Bassnett, S., & Johnston, D. (2025). *Debates in Translation Studies*. Routledge.

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Translation Studies (TS) is a vibrant discipline which evolves through intellectual debates along socio-cultural and ethical lines. *Debates in Translation Studies*, edited by Susan Bassnett and David Johnston, is a collection that not only charts main arenas of debate but also interacts with them using varied, cross-disciplinary viewpoints. This volume's thematic breadth ranges from some related historical issues to identity, trauma, activism, ecology, technology, and representation. It can, therefore, be considered a necessary intervention in contemporary TS debates which helps readers contemplate the discipline "from the complicated perspective of now" (p. 8). The introduction effectively delineates the intellectual boundaries of the book. It is timely in its focus on 'debate' and interdisciplinarity and it mirrors the permanent evolution of TS.

Susan Bassnett's opening chapter provides a historical overview of TS and traces the discipline's emergence as an independent field of study since the late 1970s when "the Leuven group, began to meet together in Belgium and the Netherlands to share ideas" (p. 13). Her analysis begins with Holmes' foundational essay that postulated the need for initiating a "meta-discussion" or examining "the subject itself" (Holmes, 2000, p. 183), a coherent scholarly framework, and collective terminology in translation research. Believing that in neither linguistics nor literature studies "was there an adequate language to use when discussing translation", Bassnett strongly criticizes the long-standing marginalization of translation from these two fields of studies and emphasizes the discipline's attempt at academic respectability (pp. 14-15). Importantly, Bassnett characterizes the late 20th century as an era of socio-political change in which translation experienced renewed vigor, driven by world events like the eradication of apartheid and the fall of the Berlin Wall. She highlights the role of these "major world events" in the take off of the TS as an academic field of study in the 1990s, because they "led to a re-estimation of the importance of translation" (p. 15). This context emphasizes translation act as a cultural practice which is engaged intricately with power, ideology, and identity. Bassnetts' debate of the cultural turn, which moves

attention from linguistic equivalence to larger sociocultural negotiation, appropriately highlights people like Lawrence Venuti and Gideon Toury whose ideas call into question simplistic transfer theories. Bassnett's chapter is notable for its comprehensive historical context and theoretical insight. Her examination of the socio-political aspects of translation is particularly pertinent, as is her critique of the degree to which the discipline has experienced marginalization. Nonetheless, the chapter could more directly address the implications of technological revolutions—such as MT and artificial intelligence (AI)—for the discipline's future.

Federico Italiano presents an engaging and innovative metaphorical exploration of the resemblance between translation and mapping (p. 32). He argues that both practices involve processes of decontextualization and recontextualization through which meaning is reorganized spatially and semiotically. Italiano's use of critical cartographic theory and Roland Barthes' ideas emphasizes how maps and translations alike produce narratives rather than neutral or unbiased representations. His argument extends to the digital era, examining applications like Google Maps alongside machine translation (MT), highlighting tensions between cultural complexity and immediacy. According to him, "maps are both translation devices and translation sites and that translation is not only a spatial operation but a multi-level process of re-orientation and mapping" (Italiano, 2016, p. 39). Italiano's interdisciplinary approach is praiseworthy since it creatively connects semiotics, cartography, and translation. His use of historical and contemporary examples enhances the study and deepens the analysis, and his critical assessment of technological reductionism is timely. However, the chapter could benefit from a more explicit discussion of practical applications—such as how these ideas could inform translation practice or urban planning. It could also benefit from further elaboration on case studies to make its rich theoretical arguments more tangible.

Sharon Deane-Cox's chapter on "translation and trauma" argues how translation can function as a means of communicating and processing both clinical and cultural trauma (p. 42). Employing "trauma theory" to illuminate translation's potential restorative role, she allows narratives of suffering and loss to find voice across linguistic and cultural borders (p. 50). Notably, Deane-Cox foregrounds the ethical dimensions translators encounter while dealing with trauma narratives, and calls for awareness of whose trauma is muted or privileged. By incorporating Memory Studies scholar Erll's (2020, p. 44) concept of "ecologies of trauma", she promotes a holistic understanding that bridges individual and collective experiences. Deane-Cox's chapter is remarkable for its nuanced engagement with trauma theory and its practical relevance for translators. Her emphasis on the ethical dimensions of translating trauma is principally valuable, as is her consideration of the constraints of language. Nevertheless, the chapter could benefit from a more in-depth examination of reducing the potential risks of retraumatization and misrepresentation in translation practice. Therefore, while rich in theoretical depth, the provision of practical examples of trauma translation in specific contexts could enhance its applicability for educators, translators and researchers.

