



**Dirce Waltrick do Amarante. Vitor Alevato do Amaral (Orgs.). *Caetano W. Galindo: Entrevista*. Curitiba: Medusa, 2020, ISBN: 978-65-86276-10-7.**

In Andrew Chesterman's article about the emergence of Translator Studies as a new trend within the field of Translation Studies, he underlines the fact that little research on human translation takes the "people behind the texts" as the central issues of the research questions. Translations are primarily studied without considering the translator's experience, ideology and discourse as meaningful aspects that influence the text that enters the new culture. In most cases, it includes merely looking at the translator's procedures, considerations of some facts of his/her biography and comparison with other translators/translations. Invisible for too long, the translator's discourse usually shows up in paratexts to shortly talk about their decisions in the process.

The book *Caetano W. Galindo: Entrevista/ Caetano W. Galindo: Interview*, organized by Dirce Waltrick do Amarante and Vitor Alevato do Amaral, is an indisputable contribution in making the translator visible and explicit, and as a relevant agent of literary production. Both renowned researchers and specialists on James Joyce's translations, they interview Caetano Galindo, one of the most prominent translators in Brazil, largely known for his awarded translation of *Ulysses*, Joyce's masterpiece. As pointed out by the organizers in the introduction, this publication is an invitation to access Galindo's thoughts about translation and literature as well as his reflections about his own work as a literary translator of challenging works of fiction, which include not only James Joyce but a diversity of authors, such as T. S. Eliot, Christopher Marlowe, Tom Stoppard and David Foster Wallace. The interview is followed by an essay of Galindo's authorship concerning the relation between the original and the translation. At the end of the book, the chronology of his life and the list of publications exhibits his vast repertoire not only as a distinguished literary translator but also as an awarded writer.

As mentioned before, Galindo is primarily remembered for his translation of Joyce's *Ulysses*, which granted him two awards of best translation by the prestigious Jabuti and Brazilian Academy of Letters prizes. Joyce is the author that undeniably best represents

Galindo's trajectory not only as a translator, but also as a researcher and professor. He acknowledges that Joyce had a major impact on his life and even states that the Irish writer invented him as a translator: "He in fact made me, if not a better person (failure is still on me), at least into someone longing for becoming a better person, and who knows in a certain level what could be done to achieve this goal"<sup>1</sup> (64).

Galindo is asked about several topics that involve the translation process. He talks about his background as professor and researcher and how it influences his work as a translator; the relation between translation and other fields of knowledge; his relationship with publishing houses and other agents of the process; the relevance of theories of translation in his practice; the existence of a translator's identity; the relevant role that the translator performs nowadays; the issue of untranslatability; the impact of his activity as a translator in his literary production; and how events of his private life influenced his career. He says, for example, that after giving up a scholarship in Germany to stay close to his newborn daughter, he went through "a few months of crisis and sitting in fetal position on my living room floor"<sup>2</sup> (23) before making the decision of translating *Ulysses* – just because it was something that he wanted to do and nothing else.

Throughout the interview, Galindo emphasizes the relevance of experience in the task of the translator. From time to time, he recalls that the stock of knowledge he gathered along many years of practice was crucial to improve his practice. The background knowledge of literary theory and linguistics, for instance, contributed to refine his interpretation, although he does not view them as mandatory to translators in general. As a musician, Galindo makes a sharp connection between both activities: the interpreter of classical music also must convert an original production – the score – into a new version addressed to a specific target audience which is in general unable to understand the original code.

As researcher and professor, this interview also provides an opportunity to think about the actual relevance of theory in the translation practice. Galindo does not view these theories as really useful for translators in general, although he argues that reading about translation improves the translator's reflection and may enhance his/her practice. In effect, he even questions the very existence of translation theories at all and would rather call this reflection that arises from practice "essayistic of translation", considering that "We do not explain translation, we talk about it, think about it, argue and hypothesize about it"<sup>3</sup> (37). The proper designation for the field of study is a broader discussion, but Galindo's position certainly reinforces how much theoretical studies contribute to the background of a translator.

