

***TRANSLATING HOME IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: MIGRATION, BELONGING AND LANGUAGE JUSTICE* BY ISABEL C. GÓMEZ AND MARLENE HANSEN ESPLIN, ET AL.**

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Translating Home in the Global South: Migration, Belonging, and Language Justice (2024) explores translation practices developed in contemporary conditions of movement, displacement, and liminality, and which are, in some way, related to or situated in the geopolitical context of the Global South. The essays in this volume foreground fluid approaches to language and temporary, ever-shifting states of belonging (or unbelonging), and translators' negotiation thereof. Ofelia García and Li Wei's notion of "translanguaging"—the practice of seamlessly combining elements from differently named languages—provides a central theoretical pillar for how the act of "translating home" is framed. As the editors put it, "[T]ranslating home is the same linguistic practice set into motion, drawing on the embodied knowledge of multiple geo-linguistic standpoints and experiences at once" (1). Intentionally resisting monolingual and multilingual paradigms (and the associated assumption of clearly demarcated boundaries between languages), *Translating Home* instead prioritises translanguaging to highlight interactions and relationships between linguistic systems.

Importantly, in its exploration of how migration impacts "our practices around translanguaging meaning-making" (1), the volume positions the translator "not as an outside resource but as a wholly imbricated actor in constructing home in a translanguaging world" (1). Diverging from the common scholarly focus on receiving nations' strategies to welcome migrants into their language cultures, *Translating Home* concentrates on writers, interpreters, and translators who personally experienced migration (2). By making visible the complexity of translation practices developed during mobility, the volume renders permeable the borders that determine categories of "language" and "nation", which, in turn, reveals the constructed nature, instability, and ambivalence of the 'homes' existing within them. These "homes" are shown to take on an uncanny quality—simultaneously embodying familiarity and an eerie otherness. Indeed, "home" becomes "a shifting signifier, relative to the positionality of the speaker/writer/translator/subject at hand" (6); "translating home" is thus "a makeshift and multidirectional feedback loop" (6) that is continuously reshaped as homes are made, unmade, and remade according to changing circumstances.

Occupying an intersection between migration studies and translation studies, *Translating Home* sets out to counter reductive binaries that exist in both—in the former, between "origin" and "destination", in the latter, between "source" and "target", "author" and "translator", "domestication" and "foreignization". Following Loredana Polezzi's (2012) recognition that it is not only texts but also people who travel, the volume emphasises the situatedness of translators. Interestingly, it features real translators/translations as well as fictional ones—several contributions study novels with a translator as central character. For the

reader, the constant shifts between discussions of literature in translation and representations of translation in literature can feel jarring at times. Overall, however, the decision to include fictional portrayals of translator figures yields productive insights about how contemporary writers understand translators' roles in precarious contexts of the Global South. The 'Global South' is conceptualised broadly, as the editors situate the volume "in the wake of a history of colonial linguistic epistemicide alongside contemporary material displacements characteristic of the postcolonial experience" (2). The broadness of 'Global South' works well, as it allows the inclusion of various cultural, geographical, and linguistic contexts (including areas like the Caribbean, Central America, Bosnia, South America, Syria, and South Asia, as well as spaces such as migrant detention centres, climate emergency hubs, or imaginaries constructed in exile), to trace both differences and remarkable similarities in translational practices.

The book is structured into three parts, organised according to theme instead of geography. This approach effectively mirrors the authors' recognition of the slipperiness of "home" and "belonging" in the contemporary world. The first section, entitled 'Self-translation, Collaboration, Co-creation in migrant writing', foregrounds writers and translators whose practice has been shaped by mobility with an emphasis on bypassing conventional translational categories and binaries. For example, Marlene Hansen Esplin considers how US-based Mexican writers depict translators' mediatory role during catastrophe to challenge the notion of "original" authorship, while Sergio Waisman's self-reflection on the collaborative process of translating (and later, "co-creat[ing]" with) Argentine writer Ricardo Piglia blurs borders between "original" and "translation", "author" and "translator", "familiar" and "alien" (65). Tatjana Soldat-Jaffe's essay on the use of the instant translation function on Facebook by Arabic-speaking refugees in Germany provides a grounding reminder of the reality of twenty-first-century displacements and the practical language issues that come with it. She suggests that in this context, translation creates "a universal community that provides empathy, shared agreement, and common knowledge" (45).