Paul Bandia's notion of "reparative translation" constitutes a powerful intervention aiming at decolonizing the field. Introducing the concept of "translation as reparation" for the first time in 2008 (Bandia, 2008), he aimed "to call attention to the particular relation of translation to the specific history of peoples and cultures forever defined by the experience of colonisation and slavery" (Bandia, 2025, p. 58). He critiques mainstream Eurocentric translation theories for

neglecting the cultures and histories of marginalized communities rooted in colonialism, slavery, and dispossession. Bandia innovatively connects reparative translation with restorative justice principles—repair, encounter, transformation— suggesting that translation serves as a socially engaged practice that confronts enduring inequalities. His call for activism-minded translating strongly aligns with the current global movements for racial and gender equity. The chapter's theoretical rigor is palpable; yet incorporating specific case studies showcasing reparative translation in action could inspire praxis-informed scholarship and concretize the framework he proposes.

Michael Cronin investigates the association between translation and the Anthropocene, utilizing ecological and postcolonial perspectives to analyze a "translational rift" that disrupts the relationship between humans and the environment. Drawing on literary translation instances like David Diop's novel, originally published in French as *Frère d'âme* (2019) and translated into English by Anna Moschovakis as *At Night All Blood is Black* (Diop, 2021), Cronin illustrates how translation functions as a mediator of violent histories and cultural disruptions inherent in colonial extraction. Cronin's combination of postcolonial theory, ecology, and TS underlines translation's ethical import in dealing with planetary crisis. Cronin's chapter could have been further strengthened by empirical or real-world examples of translation projects oriented toward ecological justice.

Dorothy Kenny explores the ongoing evolution of translation technology, concentrating on the advent of neural machine translation (NMT) and generative AI. She notes a significant difference in perspectives: whereas multilingual news production is increasingly utilizing machine translation (MT) for efficiency, literary translators exercise considerable caution towards MT owing to its limitations and ethical considerations. As she contends "the complete exclusion of MT from what is considered translation potentially sets literary translators on a course that will see them increasingly at odds with theoretical translation studies" (p. 100). Kenny's profound analysis underscores translation's sociocultural embeddedness and foregrounds concerns regarding the retaining of human creativity and job insecurity. She urges TS researchers to critically engage with emerging technologies to guarantee human-centered, ethical application. The theoretical perspectives presented in Kenny's chapter could be enhanced by an extensive examination of practical mitigation strategies or collaboration frameworks involving humans and machines.

Neil Sadler's chapter examines "datafication" as a fundamental characteristic of twenty-first-century translation workflows. Cautioning against the biases inherent in training datasets and the opacity surrounding data practices, he considers datafication as a future-shaping phenomenon which has not yet received the attention it truly deserves. Sadler emphasizes the effects of "datafication" on translator labor, translation quality, and ethics, and discusses translation memories, cloud platforms, and algorithmic decision-making. Asserting that TS plays a crucial role in analyzing and influencing the technological evolution of the discipline, he advocates for enhanced transparency and accountability and highlights the role of "analytics translators" (Henke et al., 2018) as mediators between "technical specialists and other parts of businesses". The chapter situates translation within broader sociotechnical systems and offers a crucial perspective on contemporary challenges. The chapter could be strengthened through more empirical validations and studies concentrated on the experience of users.

Lisha Xu sheds light on the practice of TS in China, highlighting its profound ideological and cultural importance. She maps the field's evolving status from a marginal subfield to a major

academic endeavor closely aligned with national identity and diplomatic objectives, especially in light of government initiatives that promote China's narratives on the global stage. Emphasizing the tensions between Western theoretical frameworks and the demand for culturally specific, localized approaches, Xu elaborates on "the anxiety of representation" experienced in negotiating China's image abroad (p. 125). Her support for collaborative and dialogic approaches fosters connections among scholars and practitioners in transcultural exchange. Xu's chapter presents a compelling account of how TS intersects with geopolitics and cultural diplomacy. Nevertheless, the chapter could include more tangible examples of successful collaborative translation practices or some case studies that illustrate the challenges and opportunities faced by translators in China. Such instances would augment the chapter's applicability and give readers a clearer understanding of the practical implications of Xu's arguments.

Catherine Boyle offers an ethnographic and performative perspective on translation as a collective, embodied practice, influenced by her theater work with the "Out of the Wings" project (p. 141). She contends that translation has the power of building communities, disrupting monolingualism, and challenging dominant narratives through multilingual performance. Boyle's use of the word "throat"—a metaphor for voice and silence—effectively conveys the ethical and creative stakes in translation labor. Referring to "the density of words growing in the imagination and then into practice in the re-naming and -shaping of our worlds", and associating translation with "worldmaking", Boyle enriches understandings of translation beyond mere texts into the realms of social and political praxis (p. 144). Although the focus on the collective nature of translation is impressive, there seems to be a possibility of underemphasizing the individual agency of translators.

