

Constraints in translation

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Cambridge English dictionary (online)

- **Constraint** *noun*
- **UK** /kən'streɪnt/ **US** /kən'streɪnt/
- **C2 [C]** something that **controls** what you do by **keeping** you within **particular limits**:
- *The constraints of **politeness** wouldn't **allow** her to say what she really **thought** about his **cooking**.*
- ***Financial** constraints on the **company** are **preventing** them from **employing** new **staff**.*
- **[U]** formal **unnatural behaviour** that is sometimes the **result** of **forcing** yourself to **act** in a **particular** way:
- *She **tried** to **appear friendly**, but her constraint was **obvious**.*
- **under constraint** formal If you do something under constraint, you do it only because you have been **forced** to:
- *They **confessed**, but only under **severe** constraint.*



Keywords

[S]ignificant, binding words in certain activities and their interpretation;
they are significant, indicative words in certain forms of thought.
Certain uses b[ind] together certain ways of seeing culture and society
(Williams 1976: 15)



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Outline of talk

I. Translating constraints in theatre

- Translation across time
- Translation across culture
- Translation across language

II. Translating constraints in literature

- Translating constrained literature
- Translating within texts – translingual forms global market forces
- Translating within global market forces

III. Translating constraints – future directions

- Inter-medial translation
- Legal translation
- Health practice and translation



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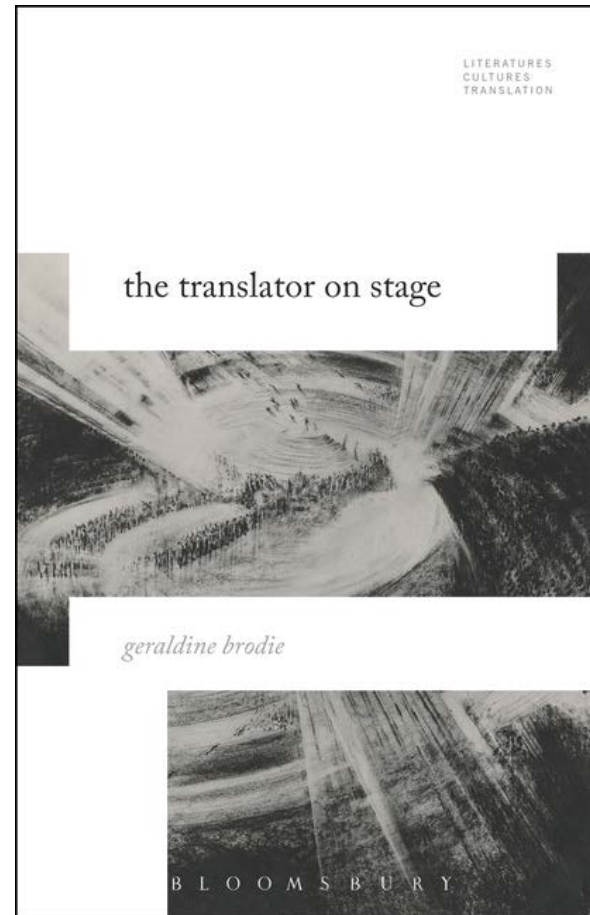
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Geraldine Brodie 2018



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Ariane Mnouchine, *Les Atrides* (1990-)



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To direct a classic means not only staging a *visible* text of course, but also in a way – and this is where lies the difference with contemporary texts – to direct a second *invisible* text which is made up of the memory of the visible text, its *history*, its *dust*.

(Mesguich 2011: 115)



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Mnouchkine chose to associate scholarship with her project intimately, so that her findings in the wording of the translation and in the staging of the plays could always be related to precise and argued decisions concerning the meaning and the syntax of the words.

(Judet de la Combe 2005: 275)



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Constraints of translating “classics”

- They are transcendent and timebound
- Translating to the contemporary stage means reading visible and invisible texts
- Strategy in performance is to make this clear



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Peter Brook, *Mahabharata* (1985-)



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Constraint of translating across cultures

- Juggle opposing forces of distance and proximity: “Indian and universal”
- Deal with the discrepancy between esteem held in source culture and anonymity in target
- Strategy is to put mediator on stage



Peter Brook, *Ring Round the Moon* (1950)



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Christopher Fry, *Ring Round the Moon*, papers (1949-50) V2

~~He slept all night under both her windows, Mr. Hugo, sir. Yes, Mr. Hugo~~
~~- - under both her windows. That's f~~Five nights now Mr. Frederick has
gone to bed in a rhododendron bush: you know, sir: the one on the
south side of the west wing, **beside that statue they call Calliope, a**
classical character, sir. **Every** ~~It's five mornings consecutive~~ the **house**
~~chamber-maid Maisie~~ has found his bed unrumped, and the gardener
~~Jones~~ has found the rhododendrons rumped. Well, it gives them a jolt,
Mr. Hugo, as who wouldn't it? I try to make light of it, ~~of course~~ **so as,**
to keep them in the dark; but one day they'll talk and Madam will hear
about it.



