

ropean conceptualizations of the world and their contribution to mankind do not figure in it. The stream of knowledge flows from the ancient Greeks to modern Western Europe. This issue is particularly significant because the blurb of the book opens with the following set of questions: “What do we do when we talk of ‘world literature’? What does a global, even a planetary view reveal to us about literature, culture and being?” In my opinion, if we do not move intellectually beyond the confines of the perimeter of Western culture, we have still not stood up to the challenge of the orbital perspective of the world. We are just likely to reproduce the vision of our territorial space and our hegemonic ambitions in the orbital gaze. Leonard himself notes that the terrestrial perspective is incomplete and contaminated, and almost apologetically adds that “it must be carried into orbit if the world is to be seen at all” (157). I believe that in the post-Saidian world the impossibility of achieving completeness should not prevent

us from taking up the intellectual responsibility of widening our scope and looking beyond Europe when we talk about the world. As a matter of fact, Leonard does mention some non-Western writers. He discusses the works of Haruki Murakami, who managed to succeed on the global English book market, and Vandana Singh, who writes in English. However, their works are arguably examples of writing which throws the cloak of Western sensibilities over their native cultures.

Despite my above-mentioned reservation, I think that Leonard’s *Orbital poetics* is a fascinating book. It definitely does what a good academic book should do: it opens new horizons and provokes thinking. His erudite and philosophical exposition of the interplay between literature and orbit is an ingenious contribution to the debate on literature from the “global” perspective.

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**ANDREA RIZZI – BIRGIT LANG – ANTHONY PYM: What is Translation History?
A Trust-Based Approach**

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The reviewed publication was written in collaboration between a historian of the Italian Renaissance (Andrea Rizzi), a cultural historian specializing in Germany and Austria (Birgit Lang), and a translation scholar/historian (Anthony Pym). Since the authors take pains to communicate their respective disciplinary positionality and consider this factor important in their program for an interdisciplinary translation history, it is of note to mention it. The book was published as the first and programmatic publication of the new Palgrave Macmillan series called Translation History, launched in 2019, whose aims are in line with the approach discussed in the book itself: “This new series is the first to take a global and interdisciplinary view of translation and translators across time, place,

and cultures. [...] Translation History aims to become an essential forum for scholars, graduate students, and general readers who are interested in or work on the history and practice of translation and its cultural agents (translators, interpreters, publishers, editors, artists, cultural institutions, governments).” (See more at <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/series/15957>)

The book synthesizes newer interdisciplinary approaches to translation history research which since the 1990s have displayed a tendency toward using sociological concepts and methodologies (most notably in Pym’s 1998 *Method in Translation History*) and since the early 2000s shown ever greater conceptual and methodological affinities to historiography (as seen in the 2006

Charting the Future of Translation History, ed. G. L. Bastin and P. L. Bandia; or the 2010 *Translation Under Fascism*, ed. K. Sturge and Ch. Rundle). The present book, however, is not a mere overview and discussion of past methodologies, but rather an attempt at an informed, discursive, interdisciplinary, and synthetic approach to charting out the methodology of translation history research. The methodology outlined in the book could lead the (sub)discipline to a greater (methodological) autonomy, create a new interdisciplinary language (one that the authors would perhaps call a “pidgin”, with translation and interpreting studies terms and concepts combined with terms and concepts from sociology, cultural and art history as well as print and book history), provide an informed analysis of the translation historian’s epistemological and disciplinary positioning, and present sets of guidelines and/or benchmarks for further interdisciplinary historical research. These complex points and aims make for an important, albeit at times very challenging book.

