Literary Translator Studies, edited by Klaus Kaindl et al.

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Over the past few years, research in translation studies has paid increasing attention to the importance of the human factor within the broader translation and interpreting professions. Among other things, this so-called sociological turn has led to greater scholarly focus on translators and interpreters as practitioners. In focusing solely on literary translators, the current volume therefore represents a novel and relevant contribution to the field. Edited by three researchers at the University of Vienna’s Centre for Translation Studies, this collected work brings together sixteen chapters spanning a variety of timescales and approaches, but all pertaining directly to literary translators.

The book is opened by a wide-ranging introduction by Klaus Kaindl, who skilfully outlines the history and development of translation studies - and by extension, of Translator Studies. In aiming to locate the literary translator as a research subject within wider Translator Studies, Kaindl provides a thorough analysis of the necessary theoretical and methodological background through the presentation and analysis of relevant frameworks, perspectives, and concepts. Drawing on a comprehensive bibliography with over 180 references listed, Kaindl also articulates the structure of the edited volume, which is divided into four sections based on the relevant methodologies and concepts used.

The first section foregrounds aspects relating to the histories and biographies of literary translators themselves. As such, Mary Bardet’s contribution outlines her attempts to trace a forgotten early 20th century French woman translator through diligent detective work in the archives, linking her subject to wider societal trends at that time. In the next chapter, Sabine Strümpper-Krobb examines the biographies of two prominent late-19th century female translators, paying particular attention to the importance of their work in the literary and social contexts of that time. Turning to 20th century Polish Galicia, Markus Eberhardt explores aspects of the lives of four translators, with the aim of highlighting the added value that translator biographies can bring to Translator Studies. However, unlike the historical focus of the preceding chapters, the final contribution to the opening part of the volume deals with the contemporary interface between Translator Studies and Library and Information Studies, as illustrated by Belén Santana López and Crispuño Travieso Rodríguez’s overview of the literary translator’s invisibility in Spanish library catalogues.

The three chapters which comprise the second section focus on social science-based approaches. The first contribution, written by volume co-editor Waltraud Kolb, examines the self-concepts of literary translators within the translation process itself. This is accomplished through the prism of a single sentence taken from a short story by Hemingway as translated by experienced English-German literary translators, together with information regarding the translators’ decision-making processes. The two subsequent chapters are both interview-based studies grounded in the Nordic context. In Anu Heino’s chapter, it is the biographies of modern Finnish literary translators with regard to their translatorial activities that are highlighted using insights from narrative theory. Yvonne Lundquist’s study, however, explores the notion of “star translators” through analysis of fifteen leading literary translators in Sweden, using Bourdieu’s concept of institutional consecration as the relevant analytical framework.

The book’s third section is centred on paratexts and their implications for literary translators. Accordingly, Nilsa Ben-
Ari's opening chapter focuses on the translator's note and its apparent resurgence. She provides a general, historical, and contemporary overview before analysing a series of literary translations produced in Israel, which leads to interesting findings regarding the voice, status, and participation of literary translators. The analysis of the literary translator's voice, together with other aspects regarding self-perception and self-positioning, all feature strongly in the chapter by Anna Fornalczyk-Lipska. Through the examination of prefaces to books translated by and media interviews with Polish literary translators of children's literature, Fornalczyk-Lipska notes that, in giving translators greater prominence, awareness of literary translation beyond the ivory tower is increased. Daniela Schlager's contribution provides a different conceptual approach to studying translators as individuals. Through the lens of the life of the nineteenth-century British writer and translator Harriet Martineau, Schiager examines the theoretical concepts of multipositionality and translatorial telos as expressed through Martineau's life philosophy and translations. Beatrijs Vanacker's chapter also focuses on a female translator, the noted eighteenth-century Dutch translator Elisabeth Wolff-Becker. Through analysis of her paratexts and personal correspondence, Vanacker seeks to examine Wolff-Becker's position in the contemporary literary field at that time and how she used translation to construct her own "translatorial posture".

Comprising five chapters, the fourth and final section of the work also focuses on the idea of translations and gateways. In this regard, Michelle Wood's chapter provides a novel approach to the study of movement by exploring the nineteenth-century women translators of Tolstoy's work. Here, the concept of travel by train is analysed not only by citing examples of the Russian author's use of relevant stylistic devices in his literary works, but also by providing insights into the physical journeys made by these pioneering translators in the imperial Russia of that time. The chapter on the poetical and translatorial voice of the eighteenth-century founder of Translation Studies, James S. Holmes, is co-authored by Elke Brems and Jack McMartin. In interpreting Holmes's translations of Dutch poetry into English as well as his own poems, Brems & McMartin contextualise these works through analysis of Holmes's translatorial and authorial practices as well as his gay identity. Turning to the twentieth-century, Susanne Hagemann's contribution tests the model of translatorial "attitude" as defined by the scholar Theo Herman – through the case study of Wilhelm Adolf Lindau, the German translator of Sir Walter Scott's works. Taking this notion, Hagemann explores this concept through judicious comparative analysis of relevant texts and paratexts, leading to interesting conclusions regarding the efficacy of the theoretical framework. Andrew Chesterman's engaging chapter provides an insight on the translatorial oeuvre of the non-conformist polymath Douglas Hofstadter. Taking Hofstadter's three works of literary translation as case studies, Chesterman also highlights Hofstadter's own concepts and practice of translation, including his conscious decision to distance himself from mainstream translation studies scholarship. The final contribution to the volume is by Judith Woodworth, whose study explores the growing concept of "transfiction", in other words, how translators and translation has become ever more widespread in fictional works. Woodworth takes two novels by female New York-based writers as case studies, exploring not only the lives of the authors (whom she interviews) and the principal protagonists of their novels but also the critical reception, summing up that ultimately translators and translation are portrayed in a positive light.

In general terms, Literary Translator Studies represents a pioneering landmark in translation studies scholarship, particularly with regard to the magisterial introduction which outlines the scope of the sub-field. Though the work covers a variety of historical periods as well as a range of theoretical and conceptual approaches, a broader geographical focus would have been appreciated – to that end, and reflecting current discussions among literary translators, future research could perhaps also include aspects exploring literary translators from languages and cultures beyond the European context. Yet this observation does not detract from an excellent and carefully curated edited volume. As such, this collection is a timely and worthy addition to the translation studies literature which will prove extremely valuable over the years to come.