

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: The Seven-Year Itch

Translation Matters has reached the end of a seven-year cycle. And like many married couples after a similar period of time, it is starting to feel the itch for change.

A lot has happened in those seven years. When the journal was first launched back in 2019, it was a small provincial affair, edited solely by myself and Gisele Dionísio da Silva (who had extensive editorial experience, having worked for years at an academic publisher in Brazil). It aimed to be, above all, a training journal for the various students of translation that were coming through the ranks at our university and other institutions with which we had close ties. Consequently, most of the contributors to the first issue, and to the general issues that followed, had a personal relationship with us in some way: they were our students, our colleagues, people that we knew from conferences, and *their* students and colleagues.

In those early years, Gisele and I put a lot of effort into those articles, working intensely with the authors to ensure that their offerings were of a standard to be presented to an international public. Being an online journal, *TM* had an exposure that print journals did not have. We were aware that, if we made mistakes at this stage, and brought out an issue that was substandard, we couldn't just pile those unwanted copies into a cardboard box and push it to the back of a cupboard. The mistake could never be erased but would colour our reputation for years to come. Hence, we scrupulously requested peer reviews – usually from our immediate colleagues and friends – and if they came back with negative feedback, worked with the authors until the articles were put into shape. In part, this was because we didn't have much of a pool of material to draw on. Like all young journals that had yet to make a name, we had to procure articles, rather than wait for them to be freely submitted.

The thematic issues, however, operated according to a different dynamic. We found out in our first year, when we put out the call for the special issue on *Intersemiotic Translation and Multimodality* (Vol. 1, No. 2, 2019), that there were people out there in the wider world that would be interested in submitting to us if we could just reach them. And with the second special issue (*Translation Under Dictatorships*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2020), which had initially been created to offer a platform for the many TS scholars in Portugal researching translation under the Estado Novo, we found we actually received more submissions from outside the country than we did from Portugal itself. As a result, that special issue covers dictatorships in Spain, Italy, Brazil, Norway and the Arab world, in addition to the Portuguese Estado Novo.

In fact, it was those thematic issues that really brought *Translation Matters* to the attention of the outside world, and the ones that followed – *Picturebooks and Graphic Narratives* (Vol. 3.2, 2021) and *Translation and Money* (Vol. 4.2, 2022) – cemented this trend. Thus, in 2023, we took the decision to produce two special issues in the year rather than the usual one – *Experiential Translation* (Vol. 5.1) and *Translation in and From the*

Middle Ages (Vol. 5.2, guest-edited by J. Carlos Teixeira), only reverting to a general issue in the second semester of 2024.

In the meantime, the editorial committee increased, as other colleagues came on board – most notably, Elena Galvão as book reviews editor, Marco Neves as webmaster and Imren Gökce as copyediting coordinator (as well as a few others that came, stayed for a year or so, and left). The academic advisory board also expanded, as we found ourselves having to reach much further afield to find peer reviewers with the specialist knowledge necessary for the articles that we were now receiving.

However, it was a fortuitous circumstance – the visit to Lisbon of an exceptional young PhD student from Salamanca, Margarita Savchenkova, in 2023 – that really propelled *Translation Matters* to a whole new level. With her technological and bureaucratic expertise, combined with an admirable patience for form-filling and statistics, Margarita took it upon herself to get *Translation Matters* indexed, first in directories like MLA, Crossref, ERIHPLUS and Latindex, and then finally, in the much-coveted Scopus database. To our amazement, when Scopus indexation was awarded in 2024, we went straight into the top quartile (Q1) in the category of Literature and Literary Theory,¹ proving that the scholarship we were producing was indeed having an impact on the outside world.

With Scopus indexation, we overnight became a journal in which scholars all over the world wanted to publish. Since then, we've been inundated with submissions, so many that only a small percentage could actually be published. There was also a noticeable shift in the kind of articles that were being submitted. Probably due to our investment in avant-garde or experimental conceptions of translation (particularly in the special issues of 2023-4, though also in some of the earlier ones as well), the most interesting articles coming onto the platform no longer seemed concerned with the technical/technological/pragmatic aspects of interlingual translation that animate most of the journals in the TS ecosystem, but instead assumed translation to be something much broader: a transformational process by means of which anything that is a carrier of meaning is reworked for a new purpose.

That is to say, without really intending to, we found we had already carved out a niche for ourselves as a humanistic/literary/philosophical journal as opposed to the broad-spectrum translation periodical that we presented ourselves as on the website.

This is why we are now feeling the seven-year itch. *Translation Matters* has grown up and it is no longer satisfied with the identity that it had assumed back in its infancy. However, unlike those married couples mentioned in my opening paragraph, it is not dreaming of greater promiscuity. On the contrary, it is considering consolidating the relationships that it has already developed with experiential and experimental forms of translation, inter-epistemic translation, literary/artistic translation and translation

¹ This went down to Q2 in 2025. We also have Q2 indexation in Linguistics.

philosophy/theory, by cutting itself free from the more conventional understandings of the term from which it developed.

