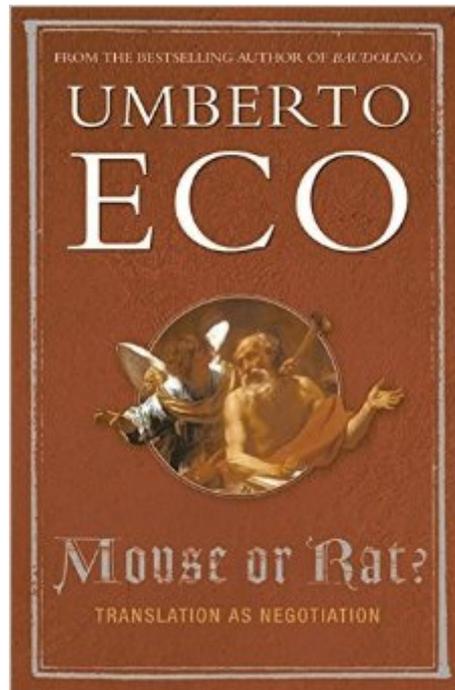


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Mouse Or Rat: Translation As Negotiation



Synopsis

From the world-famous author of *THE NAME OF THE ROSE*, an illuminating and humorous study on the pleasures and pitfalls of translation. 'Translation is always a shift, not between two languages but between two cultures. A translator must take into account rules that are not strictly linguistic but, broadly speaking, cultural.' Umberto Eco is of the world's most brilliant and entertaining writers on literature and language. In this accessible and dazzling study, he turns his eye on the subject of translations and the problems the differences between cultures can cause. The book is full of little gems about mistranslations and misunderstandings. For example when you put 'Studies in the logic of Charles Sanders Peirce' through an internet translation machine, it becomes 'Studies in the logic of the Charles of sandpaper grinding machines Peirce'. In Italian 'ratto' has no connotation of 'contemptible person' but denotes speed ('you dirty rat' could take on a whole new meaning!) What could be a weighty subject is never dull, fired by Eco's immense wit and erudition, providing an entertaining read that illuminates the process of negotiation that all translators must make.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

To judge by its premise, the respected Professor Eco wrote one of the most brilliant books. Many authors before him (George Orwell, e.g.) and including him (Eco, 'On Literature') attempted to answer the question 'how I write', but hardly anyone asked themselves 'How am I being translated into foreign languages, and what do I think about it'. Admittedly, to ask this question one needs to be able to answer it, and without Eco's knowledge of foreign languages it is impossible. If, however, like him, a reader knows at least one more language, apart from his native one, then 'Mouse or

Rat?' will be an engaging, at times merely hilarious, reading. Bearing in mind Eco's long-standing research into semiotics of language, literature and philosophy, this monograph of his is at times a curious self-assessment of Eco the linguist, philosopher, writer and, in fact, translator. This 'personal' aspect must always be remembered. In spite of drawing general conclusions, the book is often an analysis of Eco's own experience in engaging with professionals who translated his works. Eco argues - powerfully and convincingly - that translation is a negotiation between two cultures, and not merely two linguistic systems, which thesis cannot, of course, be regarded as the new word in Translation Studies. Strictly speaking, he does not attempt to formulate any new ideas, and shows great respect to Steiner's 'Before the Babel'. His main goal is therefore to illustrate the application of different translation techniques (ekphrasis, rewriting, foreignising and domesticating of the source text, adapting for screen, etc.) to a variety of texts and then to analyse the results from the point of accuracy and equivalence.

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