

Venuti, Lawrence (2021). *The Translation Studies Reader* (4th ed.). Routledge.

As a professional translator and a respected translation scholar, Lawrence Venuti's intellectual insights and relentless academic endeavors have led to widely acclaimed scholarly publications in the field of Translation Studies, most notably *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995), *The Scandals of Translation* (1998), and *Translation Changes Everything* (2013). In the capacity of the main editor of the *reader*, Venuti put his marks and shared his views on selecting inflectional readings that exerted a profound impact in the field of translation. Some of these selected readings were translated into English, which stresses the importance of translation in bringing new materials to light to foster profound understandings and enrich diverse perspectives about Translation Studies in the age of globalization. Venuti shows how writing about translation should be written or translated into English, thereby globalizing the field while eliciting contributions from other rich traditions to English. The author contends, "In the end, this reader shows that native speakers of English wrote relatively little of the translation theory and commentary that have proven influential over the past two millennia" (2021, p. 3).

In *The Translation Studies Reader* (2021), Venuti adopts a chronological method in drawing a historical map from antiquity to the present, introducing major translation approaches and commentary by focusing predominately on Western Tradition. Nonetheless, the volume includes a Chinese tradition, particularly the respective accounts of [Zhi Qian?], Dao'an, Lin Shu, Qu Qiubai, and Lu Xun for the first time in the history of the *reader* since its first publication in 2000. This addition is remarkable in widening the scope of the anthology while invoking new ways to read different accounts and thereby advancing scholarly discussions between Eastern and Western thinking about the subject matter. In doing so, Venuti seeks "to stimulate new kinds of thinking about translation historiography" (01:00). Another important feature is adding new readings in the section of 2000 and beyond: Pascale Casanova's "Consecration and Accumulation of Literary Capital: Translation as Unequal Exchange," translated by Siobhan Brownlie, Carla Nappi's "Full. Empty. Stop. Go: Translating Miscellany in Early Modern China," and Karen Van Dyck's "Migration, Translingualism, Translation." With these inclusions, the *reader* manifests significant, albeit welcomed changes.

Specifically, the fourth edition of *The Translation Studies Reader* includes 34 contributions arranged chronologically into seven sections. The first section covers a historical stretch from antiquity to the late nineteenth century; it is titled "foundational statements," insofar this era has marked a crucial influence on the subsequent practices and commen-

tary of translation. The rest of the sections cover the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Each section is complied with a useful introduction highlighting trends in Translation Studies. This, in turn, establishes a background for concise expositions of readings, with an emphasis on the "work of influential writers, theorists, and scholars who are not represented by a reading" (p. 2). Suggestions for further readings appear at the end of every section, which directs the readers to explore more about the discussed topics while emphasizing the space limitation of the anthology. The author skillfully imbibes instrumentalism and hermeneutic in the section introductions as analytical tools to explicate various trends and theoretical developments. While doing so, he canonizes translation into a dichotomy—mapping it out into two contrast modes of thinking.

The overarching goal of *The Translation Studies Reader* is to present influential diverse accounts in a chronological order to examine major developments in translation theory and to underscore the significance of each period. The collection is intended to serve as "an introduction to the field recognizable to the scholars who work within it" (p. 1). Venuti frames the history of translation theory into a series of dynamic linkages between translated texts' relative autonomy, equivalence, and function to be ascertained by linguistic, literary, cultural, and social factors (p. 5). He argues that translation theory lends itself to certain assumptions about language use, which can be classified into instrumentalist (empiricist) and hermeneutic (materialist). These models are best understood as ways of thinking about translation. The author discusses them in this anthology in an intriguing title, "Genealogies of Translation Theory: Schleiermacher" and previously articulated in *Contra Instrumentalism: A Translation Polemic* (2019). Instrumentalism conceives translation as "the reproduction or transfer of an invariant contained in or caused by the source text, whether its form, its meaning, or its effect" (2019, p. 6). Whereas according to hermeneutics, translation is a subjective interpretation that changes the source text's meaning, impact, and form; it assumes social and cultural determinants mediate a materialistic notion of language that constitutes thought and reality as opposed to expressing or representing them (2021, p. 488–489). Venuti sharply attacks instrumentalism by arguing that such a model has dominated translation since antiquity and stymies its growth. For that reason, he advocates hermeneutics because there is no fixed invariant form of the source text since translation is an interpretive act depending on how the receiving culture responds to it (p. 405). He notes that hermeneutics is the remedy to advance the research and the practice of translation.

CRITICISM

Remarkably, the fourth edition of *The Translation Studies Reader* has greatly evolved in its scope, discussion, and representation. Notably, it covers a wider historical stretch from antiquity to the present. It is also featured by representing a non-Western perspective from Chinese tradition. However, it has skipped momentous developments in translation in other traditions such as Arabic. For example, during the Abbasid era, which is also called the Golden Age of Islam, translation had witnessed an exemplary development as many languages covering a range of subjects had been translated into Arabic such as Greek, Indian, and Persian. The foundation of *Bayt al Hikma* (House of Wisdom) in Baghdad marked the first step toward the translation movement. Hunayn ibn Ishaq, who mastered Arabic, Greek, Syriac, and Persian, is one of the most recognizable multilingual translators. His “unique method of translation was a landmark for translation in Islamic culture” (Abdulla, 2021, p. 88). Hence, this collection would have significantly benefitted from adding ibn Ishaq to illuminate intriguing insights about his endeavors and what informs his practice. This is not the case with the *reader* in its current or previous editions.

Within my review of this anthology, I do not question eliminating crucial items from the previous edition per se, such as Michael Cronin’s “The Translation Age: Translation, Technology, and the New Instrumentalism,” which is paramount. However, the exclusion of materials raises serious questions about what qualifies to enter the realm of *The Translation Studies Reader*. For instance, excluding post-colonial translation theory is quite curious because it is one of the most important developments from the 1990s onwards. Although a leading scholar Tejaswini Niranjana was mentioned in the section introduction of the 1990s, post-colonial translation theory deserves a lot more than a couple of sentences (p. 283–284). Insofar as it exerts a crucial development in Translation Studies with the likes of Niranjana, Susan Bassnett, Harish Trivedi, among others, post-colonial translation would be an extraordinary asset given its resonance with the historical approach of the anthology in question. Taking due consideration of this trend in future editions of the *reader* would be a welcome change


along with an indispensable essay of Gayatri Spivak’s “The Politics of Translation,” which is preserved in the four editions. After all, an introduction to the field without post-colonial translation is rather pointless.

Without paying much attention to future potential developments, the map of the field is seemingly restricted in a historical citation of canonical readings. This comes across as another shortcoming of *The Translation Studies Reader* as it lacks a conclusion. This is because a conclusion is necessary to map new areas of research, pronounce the challenges and the limitations of the field, and more importantly, provide remarks about the future of Translation Studies as a whole.

All in all, the fourth edition of the *reader* is a must-read for anyone interested in translation, scholars, researchers, translators, instructors, and students. It is a fascinating collection and an indispensable introduction to the emerging field of Translation Studies. More importantly, it serves as a historical map to a broad spectrum of influential readings in Western and Chinese traditions formulating a heterogenous body of works from antiquity to the present. It acts as a source of teaching, a guide for research, a frame of reference to canonical readings while serving institutional needs as a classroom textbook. To that end, it is a laudable contribution indeed.

REFERENCES

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