Such a transformation cannot come overnight, however. With so many articles already in the pipeline at different stages in the editorial process, we have to first ensure that we honour our responsibilities to those authors before narrowing our focus. Hence, from 2026, articles that are not immediately connected to a thematic issue will be published on a rolling basis on the platform,² so that both of the official issues can be devoted to a particular theme. As can already be seen on the [Calls for Papers](#) section of the website, we have four thematic issues already announced: *History as Translation* (Vol. 8.1, guest-edited by Margarita Savchenkova), *Retranslation* (Vol. 8.2, guest-edited by Ahu Selin Erkul Yağci, Selahattin Karagöz and Merve Engin Kurt), *Media Ecologies of Translation* (Vol. 9.1, edited by Raluca Tanasescu) and *Eco-Translation* (Vol. 9.2, edited by Xany Jensen van Vuuren, Helen-Mary Cawood and James Kelly).

The present issue, therefore, is the last of the general issues in the old mould before the big shake-up next year. To some extent, it can be seen as a transitional issue: for although the articles selected for publication in it are not thematically linked, they do already bear some of the marks of the new 'grown-up' version of the journal that will make its appearance next year. It is also the first issue to have been brought out by our new expanded editorial board.

The first article, for example, is a meditation on complexity thinking by **Kobus Marais**, whose writings about the emergence of knowledge through translational semiotic processes (Marais, 2019, 2024) have positioned him unequivocally at the forefront of the new paradigm. This article aims to take stock of the development of complexity thinking within Translation Studies by reviewing its historical trajectory and engaging with some of the criticisms that it has received, most notably from figures such as Douglas Robinson (2022) and Anthony Pym (2023). The conclusions that Marais reaches, namely that the construction of knowledge is as constrained by the non-human inert Other (i.e. matter-energy in its various manifestations) as it is by human concerns, not only bring ethical and ecological consequences, but also implications for the whole philosophical debate about how we acquire knowledge in the first place.

At first sight, the next article, by **Andrea Musumeci**, is more conservative in nature, in that it is concerned with the training of translators for "a service profession demanding business acumen and adaptive problem-solving". However, it soon becomes apparent that his approach goes beyond the parameters of conventional translator-training. In fact, to the extent that the article borrows its theories (game-based approaches and ecological dynamics) from sports pedagogy and asks how they may be "be translationally adapted to enhance the development of strategic, extra-textual competences in translation education", it may also be considered as a sophisticated exercise in inter-epistemic translation of the kind explored in Vol. 6 (1) of *Translation Matters*.

² These will be collated into a general issue at a later opportunity.

Phillippa May Bennett's article, which follows, is also about education, but rather than focusing on translator training, it returns to the age-old question of how translation may be used in foreign-language education. From the onset of the 'communicative approach' in the early 1980s, translation was effectively banned from the EFL (English as a foreign language) classroom on the assumption that it prevented learners from acquiring the mental flexibility to think in the new tongue. In recent years, however, a 'translation turn' in foreign-language teaching has been trumpeted (Carreres and Noriega-Sánchez, 2021; Fehaima, 2022) and translation has begun to return as a teaching method to the EFL classroom. Bennett has sought to find out the extent to which this shift has impinged upon the Portuguese education system by conducting a short survey of university trainers of EFL teachers to ascertain their attitudes towards the use of translation in the English language classroom. Her results show that Portuguese university trainers seem to take a pragmatic attitude to the matter, approaching translation as a strategy that could be used in combination with others, though "not as a crutch that prevents immersion in the target language".

Julie Wechsler's article, which comes next, also uses ethnographic methods, this time to explore the work of indigenous interpreter-translators in Peru. Drawing on a pool of interpreters and translators trained by the Ministry of Culture and registered at the National Registry of Interpreters and Translators of Indigenous Languages (*Registro Nacional de Intérpretes y Traductores de Lenguas Indígenas, ReNITLI*), she attempts to find out how interpreting functions in healthcare contexts in indigenous parts of Peru and make some recommendations for how the service could be improved with a view to increasing the inclusivity and accessibility of public spaces in Peru.

The fifth article, by **Araceli María Alanís Corral**, moves into different territory to look at the musical cover version as a form of translation. Alanís Corral takes as her case study a song by American singer-songwriter, Taylor Swift, which the artist re-recorded as a way of taking back control of her work after the original recording was sold without her consent. The focus is on one particular lyric, which was changed in what appears to be an act of ideological reframing. Presenting this as a case of 'intra-lingual self-translation', Alanís Corral discusses the extent to which the change was motivated by changing social mores, and forms part of the negotiation of her present identity.

The *Articles* section of the issue closes, uncharacteristically, with a self-contained dossier in Spanish and Portuguese on *Ibero-American Transfiction*. Involving four articles by **Esther Gimeno Ugalde**, **Isabel Araújo Branco**, **Fátima Fernandes da Silva** and **Carina Infante do Carmo**, and framed by an Introduction jointly authored by the first two, this dossier theorizes the phenomenon of transfiction and presents case-studies from the Ibero-American world in which the figure of the translator becomes a character in a fictional narrative.

In addition to the book reviews, this issue also contains an interview by **Daniel Galvão** of the Portuguese music director and song translator João Artur Guimarães, which explores the question of song translation for dubbing. Covering the interviewee's personal

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experience, dubbing culture in Portugal, the problems affecting this kind of translation and possible solutions to them, this interview offers precious information for anyone interested in entering this very specific area of translation practice.

With its coverage of themes like (inter-)epistemic translation and music translation, and introduction of a new language (Spanish) into the traditional mix, this issue of *Translation Matters* not only signals the end of an era, but also points forward to some of the issues that processes that are likely to be attracting our attention in years to come.

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