



Transfer: Journal of Contemporary Culture, 1, 2006, Valencia, Publicacions de la Universitat de València / Institut Ramon Llull, pp. 168, ISSN: 1886-2349.

This new English-language journal is an initiative from the Institut Ramon Llull as part of its role to promote Catalan language and culture outside of Catalan-speaking lands. As a journal of Catalan work in English translation, it may recall the now defunct *Catalan Writing*, but there is an important difference between the two. Whereas the focus of *Catalan Writing* was entirely literary, featuring literature and commentary in translation, *Transfer* is presented as a journal of culture and thought.

Furthermore, *Transfer* hopes to interest a wider audience through its own subject matter: it is not essentially about Catalan issues, ‘but rather will publish articles pertaining to international debates in the fields of contemporary thought and culture’ (3). Thus this journal aims to show what Catalan thinkers can bring to the international scene. Not only is this an opportunity for Catalan thinkers to have their work published in English, but it is also a chance to bring a Catalan perspective to the aforementioned ‘international debates’, highlighting Catalonia as part of Europe and the world itself. This is especially the case with articles by Joan F. Mira and the already internationally-renowned Manuel Castells. Indeed, whereas some may criticise the inclusion of Castells in such a publication (he is a prolific writer who publishes primarily in English), his presence provides a link between an international readership and Catalan thought (using the term in its widest possible sense, referring to thought on Catalonia by anyone and thought by Catalans about anything).

Some articles, though, seem (to the lay reader, at least) not to offer cutting-edge insights and sit uneasily amongst the others. Serrano’s article, for example, leaves the reader feeling that the piece is introductory rather than innovative.

There is a section of each volume that will be dedicated to Catalan issues, and here it covers the themes of Dalí, Barcelona’s

urban regeneration seen through film, and female characters set in Barcelona in Mercè Rodoreda's fiction. These themes, the first two especially, are clearly of international interest: Dalí is universally recognisable, and the theme of urban regeneration is current in many of the world's metropolises.

A sticking point with the journal is its intended readership, even as proclaimed by the journal's director.

This collection of articles will be addressed to essayists, thinkers and readers around the world who are interested in the topics *Transfer* deals with but, in particular, it is hoped they will attract the attention of other journals of culture and contemporary thought in all languages that might be interested in translating the writers and articles that appear in *Transfer*, not to mention publishers, literary agents and translators who specialise in the domains of research and contemporary thought. (3)

The 'in particular', allied with the fact that this is certainly an attractive volume featuring illustrations by Antoni Tàpies, leads us to believe that this is essentially a shop-front for the work and authors featured, as well as Catalan culture in general. Its usefulness for scholars and thinkers is limited, on the one hand due to its distribution (initial press releases stated that the journal would have 'presència a Internet', but at the time of writing little information about it is available on the Web), and on the other due to the translations. On the whole, it seems as though the translators have adopted a foreignising strategy (i.e. they stick closely to the syntax and lexical choices of the foreign language) and so some articles become difficult to penetrate. More serious is the elevated number of typographical errors, and errors such as 'politic parties' (73), and the use of the word 'Britons' when the context is linguistic variation in France (9): the reader can only assume that the term should be 'Bretons', and as such loses faith in the text.

The journal's academic rigour is called further into question with the translation of citations. For example, in Junyent's article, the text states the following:

Anthony Appiah, for example, defines 'postcoloniality' as 'the condition of what could be called, without the merest generosity, *comprador intelligentsia*: a relatively small group of writers and thinkers in the Western style and formed the Western way, who are intermediaries in the trade of cultural products from the capitalist world to the periphery. (114)

Appiah actually states that 'Postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia: of a relatively small, Western-style, Western-trained, group of writers and thinkers who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery' (Appiah 1996: 62).^{*} Laying arguments about wording to one side, there is a significant difference in the semantic import of the two phrases, and the first does not accurately represent the second. Furthermore, the fact that this is a selection of previously published texts means that there is some misleading information, especially if the articles are labelled as 'contemporary'. For example, in Rosa Congost's article, Pilar del Castillo is named as a current minister of the Spanish government (34) and Jordi Pujol as the president of the *Generalitat* (42). A translator's or editor's note could easily remedy this, as well as the oblique references to education policy (34). It must be remembered that the readership of this journal is different to that of the journal in which the articles were originally published, and corresponding changes should be made.

Hopefully in future volumes editors will be able to correct these errors, because the initiative is a good one. However, when mistakes mar what is supposed to be a showcase, at best they may be a nuisance, but at worst they may affect readers' views of the material itself: and when potential readers are foreign editors etc., to whom the journal is appealing, the journal's main purpose runs the risk of not reaching fruition.

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^{*} Appiah, K. A. (1996), 'Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?', in P. Mongia (ed.), *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, London, Arnold, pp.55-71.