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Brand new translation, same old story? The perpetuation of female and racial stereotypes in (re)translation

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BRAND NEW TRANSLATION, SAME OLD STORY?
THE PERPETUATION OF FEMALE AND
RACIAL STEREOTYPES IN (RE)TRANSLATION

Katinka Zeven

1. A more recent translation does not necessarily make for a more sensitive approach to racial stereotypes.
2. Though the dominance of certain characteristics of translators is an issue for concern (certainly the lack of translators of colour), and the argument that a Black translator is the right person when it comes to translating works by Black authors is a valid one, the idea that skin colour ought to be a dealbreaker is not.
3. Translators have a responsibility not just towards their readers, but to society as a whole in challenging the perpetuation of negative gender and racial stereotypes by becoming aware of their own unconscious biases.
4. Corpus stylistic tools are useful, but they lack the sophistication of close readings when the aim is to identify the more subtle stylistic choices affecting readers' perceptions.
5. Translation training can benefit from using reception studies to instil an awareness in students of the potential impact of their translations.
6. Edward Said's insight that even "single phrases" may "contain a whole library of meanings" does not take away from the fact that some phrases have a single meaning.
7. Mistranslations are not always caused by misinterpretations of the source text; they are sometimes caused by misreadings.
8. Using AI fundamentally flouts the idea that translating literature requires empathy, sensitivity and an inquiring mind.
9. Whereas the quote "Translation is like a woman. If it is beautiful, it is not faithful. If it is faithful, it is most certainly not beautiful." was used for ages without being challenged all that much, the world would have been up in arms if it had read "Translations are like men. No matter what people say about them, they are always inadequate."
10. Meritocracy is an illusion.
11. The debates on the origin of chicken tikka masala and on the edibility of Marmite illustrate that the importance attached in the UK to matters culinary is grossly underestimated.