

Hanna, S. (2016). *Bourdieu in translation studies: The socio-cultural dynamics of Shakespeare translation in Egypt*. New York, NY: Routledge. 231p.

The last two decades have witnessed a shift from the cultural to the sociological turn in Translation Studies, with particular attention paid to various agents and their interactions in the translation process. The interrelational and interactive character of the paradigmatic turn is fundamental to our understanding of translation practice as a “socially-regulated activity” (Wolf, 2007, p.1). In comparison with the sociological Translation Studies, the cultural approach puts undue emphasis on translation as an end product in the target culture, that is, the outcome of a discursive practice. To some extent, the cultural approach overlooks the dynamics of cultural production in its simplistic reasoning that rewriting and adaptation of target texts are merely subject to cultural manipulation.

The sociological turn is inspired mainly by the concepts of ‘habitus’, ‘field’ and ‘capital’ in cultural production that have been introduced by the French sociologist Bourdieu. These concepts help to shed light on the intricate mechanisms underlying the translation activity in its social context. The sociological approach has gradually attracted the attention of translation and interpreting scholars (Inghilleri, 2005; Simeoni, 1998) and has led them to explore translation practice by placing the conditioning factors of ideology, poetics and patronage, etc. within the field of cultural production. Compared with previous approaches, the Bourdieusian concepts-informed sociology of Translation Studies offers a conceptual tool more powerful than norms or conventions practiced in Descriptive Translation Studies, for it analyzes and interprets the intricate dynamics between socio-cultural constraints and agents instead of merely describing norms within a certain social context. However, until now, as the author of this book, Hanna (2016, pp. 5–6) argues, most researchers have not fully invested in the whole range of conceptual tools that underpin Bourdieu’s theoretical approach and confined its research scope to literary translation in general, and the genre of fiction in particular, leaving much to be researched in the fields of drama, poetry and children’s literature. Moreover, little research has been conducted to elaborate the implications of Bourdieu’s sociology for a methodology for Translation Studies. Through the exploration of the implications of Bourdieu’s sociology of cultural production for the study of translation, this book makes a significant contribution to Sociological Translation Studies, and intensifies this sociological turn within the discipline of Translation Studies.

Hanna’s work, *Bourdieu in Translation Studies*, is the latest empirical research in drama translation that appropriates Bourdieu’s sociology to help better understand the cultural dynamics of the production, dissemination and reception of Arabic translations of

Shakespeare's tragedies in Egypt. Apart from a list of eleven figures and a subject index, the book consists of seven chapters, which can be subdivided into three parts: theoretical backdrop and reflection (Chapters 1–2), empirical investigation (Chapters 3–6) and implications for a methodology in sociological Translation Studies (Chapter 7).

In Chapter 1, entitled *The 'Social Turn' in Translation Studies: Bourdieu's Sociology and Shakespeare in Arabic*, the author reviews the theoretical development of sociological Translation Studies inspired by Bourdieu's conceptual tools, and examines its difference with the cultural approach. Unlike the cultural approach, which adopts 'gender', 'race', 'nation', etc. as units of analysis, the sociological approach allows researchers to use 'field' as the unit of analysis in research. According to this approach, struggle among agents over the possession of capitals and occupying dominant positions constitute the logic of all fields, leading the structure of field to be in a state of flux and susceptible to re-hierarchization (p. 5). Then, some significant textual features of the translations of Shakespeare's 'great tragedies' and the selection criteria are examined to highlight their distinctive positions in the field of drama translation in Egypt. The main focus is put on identifying the changing mode of production and consumption of drama translation.

Chapter 2, *Bourdieu's Sociology of Cultural Production*, engages in a detailed elaboration of the underpinning concepts of 'field' and 'habitus'. It aims to test their viability for studying the social implications of drama translation by citing examples of literary and drama translation into Arabic. For this purpose, Bourdieu's concepts are discussed in detail, with particular emphasis put on the socio-cultural fields of theatre, literature and drama translation in Egypt. The viewpoint of regarding drama translation as a field of different positions allows agents to make various decisions and choices. The newcomers to the field seek to assert their difference and add new positions, introducing changes and inducing reorganization of the hierarchy of the available position-takings. For Hanna, the positions in drama translation can be delineated according to the medium and consumers, genre, time frame, cultural milieu and canonization of the source text, consecration, strategies, poetics and politics of the translator. Additionally, the three forms of capital, the way they are invested in the field, translator's habitus, homology and the functioning of the field are expounded, which shows their feasibility for studying drama translation as a socially-situated activity.

The emerging field of drama translation from the 1850s to the 1910s is mapped by drawing upon Bourdieu's theoretical framework in Chapter 3, *Genesis of the Field of Drama Translation in Egypt*. By contextualizing Abdu's version of *Hamlet*, the author intends to explore how western theatre was appropriated by Arab and Egyptian cultural producers to shed light on the socio-cultural processes of its shaping field. The relational reasoning, that is, positing western cultural impact as one of many factors, helps us better understand the interactive reality and

identify the field of power and the networks of factors operating within (p. 74). Case studies start with charges levelled at Abdu's version in the aspects of plot, genre structure and hybrid language. The charges are reevaluated by resorting to Bourdieu's term of power of naming, namely, the struggle over finding a definition for the field of drama translation in Egypt, and examining its autonomy and heteronomy, and the trajectory of early drama translators.

