Michaela Wolf
Interpreting in the network of terror: "Communication" in Nazi concentration camps

In Nazi concentration camps communication was vital for the prisoners’ survival. This lecture will lay bare the often ambiguous functions of interpreting between perpetrators and victims and the blurring boundaries between the agents involved. It claims that the study of communication mechanisms in these camps enhances our understanding of the ambiguous role of interpreting in more general terms. These questions will be explored on behalf of a series of survivor accounts which feature interpreting situations in concentration and death camps.

Ping Zhang
Towards a universal text: Seder Zeraim of the Mishnah in Chinese

Universal text is a concept that was derived from Midrash tradition. Universal text is a text composed by a single writer in the all the languages and for all the times. It is a text beyond time and space, a text that not only can be understood anywhere in any language in the same sense, but also can be understood by the people in different historical periods. For a text with universal contents, universal text is the ideal form of its existence.

Given the vast differences between human languages and the constant change of any specific language, universal text looks like a text in its perfection, a far-away dream that can come true only with miracles of God. Nevertheless, I still would like to ask if we, in spite of all the limits of ability as human beings, could make meaningful breakthroughs on our way towards that dream. If we can, how do we do that?

With that question in mind, and inspired by some Biblical translation practices such as King James version and the Germany version by Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, which, in contrast to many colloquial translations, stressed the classical style of the language and tried to resonate the tunes of the original Holy Scripture, I tried to create a new Chinese language style that combines classical Chinese, modern mandarin and the structures of Hebrew language in my translation of Mishnah. That
new style successfully helped me to deal with the main problem of translating The Mishnah: how can the translation be beautiful and clear, and at the same time, the openness of the original text is well kept?

Nuria Brufau-Alvira
Feminist translation in the 21st century: More theoretical than practical? Where within Gender Studies?

A gender perspective was systematically applied to translations for the first time almost four decades ago in Canada. Some years later, translation theories on the matter were published also for the first time (Simon 1996, von Flotow 1997) there. Although this phenomenon allowed translation theorists to talk about the existence of feminist translation theories within Translation Studies, their appearance there and then was eased by the advances both in nationalism and in feminism in a very special context; one which allowed for translators to perform political acts with their feminist translations.

Gender and Translation have since then been combined. Within Translation Studies they have been traditionally related to the management of grammatical genders, the need to make both the translation and its translator visible, especially if this is a woman, or to the debate about whether the sex and gender of the translator matters. More recently, they have become a research area linked to sex, gender identity construction, and to national identity construction. And more and more Translation Departments worldwide seem to be interested in this connection, in particular those from non-Western spheres. It is then an interdisciplinary area which has evolved. However, there are two interesting tendencies in this evolution which require further reflection. First, it seems that there is more theoretical research than real everyday practice of feminist translation. Second, this connection is cared for within Translation Studies, but mostly ignored both in Gender Studies Departments and within (the) global feminist movements.

In this presentation I would like to shed some light on such tendencies.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:
Calls for the study of translation within a general theory of transfer have been voiced as early as 1981 (Even-Zohar), and forcefully accentuated afresh as late as 2012 (D’hulst). However, to this day, hardly any systematic efforts have been made to treat translation, in principle, as one among several possible mechanisms active in the process of cultural transfer. At the same time, Polysystem Theory and DTS, which gave rise to the aforementioned calls, seem lacking for the greater task in several respects.

Drawing on the insights gained by a number of disciplinary frameworks – cultural, sociological, and historical – a preliminary outline for a general theory of transfer is suggested. Integrating aspects of all its forebears, it aims at cross-disciplinary understanding and applicability. First, transfer is defined as the flow of items between cultural systems, entailing a modification in the semiotic-functional level of both transferred item and the system absorbing it. Several principles are then postulated: the in-principle continuous nature of transfer processes; a sociological principle of the dynamics governing the spread of items (or models) in culture; and a historical principle linking the nature of their modification with temporal aspects of the process. Finally, the suggested framework is shown to allow for the study of translation as a form of transfer.

Selected bibliography

D'HULST, Lieven. 2012. “(Re)locating translation history: From assumed translation to assumed transfer”, *Translation Studies*, 5:2, 139-155.


**Hila Karas**

**The question of translation as paratext**

This talk will discuss relations between the notions of translation and paratexts, as well as the factors determining these relations. The status of translation as paratexts has not been decided since Gerard Genette’s seminal essay. In fact, Genette himself hesitated whether a translation should indeed be considered a paratext of its own source text. This may reflect a lower hierarchical status of translation vis à vis its source; on the other hand, the interest in the paratexts of translation itself is presently increasing. We will compare translation to paratextual elements which have been analyzed in detail, discuss the notion of paratext and its main categories, and link them with possible readings of the translation itself.

**Shimon Sandbank**

**The translator's impossible task: Variations on Walter Benjamin**

My paper deals with Benjamin’s essay ‘The Task of the Translator’, first showing how it does away with both reader and referent and reduces translation to a relationship between texts; then discussing two approaches to the essay - Szondi’s philological-historical approach (in his essay on Celan’s translation of Shakespeare’s sonnet 105) and the deconstructionist interpretation by de Man and Barbara Johnson. I finally suggest that in spite of the distance between the two approaches, they strangely seem to reach the same concept as to what poetry aims at.