

Epitextual excursions: Dutch translators acting as cultural mediators in the transnational movement of Afrikaans literature in the Low Countries

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The increased use of sociological concepts and frameworks within Translation Studies, the so-called “sociological turn”, developed from a growing awareness of the impact of translation within a given society and between different societies (Buzelin & Baraldi 2016:118). Heilbron and Sapiro (2007:95) identify several aspects which have to be considered within a sociological approach, namely the structure of the field of international cultural exchanges, the constraints that influence these exchanges (political and economic), the agents involved in the exchange and the processes of importing and reception in the target culture. According to Pym (2006:4) many translation scholars have ventured beyond the sociocultural dimensions of source and target texts, and are now including in their scope “who is doing the mediating, for whom, within what networks, and with what social effects”.

Meylaerts, Gonne, Lobbes & Sanz Roig (2017:67) defines a cultural mediator as “a cultural actor active across linguistic, cultural and geographical borders, occupying strategic positions within large networks and acting as a carrier of cultural transfer”.

Over a number of years, a group of Dutch translators have been active in both the Low Countries and South Africa, and occupied varied positions within the fields of publishing, academia and professional translator training, media and even diplomacy. This paper considers these mediating acts, focusing on their epitextual contributions.

It is clear that a translated text is not the only product (or even focus) of these translators' inputs and that they act in various degrees as cultural mediators. Their networks, knowledge and writing skills are regularly employed for the promotion of Afrikaans literature and (South African) culture in the Netherlands and Flanders. The possible impact of their epitextual contributions on the image of South Africa(ns) in the Low Countries, will be explored.

List of references:

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