MA IN LITERARY TRANSLATION

LITEM037: Translation Theory

Tutor: Jean Boase-Beier  Autumn 2008  Thursdays 9-11

This unit discusses key theoretical and descriptive pronouncements on translation by theorists and practising translators working within the Western tradition. The focus is predominantly on contemporary work, with some older commentary providing historical context. Students are encouraged to explore their own theoretical interests and present their findings in class.

The week-by-week plan is as follows:

1. Introduction: aims and structure of unit. Translation studies, linguistics and literary theory. Terms and concepts
   **Reading:** Bassnett 1991: Chapter 1; Steiner 1992: Chapter 4; Jakobson in Schulte & Biguenet 1992 (S&B): 144-151; Boase-Beier & Holman 1999: Chapter 1

2. Theory and practice
   **Reading:** Chesterman & Wagner 2002

3. Reading translators’ prefaces and notes
   **Reading:** Preface to King James Bible; Introduction to Lowell 1958; Prefaces and notes to *Visible Poets* Series

4. Historical pronouncements on translation
   **Reading:** d’Ablancourt in Lefevre 1992 (L): 35-37; Dryden in S&B: 17-31; Pope in L: 64-66; Tytler in L: 128-135; Schleiermacher in L: 141-165; Goethe in L: 74-78; Schlegel in L:78-80; Benjamin in S&B: 71-82; Pound in S&B: 83-92

5. Linguistic theories of translation
   **Reading:** Nida in Brower 1966: 11-31; Nida 1964: Chapter 6; Catford 1965; Malmkjæer 2005

6. Polysystem theory
   **Reading:** Gentzler 2001: 106-144; Even-Zohar and Toury in Venuti 2000: 192-7, 198-21

7. Translation and ethics, domesticating and foreignising. Postcolonial translation
   **Reading:** Berman in Venuti 2000; Venuti 1995, esp. Chapters 1 and 6; Venuti
1998; Bassnett & Trivedi 1999

8. Reading Week: no class

9. Stylistic and cognitive approaches
   **Reading:** Boase-Beier 2006; Gutt in Venuti 2000

10. Gender in translation
    **Reading:** Simon 1996

11. Functional theories
    **Reading:** Nord 1997


**TRANSLATION THEORY READING LIST**

1. **Historical Survey**

   Marcus Tullius Cicero 106-43 BC  
   ‘De oratore’ 55 BC

   Quintilian 35-96 AD  
   ‘Institutio Oratoria’ 96 AD

   St Jerome 345 - 419/20  
   ‘Letter to Pammachius’ c. 406

   Lindisfarne Gospels 777

   Roger Bacon c. 1214 - 1292  
   ‘De lingarum cognito’ 1267

   John Wycliffe 1320 - 1384  
   *Wycliffe Bible* 1330 - 84

   Desiderius Erasmus 1466 - 1536  
   ‘Letter to William Warham’ 1506; New Testament 1516

   Martin Luther 1483 - 1546  
   ‘Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen’ 1530

   William Tyndale 1494 - 1536  
   *Tyndale’s New Testament* 1525
Sir Thomas Wyatt 1503 - 1542

Translations of Petrarch's sonnets

Etienne Dolet 1509 - 1546

‘De la manière bien traduire d'une langue en autre’ 1540

Earl of Surrey 1517 - 1547

Translations of Petrarch's sonnets

Philemon Holland 1552 - 1637

‘Preface to the Reader’ in Pliny's History of the World 1634

George Chapman c. 1559 - 1634

Iliad 1598

Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt 1606 - 1664

Translations of Cicero 1638

King James Bible

Preface ‘The Translators to the Reader’ 1611

Sir John Denham 1615 - 1669

Preface to the Aeneid 1656

Abraham Cowley 1618 - 1667

Preface to the Pindarique 1656

John Dryden 1631 - 1700

Preface to Ovid's Epistles 1680

Alexander Pope 1688 -1744

Iliad 1715

Alexander Fraser Tytler

Essay on the Principles of Translation 1790

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe 1749 - 1832

Schriften zur Literatur 1824

Madame de Stael 1766 - 1817

‘De l'esprit des traductions’ 1821

August Wilhelm Schlegel 1767 - 1845

Schlegel - Tieck Shakespeare 1797 – 1833

Friedrich Schleiermacher 1768 - 1834

‘Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens’ 1812

Wilhelm von Humboldt 1767 - 1835

Preface to Agamemnon 1816
Samuel Taylor Coleridge 1772 - 1834  
*The Death of Wallenstein* 1800

Percy Bysshe Shelley 1792 - 1822  
*A Defence of Poetry* 1821

Thomas Carlyle 1795 - 1881  
‘The State of German Literature’ 1827

Edward Fitzgerald 1809 - 1863  
*The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* 1859

George Eliot 1819 - 1880  
*The Essence of Christianity* L. Feuerbach, 1854

Matthew Arnold 1822 - 1868  
‘On Translating Homer’ 1861

Dante Gabriel Rossetti 1828 - 1882  
*Dante and his Circle* 1861

Hilaire Belloc 1870 - 1953  
‘On Translation’ 1931

Ezra Pound 1885 - 1972  
*Cathay* 1915

Marianne Moore 1887 - 1972  
*The Fables of La Fontaine* 1954

Walter Benjamin 1892 - 1940  
‘The Task of the Translator’ 1923

Helen Waddell 1889 - 1965  
*Mediaeval Latin Lyrics* 1948

Roman Jakobson 1896 - 1982  
‘On Linguistic Aspects of Translation’ 1959

Vladimir Nabokov 1899 - 1977  
‘Problems of Translation: Onegin in English’, 1955

2. *Contemporary Views*

3.  


4. **Reference Books and Journals**


*Babel*

*Modern Poetry in Translation*

*Target*

*Translation and Literature*

*Translation Review*

*The Translator: Studies in Intercultural Communication*


5. **Related Areas**


6. **Novels, Poetry and Memoirs**


*Visible Poets* series


Flotow, L. von (1997) *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'*. Manchester: St Jerome


Paz, O. (1971) *Traducción: Literatura y literalida* Barcelona: Tusquets


Rener F. M. (1989) *Language and Translation from Cicero to Tytler.* Amsterdam: Rodopi


Rose, M. Gaddis (1997) *Translation and Literary Criticism.* Manchester: St Jerome


Toury, G. (1995) *Descriptive Translation Studies - and Beyond.* Amsterdam: Benjamins


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