

## Call for Papers

# Modernity in Translation

### Guest Editors

Professor Mustafa Riad, Ain Shams University, Egypt  
Professor Tarek Shamma, Binghamton University, New York, USA

**Journal:** *Encounters in translation – Rencontres en traduction*

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free for authors, free for readers*

### Languages of submission

Proposals may be submitted in French or English. Submissions in other languages may also be considered, subject to confirmation by the editors

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Translation throughout history has been a major channel for knowledge transfer, but in modern times modernization in the Global South has often taken the form of a unidirectional process—importing from or copying the West. This special issue of *Encounters in translation – Rencontres en traduction* seeks to explore the complex relationship between translation and the experience of modernity, often linked, but not limited to, the colonial experience. It also seeks to examine how translation has shaped and been shaped by the historical and ongoing processes of colonialism and its aftermath.

We welcome contributions on the following topics:

**Enforcing and resisting colonial power dynamics:** Translation may be examined as a tool for colonial dominance (e.g., enforcing legal systems, promoting assimilation, suppressing indigenous languages) and as a site of resistance (e.g., reviving national identity, disseminating nationalist ideas, challenging colonial narratives). Examples can be drawn from various regions that went through a colonial modernization process, such as India, Africa, the Americas, Ireland, Algeria, and South Africa.

**Navigating cultural dependency and identity:** Exploring the complex relationship between translation and modernization, particularly in the context of cultural dependency, in a manner that illuminates the role of translation in facilitating the transfer of knowledge and ideas, and its impact on the development of indigenous cultures and identities. A key concern is the extent to which the translation of (Western) knowledge for the purpose of ‘modernization’ has been

equated with ‘westernization’. What defines a translated concept or a cultural practice as ‘modern’, as opposed to ‘new’, ‘foreign’, or simply ‘western’?

**Strategies for equitable knowledge transfer:** Is it possible to conceive of the transfer of ideas, schools of thought or literary genres independently from the cultural contexts that gave rise to them? This process requires an exploration of the dividing line between cross-fertilization, mutual acculturation, and cultural domination and imitation. We welcome contributions that investigate translation practices that can facilitate particular forms of knowledge transfer, especially those that defy (post)colonialist or Eurocentric pressures.

**Shaping and negotiating individual and collective identities in postcolonial societies:** This sub-theme encompasses the role of translation in shaping individual and collective identities in postcolonial societies, including the negotiation of power relations and cultural recognition. Examples can include the translation of Western literature into Indian languages, indigenous oral literature into English, and Creole languages into European languages.

**The emergence of new cultural forms in a modernized world:** Examining the emergence of new cultural forms and identities through translation addresses the tensions between homogenization and particularization in a modernized world. Examples can include the Bengali Renaissance in India, the Negritude movement in Senegal, the development of Taglish in the Philippines, and the challenges of translating cultural products from marginalized communities.

**Ethics and social justice in translation:** Examining the ethical implications of translation in postcolonial contexts includes addressing its role in promoting human rights, ensuring access to information, fostering cultural diversity, and decolonizing knowledge production. This can involve critical reflection on translation choices and advocating for more equitable and inclusive practices.

**Decolonizing discourse:** Examining the limitations and potential harm of positionality statements in decolonization efforts, particularly when they reinforce colonial patterns of knowledge production and representation.

*Encounters in translation – Rencontres en traduction* invites submissions that explore the intersection of translation and a wide range of disciplines, including postcolonial studies, critical race theory, anthropology, medical humanities, and cultural studies. We encourage submissions that adopt a resolutely transdisciplinary approach, drawing on insights from multiple fields to illuminate the complex and multifaceted nature of translation. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, the role of translation in shaping postcolonial identities, the impact of translation on race relations, the use of translation in anthropological research, the shaping of the culture of scientific discourse at different historical and cultural junctures, and the contribution of translation to cultural (mis)understanding.

We welcome submissions from scholars at all stages of their careers and are interested in papers that offer new theoretical insights and/or that present innovative case studies. We particularly welcome contributions that critically examine the concept of modernization, especially those that expand the discussion beyond traditional Western perspectives.

**Timeline**

Deadline for submission of synopses (1000 words): 1 July 2025

Selected contributors notified of acceptance of abstracts: 1 August 2025

Deadline for submission of full contributions: 31 October 2025

Confirmation of provisional acceptance of contributions: 15 November 2025

Publication date: November 2026

**Contact:**

Professor Mustafa Riad: [mrmriad@art.asu.edu.eg](mailto:mrmriad@art.asu.edu.eg)

Professor Tarek Shamma: [tshamma@binghamton.edu](mailto:tshamma@binghamton.edu)

A digital version of this call for papers is available [here](#)