

Pre-proof, pre-copyedit version:

Introduction
Bordering Approaches & Trans-bordering themes
in Dialogue with the work of Rosemary Arrojo

D. M. Spitzer | Independent Scholar (USA)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6655-7755>

Abstract

Introducing the collection of essays in honor of Professor Rosemary Arrojo, this chapter thematizes the image of borders and bordering approaches present in the volume's title. Drawing on all contributed chapters, a selection of Arrojo's texts, and critical studies from within and beyond the 'borders' of Translation Studies, the introduction explores several ways in which a robust interdisciplinarity—or a *trans*-disciplinarity—not only enhances, but is inextricable from the work of the field. Four themes unfold along the wider thematic of borders and bordering to illustrate how questions and topics take shape and are engaged throughout the book's two sections, "Transfiction" and "Bordering Approaches"—while transfiction itself is shown to be a bordering approach. The introduction closes with an articulation of both some risks of the language asymmetry present in the volume and some ways the collection's balance of scholars working in zones of the Global South and North might offset those risks and, even minimally, produce some measure of critical resistance and counter-movement towards the creation of a more pluralistic and diverse Translation Studies.

Borders

Rosemary Arrojo and Andrew Chesterman once noted that metaphors of translation are necessary

and that whatever metaphor one uses “presents it in a certain light, rather than in some other light” (thesis 9; Chesterman and Arrojo 2000, 153). The metaphor casting light and shadow within the title of this volume has to do with a border, a bounded zone and its border-sharing neighbors. In the title’s metaphor transfiction shares borders with other approaches to theorizing translation and the suggestion seems to be that these approaches theorize from a border(-ing) perspective onto the territory, or in the direction of, translation as if the territory of translation simply stands before those who would survey—or, theorize—its terrain and record their observations. The very term *translation*—along with related or similar terms in other languages—embeds its own “spatial metaphor” and its attendant, problematic, foundational dualisms related to conventional thinking on translation, including a (belief in a) stable content available for transfer across the borders of spatialized languages (Guldin 2016, 49-53). Within the spatiality of such metaphors pulses a temporal dimension, too, that would assign an eternity to “a meaning which transcends its form, circumstances and history, and which could be *forever* protected from difference and change” (Arrojo 1998, 28; my italics). The temporality of border(s) registers metaphorically as a departure or removal from temporality, an implicit *atemporality* with respect to the zones whose borders are intimated in the title. At first glance, translation appears in the metaphor both as a bordered zone determined, established, fixed, essential, *and* as a task of moving between spatially and temporally determined zones: those dividing languages as well as those separating the eternal (meaning) and the transient (verbal expression). Such a complex of metaphor occupies the image of borders in thinking translation.

The implications generated by the border metaphor point to some of the central concepts related to translation on which much of Rosemary Arrojo’s critical interventions focused: the relation between translation and those who translate or theorize translation; translation and its disciplinary borders; the presumption of a stable meaning and its conveyance. Directly and indirectly in dialogue with her work and from varied perspectives and approaches, the chapters in this collection also address some of the problematics raised by the metaphor of borders. Using the metaphor of borders and its implications to thematize topics of inquiry running throughout the volume illuminates some of the shared concerns and some of the ways a diversity of approaches—even those apparently beyond or across disciplinary borders—enhances Translation Studies (TS).

Disciplinary Borders

Translation as bordering *transforms* borders insofar as (at least some of) its emphases address the movements of tracing as-through-by which borders come into existence.¹ If translation in some way(s) “occasions the dissolution of borders” (Maitland 2019, 205), the views from TS and bordering approaches would take part to some extent and in varying ways with that dissolution insofar as translation, however it is meant and understood, names the area(s) or subject(s) of inquiry. “While scholarship often describes the limits of a subject matter, in our case translation,” as Kaindl has written in his chapter, “literature is not about reproducing those limits, but rather about identifying spaces of possibility, which open up a new perspective” (MS 1: 2). The chapters theorizing from a transfictional perspective limn the connecting border of scholarship and literature, opening the range of possibilities and perspectives for thinking about translation. The approach, now known as transfiction (Kaindl 2014, 4), works from the premise that a fictional text can act as a “complementary vital resource” (Spitzl 2014, 366) to texts more conventionally regarded as theoretical, namely “non-fictional and non-narrative pieces (e.g. essays involving description, exposition, argumentation, instruction, philosophical speculation, etc.)” (Delabastita and Grutman 2005, 29). As Adriana Pagano phrased it, drawing on literary texts in the work of theorizing “allows the critic to transcend fixed borderlines” separating disciplines and “to approach multiplicity sites, such as translation, more adequately” (2000, 39).

Transfiction’s pliability and interdisciplinarity can be observed in a sampling of its range. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, for instance, scholars developed connections throughout such “multiplicity sites” in multiple directions, that is not only *towards* translation but through translation in the direction of other such multiplicities: studies of fictional translators have illuminated complexities of identity, fragmentation, and displacement together with “the problematics of the complex cultural process of translation” (Strümper-Krobb 2003, 117); the intricate associations of trauma, colonialism, ecological awareness, and translation that illuminate each strand in the weave (Curran 2005); the “triangular relationship” ensnaring authors, translators, and texts in “the imaginary of a patriarchal culture” that genders texts as female-feminine subject to property-disputes of male-masculine authors and translators (Arrojo 2005, 82-83); the complex ways fiction and reality are related to one another and how, through an

application of the sociological concept of *habitus*, translator-characters can be read in terms of the physical, psychic, and cognitive aspects of their depictions (Kaindl 2008, 309-11). Through critical attention to texts “beyond the limits of what we conventionally call theory or philosophy” (Arrojo 2014, 46), transfiction foregrounds aspects of literary texts that might otherwise pass unnoticed or without sufficient interpretive scrutiny. That is, transfiction itself might be understood as a *bordering approach* to theorizing translation, inextricably in relation with diverse areas and approaches.

