

But Lhotzky has chosen not to load up his translations with notes, which was probably wise. This is not a scholarly edition but is clearly intended to be a singable collection. Whether that objective succeeds depends entirely on the reader's familiarity with the music; Lhotzky does point out that many of the songs are available on YouTube through Degenhardt's comprehensive website.

This book includes not only a thoughtful and insightful foreword by Lhotzky but also an extremely useful appendix listing the song contents (titles, not entire lyrics) from all of Degenhardt's recorded albums over his fifty-year career. Degenhardt was a politically engaged observer of Germany through its postwar ups and downs, not only the years of the Great Coalition of CDU and SPD, but up to and including reunification in 1990, after which he recorded nine CDs. Lhotzky includes only five song translations from this late period.

Traduttore traditore (the translator is a traitor) is no less true now than when it was first expressed in the context of translating Dante into French, and yet one would not therefore ask that translators stop trying. Lhotzky's attempts are a valuable service in sharing a good cross-section of one of Germany's most important *Liedermacher* with an Anglo-American audience.

Richard Rundell

David Trueba. *Blitz*. Translated from Spanish by John Cullen. New York: Other, 2016. 176 pages.

"Eventually I went back to sleep, and memory of the years we'd shared rolled through my mind, images evoked by nostalgia or spite," reflects Beto, the narrator and protagonist of David Trueba's 2015 novel *Blitz*, as he shares a Munich hotel room with the woman whose infidelity he has just discovered. Nostalgia or spite remain, generally, the underlying political message of this text, as some combination of these emotions leaves our narrator in a self-pitying quagmire. Explaining his decision to skip his flight back to Spain and stay in Germany after the landscape architecture conference that has brought them there, Beto tells us, "My inertia could be understood as petty revenge." Against his girlfriend, certainly. But, on a wider level, his inertia is a protest against the modern economy. The Eurozone crisis is the inevitable backdrop, the necessary explanation for this novel of crash, failure, and drift.

In the first half of what the Spanish publisher Anagrama Editorial marketed in 2015 as a “tragicomedia romántica,” a label Other Press has stuck with, our narrator travels to Munich with his gorgeous, failing-actress girlfriend. He is a more-or-less flailing landscape architect, living on the verge of poverty following the collapse of Spanish spending. She is his sidekick in his Madrid “firm,” a spare room in their apartment, where he designs projects that will never be built. For the Munich competition, he has designed a park for adults full of hourglasses, with the idea that they would transform the inevitable passage of time into something visual: “It would teach you to appreciate what three minutes were.” He discovers that his girlfriend has been cheating on him with her Uruguayan musician ex; he stays on in Germany for a few days, breaking his cellphone, checking his empty bank account, pushing a more successful Catalan colleague off-stage during a roundtable, and sleeping with a German woman twice his age, Helga. She arranges for his return flight, during which the Catalan architect offers him a job at his firm in Barcelona. He moves there, lives with a sexy, self-described “vampire” of a lesbian, sleeps with girls while keeping his distance, and eventually, impulsively, flies to Mallorca on New Year’s Eve to reunite with Helga.

Trueba (born in Madrid in 1969) has moved with success between cinema, literature, and journalism. Indeed, he has recently announced that *Blitz* will be adapted as a film. In all three areas, his work has been heavy on humor and heavy on leftism. Even while announcing the adaptation of *Blitz*, he explained that he bases his fiction on real life and uses it to solve real problems. However, a few years earlier, discussing his 2008 *Saber Perder*, the author said that he doesn’t try to do sociology in his books. All the same, the reader can decide whether it is politically engaged or merely heavy-handed to announce eighteen paragraphs into the novel: “The financial crisis had accustomed us all to a pretty ridiculous level of insecurity, in that we accepted degrading jobs and subhuman salaries in order to feel we were still stakeholders in the system and not yet reduced to beggary.” And the reader might judge, too, that this description of Beto is sociological: “One more Spanish immigrant in search of a promising future far from the tragedies of his country.” While we’re at it, it might be called “heavy-handed” foreshadowing to christen Helga (the Munich woman who will soon sleep with the young foreigner)’s cat Fassbinder.

Debate has buzzed within the Spanish literary community around the so-called *novela de la crisis*. Critics fume over the role of literature today, and the need for objectivity, anonymity, and collectivity; authors like Marta Sanz, Pablo Guitiérrez, and

Rafael Chirbes may be hailed as the great novelists of the crisis. Spanish disenchantment with the European and liberal dreams has sometimes translated into narratives that situate personal failure within larger political failure, so that sexuality, work, and nation are simply the devastated casualties of the recession. Critics like David Becerra have dismissed the so-called *novela de la crisis* as a nostalgic, hence conservative, ode to the way things were.

And in a way, *Blitz* is indeed nostalgic. Though Beto dismisses sentimentality as an “egocentric [...] nationalism of the self,” let us consider his theory of landscaping: “We need a mirror, a healing mirror, we need to fall in love with ourselves again, with the concrete, human fact of us, however imperfect they might be.” Or how he remembers his girlfriend: “On stormy-weather days, when the economy was staining everything with winning and losing, Marta was my refuge and my shelter.” Or his opinion on emoticons: “She knew I hated messages with emoticons and text symbols, irritating substitutes for real emotion.” Beto is a difficult narrator to like; he is self-pitying and self-indulgent, and a self-important and unappreciated genius buoyed by having a girlfriend who, he reminds us constantly, has a perfect body. Not only is she lovely, but she is self-abnegating: “I’ve already given up my dreams, and it’s enough for one of us to do that, she’d say on the days when I let my discouragement show.” Though Marta found Kiarostami films boring, for instance, he “assured her more than once that agitation was only an attempt to fill the essential void.” Well, then. On the other hand, Helga is a far more interesting and insightful character, weighing down Beto’s jejune recriminations with wise and wizened sobriety, and even Marta-of-the-apple-ass is, finally, out of his orbit. The Catalan landscaper turns out to be his real refuge and shelter. Ultimately, Beto’s sophomoric anger against the Catalan, the Uruguayan, and the beauty is misplaced, leaving us with a more ambiguous moral accounting. The only sure enemies, it seems, are capitalism and time itself.

