

# Chaosphere and Entropy. Complexity and the Place of Translation in (the) Digital Humanities

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The discourse and methods of (the) digital humanities are an exercise in complexity. In electronic scholarly editing, for instance, complexity in general and coding in particular provide “a healthy self-consciousness” (Nell Smith 2004) about the circumstances of knowledge creation. Complexity is also permanently sought in charts and maps (Drucker 2016), in preserving the multifariousness of cultural heritage (Presner and Shepard 2016), in the study of the human-computer interfaces (Ruecker 2016), in the synergetic effects and unintended consequences of the Internet of Things (Jørgensen 2016), in linked data and the semantic web as essential tools for understanding the complexity of humanists’ discourse and of the disciplinary developments in the humanities (Oldman et al 2016), in relation to hypertextual history or virtual reality systems. Thus complexity is essential to multiple readings and interpretations in academic research and coding emerges as essential to disentangling humanistic multiplicities.

Although a fundamentally humanistic discipline and an activity that takes its drive from human action, translation studies has only very recently started to consider complexity as a suitable paradigm (Marais and Meylaerts 2018; Marais 2014). Complexity signals the need for translation studies to acknowledge entropy—the tendency of the universe towards disorder—and the decentralization of translation activities (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018; Tanasescu 2018) as a characteristic of translation practice in micromodernity (Cronin 2012). In this context, this talk will examine the possibilities of aligning translation studies to the latest developments in (the) digital humanities and of seeing translation as ‘chaosphere’—both an activity and a type of text characterized by non-linearity. To this end, we will employ a chaos-theory informed framework to explore the promises of complex network analysis for capturing multiplicity in translation. Last but not least, we shall also look at the multifarious role translation can play in (the) digital humanities and the benefits of these two disciplines joining hands.

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