An ever-evolving range of understandings and subjects constitutes translation and this discontinuous, heterogeneous terrain may be one of the most promising dimensions of TS as what Bassnett and Johnston have recently called “a hub interdiscipline within the academy” (Bassnett and Johnston 2019, 185-86). Even as an *interdiscipline*, TS has formed borders of its own, in terms of the formation of academic departments or programs within departments, its own disciplinary apparatus that includes professional organizations, conferences, and publishing venues from journals to book series. Yet, the interdisciplinarity (or *trans-disciplinarity*?) of TS can work to generate sufficient resistance to an impulse Arrojo likened to the building project at Babel both in its drive to assert control over the “domain of translation once and for all” and to establish itself as a self-standing “independent discipline” (2002a, 138-39). Such an assertion would re-produce the “Janus-faced” character of bordering according to which any rigid assertion of a border that establishes ‘independence’ “goes hand in hand with governing practices of exclusion and purification” even beyond the nation-state level on which this statement focuses (Van Houtum and Van Naerssen 2002, 127). In the case of TS, Baer has traced the ways in which the establishment of a disciplinary border, via its own “neo-imperial mythistory,” has exerted an exclusionary force that reproduces “traditional colonial asymmetries,” most profoundly the epistemological primacy of “the Global North” (Baer 2020, 223, 234, respectively).

Perhaps relations with other areas—*bordering* zones with shared interests in translation—might be understood as an importantly enhancing condition of TS, though this valence cannot be shorn of its risks: in Belausteguigoitia Rius’ formulation interacting with Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands*, borders create “nuevos espacios que inauguran relaciones” (new spaces that instigate relations); the spaces discussed by Belausteguigoitia Rius are marked by the violences of twofold realities at

once constructive and ruinous, protective and harmful (2009, 755). So too, in a different register and key, the new spaces opened by the borderings of this volume both amplify voices through the broad auditorium constituted by English language publication and risk the violence of epistemicide (see below, “Bordering risks”). In the opening of his chapter, Oliveira notes that the spread of TS into varied sub-disciplines produces torque within the field by turning in one direction towards increased specialization—even “compartmentalization” and “segmentation”—while making another (counter-)turn towards the continual establishment of its own field of inquiry (MS 11: 1-2). As the discipline spreads and appears to fracture, the areas opened by this internal differentiation and bordering provide opportunities for new, perhaps previously unforeseeable filaments of relation to be articulated and investigated—that would be an instance of how bordering can transform disciplinary borders to generate dialogue(s) within, between, and across areas of inquiry and, in that transformation, involve and suggest different configurations. This is to say TS, exercising what in this volume Pisetta has termed its “flexibilization” (MS 14: 5-6), would seem to insist on, and incline repeatedly and diversely towards, its relations through other areas of inquiry, linked to such areas constitutively, not incidentally. As Pisetta writes of Mounin’s linguistics-based work on translation: “Actually, it could not be otherwise” (MS 14: 4).

Bordering might then point a way towards the kind of “epistemic shift” heralded by Ďurovičová wherein “‘*trans-*’ has come to be used as a semantic marker of flux, ungelled and multidirectional, signaling binaries dissolving into mutations” (2019, 1). Moreover, this inclusive and expansive *trans-* act of bordering can work as a reminder of translation’s spread, its saturation throughout the humanities and contemporary life through rapidly shifting zones of relation; a reminder, too, that TS does not contain, does not form *the* boundary within which translation is studied, theorized, practiced. Provisional and transitory *bordering*, like chalk drawn contours, promotes and enacts the openness of TS to emerging ways of thinking translation, collaborative in a sense of promoting the vital, dynamic relations that sustain and value differentiations as integral and mutually enriching—and mutually transforming—of the areas shaped by bordering inquiry. Bordering inquiry, understood as an action of *trans-* movement, might then echo what Glissant has envisioned in the relational identity (as distinct from the “root identity”), an orientation that regards locations—imagined here as extended to questions, themes, topics, areas of inquiry—not as “territories” available for occupation, conquest, control, but as sites where “one gives-on-and-with

[*donne-avec*] rather than grasps [*com-prendre*]” (Glissant 1997, 144; my interpolations from Glissant 1990, 158).²

It is from such bordering that TS may continue to become “better able to engage,” as Bassnett has written, “in borrowing from and lending techniques and methods to other disciplines” (2013, 4). Another and further consequence of bordering approaches might be towards a removal, or dissolution, of disciplinary borders (Bassnett 2013, 4), or even a disclosure of the recognition of a *trans-* sensibility replete with manifold possibilities for *transformations*. Again: assembling a diversity of approaches into a single volume allows for questions and themes important to TS to be illuminated from multiple sources, in numerous and various ways, so as to bring more of such questions and themes into complex and differentiated light(s). Hopefully this volume’s variegated terrain promotes further dialogue through and across bordering approaches, perspectives, and the disciplines in and by which they are often shaped, even as it recognizes that the bind imposed by bordering—in this case, the enforcement of an English-language border—persists without resolution. In this sense the volume embodies some tensions related to this aspect of bordering; articulating (some of) them does not dissolve these tensions, though it does raise them (partially) into view.

