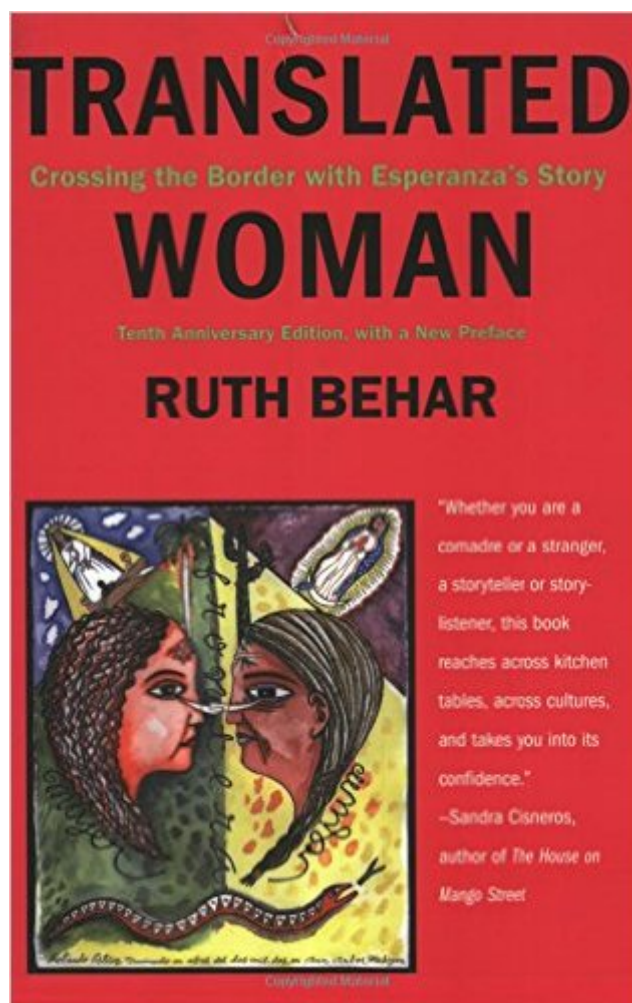


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Translated Woman: Crossing The Border With Esperanza's Story



Synopsis

Translated Woman tells the story of an unforgettable encounter between Ruth Behar, a Cuban-American feminist anthropologist, and Esperanza Hernández, a Mexican street peddler. The tale of Esperanza's extraordinary life yields unexpected and profound reflections on the mutual desires that bind together anthropologists and their "subjects."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Esperanza, a poor Mexican street peddler, is befriended by Ruth, an American anthropologist with Cuban-Jewish roots during the course of Ruth's fieldwork in Mexico. They become friends, comadres, and Ruth decides to tell Esperanza's story. Questions arise. Why does Esperanza want to tell Ruth the whole story of her life? Why does Ruth decide to record it? In what format will Ruth present that story so that North American readers can understand it? How will Ruth place that story into the framework of the anthropological profession or into the feminist discourse? Does she have to do that in a traditional way? Does Ruth have the right to Esperanza's story? Is she exploiting Esperanza, who, after all, can never come to the USA in person except, in the most unlikely of circumstances, as a servant? (Ruth can drive down to Mexico more or less at will.) Yes, of course it is Ruth who poses all these questions and then answers them. The result of these questions is a very interesting and iconoclastic book, which, though at times difficult to read, clearly raises many questions. TRANSLATED WOMAN might be called the archetype of a modern anthropological creation because 1) the author does not hide behind the curtains, but places herself

in the center along with the subject and 2) like current Anthropology as a field, it is so full of self-doubt, both personal and professional, that a reader perceives more questions than answers, the main one being, "if Ruth were so full of guilt and indecision about the merits of such a study, why didn't she just drop it?" I, for one, thought that if she felt it were wrong, then she shouldn't have continued, but if she did continue, then hand-wringing and meek self-castigating sentences were unnecessary.

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