 Genre Studies Network (GSN)

an interdisciplinary network funded by AHRC and organised by Dr Natasha Rulyova (University of Birmingham) in cooperation with Dr Garin Dowd (University of West London)

Workshop four

Genre in Translation:

crossing cultural, linguistic, disciplinary, media and other boundaries

organised in cooperation with Prof. Jeremy Munday,

Centre for Translation Studies, University of Leeds

23 February 2013

University of Leeds

**Speakers’ Bios and Abstracts**

**Prof. Peter Davies, University of Edinburgh, UK, ‘Genre and the Ethics of translating Holocaust Testimonies’**

Peter Davies is Professor of Modern German Studies and Convenor for German at the University of Edinburgh.Hisresearch specialisms include holocaust writing and translation,myth, modernity and literature, myths of matriarchy in German culture**,**gender and the body**,**andGerman-language literature and culture, 1880-1945. In 2004-5 he was a Research Fellow of the Alexander-von-Humboldt-Stiftung, conducting research into matriarchal myths in German-language culture. From 2000-2003 he co-directed the AHRB Major Research Project “The Modern Restoration: Re-thinking German Literary History, 1930-1960” (Berlin: de Gruyter 2004) with Professor Stephen Parker and Dr Matthew Philpotts, Manchester. From 1998-2000 he was Leverhulme Trust Research Fellow at the [University of](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/literatures-languages-cultures/delc/german/staff?person_id=134&cw_xml=profile.php) Manchester, conducting research into Stalinism and Literature in the GDR. His publications include two single-authored monographs *Myth, Matriarchy and Modernity: Johann Jakob Bachofen in German Culture, 1860-1945*(Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, Feb 2010) and *Divided Loyalties: East German writers and the Politics of German Division, 1945-1953* (Leeds: Maney Publishing for the MHRA, 2000).

Abstract: The formulation, preservation and mediation of knowledge about the Holocaust and the experiences of the victims can be seen as one of the most extensive and influential translation projects in Western history. Given the vital role played by translation at every stage, it is perhaps surprising that there has been relatively little work foregrounding the effects of translation on these processes. There is an increasing body of work on the translation of Holocaust testimonies, which is beginning address a range of research questions that draw on the concepts and methods of Translation Studies and on debates within the disciplines that are grouped under the heading Holocaust Studies. This paper will address one of these areas, namely the question of the value-judgements that are adduced to issues of textual genre when reading and translating Holocaust testimonies, and the shifts that may occur in genre when a text is translated to meet or challenge the expectations of the target culture. Particular conceptions of genre demarcation – especially those suggesting the ‘literary’-‘non-literary’ demarcation – become the focus of scandal, anxiety and debate about the ethics of the translator’s task.

**Dr Angela Kershaw , University of Birmingham, UK, ‘Some thoughts on genre and translation in the case of narratives of the Second World War and the Holocaust*’***

Angela Kershaw is a senior lecturer in French studies at the University of Birmingham. She is the author of two monographs, *Forgotten Engagements: Women, Literature and the Left in 1930s France* (2007) and *Before Auschwitz: Irène Némirovsky and the Cultural Landscape of Inter-war France* (2010). Her research interests include 20th century French literature, women’s writing, travel writing and the translation and reception of French war and holocaust literature.

Abstract: Recent French novels about the Second World War and the Holocaust, which attempt to represent the potentially unrepresentable – the horrors of the war and the camps – depend on the explosion of conventional genre distinctions. Because the events (and their moral implications) are viewed as *disordered*, genre coherence as a means of ordering is rejected. Examples include Fabrice Humbert’s *L’Origine de la violence* (2009) which works on the interface between fiction and autobiography, Laurent Binet’s *HHhH* (2009) which transgress the boundary between fiction and history, and Sylvie Germain’s *Magnus* (2005), an intertextual *tour de force* composed of quoted fragments intercalated with the (non linear) plot of the novel. In the case of Germain in particular – though this is also a feature of Humbert’s and Binet’s texts – the transgression of genre boundaries depends on the presence of translated fragments within the source text: Germain cites, amongst others, Ahron Appelfeld, Friedrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Celan, Juan Rulfo, W.G.Sebald, Martin Luther King, Thomas Hardy, and Shakespeare, without any overt acknowledgement of the fact of translation. The quoted fragments which disrupt the generic conventions of the text are already (though silently) mediated by a translator, before ever it is a question of translating *Magnus* into another language. To pose the question of the relationship between genre and translation in these novels is therefore to reveal the instability of the source text *before* the issue of intercultural transfer via the translation of the novel into another language even arises.

**Prof. John Milton, University of São Paulo, Brazil, ‘Adaptation, Translation and Genre’**

John Milton is Titular Professor in the area of Translation Studies at the Universidade de São Paulo (USP). He is the author of *O Poder da Tradução* [The Power of Translation] (1993) (republished as *Tradução: Teoria e Prática* [*Translation: Theory and Practice*] (1998 and 2010); *O Clube do Livro e a Tradução* [*The* Clube do Livro *and Translation*] (2002), and *Imagens de um Mundo Trêmulo* (2006), a travel book on Japan, and Journey to *Turkey, the Balkans and Egypt* (2011). He also edited *Agents of Translation* (John Benjamins 2009) with Paul Bandia. He has also translated the poetry of Keats, Wordsworth and Shelley to Portuguese, together with Alberto Marsicano.

