Chan Sinwai. *Translation and information technology*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, 215 pp.

The new challenge for translation studies in the 21st century, claims Chan Sin-wai in the introduction to his book *Translation and Information Technology*, is the impact of information technology on transla-

tion theory, practice, and education. As editor of this compilation of thirteen articles on topics of machine and machine-aided translation, Dr. Chan emphasizes first and foremost the integral role of translation studies in the technological revolution. The doors to global communication have been thrown open by the recent growth of the Internet, and machine translation has simultaneously become a primary agent in the breaching of linguistic barriers. The collection of papers in this book presents the possibilities of machine translation as an educational and professional tool, and explores the challenges it may portend for the human translator.

The book is divided into three sections: "Methodology and Application," "Terminology," and finally "Critique and Training." The compilation ends with notes on the contributors and an index. The first section contains six papers written by experts in computational linguistics, an essential field of study for creating a foundation for successful machine-translation programs. The authors of these papers present their language translation systems in technical detail, all of which focus on Chinese-English translation. Under the brief section on "Terminology," two essays discuss the cross-cultural problems arising from the proliferation of technical terminology. The third section contains five essays which explore the future role of machine translation, including an assessment of the latest technologies.

Chan Sin-wai presents his own paper within the first section, entitled "The Making of *Transrecipe:* A Translational Approach to the Machine Translation of Chinese Cookbooks." He introduces a fast, efficient, fully automatic Chinese-English translator for cooking recipes that is advanced in its use of a "translational approach" rather than the commonly used linguistic and computational approach in designing translation software. The latter approach, he claims, produces unsatisfactory translations due to the fact that it employs only a syntactical method of translation. He prefers methods that fragment sentences into shorter ones before translating them into the target language, a technique that has not been implemented previously in machine translation. Based on the success of *Transrecipe,* Dr. Chan claims that this program can be used as a model for systems intended for translating procedural and practical texts, because it is

within this domain of machine translation that "language-matching is possible."

The essay "Computer Technology and Translation — Friends or Foes?" by Carrie Chau Kam Hung and Irene Ip Kwok Chun appears in the section "Critique and Training." The authors investigate the advantages and/or disadvantages of using computers in translation education based on a study involving students in Language Studies at the City University of Hong Kong. The study consisted of giving a vocabulary acquisition lesson to two groups of students; the control group used the traditional learning method of printed materials and writing, while the experimental group used computers to receive instructions, enter their answers, and work interactively with the computer during exercises. The study found a much greater rate of improvement in the computer-aided group.

In the final section, Paris Lau Chi-chuen reflects on the challenge to the traditional translator in his essay "Globalisation on Language: Death of the Translator in the Technological Age." Using an article written by Walter Benjamin on the mechanical reproduction of art as a stepping-stone, Paris Lau Chi-chuen equates translation with art through its unique attempt to recreate the sense of space, time, and meaning in the original work. He argues that machine translation casts aside the translator's attempt at correspondence between original and replica, dispersing the uniqueness of the original with a plurality of copies. By way of its "transitoriness and reproducibility," he claims, machine translation disproportionately represents "all embedded fabrics of culture and tradition" found in the original.

Translation and Information Technology makes several interesting inquiries into the effects of information technology on translation. Each section of articles addresses a different field of interest, and thus will appeal to different readers. Inclusive to these are the computer scientist, the linguist, and the translator. Although much research remains to be done on machine translation, significant advances have been made in approaching system design from a translator's perspective, and these systems are already playing a crucial role in translation studies. But what about the traditional translator? Can machines ever replace humans in this capacity? Some believe, as does Paris Lau Chi-chuen, that machines can never attain the human experience neces-

sary for translation. Others, including Chan Sin-wai, believe that the machine and the human translator are not rivals, but rather complementary to each other. In an age of rapid technological and global change, it is necessary to recognize the challenges that information technology presents to the traditional practice of translation.

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