Chapter 4, *Translators' Agency and New Translation Products*, aims to describe the structural changes in the field of drama translation from commercially-orientated to prestige-seeking translations of Shakespeare's tragedies in Egypt during the 1920s. The agency of the new-generation drama translators, especially the most prominent writer, poet, drama translator and theatre administrator Khalīl Muṭrān, is explored in terms of the thematic and genre options, forms of capital and modes of production. The specific reasons underlying these structural changes introduced by newcomers are explored in detail. The rise of serious theatre, represented by the troupe of Ayaḍ, began to challenge the dominance of musical and comic theatres by Hijāzī, 'Azīz 'Īd and Najīb al-Riḥānī. This led to diverse positions along the continuum of autonomy-heteronomy in the field of drama translation, namely, (semi)-autonomous, (semi)-heteronomous positions occupied by translators in the field of drama translation. Khalīl Muṭrān's Arabic *Othello* provides an illustrative example to address the challenge of fidelity vs. acceptability faced by translators in diverse positions. Special emphasis is laid on Khalīl Muṭrān's habitus, trajectory, translation output and the subsequent canonization of his translations of Shakespeare's tragedies.

Bourdieu's two concepts of 'distinction' and 'social aging' are used in Chapter 5, *Explaining Retranslation*, to probe socio-cultural issues conditioning the production and consumption of retranslations, with particular reference to *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear* in Egypt. The traditional viewpoint of conceptualizing the aging translations, mainly in terms of the obsolete language, is challenged by the fact that some retranslators attempt to achieve distinction for their translations in the target culture by introducing new literary forms, targeting new audiences or advancing a certain ideological agenda. For Hanna, this 'aging' of translations is the declared outcome of a struggle between established translators and newcomers to the field (p. 161).

In terms of language register, using *fusha* (classical Arabic) has always been a doxic practice, i.e., the learned and unconscious belief that informs translators' actions and thoughts within the drama translation field in Egypt. This dominant medium of expression is associated with people occupying politically powerful and socially prestigious positions. The author, in Chapter Six, entitled *Breaking the Silence of Doxa*, showcases a few iconoclastic translations where 'āmmiyya (colloquial Arabic) was used, to investigate the reasons underlying Nu'mān 'Āshūr and Mustapha Safouan's challenging behaviours in the translation of

Othello. The reasons relate to the translators' different agendas: 'Āshūr is committed to modern social drama, while Safouan is dedicated to bridging the gap between the masses and the intellectuals, as well as liberating Egyptians from a prefabricated national unity that suppresses difference and downgrades diversity (p. 190). Nevertheless, Safouan's different stance on translation reveals some paradoxes in both his linguistic choices and targeted audience, showing the complexities in mapping cultural practices.

Based on the theoretical elaboration and empirical findings, Chapter 7, *Toward a Methodology for a Sociology of Translation*, seeks to reflect upon the feasibility of Bourdieu's sociology and provides insight into a proposed relational methodology for Translation Studies that aims to accommodate different translation phenomena and address various questions.

Bourdieu in Translation Studies offers a detailed and comprehensive investigation of the various socio-cultural conditioning factors within the field of drama translation. The book is characterized by its systematism in theoretical elaboration and innovative perspective on the genesis and development of drama translation in Egypt. It integrates all of Bourdieu's conceptual tools in the study of drama translation, moving beyond the previous studies, which are mostly focused on translation and interpreting in general (Sela-Sheffy, 2005) or merely draw upon Bourdieu's concept of habitus (Meylaerts, 2008).

Hanna's empirical research proves to be feasible in its three-step methodology: firstly, he situates translation in the social and historical processes by regarding drama translation as a field of power and by exploring its internal structure and inherent characteristics; secondly, he maps the changes in position-taking of translators within the field of drama translation by tracing their trajectories both in habitus-forming education and in translation experience; lastly, he compares synchronically different translators' versions to investigate the driving force for the struggle among translators and elucidate translation phenomena both present and in the future. Hanna's field-orientated research distances itself from previous static conceptualizations of translation and takes account of the wider socio-cultural and political space in which the field of translation is located, lifting sociological Translation Studies to a new level.

However, it should be noted that the book has some weaker points as well. Firstly, the interdisciplinary nature of Translation Studies calls for exploration of Bourdieusian theory of translation in relation to other sociological theories that have emerged and are equally relevant to Translation Studies. Among them, Bruno Latour's actor-network theory and Niklas Luhmann's systems theory are increasingly applied in Translation Studies. If they prove to be complementary, there will be a new vista for future sociological Translation Studies.

Secondly, although the book endeavours to answer a wide range of questions through case studies of the translations of Shakespeare's great tragedies in Egypt, some conclusions need to be tested on a wider range of translators from different cultural backgrounds and historical periods. Obviously, Hanna's work is a synchronic study that compares translations by different translators in Egypt during the same period, leaving the diachronic research to be conducted in the future.

Thirdly, Hanna argues that newcomers strive to introduce new modes of thought and expression, inducing a reorganization of the hierarchy of available positions. This viewpoint appears to be problematic in light of Sela-Sheffy's findings (2005, p. 7) that novice translators also adopt elaborate Hebrew style as veterans do and use it as an eccentric and highbrow trait to stand out from their peers, which endows them with the powerful position of gate-keepers instead of change-makers. In the same vein, even renowned veteran translators rely on revolutionary approaches to keep their waning symbolic capital, especially considering the changes that took place in different historical and cultural backgrounds for their translations. Additionally, there are some minor errors, such as Figure 2.7 (p. 58), since the mode of stage translation obviously belongs to theatre production instead of literary production, an oversight which, I believe, will be revised in future reprinting.

Overall, Hanna's *Bourdieu in Translation Studies* offers a comprehensive investigation of the field of drama translation and the dynamics of various conditioning factors, making it an important contribution to sociological Translation Studies. The author's long experience in the sociological study of translation and his working background make his analyses profound, both in depth and width, and provide insightful directions for future research. Therefore, this book is a highly recommended must-read that has much to offer to anyone interested in the field.

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