

A hero with many faces - the frontiers of authorial identity in translated texts

Leonor Sampaio da Silva

University of the Azores, CHAM, Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, Ponta Delgada, Portugal

maria.ls.silva@uac.pt

Orcid: 0000-0002-4241-272X

Abstract

This paper is about identity in modern times, taken in its complexity as stated by Stuart Hall: a fragmented territory, with no stable “sense of self”, due to a set of “displacements” – geographical, social, cultural, and personal. Such displacements originate multiple contacts, which, in turn, cause changes that create experiences of doubt and uncertainty. Displacements and their consequent experiences assume extreme visibility in travel literature and take on a deeper hue when translation takes place. The present study is based on a translated version of a travel book written by two English brothers, who visited the archipelago of the Azores in 1838. The Portuguese translation, dated a century after the original book was published, and edited with the purpose of marking the one hundred and tenth anniversary of the authors’ arrival on the Azores, evinces how identity moves between unclear borderlines. Besides the authors’ and the translator’s voices, we can find the voice of two cultural traditions, two historical periods and geographical spaces in dialogue. The line separating worlds and words and the effort to make sense of them show how identity is in permanent formation and transformation.

Keywords: modernity, travel identity, translation, frontier, displacement