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“Stop Read Listen”: A Review of *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and the City*, edited by Tong King Lee (Routledge, 2021)

At least since Sherry Simon published *Cities in Translation* in 2012, the city has become a major trope for translation theory and translational thinking. This is not to say that geographic spaces (Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, 1995), linguistic landscapes (Shohamy et al., *Linguistic Landscape in the City*, 2010), literary representations (Cronin, *Translating Ireland*, 1996), or the reconstruction of memory and historical trajectories of multicultural spaces and societies had not existed as areas of interest before that. What has characterised endeavours in this field over the last decade, however, is an increasing inter- and transdisciplinarity, where academics not only take time to read beyond their specialties, but also engage with artists, activists, and colleagues interested in phenomena tied to language, translation, and urban space in joint publications, conferences, and open public events. The notion of cities in translation inevitably includes an understanding of cities as transformable and transforming entities. To study these, a multitude of approaches has been developed ranging from the *flâneuse*, or *flâneur* (Canan Marasligil; Andre Furlani) to the excavation of institutionalised forms of language and translation policies in archives (Lieven D’hulst) or approaching translation in and of the city as embodied experience (Zhu Hua and Li Wei; Randa Aboubakr)—all discussed in the *Handbook*.

The Routledge Handbook of Translation and the City, edited by Tong King Lee, comprises 26 chapters that bring to life this decade-long transdisciplinary encounter. Structured in four parts, it starts by laying



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theoretical foundations and portraying methodological trajectories used to analyse the relationship between translation and the city. The second part focuses on policies and institutions, the third on translation as praxis, and the fourth on translation as trope. Throughout the *Handbook*, the reader finds historical and contemporary reconstructions, work based on literary translations, analyses rooted in ethnographic observations, as well as rich reflections by curators and artists. As a truly transdisciplinary enterprise, the *Handbook* contains contributions by scholars of international relations, translation, and education, historians, comparatists, and linguists, curators and practitioners, as well as translators, freelance writers, and artists. Since it is impossible to discuss the content of all the chapters in detail here, I shall try to weave a thread of four recurrent tropes that connect different chapters in this fascinating volume.

1. *Translation and multilingualism in the city are a spatial phenomenon.* Sherry Simon writes of sites of translation, referring to zones and spaces that host stories and transcultural encounters; Carmen África Vidal Claramonte addresses notions of the time-space continuum to conceptualise translational spaces of the between, where power defines agency to influence human mobility, but also the flow of ideas and therefore the question of how, where, and when translation takes place. This set of questions, then, relates to how translation and the city form identity, dealing with cultural heterogeneity and unequal power relations. Federico Italiano reflects on maps as spaces of representation of power. Contrasting the concepts of the map and the territory, he demonstrates the transformative power of maps as tools for constructing boundaries; he traces their evolution over time—from 13th-century Florence to the cartographic representation of Tenochtitlan in 1521, and onward to Calcutta in 1887 and New York in the 1980s. Spaces of translation are also present in many other contributions, entailing institutions such as street markets, schools, churches, or publishing houses. One chapter touches upon the “karate club” as a space of translanguaging (Zhu Hua and Li Wei), another discusses contested, multilingual, and translated political messages on the walls of Cairo (Randa Aboubakr), and yet another, the representation of empire(s) on the streets and sculptures of Lemberg/Lwów/Lviv (Irene Sywenky). Rita Wilson highlights the fact that translations give rise to novel phenomena that exist independently of both the source and target contexts. Drawing on literary works, she guides her readers through the street markets of Melbourne, exploring their rich multimodal forms of communication. The concept of space serves as a compelling framework for understanding the multifaceted dynamics of translation and translanguaging, as well as the nationalistic, economic, and cultural power struggles inherent in linguistic representations within both public and less visible urban spaces.

