

O'Driscoll – Book review:

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This French-language collection of essays deals with the position of Translation Studies (la *traductologie*) within the contemporary University, and its relationship with the teaching of translation as an activity, for linguistic/pedagogical purposes and/or for the training of future professional translators. It also deals with the uses currently made of translation and Translation Studies within university departments. Ballard points out in his Introduction that, historically, translation quickly became associated, from Antiquity onwards, with learning and personal development: for instance, he cites Pliny, who recommended translation as a useful intellectual activity, because 'la traduction ouvre l'esprit et forme le goût' ('translation opens the mind and develops taste' (my rendering). For Ballard, this is a foundational, indeed, provocative statement, to which this collection of essays devotes renewed attention, and it is in the light of this call to actively translate, that the contributors of these essays discuss the present-day usage of translation within educational circles. As Ballard puts it, does the student who has done a year of translation at university have a sense that their mind has been opened and their taste developed? For Ballard, the student who actively practices translation, benefits from an increasingly keen sense of judgement and an ability to evaluate their translational output. I would agree with Ballard on this point: the translator, far from being a mere scribe, is an active creative writer and interpreter of meaning.

This issue of translation as potentially opening the mind of the student is all the more pertinent given the exponential growth and development of the discipline of Translation Studies in recent decades, a science of translation which should, ideally, contribute to deliberation on, and ultimately a greater understanding of, practices of translation. Ballard questions, in passing, the view held by some scholars that the discipline of Translation Studies 'was born' in the 1970s. True, this decade saw the attribution of the label 'traductologie' to a science which was still, comparatively, in its infancy, together with 'une explosion des recherches et des publications dans ce domaine' (ibid: 7) ('an explosion of research and publications in this domain', my rendering); however, Ballard traces the origins of Translation Studies back to the end