



# Borrowed Tongues: Life Writing, Migration, and Translation

*Eva C. Karpinski*

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*Borrowed Tongues* is the first consistent attempt to apply the theoretical framework of translation studies in the analysis of self-representation in life writing by women in transnational, diasporic, and immigrant communities. It focuses on linguistic and philosophical dimensions of translation, showing how the dominant language serves to articulate and reinforce social, cultural, political, and gender hierarchies.

Drawing on feminist, poststructuralist, and postcolonial scholarship, this study examines Canadian and American examples of traditional autobiography, autoethnography, and experimental narrative. As a prolific and contradictory site of linguistic performance and cultural production, such texts challenge dominant assumptions about identity, difference, and agency.

Using the writing of authors such as Marlene NourbeSe Philip, Jamaica Kincaid, Laura Goodman Salverson, and Akemi Kikumura, and focusing on discourses through which subject positions and identities are produced, the study argues that different concepts of language and translation correspond with particular constructions of subjectivity and attitudes to otherness. A nuanced analysis of intersectional differences reveals gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, and diaspora as unstable categories of representation.

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