Theoretical Borders

Another implication of the metaphor of borders seems to suggest that translation simply stands there for a theorist to survey and report. The metaphor of borders manifests in the title as *bordering*, a gesture that might disrupt in an albeit minor way the apparent stasis of the nominal form (*borders*), introducing a verbal element, an action both internal to and inseparable from the spatial aspect that would describe the positions of the “bordering approaches” announced in the title. As a way or approach to thinking translation, bordering both recognizes (and [re-]creates) borders of some sort while setting them in motion through emphasis on the action of producing borders. Bordering draws—produces—borders (Sakai 2019, 94; 2010, 32), demarcates them as borders that “will bear the mark” of the theorist(s) at work, who is “inevitably implicated” in theorizing, as Arrojo’s coda on the shared grounds theses 15-16 describes (Chesterman and Arrojo 2000, 158-59). However, the process of bordering in turn has its own menacing aspect, articulated from an

economic and political geographical perspective as a continual process that through its movements attempts to determine (albeit shifting) borders in an effort to establish control over mobilities (Van Houtum and Van Naerssen 2002, 126).

In addition to Sakai's sense of translation as border and bordering that naturalizes the borders of nations and national languages (2019, 84; 2010, 29-31), there may be other available senses of the image or metaphor of bordering. One such possibility is in the valence of border and bordering as *limit* and *limiting*. As Amorim has written in this volume, one important lesson produced by Arrojo's articulation of a post-Nietzschean framework is that "any translatorial choice or any conclusion about a translation is always *a point of view* constructed around arguments set in a particular historical moment, in a context from which meanings have been derived" (MS 10: 3). Similarly, theorizing translation will work from a perspective with historically determined boundaries, or limits. If theorizing only radiates from the perspective(s) of those who theorize and such perspectives can be productively understood as bordered—that is, as limited by the experiences, agendas, and historical conditions in and from which people theorize (as in theses 2-3, Chesterman and Arrojo 2000, 152)—then all theorizing of translation will be in this sense bordering. In terms of developing a theory of translation, Oliveira's chapter works initially to describe the author's position and, specifically, how a "therapeutic reading" of Wittgenstein's later philosophy shares borders with non-essentialist thinking on language in their reconceptualization of the "traditional concept of sign" (MS 11: 5). Oliveira then builds on Tymoczko's notion of "translation" to formulate a pliable, transcendently oriented theory—one that seeks conditions for the possibility of translation (MS 11: 4, 7-8)—that can accommodate a spectrum of thinking translation because it begins with and sustains reference to the dynamics of *use* and spans the range of "games" that require both "exactness" and "vagueness" (MS 11: 11). In this way the theory might be said to enact a bordering, a way of on-going, continually adjusted theorizing that can include, within the limits of the transcendental conditions Oliveira articulates, "not only the variations across cultures Tymoczko and Gambier talk about, but also what happens in neighboring disciplines or in the so-called 'metaphorical uses'" (MS 11: 13-14).

From such limits and limiting the disjunctive aspect of translation developed by Cardozo emerges into view: out of a conjunctive "gesture of approaching" emerge a relational awareness of self and

other “as parts apart of each other in this relational event” (MS 12: 2). “Just as one may conceive the border not only as what sets one part apart from the other, but also as what gives the outlines and limits of each part to be perceived,” the specific *translational relation* generates a text in its status as ‘original’ and another—in the act of its making, being written—as a translated text. Yet, this very border and bordering in Cardozo’s translational relation does not emerge as a “space apart from the parts of the relation,” but rather as the happening of such bordering (MS 12: 6). As a protection against the reduction of a translational other to what Cardozo terms a “narcissus-like condition” of projecting the other according to one’s own and not the other’s otherness, a reduction that risks “a fatal outcome for the other’s singularity” into the “regime of indistinction of the other,” translational relation comes forward as a spacing that makes—or makes ready—the differentiating liminality as which relation takes place (MS 12: 11-12).

Limit, limited, limitation, and limiting would not then name deficit or a fixed status, but rather a condition for relations that is both spatially and temporally varied, rich, complex. Spatially, the limits and limiting name the dynamically shifting reconfigurations of subjects and cultures in the movements of, in this case, varying ways of engaging with questions important to TS as well as a shared appreciation for the work of Professor Rosemary Arrojo. In a temporal sense, the very movements of the spatial valence of limit-limiting span, conjoin, and blend pasts and futures: the relational times that generate meanings through multiple points of departure, sources for beginnings are textured, layered, spiraled, or otherwise non-linear. The limiting-borderings limn mixed temporalities in the relations they constitute and in the histories they contour and embody *as* contemporary thinking translation in temporal *métissage* with various other times.

