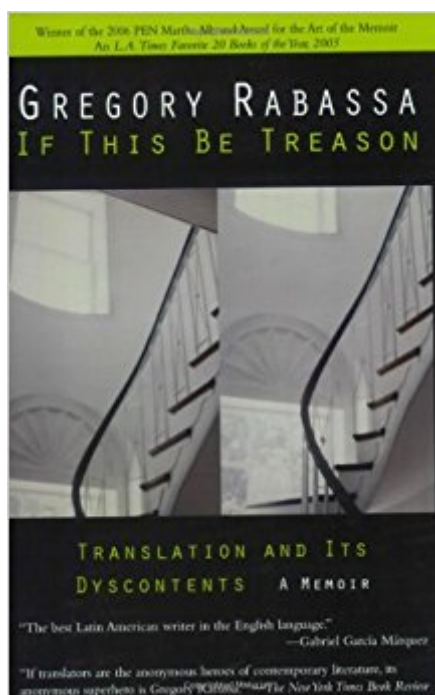


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# If This Be Treason: Translation And Its Dyscontents



## Synopsis

A Los Angeles Times Favorite Book of the Year for 2005. Gregory Rabassa's influence as a translator is tremendous. His translations of Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Julio Cortázar's *Hopscotch* have helped make these some of the most widely read and respected works in world literature. (García Márquez was known to say that the English translation of *One Hundred Years* was better than the Spanish original.) In *If This Be Treason: Translation and Its Dyscontents*, Rabassa offers a cool-headed and humorous defense of translation, laying out his views on the translator's art. Anecdotal and always illuminating, Rabassa traces his career from a boyhood on a New Hampshire farm, his school days "collecting" languages, the two and a half years he spent overseas during WWII, and his South American travels, until one day "I signed a contract to do my first translation of a long work [Cortázar's *Hopscotch*] for a commercial publisher." Additionally, Rabassa offers us his "rap sheet," a consideration of the various authors and the over 40 works he has translated. This long-awaited memoir is a joy to read, an instrumental guide to translating, and a look at the life of one of its great practitioners.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The leading U.S. translator of Latin American literature."

Gregory Rabassa was born in Yonkers in 1922. He studied at Dartmouth and, in 1942, volunteered for the Army, serving in the Office of Strategic Services. When he returned home after the war, he received a Ph.D. from Columbia. His translations of works by such literary giants as Jorge Amado,

Julio Cortázar, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Gabriel García Márquez have become classics. He is presently Distinguished Professor of Romance Languages and Comparative Literature at Queens College, New York.

I suppose this could be used as an example... of contextual emptiness and lighthearted self-absorption.

Rabassa's anecdotes make this text so much easier to take as opposed to those that are more oriented towards theory (and sometimes theoretical posturing). I am so lucky to have worked with one of his students in Literary Translation and all that he's had to share has been well received. He is indeed a great man.

If you are into translation and literature, this book is a gem, a joy to read. It is a senior master's view of the translator's art. Many interesting vignettes. A good read.

This was a gift to a friend who is still raving about it!

This is a collection of brief pieces by one of the currently better-known, and, probably, more successful translators. His translation of GGM's "One hundred years of solitude" is probably his most famous, but he's been very prolific, translating Brazilian Portuguese writers as well as Spanish. Some of the pieces deal with general ideas, the author's and others', about translation generally, but most of them are rather random remarks on his particular experiences translating particular authors, such as GGM, Donoso, Clarice Lispector, etc. The pieces offer no particular insight into these authors, it seemed to me, and in fact frequently recount mere personal acquaintance with these personages, running into people and obnoxious about, rather than literary matters as such. When literature per se comes up, we hear allusions that, for better or worse, many of us are not going to get. If you do in fact get them all, it's more likely that you'll enjoy this book. Or maybe not. Rabassa does in fact occasionally talk about specific problems in translating specific works, specific phrases, etc. In such cases he's interesting. It's not much of the book, though.

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