Part II ('Detention, Denial of Home, and Border Policing') picks up on translation's utopian potential to forge communality as articulated by Soldat-Jaffe, but notes that it is a double-edged sword, asking, "When can acts of translation and interpretation present radical resistance to practices of confinement or border policing—and when might translations contribute linguistically to these real-world injustices?" (3). In this vein, Alexandra Maria Lossada studies the collection *Dreaming America: Voices of Undocumented Youth in Maximum-Security Detention* (2017), showing that translation both illuminates and obscures vulnerable "voices", while Višna Krstić Jovanović & Filip Jovanović consider the psychological strain experienced by translators and interpreters working in asylum-seeking centres. The stand-out contribution here is Janet Hendrickson's essay, which challenges the idea that a translation becomes "successful" once it renders texts or ideas accessible into dominant languages. Reading Mónica de la Torre's *Repetition Nineteen* (2020) alongside Walter Benjamin and Eva Hesse, Hendrickson makes a nuanced argument for the decolonial quality of De la Torre's experimental translation practices, which oscillate between excess and absence in resistance to English hegemony.

The final part, 'Stateless Translation and Planetary Ecologies', situates itself in contexts of political unrest and climate catastrophe to explore translation's role in working through difficult pasts and facilitating decolonial futures. Yan Wu compares multilingual novels by

Amitav Ghosh and Chen Quifan that portray translators mediating between the local and the planetary and between human and non-human agents. Thereby, Yan convincingly illustrates the importance of translation in the twenty-first century with its shifting landscapes, rapidly changing natural environments, and precarious homes. Wafa Hamid reads Agha Shahid Ali's translations of Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Mahmoud Darwish as instances of what Christina Sharpe (2016) calls "wake work"—originally referring to continuous efforts to confront and work through the history of slavery and its present impact on black communities—applied in this case to the contexts of Kashmir and Palestine, respectively. Hamid shows that these translations embody contradictory, yet co-existing, impulses of "homing" and "unhoming", rootedness and exile. Finally, Isabel C. Gómez discusses the multilingual poetry collection, *while they sleep (under the bed in another country)* (2019) written by Roque Raquel Salas Rivera in response to Hurricane Maria. To describe Salas Rivera's non-conventional translational choices, she suggests the term "cuir eco-translation" (186), an approach to translation situated in Latin America that disrupts gender and linguistic binaries, calls into question political power relations, and decentres the human subject in relation to the natural world.

Despite the divergent translational practices, variety of creative conditions, and distant geographical and/or cultural contexts covered by the essays in *Translating Home*, the volume does not feel disjointed. This is due partly to the authors' consistent recognition of the double-edged nature of translation, and partly to the recurrence of themes and imagery across sections. For example, the image of contamination appears in several contributions: Esplin offers contamination as an extended metaphor for the way that translation "exposes the fiction of self-containment" (39), Waisman describes Piglia's understanding of creative "mistranslation" as "[a]n infection, a contagion, that is not at all a detriment, but rather an essential part of a possible transformation" (70), while Yan studies novelistic representations of translators navigating environments increasingly contaminated by human waste. Social justice and decolonial thinking are other recurring themes: Lossada and Soldat-Jaffe's essays feature a commitment to justice through translation in response to real-world encounters, while Hendrickson and Gómez explore its representation in a more abstract literary or aesthetic sense. This application of similar themes to differing levels of abstraction and practicality provides balance and reminds of translation's situatedness.

With its focus on contemporary migratory contexts and its future-oriented approach, *Translating Home* is compelling and topical. The volume will be of interest to researchers in the fields of migration studies, world and postcolonial literature, translation studies, and comparative criticism. By centring writers, interpreters, and translators who embody fluid identities beyond singular national or linguistic paradigms and highlighting the complexities that emerge from their subsequent translation practices, *Translating Home* displays the Global South as a rich site for scholarly enquiry about the role of translation in negotiating our ever-changing world.