The temporal and spatial provisionalities of bordering might further highlight its resonances as limit(s) and limiting. It may be that “coming to terms with the provisionality and the contextualization of all allegedly clear-cut distinctions,” as Arrojo phrased it, “can sharpen awareness of the fundamental roles we play—whether as authors, readers, or translators—in the construction of the meanings that matter to us” (2018, 13).³ Drawing obliquely on Édouard Glissant, bordering as limiting might be stated as: the limits of limiting that constitute each contributor in the motions of their work take shape as a (limited) site of relation (1997, 142)—the limits articulated for the purposes of their chapters—while also churning away into a turbine of

opacity (186) wherein “the proper limit is not discernible in Relation” (169) because of the continual movements of relations and because of Glissant’s vision that reflexively “the subject is a thick cloud of knowledge” (160). As Ramírez Giraldo and Venegas Piracón remind us in their chapter in this volume, Glissantian “relation requires us to engage with opacity” (MS 7: 14), just as, in turn, relation *s’efforce* (exerts itself) and *s’énonce* (comes to expression) in and with opacity (Glissant 1990, 200). This sense of bordering as limiting will unfold as *a* moment in which the perspectives shaping inquiry reach articulation in order for theoretical relations to be developed even as the limits of such perspectives await further articulation through critical engagements yet to come, through a community of scholars relating differently to these opacities—just as this gathering of researchers variously engages with the work of Rosemary Arrojo. The limits of bordering-as-limiting, that is, remain only partially knowable and call for further, though never exhaustive, interpretation.

Crossing borders: translation, power, meaning

The metaphor within *translation* intimates the action of shipping, moving a freight of stabilized meaning from one linguistic port to another. Long-standing conventional expectations and assumptions concerning translation forbid any tampering or excess handling in the transport of such meaning by those who carry out the task. Arrojo worked to develop what she termed a “post-Nietzschean” framework according to which “there can be no essential meaning or concept” fully separable from language and “fully transportable” (2010, 249) that would counter the essentialist paradigm and its grounding in the possibilities “of translation as a form of meaning recovery and transferral without essential loss” and “of a clear-cut opposition between content and form” (1998, 28). Because of its insistence that meaning is made and not found, the non-essentialist view brings out questions of translators’ power or empowerment as shapers and creators of meanings and the asymmetries of power when the two views collide.

Pisetta’s close engagement with Derrida’s “What is a relevant translation?” moves “through different fields of knowledge” as it brings into relation “elements that the less insightful would judge to be worlds apart” (MS 14: 12). After initial and preliminary encounters with a conventional notion of *translation* (that found in a dictionary entry), Pisetta’s chapter works its way into an

increasingly nuanced vision of translation as a task that, because of “[i]ncompleteness, precariousness, openness; an inability to generalize” that characterize a “complex system of translation,” summons humility over assertions of control (MS 14: 7). While translators are implicated in the production, not the mere transfer, of meaning, that task meets a limiting force in the “complex system” Pisetta articulates: modesty, awareness of limitations conditioning translators’ activities and a specificity on the level of each case, each act (MS 14: 14-15). Similarly, and with specific reference to and sustained interaction with Arrojo’s critical encounters with Jorge Luis Borges’ “Pierre Menard, Autor del Quijote” and Moacyr Scliar’s “Notas ao pé da página” (Leal translates: “Notes at the Foot of the Page”), Leal works to illuminate the interplay between humility and omnipotence and to articulate a dynamic translational mode constituted by a continually adjusting relation of *autonomy* and *approximation* in the meaning-productive role of translators (MS 2: 11-12). Scliar’s fictional translator comes forward as (hyperbolically) assertive of his involvement in the text, a translator “who literally obliterates the text and forcefully seizes the spotlight through his inappropriate footnotes” (MS 2: 4), while in Borges’ story Menard appears as a translator whose “seeming humility is a strong will to omnipotence” (MS 2: 10).

As this dynamics raises questions of power, Leal’s chapter develops a dialogue not only with Arrojo’s work (e.g. 2002b on this topic, though Leal’s chapter addresses many of Arrojo’s publications) but also with other studies throughout the volume. Bohunovsky’s work considers the different forms and extents of empowerment exercised by “creative agents” in theater translations, finding that directors seem to have embraced their “authorial role” while theater translators, “although they are equally creative agents in the game and in the negotiation of meanings, interpretations, and rewritings,” have not yet done so (MS 8: 12-13). Yet Bohunovsky calls for a rethinking of *translation* so that it “refers to a work of authorship” (MS 8: 10). Throughout the study Bohunovsky erodes some of the “clear-cut distinctions” guiding much of theater translation, such as the “page/stage” dichotomy and the question of performability to which it is attached; performability is exposed as not a “textual characteristic,” but instead as deriving “from someone’s power to make that decision,” raising the question: “who has the power to make this decision?” (MS 8: 8). The theme rises also in Darin’s study of Chico Buarque’s *Essa gente* (Darin translates: *Ordinary People*), where attempts to control texts overlay complexities of power along various intersecting trajectories, including the problem of (in-)visibility and “the undesirable intervention

of translators, readers, revisers, and proofreaders in authored texts” (MS 3: 3), relations of original and translation within the rubric of fidelity, and power relationships governed by heteronormative gender roles. Figures grasping for control over meanings, the different characters seeking “to appropriate words, tame them, direct them, build with them solid architectures from which they can name the world and create a safe place for themselves,” however, confront a resistance from languages in their “forgetting that words are adventurous and do not accept possession” (MS 3: 14). With reference to literary translation in twentieth and twenty-first century Brazil, Amorim’s chapter considers the enduring question of fidelity in a way that highlights translators’ inextricable role as producers of meanings. However, Amorim’s emphasis falls on the interpersonal, historical contexts in and from which meanings are formed, contexts saturated with and “grounded on ideology, on a set of beliefs, on specific aesthetic values, and even on certain implied moral judgements” (MS 10: 6). Beyond a struggle between various agents for control over meanings, meaning production swells within a tide of *re*-production, where creative agency—construed as authorship or translatorship or otherwise—courses as a stream in the “impermanent, provisional, and ever-flowing condition of our interpretive endeavors” (MS 10: 16).

