

VISIBILITY AND JUDGEMENT IN TRANSLATION

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ABSTRACT: I am talking about the whole vexed question of whether visibility is always desirable in translations and whether foreignisation is always a good thing. I point out that the translations of authors which sell the most do NOT demonstrate the visibility of the translator, quite the reverse. I cite the first and the new translators of Asterix who insist that they must be invisible. I point out the over-simplification of Venuti's binary distinction between foreignisation and domestication, and I return to the terminology that Lefevere and I developed as to the role of the non-professional reader. Running through the talk is the question of how we evaluate a translation, and I refer to my own experience as a judge of many international prizes, also to the views of Horace Engdahl, former secretary of the Nobel prize committee. My conclusion asks why is it that scholars of translation and comparative literature have focussed so much on 'high' cultural texts, when evidence suggests that the texts which circulate most widely in translation are those read by non-professional readers.

BIONOTE: Susan Bassnett is Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Glasgow and Professor Emerita at the University of Warwick. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, a Fellow of the Institute of Linguistics and President of the British Comparative Literature Association. She is author of *Translation Studies*, 4th Edition (2014), *Constructing Cultures*, *Comparative Literature*, *Postcolonial Translation*, *Translation*, *Translation and World Literature*.



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