, address, within broader or narrower limits, the “what”, the “how” and the “why” of the translation process. In chapter eleven, Ardelean concludes her journey through Translation Studies, focusing more on the “how” and pointing out that any translation project should be approached ethically. A translator is thus expected to produce an accurate target text, to keep the information he comes in contact with confidential, and treat it impartially, irrespective of his/her own beliefs, to avoid breaking intellectual property rights, to provide correct details about his/her qualifications, to observe deadlines, and to have a moral behaviour towards the agency and the clients with whom s/he should “maintain a relationship based on loyalty and mutual trust” (p. 162).

*Translating for the Future. What, How, Why do we Translate?* is a look back into the more distant or recent past that opens the windows towards the future of Translation Studies. It addresses a rather wide audience: though one’s background in the field may prove helpful in understanding some of the more specialized parts of the book, non-professionals may also find it thought-provoking. For the former, it reconfirms things they should be familiar with, for the latter, it opens up numerous avenues worth exploring. For both, the value of the book resides in the choice of topics (the areas of Translation Studies touched upon are representative for the domain), as well as in the way they are intertwined (the chapters unfold in a logic succession that helps the readers to understand how the various parts articulate in the coherent whole that Translation Studies represent).

The book abounds in references to core bibliography in the field spoken about, which turns it into a rich starting point resource for further, more extensive inspection, should any of its readers want to gain in-depth knowledge of certain aspects they are particularly interested in.

Undoubtedly an academic publication, Ardelean’s book makes a pleasant reading, too, and strikes a right balance between intellectual effort and leisurely enjoyment, just as work in the field of translation, whether of a theoretical or applied nature, should be.

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