Challenging the essentialist notion of translation as transport-of-stable-meaning, several other chapters bring to light the extent and ways in which translators produce—rather than merely convey—meanings, raising adjacent issues of power and visibility along different lines. Emphasizing the affective dimensions of translating—the act and process, rather than the product, Woods draws from a scene of translating in *Jane Eyre* some ways meanings overflow the texts and emanate from the “utopic” possibilities manifesting at least temporarily, in passing, in the work of a female-feminine mode of collaborative translating. Where translation focuses on the result it often becomes “fraught by questions of possession and mastery and ultimate meaning” (MS 4: 13), Woods asks: “What happens, though, if the translator is not only female, but a community of females?” (MS 4: 3). Translating in togetherness, the women characters Woods discusses in *Jane Eyre* build (fictional) lived, experienced meanings of solidarity and empowerment against the press of male-masculine and heteronormative demands for gain and possession, even if only in the span of their translating act (MS 4: 13-14). While the affective experiences of such translational fellowship generated by the *act* of translating remain within the fictional narrative of *Jane Eyre*, the text Baer’s chapter investigates, Semen Lipkin’s *Dekada*, blurs

the border separating literary and extra-literary realities. Translators' power to construct meanings cross into the formation of cultural imaginaries by way of translating international as well as intranational (USSR) literatures (MS 6: 3-5). In the case of *Dekada*, meanings produced by the fictional (heroic) translators strain against another competing and more powerful narrative of Turkic populations of the "Imaginary East": the Soviet state-endorsed translational imaginary at once "celebrated the (lacquered if not wholly manufactured) cultures of non-Russian peoples while also subjecting them to various forms of violent repression and control—up to and concluding the forced displacement of entire peoples from their native lands" (MS 6: 14). Here, literary meanings crafted by translators spill over the (conventionally presumed) borders of literature and reality.

In Arrojo's work surfaces a related engagement with the question of translators' (in)visibility, which in her view belongs together with questions of meaning-production, "the inescapable task of any translation" (1997, 31). Overlapping the complex theme(s) of the construction of meaning and translators' empowerment, the topic of translators' visibility comes forward in a number of chapters. Kaindl, for instance, shows how transfictional footnotes operate beyond the subordinate position they occupy when regarded as paratext, gaining new visibility as *parergon*. In a (provisional and ongoing) search for meaning, fictional translators, maintaining a presence in the text and participating through (fictional) footnotes in the work of meaning's construction, "cannot help but intervene in the text with their interpretation, influencing the plot and thus—like the *parergon*—have an effect on the text from the outside" (MS 1: 10-11). Visibility and power converge in the role of translators in Goldstein's chapter, which takes up three Korean-English translation projects in film and literature. While media coverage of the texts Goldstein examines drew increasing and positive attention to the interventions of translators in making certain works successful, Goldstein shows how critical attention retained the conventional hierarchical relation by which translators and translations are subordinated to authors and original. Underlying this focus on the source texts Goldstein illustrates that this hierarchy is "rooted in the assumption that the 'original' is stable and immutable, and that the original is read, interpreted, and understood in the same way by everyone" (MS 9: 6). This essentialism leads Goldstein to identify a struggle for control of meaning and assertion of power rising from an "anxiety of Korean critics and audiences over these works' Korean identity," manifest in vocal concerns over the extent to which translators have "become part of Korean culture and society" (MS 9: 13-14). Here again the borders of

literature and reality are frayed as translators' own identities are determined and matched against a broader cultural and ethnic essentialism.

After identifying some ways that fictional translators operate in Colombian texts, Ramírez Giraldo and Venegas Piracón bring into critical reflection some methodological questions. The question of power and empowerment takes a reflexive turn as Ramírez Giraldo and Venegas Piracón wonder whether the practice of transfiction “reproduces the traditional imaginary of the non-Western world as producer of raw materials, and of Europe as the importer of those materials to produce finished goods” (MS 7: 14). By working with theoretical perspectives developed by Martinican philosopher Édouard Glissant, this chapter offers a possibility for South-South interpretive relations that would suggest an alternative to North-South relations according to which “explanatory power to interpret the other” belongs to Western (Northern) theorists, texts, and frameworks (MS 7: 14). In addition to a call to theorists to lay greater emphasis on the meaning-constructions their own interpretations render (MS 7: 12-13), Ramírez Giraldo and Venegas Piracón also recommend explicit awareness and articulation of “the provisional, contingent nature” of interpretation (MS 7: 15).

Linguistic Borders

As energized from within by a border-crossing metaphor, the term *translation* seems to imply borders separating languages into discrete units across which separable meaning would be transported. The metaphor further implies that languages remain and are situated stably within fixed boundaries, such as those of nation states. Sakai thinks bordering in terms of internationality, nationhood, and national languages, under the heading of a “modern regime of translation” according to which translation’s primary gesture takes place as “the schematism of configuration” that divides by means of the border it inscribes, establishing bordered zones—namely, between two unified, discrete national languages—and enabling the “putative unity of a national language as a regulative idea” (2010, 28-29). As a position from which to bring into focus, problematize, and disrupt the intimate, intricate linkages of nation, language, translation, and unity, Sakai articulates the priority of a transnationality that would enable critical intervention on this “regime” (2019, 86-87).