2. *Multilingualism and translation in the city are the norm, not the exception.* Another recurring theme in this volume is the ubiquitous presence of translation and multilingualism in the city. In historical analysis, this is illustrated by the changing language policies in Brussels (Reine Meylaerts) or Istanbul (Şule Demirkol Ertürk), where translation is as much an object as a medium of remembrance, bringing to life the history of refugees and the persecution of minorities, both intrinsically connected to recurring shifts of imperial rule. Likewise, the many layers of multilingualism are addressed in chapters analysing linguistic landscapes. Patrick Heinrich offers a harsh evaluation of the changing language regimes in Tokyo's public sphere by illustrating how language-policy decisions taken in connection with the Olympics were driven by the motivation of representing certain languages rather than taking into account the actual needs for linguistic diversity to facilitate communication. Tereza Spilioti and Korina Giaxoglou analyse strategies of translanguaging and transcribing (the use of specific features of one language, such as spelling or script, in another language) in different types of urban spaces in Athens, ranging from the airport to graffiti in high schools and squats. The chapters of this *Handbook* illustrate very convincingly that the co-existence of languages in the city results from processes of globalisation and forms a marker of cosmopolitanism, at the same time illustrating historical layers of colonisation, settlement, and repression.

3. *Translation and multilingualism in the city are contested, transient, and ephemeral.* This observation can be found in many chapters. In an autoethnographic manner, Myriam Suchet and Sarah Mekdijian offer a counter-mapping of the city in Dakar, retracing their steps in the Niayes dominated by contrasts, such as the lack of running water in the communities and its presence on an abandoned golf course. Their recurring counter-mappings—on paper, film, or sand—contest dominant representations of the city and create a dialogue with the authorities and their representations of space, identity, and language. Hunam Yun understands cities as palimpsests of desires that keep being rewritten and transformed over time: she draws on literary productions to gather narratives related to different languages present in the city. Narratives surrounding English, the language of the coloniser, are divided up into narratives fetishising this language versus those that see it merely as a vehicle of communication. Literary representations are also part of Andre Furlani's reconstruction of the duality in the two settler-colonial languages of Montréal/Montreal; the scholar concludes that translation is never neutral, and in this particular case it creates the possibility for English and French communities to avoid communicating directly, if they so wish.

4. *Translation and the city uncover traumas, memories, and dissonance.* Several contributions link translation, the city, and trauma. Anne Malena,

for instance, addresses US-American racism by finding its traces in long-forgotten translations tied to New Orleans. Malena compares translations to ghost stories, as they keep slipping away, and the evidence of their existence is often hard to ascertain. She does find travelogues of an Ursuline nun from the 18th century published in several editions in English and French that uncover how any person involved in settling these lands contributed to an imperialist venture; moreover, she analyses novels that represent the perspective of Creole populations. Similarly, Simon Harel addresses trauma—in the sense of that which resists conscious figuration and translation. He uses the notion of autophagy as a form of writing and translating primitive psychic mechanisms leading to psychic self-destruction: a powerful notion that requires careful re-reading and reflection before its full potential can be grasped.

The *Routledge Handbook of Translation and the City* captivates not only due to its rich contributions and the diverse locales which it traverses—spanning Lagos (Elena Rodríguez-Murphy), Delhi (Jaspal Naveel Singh), Tallinn (Federico Bellentani), New Orleans (Anne Malena), and Athens (Tereza Spilioti and Korina Gioxoglou)—but also by presenting a vast set of interdisciplinary methodological approaches. Readers will find ethnographies, linguistic analyses, historical reconstructions of translation policies, interpretations of literary productions, artistic research-creation projects, and decolonial interpretations, all weaved together. Besides the interesting content of this volume, it is important to note a practical feature: at the end of every chapter, each contributor provides suggestions for further reading, which makes this *Handbook* invaluable for graduate students and all interested readers. These recommendations encompass materials in the diverse range of languages represented in the chapters and reflect a broad spectrum of perspectives, often introducing angles that even specialists in the field may not have previously considered.

Translating the city will never end: neither as a practice, form of expression, embodied activity, nor as a rationalised form of analysis. Cities as living spaces will continue to host memories of violent transformations, of civil disobedience, of hope, fantasies, and identity formation.

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