

Department of Philosophy and History of Ideas, Aarhus University

SLØK LECTURE

23 May 2019

2 PM – 4 PM, Building 1441, Auditorium 3



Annabel Brett
University of Cambridge

THE POLITICS OF TRANSLATION AND THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

'Meaning in context' is the catchphrase for a certain understanding of how to write the history of political thought. The temporal and local restriction of meaning it has been taken to imply has come under sustained attack, both in principle and especially, now, in the context (sic) of writing a global history of political thought. In this lecture Annabel Brett revisits contextualist methodology through the lens of translation, a practice that has been central to the history of political thought and yet one that seems to sit uneasily with a strict idea of situated meaning. This lecture draws on postcolonial translation theory, European understandings of translation both past and present, and Brett's own experience of translating to explore the continuing dilemmas of power, violence and ethics in interpretation.

She concludes with an argument for a strong sense of translation as a practice of history in its own right, and reflects upon what this means for the self-understanding of the historian of political thought.



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