Different challenges to the problematic identified by Sakai, framed by Rajagopalan as “the long-enduring beliefs about languages as self-contained wholes, thoroughly independent of and immune from influences from one another” (MS 13: 9), surface in both the “Transfiction” and the “Bordering Approaches” sections of this volume. Looking to the Babel narrative in the Book of Genesis in numerous translations, Spitzer’s chapter discloses ways in which the Biblical scene subverts this view. While the typical reading of Babel assumes a pre-Babelian linguistic unity—what Arrojo has called the “pre-Babelian state, in which word and thing could actually be one” (1996, 209), Spitzer looks to the surrounding narrative(s) and finds that instead of inaugurating “linguistic diversification, the commencement of the Tower narrative voices a retrograde motion through which a people attempts to consolidate itself into a single language, ‘une seule lèvre’ (Gen. 11:1; Chouraqui), against the current of previous linguistic differentiation” (MS 5: 7). The image of fire in the narrative “operates as a figure for the drives to unity, to stabilization, and to control or dominate” motivating the male-masculine colonizer-builders at the site of Babel (MS 5: 9). A resistance to these drives surfaces in the narrative’s nuanced references to water, fluidity, and mixing and characterizes the god’s actions at Babel, which “disclose both that the purified language of the male-masculine construction already exists in relation and confusion (in the sense of mixture) and that translation destabilizes the assertion of unity, purity” (MS 5: 14-15).

Rajagopalan’s chapter provides a useful, critical-diachronic account of the field of linguistics as he deconstructs the terms of his own title: “Towards a grammatologically informed linguistics.” To imagine that such a linguistics were *not* possible would be in part to hold that linguistics itself names a field of inquiry secure from the vital dynamics not only of research and scholarship, but more fundamentally, of thinking and of language—its own ‘object’ of research. From within the field of linguistics and with reference to translanguaging (which, Rajagopalan writes, “draws attention to the impossibility of individual languages enjoying their splendid isolation from one another”), multilingualism, and increased mobilities (MS 13: 9-10), Rajagopalan describes how shifting and permeable social and cultural boundaries have increasingly rendered untenable the idea of discrete and isolated linguistic systems. All these phenomena unveil “the smug myth” of a stable bond between nationhood and a (single) language that would work “as a cementing factor” for a stable national identity (MS 13: 9). Furthermore, the chapter exposes the need for linguistics

to attend to “the whole gamut of semiotic resources that are at the disposal of the speaking subject” (MS 13: 10). To become actively engaged in the currents of social and cultural life in the twenty-first century, Rajagopalan calls for linguistics to move away from “what Saussure famously described as ‘la clôture immanentiste de la langue’ (1916, 46), which became a cornerstone of his entire structural enterprise” and towards “the idea of language as a fluid, amorphous object in an increasingly translanguaging world” (MS 13: 9, 14-15, respectively). If, as Darin states in the opening of her chapter, the “anti-essentialist postmodernist thought that gained momentum in the mid-twentieth century is now the basis for most theories about language” (MS 3: 1), Rajagopalan’s chapter makes explicit some of the prevailing ideas about language within TS.

Arrojo’s work from *within* TS relied on a critical turn towards linguistics in order to frame the need, as well as the grounds, for a “non-essentialist theory of translation” (1998, 40) as, indeed, “Deconstruction is at the source of some of the most radical criticism on the traditional, essentialist concepts of sign and translation in TS” (Oliveira MS 11: 4)—but it also transcended a TS border as, for instance, the co-authored publications with Rajagopalan in her career bibliography testify (MS B: 9-10). On the borders of philosophy and TS Oliveira’s work demonstrates the priority of a “conception of language” for a “theory of translation,” which forms the basis for his effort to theorize translation (MS 11: 8). Illuminating ideas about language from beyond and on the borders of TS—whether linguistics, philosophy, or feminist-transfictional—reveals the fluid, permeable quality of disciplinary boundaries and so emphasizes the importance for humanities (and beyond) to work at interdisciplinarity: both to enhance understandings of certain starting points *within* a discipline that might not gain visibility from within that discipline, and to inspire reconfigurations of the disciplinary limits—in the manner Baer urges of “enlarging the field” (rather than an “expansion”) (2020, 234)—in light of the fresh visibility(-ies) made available by bordering approaches.

