I often thought that translation, which I've done a good deal of, is really impossible, and I always mention this high expectancy that people have of translation. For some reason, they think that a book in Spanish, Portuguese, Urdu, or any other language can be reproduced in English. That, of course, is patently impossible. How do you reproduce the sounds? And then there's that question of reading, my theory is that translation is nothing but the closest possible reading you can have of a piece. But that book that we are reading is our book only. It doesn't even belong to the author. The author has given us this raw material, but as we read it, we are reading what we are thinking and what we see. So, every time a book is read by a great public, you have 10,000 subtly different books. And then, the translator puts it into another language. There's another reading. He is creating a different book by his own reading. And then, someone picks up the translation, three people pick it up, and they are now reading three different books of a book that is also a different book from the original. You see how we are getting down to those Russian dolls. One fits inside of the other and they are all the same doll, and yet they are different. That's why I think translation is impossible, because even the original book cannot be conveyed to the reader.

-Gregory Rabassa

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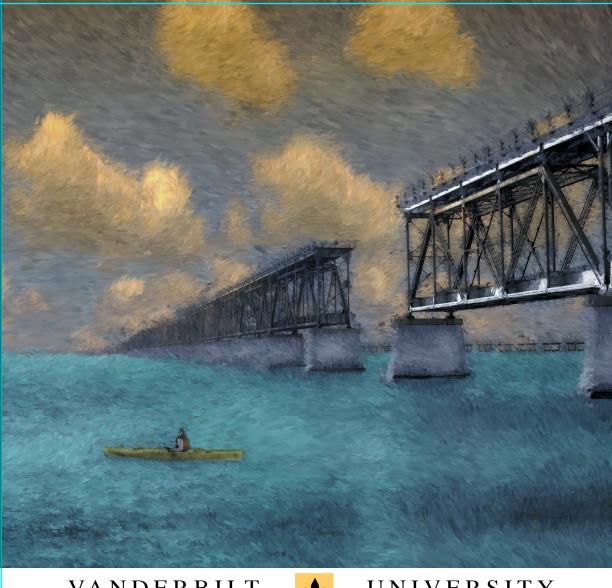
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BORDER CROSSINGS: Boundaries of Cultural Interpretation





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