

Call for Papers

Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies: East and West in Dialogue

7-8 May 2014, at the Institute for Modern Languages Research, University of London

Keynote Speakers: **Mona Baker** (University of Manchester, UK), **Farzaneh Farahzad** (Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran) **Ferial Ghazoul** (American University of Cairo), **Theo D'Haen** (KU Leuven, Belgium), **Defeng Li** (SOAS, University of London, UK), **Kirsten Malmkjaer** (University of Leicester, UK), **Maria Tymoczko** (University of Massachusetts, USA), **Judy Wakabayashi** (Kent State University, USA)

Conference Organizers: **Dr Maike Oergel** and **Dr Kathryn Batchelor** (University of Nottingham, UK)

The **Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies** at the University of Nottingham is organizing a keynote conference to bring together Asian, Arabic and Western scholars in the area of translation and comparative literary and cultural studies, with the aim of facilitating and accelerating dialogue between 'Western' and 'Eastern' traditions. The conference seeks to establish areas of overlap and difference in Eastern (Asian and Arabic) and Western traditions of translation and comparative studies in order to contribute towards re-shaping our understanding of intercultural encounters and engagement. This will be achieved by discussing the different traditions *not* in terms of differentiating traditional dichotomies (Own and Other) *nor* subsuming them under monolithic concepts of universal values (humanity, globality etc), but by prioritizing the activity of *comparing*. The link between Translation Studies and Comparative Cultural Studies is key, and mutually productive, in this respect: while comparative studies is currently engaging with the notion of the incomparability of cultures, translation studies, while equally engaging with the (related) notion of untranslatability, is based on the necessity to compare in order to find appropriate equivalents. By animating the link between these disciplines we aim to contribute to the outlining of new horizons for both of them.

The conference intends to build on the following intellectual and academic activities, all of which indicate a clear need for increased exchange:

- 1) the publications profiling non-Western traditions of translation scholarship and practice, such as the *Anthology of Chinese Discourse on Translation* (2006) by the late Martha Cheung and *Asian Translation Traditions* (2005) or *De-centering Translation Studies: India and Beyond* both by Judy Wakabayashi.
- 2) the opening up of comparative studies, especially comparative literature, beyond its traditional North American-European focus towards Asian and Arabic materials, evident in the growing numbers of anthologies of world literature, e.g. Norton's *Anthology of World Literature* (2001), Longman's and Bedford's *Anthologies of World Literature* (2003 and 2004 respectively) or *The Routledge Companion to World Literature* (2011), edited by Theo D'Haen.
- 3) in the founding of international organisations such as the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies (2004) that seek to redress the Western bias in the field.

It is expected that the conference will serve as a platform for setting up an innovative research network straddling not just the traditions of East and West, but also the disciplines of translation studies and comparative studies.

Abstracts (250 words) are invited for the panels below and should be sent to both organizers at maike.oergel@nottingham.ac.uk and kathryn.batchelor@nottingham.ac.uk by **Friday, 6 December 2013**.

The Panels

Panel 1: Histories and Anthologies of Translation and Comparative Literature

Keynote Speakers: Theo D'Haen (KU Leuven, Belgium), Judy Wakabayashi (Kent State University, USA)

Aims:

- to explore the principles of exclusion and inclusion that underlie the academic process of compiling histories and anthologies of translation and comparative literature
- to discuss the extent to which such principles are revealed as universal or culturally determined
- to debate the validity of geographically-bound versus global approaches.

The expertise of other delegates in this area, esp. Mona Baker (*The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*), and Kirsten Malmkjær (*Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies*) will produce a panel dialogue that is of a landmark nature. This panel will be dedicated to the **memory of Martha Cheung**, who was to have been a keynote speaker at the conference before her untimely death in September 2013.

Panel 2: Translation Theory

Keynote Speakers: Mona Baker (University of Manchester, UK), Kirsten Malmkjaer (University of Leicester, UK), Farzaneh Farahzad (Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran)

Aims:

- to interrogate Western translation theory approaches through a fruitful dialogue with other traditions, and vice versa
- to debate the desirability (or not) of universal rather than culture-specific approaches.

The dialogue here is intended to produce a clearer understanding of the current theories and their reception and implications for translation scholars and students around the world who are currently drawing on their translatorial frameworks.

Panel 3: Comparative Cultural Studies Approaches

Keynote Speakers: Ferial Ghazoul (American University of Cairo) Maria Tymoczko (University of Massachusetts, USA)

Aims:

- to debate the exchange of 'cultural products' between East and West, the channels via which this takes place, and the effects these transfers have on the cultural entities, and their impact on receiving cultures
- to develop a concrete sense of how much exchange actually occurs in cultural transfers and how these exchanges are viewed

This panel intends to bring together academics working in clearly demarcated (Western or Eastern) contexts with those working ,or perceiving themselves to work in contexts of cultural and institutional hybridity (such as the American University of Cairo). The insights emerging here will engage productively with those of the previous panels, esp. in terms of the cultural context of translation theory and the mapping of cultural heritages in anthologies.

Panel 4: Teaching Translation and Comparative Studies

Keynote Speaker: Defeng Li (SOAS, University of London)

Aims:

- to explore the points of commonality and divergence that emerge across the different cultural and academic situations
- to debate the ways in which critiques of the various traditions might be built into educational programmes.

This panel aims to yield insights into how to create effective programmes and curricula, which are fully aware of the cultural implications inherent in curriculum design and delivery. Bringing together academics involved in teaching translation and comparative cultural studies in a range of geographical locations, possibly characterized already by the meeting of East and West in their student/teacher make-up, the dialogue here is likely to result in producing innovative ideas for teaching and training in the years to come.