

Around the World in English: The Production and Consumption  
of Translated Fiction in the UK between Cosmopolitanism and Orientalism

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## **Abstract**

This thesis analyzes discourses of identity construction in the production and consumption of translated fiction in the contemporary British book culture. Drawing from ethnographic methods, it investigates what middle class, engaged readers make out of the translated novels they read, particularly in the ways that these books have been produced and marketed to them. The study concludes that translated fiction illustrates the multilayered meaning structures regarding taste and identity in reading communities and in the publishing industry in contemporary Britain.

The theoretical framework of the thesis is based on sociological and anthropological studies on identity, intercultural communication and the consumption of art, alongside theories of reading and literary exchange from literary studies and translation studies. Data for the analysis on reading has been collected through participant observation/focus groups at over 30 book group meetings. Research methods also include interviews with individual readers and publishing industry professionals. Analysis of reading communities concentrates on responses to translated novels as texts that have undergone linguistic transference and as stories that portray other cultures. These responses are contextualized with the value orientations that arise from current trends of cultural consumption in the UK, such as monolingualism, cosmopolitanism and omnivorousness. The thesis also includes a case study on Turkish literature, exploring recent trends in literary production and the cultural role of literary translators.

The study reveals the complex inflections of taste and identity in the practices of the agents of print culture. The textual-linguistic dimensions of translated texts are often the subject of negative evaluations when readers do not recognize the agency of the literary translator as an artist. Moreover, the opportunity of cultural encounter enabled by the reading experience activates varying discourses of intercultural communication, depending on readers' cultural capital, their level of commitment to cosmopolitanism and the orientation of the book group's discussion. In the production and consumption of translated fiction, the tension that arises between the pleasure and distinction dimensions of literary products translates into dilemmas between exoticism and cosmopolitan egalitarianism.

Keywords: translated fiction, cultural consumption, intercultural communication, print culture

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