The authors answer the question from the title in a very well thought-out and systematic manner, following a unified approach. I find it important to comment on their definition of translation and trust, two key topics discussed in the first, introductory, chapter. They consider translations in both the oral and written form and define them in historical terms as products of material culture, cultural and economic capital, patronage, and social networking (17). The authors are convinced that such a sociological view of translation can best “address issues of complex social causation that enable or hinder intercultural communication” (1). The latter major concept used in the book is trust which they explore in a non-essentialist manner as a phenomenon that can not only help describe and evaluate social encounters in mediated communication but also construct them. Thus, trust is viewed as a historical, changing category which materializes in three interconnected types: interpersonal, based on personal bonds of accountability;

institutional, carried by beliefs in the trustworthiness of social institutions; and enacted by regime, which the authors view as systems of conventions or practices adopted by translators and expected from them by their readers or patrons (14). This nuanced view of trust enables the authors to interpret various and diverse cases of historical translation products and processes (mainly from western pre-modern but selectively also Chinese and Japanese translation history) as matters of trust and context-dependent mediatory agency.

Apart from the comprehensive first chapter which outlines the main concepts and methodology, the book contains three other chapters. In chapter 2, titled “On Relationality: Trusting Translators”, the authors aim to explain and interpret the three types of trust as viable research options for looking at real historical cases of translations and translation practices. Additionally, they also attempt to interpret the translator’s signaling of trustworthiness (rather surprisingly and, for me at least, anachronistically) as cases of Aristotelian ethos. They also outline two methodical ways how scholars can engage with historical material. The authors also discuss the possible material for the historical research of trust in translation. What is most positive about this chapter, though, is that authors do not only show how the methodology they have developed can be used in real research instances, but, doing so, they also point out and discuss the deficiencies of older, more traditional approaches to translation history. Such a take on research methodology is immensely useful.

The third chapter, named “On Relativity: Trusting Historians”, focuses on the possibilities and epistemological burdens the translation historian is faced with. The authors advocate a more provenance- and position-dependent approach to translation history by claiming outright, “What we say as historians depends in the first place on where and why we are doing history” (62). By highlighting the trust element behind social relations which produce translation, the authors

uncover surprising complexity between the intercultural and spatial-temporal concepts pertaining to translation which we translation scholars thought we understand so readily. For instance, when viewed as a historical case of trust, the relation between "self" and "other" in intercultural communication can no longer be described as a mechanistic dialectics of getting to know the other and ourselves, but rather as a relative, historically bound case of network resonance and finding interpretative certainty. This trust-based relationality enables the authors to view translation as one of the many social institutions that have developed throughout history. Interestingly enough, though, they argue against the feasibility of microhistories of translation by claiming that "[t]here is no actual dialogue with the past, since the past is only a construct based on things in the present" (66).

The title of chapter 4 is self-explanatory: "On Interdisciplinarity: Trusting Translation History". The chapter, based on examples of interdisciplinary research on the roles of translation in science history, is the most reflective one. Quite tellingly, the authors see interdisciplinary research of translation history as yet another venue for trust and seek to outline its possibilities. Using physicist Peter Galison's metaphor of "trading zone", they come up with an interesting interpretation framework for the analysis of interdisciplinary discourse based on mixing of disciplinary "languages". The conclusion the authors draw is very telling: in every interdisciplinary research of translation history, all people involved need not only to trust each other but also be aware of what *kind* of interdisciplinarity they aim to do.

This argumentative book is well written and systematic, and I would argue that the authors in fact managed to show the possibilities for further expansion of translation history into history proper. Their final thoughts on the name of the subdiscipline are quite indicative of this: "Yet the collocation 'translation history' takes us even further, suggesting a particular way of doing history *or*

a historical perspective *or* a project in which translators, interpreters, diplomats, traders, and other intermediaries or go-betweens are foregrounded and studied" (110). The only major challenge (I am unsure whether to even call it a problem) of the book is what I would call its interdisciplinary thoroughness. The authors demonstrate that they are well-versed in their research fields and their disciplinary traditions, and, by collaboration, they present us with a complex book which is a cross-pollination of many concepts and traditions. I would not say that most of their concepts and the methodological issues they bring up are new – rather, they are reworkings and syntheses of ideas and problems more or less known to experts in the field of translation history – but the depth in which they discuss and contextualize them in cooperation with other disciplines might perhaps seem rather daunting to a not-so-well-versed reader. To sum up, I would say that this book is one of the most important contributions to translation history in 2019.

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