

Prophets and Pandemonium: creativity in the translating self

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ABSTRACT

In *Who Translates? Translator Subjectivities beyond Reason*, Douglas Robinson (2001) proposes a model of the self that he calls pandemonium. Pandemonium suggests a kind of disaggregated agency in which exterior and interior forces shape and are shaped by each other. As to translator subjectivity, these forces produce competing responses to a source text. This pandemonium model stands in opposition to the Western model, which Robinson considers a "spirit-channeling" model. In this model, the translator has no self; instead, the translator is simply a medium or machine through whom the original author speaks. To illustrate this model, Robinson uses the story of how Joseph Smith produced the *Book of Mormon*. Robinson then sets Smith aside. This choice is unfortunate, for Smith's story actually presents an interesting test case for the pandemonium model. Rather than a case of classic channeling, Smith's story represents a kind of creativity that successful translators need.

KEYWORDS: translator subjectivity, creativity, *Book of Mormon*, Joseph Smith.