Bordering Risks

A menacing aspect of *borders* echoes in the persistent challenge raised by the asymmetries of power, prestige, and value that determine English-language publication. Most of the contributors to this volume write and publish in multiple languages, though their involvements in this project

depend on locating their work inside the borders of English. In one sense this increases visibility for scholars whose work will—in English—gain attention of a numerous English-reading audience, while in another sense the English-only configuration of this volume might contribute to the further establishment of this (putative) linguistic border as constituting a primary zone for international visibility. Borders are all-too-often sites of violence, as Gloria Anzaldúa poignantly voiced in the late-twentieth century concerning a specific border: “The U.S.-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds” (1987, 25). Events over the years of this book’s genesis and production (2020-22) have cast more light on the violence of borders in gruesome ways, producing at a global scale an open wound, tears and rifts on people—families, communities formed both through long-shared histories and through shorter-term, temporarily constellated affinities and shared goals (as in the groups of people migrating together towards what they hope will be a more secure, safe zone of possibilities)—like the violences described by Anzaldúa, and many of them along the same (US-Mexico) border. The COVID-19 pandemic has reiterated border logic of this type even as its spread exposes some ways borders remain unclosed and uncloseable in terms of human vulnerabilities, attitudes, ideas. Nevertheless, the pandemic has also brought more light to a kind of ruthless (re-)enforcement of borders in the forms of travel bans and the horrifying attempts to ethnicize a virus, as well as the brutally violent consequences of those attempts. Several examples of these consequences and their contradictions are traced in Wemyss and Yuval’s brief article (2020), including some that highlight Global North-South dichotomies and disparities.

The present collection gathers scholars from South and North and attempts to promote a widening diversity of styles and approaches to theorizing translation. Yet, the fact that all chapters appear in English works against that attempt, registering the dichotomies and disparities present in the borders of academic publication. Bassnett and Johnston have addressed this as presenting the risk of “a twenty-first century colonialism” (2019, 181). Throughout the volume’s formation, Oliveira has raised under the term *epistemicide* some of the problems with the English-language border and its disempowering violence(s) as they grind against opportunities for heightened visibility—in the Global North—for scholars of the Global South. Of the book’s fourteen contributors, half work in and/or are affiliated with Brazilian universities, another two authors who collaborated on a single chapter work in a Colombian academic context, while one contributor is based in South Africa,

and another in an Austrian institution; only four are scholars working in the US. Apart from a few quotations or terms, however, all the chapters are presented in English. The risks of epistemicide flowing from “the process of making a text suitable for publication in the English-speaking world” encompass “not only the elimination of characteristic lexical features and ornament, but also the complete destruction and reconstruction of the entire infrastructure of the text, with far-reaching consequences as regards the world-view encoded in it” (Bennett 2009, 155).⁴ As Oliveira expressed it in one of our many exchanges (in English) on the volume and its development: “There are different styles in thinking and construing an argument, and there’s surely a tension in the strategy of using English as lingua franca (that guarantees the access to a larger readership) and the danger of imposing also a specific way of looking at things that comes with a language and a tradition” (email to author, 24 November, 2021). Such danger weighs against whatever diversity we have achieved in the volume’s contributors and their topics.

One response to the imposition of English on this volume has been the formation of a nexus of solidarity in-and-through which some of the language(s) across the chapters has taken shape in a spirit of fellowship, collaboration, and mutual aid by way of *translation* in various senses of the term. This creative fellowship may resonate in some ways with the collectivity María Lugones envisioned (in her reading of Anzaldúa) that works at “breaking down our isolation against the odds prescribed by ‘the confines of the normal’” (1992, 37)—‘normal’ in this case being English as the standard for academic publication. Even if, as Oliveira has written elsewhere, “repercussões apenas locais” (the consequences are merely local), a diversity of languages nevertheless operates as “o antídoto contra um sistema global em que não mais se crie, mas apenas se copie—levando à estagnação” (the antidote against a global system in which one no longer creates, but only copies—leading to stagnation) (Oliveira 2015, 366; my trans.). We hope some of the stagnation occurring in the English presentation of this volume meets, in the chapters themselves and the scholars who composed them, at least some measure of critical resistance and counter-movement towards the creation of a more pluralistic and diverse Translation Studies.

Bibliography

Anzaldúa, Gloria. 1987. *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 4th ed. San Francisco: Aunt

Lute books.

Arrojo, Rosemary. 1996. "Literature as Fetishism: Some Consequences for a Theory of Translation." *Meta* 41, no. 2: 208-16.

---. 1997. "The 'death' of the author and the limits of the translator's visibility." In *Translation as Intercultural Communication: Selected papers from the Est Congress—Prague 1995*, edited by Mary Snell-Hornby, Zuzana Jettmarová, and Klaus Kaindl, 21-32. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

---. 1998. "The Revision of the Traditional Gap Between Theory & Practice & the Empowerment of Translation in Postmodern Times." *The Translator* 4, no. 1: 25-48. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13556509.1998.10799005>.

---. 2002a. "Lessons Learned from Babel." *Target* 14, no. 1: 137-43.

---. 2002b. "Writing, Interpreting, and the Power Struggle for the Control of Meaning: Scenes from Kafka, Borges, and Kosztolányi." In *Translation and Power*, edited by Edwin Gentzler and Maria Tymoczko, 63-79. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

---. 2005. "The Gendering of Translation in Fiction: Translators, Authors, Women/Texts in Scliar and Calvino." In *Gender, Sex and Translation: The Manipulation of Identities*, edited by José Santaemilia, 81-95. London and New York: Routledge. ProQuest.

---. 2010. "Philosophy and translation." In *Handbook of Translation Studies*, vol. 1, edited by Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer, 247-51. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

---. 2014. "The Power of Fiction as Theory: Some exemplary lessons on translation from Borges's stories." In Kaindl and Spitzl, *Transfiction*, 37-49.

---. 2018. *Fictional Translators: Rethinking Translation through Literature*. New York:

Routledge.