Sarah Maitland explores the principles and philosophies underlying assessments of translation quality. Drawing on Walter Benjamin and her own experience with translation awards, she critiques oversimplified notions of 'fidelity' and 'accuracy'. Foregrounding the translator's interpretive agency, Maitland courageously affirms that translators are never accountable for what the work they produce might mean to the target text's readers. This way of thinking reveals translation as an act of creative authorship that is shaped by cultural contexts. Maitland believes that it is more realistic to consider translations as dynamic cultural artifacts rather than static reproductions. Pointing out that "while the translator is always responsible for what they write in the translation, *the translator is not responsible for what the translation means to its reader*" (p. 161, original emphasis), Maitland argues that the act of judging a translation is essentially tied to the reader's experience. Although Maitland's focus on the reader's experience is noteworthy, it seems scant attention is devoted to the ethical responsibilities of translators. The chapter could have presented a debate on the potential consequences of the choices made by translators, principally in cases where the issues of culture and power cannot be overlooked.

Asserting that both translation and travel are "closely associated with real or metaphorical movement", Loredana Polezzi undertakes an intersectional reading of gender, travel, and translation through the life and writings of Isabelle Eberhardt, whose fluid identities make the reader think about the nuances of cultural representation (pp. 168-169). Moreover, Polezzi metaphorically observes a profound "affinity" between translation and travel, since both deal "with the apprehension and appropriation of what is perceived as linguistically and culturally distant' (p. 169). Highlighting the ethical responsibilities of editors and translators, Polezzi traces editorial and

translational interventions that have both uncovered and obscured Eberhardt's gender and cultural fluidity. Her study emphasizes how translation shapes and challenges cultural narratives, urging for queer and postcolonial perspectives to enrich and deepen such exploration. The chapter could benefit from a meticulous analysis of the potential effects of their interventions, mainly in cases where cultural nuances are at stake.

Roberto A. Valdeón revisits the historical and current significance of translation in news reporting. Challenging prevailing perspectives or dominant views that sideline translation in journalism, he contends that translation is at the heart of news production, rewriting, encompassing editing, and cultural adaptation. In contrast to Schäffner (2012) and Davier (2015) who preferred not to use the term "transediting" for translating journalistic texts, more recent researchers' (e.g. Qin & Zhang 2020; Zanettin 2021) use of the term points "to the fact that the debate remains very much alive" (p. 193). Valdeón's subtle examination of global news outlets reveals translation's ideological and practical complexities in shaping information flows and public discourse. He supports closer collaboration between translation experts and journalism practitioners to better understand these dynamics. Although Valdeón's focus on the complexities of translation is commendable, there might be a risk of underemphasizing the ethical responsibilities of journalists.

Debates in Translation Studies, as a whole, constitutes a vital and rich scholarly tapestry, accurately reflecting the contentious and evolving nature of the discipline. Its chapters collectively show translation's various roles—as a political agent, a cultural mediator, a creative endeavor, an ethical practice, and technological labor—in a rapidly globalizing, digitizing world. The book goes beyond traditional paradigms to address contemporary problems faced by translators by incorporating interdisciplinary approaches and foregrounding issues of activism, identity, justice and power. The editors and contributors advocate for a TS that is ethically engaged, self-reflexive, and receptive to dialogue with other disciplines. By prioritizing 'debate' as both a method and a value, the book exemplifies the sort of critical engagement required for the discipline's sustained development. While some chapters could benefit from a more in-depth exploration of practical implications or technological advances, the volume, in general, stands as an indispensable guide and a valuable resource for individuals aiming to comprehend the intricacies of translation.

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Editorial notes

Authorship contribution

Conceptualization: M. Afrouz, N. Asgari Vartooni
Writing – Review and editing: M. Afrouz, N. Asgari Vartooni

Research dataset
Not applicable.

Funding
Not applicable.

Approval by ethics committee
Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest
Not applicable.

Data availability statement
The data from this research, which are not included in this work, may be made available by the author(s) upon request.

Publisher
Cadernos de Tradução is a publication of the Graduate Program in Translation Studies at the Federal University of Santa Catarina. The journal *Cadernos de Tradução* is hosted by the Portal de Periódicos UFSC. The ideas expressed in this paper are the responsibility of its authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the editors or the university.

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Article history
Received: 13-08-2025
Approved: 04-03-2026
Revised: 19-03-2026
Published: 03-2026