Having dragged his suitcase to a park, Beto takes a picture of the suitcase on the grass and another of the building façades around him. “Saving the photos was like making a map in which I wouldn’t feel so lost,” he reflects. Indeed, pictures play a large role in this short book. Beto masturbates to old phone pictures of Marta; Helga points to old photographs of herself; Beto avoids photos of her family. He takes a photo of her postcard from Mallorca, and uses it to find her; he remembers taking photographs, with Marta, of el Palacio Real in the snow. His mother receives a digital photo frame for Christmas; Beto’s rival Alex receives occasional photographs from Helga. Photographs give the past weight, in

contrast to the shapelessness and drift of the present. In this way, Beto's compulsion to depict is a kind of sentimentality. This sentimental compulsion to record and hence preserve spills over into the physical book itself. On the cover of the Spanish edition is a drawing, purportedly a self-portrait, of Beto moving out of his and Marta's apartment, scratching his head, lanky, sloppy, in a sweatshirt, facing empty boxes and boxes and boxes. Berta Risueño's drawings and photographs add to the spontaneous, flighty feeling of the text. She gives us blueprint and 3D-rendering style illustrations of the hourglass park and, later, an hourglass phone application, as well as reproductions of Otto Dix paintings and Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Allegory of Good Government* fresco. The reader can thereby allow Beto (and Trueba) to skip the heavy lifting of ekphrasis, much as he skips the heavy lifting of describing or reproducing conversation.

We can thank John Cullen for bringing into English a contemporary Spanish author of such fame and this exemplary artifact of the Eurozone crisis. The English occasionally reads a bit awkwardly; Beto refers to the "friendliness and naturalness of her [Helga's] manner." However, this is no failing of Cullen; Beto narrates in a mixture of pretension and youthfulness, using the hoity noun "trato" in the original. Similarly, another sentence reads "Although I ventured a courteous nod in their direction, I preferred to descend the stairs with a certain haste" (in the original: "Yo les dirigí un gesto educado, pero preferí bajar por la escalera con cierta prisa.") In this case, the English comes off as equally formal, contributing to his aloofness and superiority. Also, Cullen might have kept the name of Madrid's Museo Reina Sofia and the internationally beloved food *tortilla* in Spanish, rather than rendering a "Queen Sofia" and an "omelet." Aside from these small faults, there is the larger question of translating Trueba's humor. A running joke of the novel's first half—the narrator calls his rival Alex Ripollés Alex Gilipollez ("gilipollez," which John Cullen glosses, means "bullshit")—may or may not be funny at all for an Anglophone audience.

It is no surprise that *Blitz* is being optioned for the big screen. It is visual, sexual, and comic. It functions on the surface, largely, with nearly all its profundity offered up in conversation and very, very little in private meditation. It is full of jokes, slapstick and otherwise, and full of easily digested anti-capitalism. "Blitz" means lightning bolt; the text revolves around hourglasses; and its theme, eventually, is time, and the loss of time. For a novel about such young people—or perhaps because it is about such young people—it seems constantly afraid of age, while simultaneously yearning for depth and permanence. Anagrama

Editorial published *Blitz* with Beto confused among his boxes on the cover; the lovely Other Press jacket shows an hourglass against a black background, flecks of gold floating away. At the cinema, we will see which *Blitz* takes the starring role: *la novela de la crisis, la tragicomedia romántica*, or the one of lightning bolts and hourglasses, of loss and dislocation.

Ann Manov

Dror Abend-David, ed. *Media and Translation: An Interdisciplinary Approach*. New York/London/New Delhi/Sidney: Bloomsbury, 2014. 365 pp.

Dror Abend-David, the editor of this fine collection of research papers, has been able to bring together in a collaborative effort 23 translation studies scholars from eight countries. He has also provided clearly-worded one-page introductory notes for each of the seven parts of this translation studies anthology. The book is about audiovisual translation in its multiple and all-pervasive manifestations.

The three chapters in Part I (Film Translation and Adaptation) elaborate on the classical Jakobsonian L1-to-L2 translation paradigm by suggesting a more nuanced methodology to analyze film as a text in the wide sociocultural sense. The methodology takes account of elements in another language or languages (that is, L2 in Jakobson's schema) such as idiolect, dialect (regional and social), peculiarities of style and diction, slang/jargon, and foreign accents incorporated in a film. These "extra" features are described as L3 (language 3) components of the film's text. This novel, more nuanced approach to film translation analysis is introduced briefly in the opening Chapter 1 and illustrated in detail in Chapter 2, which compares Quentin Tarantino's multilingual film *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) with its representations in the form of dubbed versions in German, Spanish and Italian. The three translations illustrate a complex simultaneous interplay of interlingual, intralingual, and semiotic factors and confirm the researchers' initial hypothesis that there is no one universal solution: the final unique mix of languages in the dubbed version of an L3-saturated film is determined by the specific source text of the film in its varying sociocultural settings and the professional competence of the translator/s. Chapter 3 further develops the general theme of Part I by examining the way in which Tsotsitaal (a South African township variety of slang) is represented in the English and French subtitled and dubbed versions of Oliver Schmitz's South African film *Hijack Stories* (2000).