As for the question about translator's identity, he argues that his translations will always contain his "signature" in bakhtinian terms, i.e., the translation as a "reported speech" of the discourse of the original text and translator a voice that conveys the author's words in

another place and time without obliterating the author's voice. He mentions his meeting with the Scottish writer Ali Smith, of whom he translated several books into Portuguese, as an example to state that he considers himself her "visible face" in Brazil and the "voice" that echoes her texts in our country. This assumes that the main role of translation is to enable and expand give the writers' voices in other cultures. In his view, translators must not seek their invisibility to evidence the author's work, but take over the role of interpreters and mediators of the original text.

In the essay that follows the interview, entitled *Dire la Stessa Cosa: Ecos de Eco*,<sup>4</sup> an allusion to Eco's theoretical work about translation, Galindo contends that the relation between the original and the translation is primarily founded on the concepts of anteriority and convention. He brings up as the main illustration of his argument the *Ise Grand Shrine*, a Shinto temple in a Japanese city called Uji-tachi that is torn down and rebuilt right away every twenty years in the very same spot: "The same sign alludes every twenty years to two different referents that are conventionally considered not only 'equivalent', but actually the very same one"<sup>5</sup> (104).

In other words, the construction of a new temple does not replace the previous one; it is the same temple but restored in a different time and context. It represents a concept of tradition as a continuing, historical restoration, and this is what translation means after all: the constant updating of texts and authors through time. Galindo deconstructs a general myth that the journey across translation is filled with loss along the way: translation is about restoring and adding new and different elements in another context and time.

Translation is not a reproduction or an imitation, but actually a new *instantiation* of the "same thing". It is a game that contains rules and conventions shared by a certain community. As an example, Galindo states that every Brazilian reader in contact with a translation of *Hamlet* into Portuguese is fully aware that he/she is reading the Shakespearean tragedy and not some derivation of the original text. He quotes Paulo Henriques Britto to state that "a good translation is one that produces, in a language other than the original, a new text which allows the reader to state without lying that he/she has actually read the original"<sup>6</sup> (2), which is an assertion that brings together different points of view as it highlights the authorial voice of the translator in the target text without denying the importance of the original text in the process – and the combination of these apparently opposing ideas permeates his answers in the whole interview.

Learning the translator's thought certainly contributes to better understand the translated text and the elements that surround its production and reception. It allows the readers from the target culture to realize how internal and external processes influence the

practice and how translators deal with the limitations and challenges imposed by this work. As a source of valuable information about the translator's way of thinking, this book also provides essential clues for future translators who will face the challenges posed by any literary text. Enterprises like these are paramount to deconstruct persistent myths about the task of the translator and make the ideas, thoughts and discourse of these mediators more and more known to researchers and readers of translations.

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### Notes

- 1 “Ele de fato me transformou, se não numa pessoa melhor (a falha continua sendo minha) ao menos numa pessoa com algum desejo maior de se tornar uma pessoa melhor” (p. 64).
- 2 “alguns meses de crise e posição fetal no chão da sala” (p. 23).
- 3 “Nós não explicamos a tradução, mas nós falamos sobre ela, pensamentos sobre ela, argumentamos, hipotetizamos” (p. 37).
- 4 *Saying almost the same thing: Eco's Echoes* in English.
- 5 “Um mesmo ‘signo’ aponta a cada vinte anos para dois referentes diversos que, contudo, são convencionalmente considerados não apenas ‘equivalentes’, mas, de fato, ‘o mesmo’ referente” (p. 104).
- 6 “a boa tradução é o processo que gera, numa língua diferente da língua do texto original, um novo texto que permita que um leitor, ao ler o texto traduzido, diga sem mentir que leu o texto original” (p. 42).

### Works Cited

- Amarante, Dirce Waltrick do. Amaral, Vitor Alevato do (Orgs.) *Caetano W. Galindo: Entrevista*. Curitiba: Medusa, 2020.
- Chesterman, Andrew. *The Name and Nature of Translator Studies*. *Hermes. Journal of Language and Communication Studies* 42 (2009): 13-22.