Baer, Brian James. 2020. "On origins: the mythistory of translation studies and the geopolitics of knowledge." *The Translator* 26, no. 3: 221-40. DOI: [10.1080/13556509.2020.1843755](https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2020.1843755).

Bassnett, Susan. 2013. Preface to the Fourth Edition. *Translation Studies*, 1-13. 4th edition. New York: Routledge. ProQuest.

--- and David Johnston. 2019. "The Outward Turn in Translation Studies." Introduction to "The Outward Turn in Translation Studies," edited by Susan Bassnett and David Johnston. Special issue, *The Translator: Studies in Intercultural Communication* 25, no. 3: 181-88. EBSCOhost.

Belausteguigoitia Rius, Marisa. 2009. "Límites y fronteras: la pedagogía del cruce y la transdisciplina en la obra de Gloria Anzaldúa." *Estudios feministas* 17, no. 3: 755–67. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24327893>

Bennett, Karen. 2007. "Epistemicide! The Tale of a Predatory Discourse." *The Translator* 13, no. 2: 151-69. DOI: [10.1080/13556509.2007.10799236](https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2007.10799236)

Chesterman, Andrew and Rosemary Arrojo. 2000. "Shared Ground in Translation Studies." *Target* 12, no. 1: 151-60.

Curran, Beverly. 2005. "The fictional translator in Anglophone literatures." In "Fictionalising Translation and Multilingualism," edited by Dirk Delabastita and Rainer Grutman. Special issue, *Linguistica Antverpiensia, New Series—Themes in Translation Studies* 4: 183-99. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52034/lanstts.v4i.135>.

Delabastita, Dirk and Rainier Grutman. 2005. Introduction to "Fictional representations of multilingualism and translation." In "Fictionalising Translation and Multilingualism," edited by Dirk Delabastita and Rainer Grutman. Special issue, *Linguistica Antverpiensia, New Series—Themes in Translation Studies* 4: 11-34. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52034/lanstts.v4i.124>

Đurovičová, Nataša. 2019. Introduction to *At Translation's Edge*, edited by Nataša Đurovičová, Patrice Petro, and Lorena Terando, 1-9. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Glissant, Édouard. 1990. *Poétique de la Relation*. Paris: Gallimard.

---. 1997. *Poetics of Relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Guldin, Rainer. 2016. *Translation as Metaphor*. Oxford and New York: Routledge.

Kaindl, Klaus. 2008. "Zwischen Fiktion und Wirklichkeit: Translatorinnen im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft, Literatur und Realität." In *Translationskultur: ein innovatives und produktives Konzept*, edited by Larisa Schippel, 307-33. Berlin: Frank & Timme.

---. 2014. "Going Fictional! Translators and interpreters in literature and film: An introduction." In Kaindl and Spitzl, *Transfiction*, 1-26.

--- and Karlheinz Spitzl. 2014. *Transfiction: research into the realities of translation fiction*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Lugones, María. 1992. "On Borderlands/La Frontera: An Interpretive Essay." *Hypatia* 7, no. 4: 31-37. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810075>.

Maitland, Sarah. 2019. "Imagining Otherness: On Translation, Harm and Border Logic." In "The Outward Turn in Translation Studies," edited by Susan Bassnett and David Johnston. Special issue, *The Translator: Studies in Intercultural Communication* 25, no. 3: 204-17. EBSCOhost.

Oliveira, Paulo. 2015. "Babel unrevisited." *Anais do 1º Congresso da Associação Brasileira de Estudos Germanísticos*, edited by Helmut Paul Erich Galle and Valéria Sabrina Pereira, 360-67. São Paulo: USP/ABEG.

Pagano, Adriana S. 2000. "Sources for Translation Theory: Fiction in Latin America." *ATA Chronicle* 29, no. 4: 38-44.

Sakai, Naoki. 2010. "Translation and the Figure of Border: Toward the Apprehension of Translation as a Social Action." *Profession*, 25–34. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41419858>

---. 2019. "Translation and Image: On the Schematism of Co-figuration." In *At Translation's Edge*, edited by Nataša Đurovičová, Patrice Petro, and Lorena Terando, 79-97. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Spitzl, Karlheinz. 2014. "Fiction as a catalyst: Some afterthoughts." In Kaindl and Spitzl, *Transfiction*, 363-68.

Strümper-Krobb, Sabine. 2003. "The Translator in Fiction." *Language and Intercultural Communication* 3, no. 2: 115-21. DOI: 10.1080/14708470308668095.

Van Houtum, Henk, and Ton Van Naerssen. 2002. "Bordering, Ordering and Othering." *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 93, no. 2: 125–36.

Wemyss, Georgie, and Nira Yuval-Davis. 2020. "Bordering during the pandemic." *Soundings: A journal of politics and culture* 75: 13-17. Project Muse: muse.jhu.edu/article/764254.

Notes

¹ On this emphasis, compare Sakai's statement that an analysis of bordering "requires us to simultaneously examine both the presence of a border and its drawing or inscription" (2019, 81).

² See Betsy Wing's insights on *donner-avec* and *comprendre* (1997, 212, n. 5).

³ On such provisionalities of interpretation, see in this volume Kaindl (MS 1: 10-11), Ramírez Giraldo and Venegas Piracón's closing remarks (MS 7: 15), and Amorim's opening remarks (MS 10: 4, 16).

⁴ Bennett here writes with specific reference to texts produced in Spain and Portuguese settings.