

# Translating time: Modelling the (re)processing of emerging meaning

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The choice between substance ontology and process ontology has been haunting humanity since, at least, Ancient Greek philosophy. Generally, it seems that the Platonic view that the constant is more basic holds sway in most thinking. The intuitive assumption seems to be that things are the way they are and that one has to put work into changing them. Constancy or substance, in this view, is primary and change (or process) secondary. In translation studies, this plays out in the source text as the stable starting point (stability is primary) that has to be changed (change is secondary) into a target text. In the more pessimistic views, such as those on the impossibility of translation, the form of the source text is so unique or materially set (stable) that it cannot be changed.

Basing my argument on Peirce's process semiotics and other process thinkers like Deacon (2013), Queiroz (Queiroz & Ata, 2018; Queiroz & Loula, 2010) and Whitehead (1985), I inverse the above argument, arguing that change or process is primary and constancy secondary. Because all of reality is subject to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, it is process taking form rather than form changing (Marais, 2018). This would mean that time is crucial in this conceptualisation. Translation is not only process in the sense of changing a stable text into another stable text. Rather, translation is the very process that drives meaning in the first place. It is the virtual metabolism that relates the metabolism of the organism to its environment. A text is a process that has been constrained materially to be relatively stable, but the stability is not original, it is the effect of semiotic work, translation. My interest is thus in the semiotic work that was done to constrain semiotic process into some form of stability and the ways in which one can get to know or understand these constraints.

This complexity view (Marais, 2014) on process and form has massive theoretical implications for translation studies. I spend half of this paper exploring some of these implications. However, this reversal of ground and figure also challenges the modelling of translation. If translation is process, how do we model it in a static medium such as print? I therefore explore the affordances that new computational technology offers for translating static models into changing ones.

## References

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