Christopher Fry, *Ring Round the Moon*, (1050) published version

Yes, Mr. Hugo – under both her windows. For five nights now, Mr. Frederick has gone to bed in a rhododendron bush: you know, sir, the one on the south side of the west wing, **beside that statue they call Calliope, a classical character, sir**. Every morning the housemaid has found his bed unrumped, and the gardener has found the rhododendrons rumped. Well, it gives them a jolt, Mr. Hugo, as who wouldn't it? I try to make light of it, so as to keep them in the dark: but one day they'll talk and Madam will know all about it.



Constraints of interlingual translation

- Balancing act between foreignisation and domestication
- Translating is like walking a tight-rope



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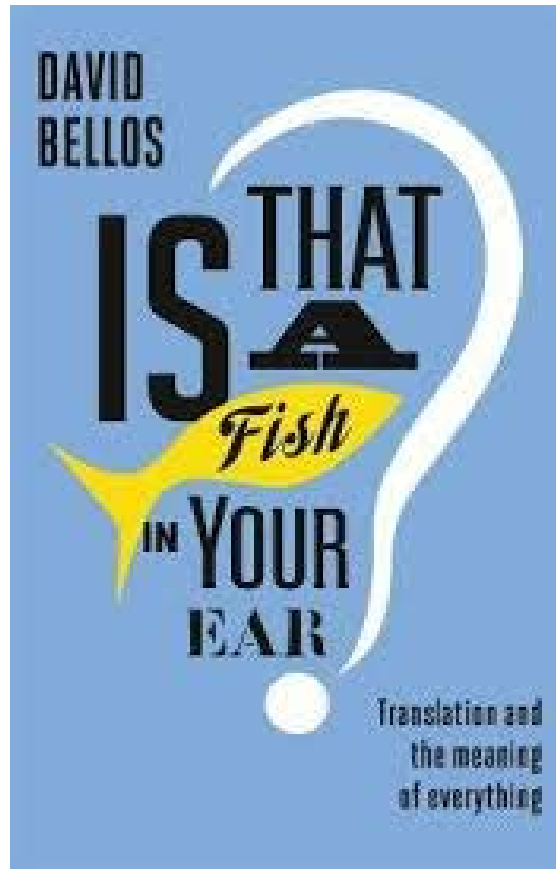
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Translating “constrained literature”



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Mischievous (Mis)translations: Outranspo

- “Longtemps je me suis couché de bonne heure”
[For a long time I used to go to bed early]
- => “Pour longtemps, je suis le premier menteur”
[For a long time I am/will be the best liar]



Constraints in translingual literature

- 2 languages translated into 1
- Negotiation of dual identity within a single dominant structure



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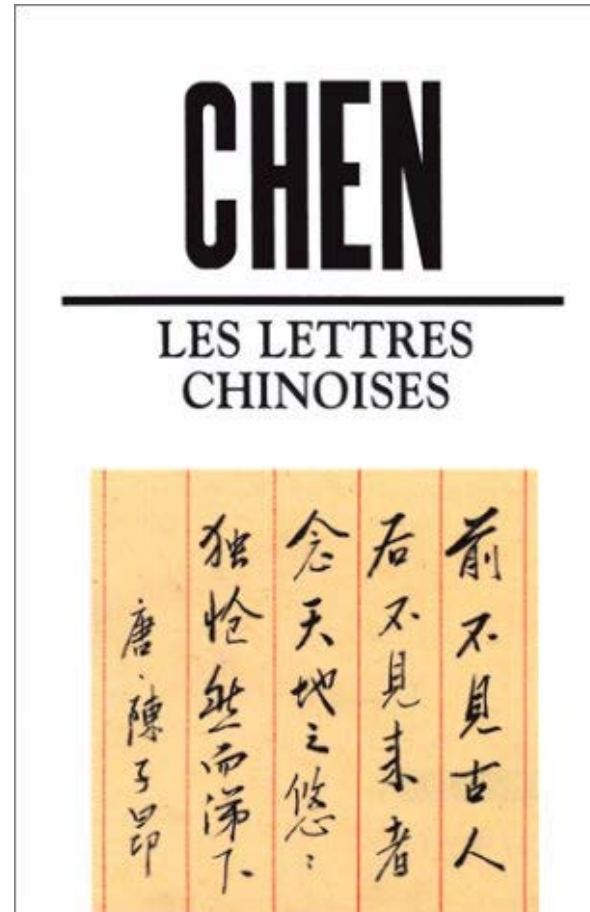
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Sino-French literature, Ying Chen, *Les Lettres Chinoises* (1993)



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Market constraints on translation

- Translations from English account for 59% of translations in global book market (literature + non-lit)
- Approx 2/3 of translations published in France come from English
- $\frac{3}{4}$ of translations in Laffont's "Best Sellers" collection are translations from English while French production makes up pretty much the other quarter



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Inter-medial translation



Constraints in legal translation

- Outsourcing as a constraining factor
- Linguistic constraints
- Relational constraints



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Constraints in interpreting and translation

- Who is authorised?
- Binding nature of their translation/interpretation
- High stakes



To sum up

- Constraint as a keyword is highly applicable to study of translation
- Applicable to many different areas
- Does not exclude creativity: opposite is true



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Thank you for listening

Questions?

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