Abstract:Adaptation Studies is to a very large extent dominated by Film Studies: Novel to Film Adaptations, and to a lesser extent novel to play adaptations. Adaptation Studies is usually monolingual (nearly always English) and seldom deals with or ignores language transfer/ translation.

However, many areas or genres of Translation Studies deal with adaptation. Subtitles for the hard-of-hearing condense what is spoken on screen as many deaf people read slowly as their first language is sign language. In adapting adult works children’s literature will omit and cut elements that are considered unsuitable for children, then in translation culturally elements may be altered. Works containing sensitive political, cultural and/or religious material may also be censored or adapted as they enter another culture with more stringent norms. The genre of theatre has its own characteristics as every performance will be a different version of the original; classic texts such as those of Shakespeare will be updated and culturally adapted as the written genre is brought on stage in another culture; and the interaction of live elements mean no two performances will be exactly the same. Likewise, Shakespeare’s plays and other classic texts are adapted to a multiplicity of genres such as operas, musicals, films, television series, radio plays, manga and other comic forms, theme parks, and video games, in English and other languages.

Indeed, in various periods translation has almost become synonymous with adaptation. 16th and 17th century France is a case in point as translations of classical literature were altered to conform to the French norms of *bon goût*, *clarté* and *beauté*, thus producing translations known as *les belles infidèles*; video games, etc.

I shall also examine a project I carried out on the translation and adaptation of classic works for a mass market. The Brazilian Clube do Livro (1942-1989) adapted a large number of world classics, often cutting political, sexual and religious references and homogenizing, or rather, pasteurizing, the style of authors such as Dickens, Rabelais and Charlotte Brontë.

Adaptation can be seen as central to Translation Studies, though contact between Adaptation Studies and Translation Studies has been minimal. The two areas, or rather, disciplines, have been divided institutionally.

This talk will examine this division between “Adaptation Studies” and “Adaptation Studies in Translation Studies”, describing the differences between the two areas, detailing some of the types of adaptations found in Translation Studies, and proposing that the Adaptation Studies should look more to and include the linguistic, or rather, language transfer element.

**Prof. Timothy Murphy, University of Oklahoma, USA, ‘How (Not) to Translate an Unidentified Narrative Object or a New Italian Epic’**

 Timothy S. Murphy is Professor of English at the University of Oklahoma. He has served as general editor of the scholarly journal Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture since 2000. He is the author of Wising Up the Marks: The Amodern William Burroughs (U of California P, 1997) and Antonio Negri: Modernity and the Multitude (Polity P, 2012), editor of The Philosophy of Antonio Negri 1 & 2 (Pluto P, 2005-2007), and translator of Negri's Subversive Spinoza (Manchester UP, 2004), Books for Burning (Verso, 2005) and Trilogy of Resistance (U of Minnesota P, 2011). He is currently working on a study of modernist science fiction focused on H.P. Lovecraft and Olaf Stapledon.

Abstract: The presentation will focus on the critical/interpretive confusion in the English-speaking world over the emergence of the genre of "New Italian Epic", which was first identified and theorized in 2008 by Wu Ming 1 (Roberto Bui) but which encompasses works published since the mid-nineties by Pier Paolo Pasolini (the incomplete posthumous work Petrolio), Roberto Saviano (the novelistic nonfiction work Gommorah) and Luther Blissett (the historical novel Q) as well as the works of the Wu Ming collective (the historical novels 54, Manituana and Altai). Bui introduces the category of "unidentified narrative objects" to describe many of these works that fall between, combine or complicate established genres in innovative and explicitly politicized ways. Several of these works have been misread by English-language reviewers and critics when they were translated, in part because of the differences between the English/American and Italian cultural/historical context, even though the genre of New Italian Epic also owes a specific and explicitly acknowledged debt to recent English and American writing (such as the work of the late David Foster Wallace) that is seeking to go beyond the formal games of postmodernism to construct a more materially engaged literary practice.

**Dr Serge Sharoff, University of Leeds, UK, ‘A Cross-linguistic View on Genres’**

Serge Sharoff is a Senior Lecturer in Translation Studies. His research focuses on natural language processing and computer-assisted language learning, including automated methods for collecting corpora from the web, their analysis in terms of domains and genres and extraction of lexicons and terminology. He is one of the designers of the Russian National Corpus and other corpora, as well as frequency dictionaries of modern Russian.

Abstract: Attempts to categorise texts by their genre go back to Aristotle, through the Brown Corpus (BC), the very first computerised corpus, through Biber on language variation. In spite of proliferation of genre-related studies, there is still no accepted definition of genres and the possibility to compare them across domain and languages. In this presentation I'll talk about a computational approach to defining the similarity between texts in terms of their genres, which can also provide a text- and language-external benchmark for comparing genres across languages.

**Dr Martin Thomas, University of Leeds, UK, 'Genre Shifts in Time and Space: Multimodality and multilinguality?’**

Having benefited from interdisciplinary training in languages and information design, Thomas has focused on the development of empirical approaches to multilingual, multimodal text analysis. He also currently leads the Centre of Translation Studies in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures at Leeds.

Abstract: Genres shift in time and space. More or less prototypical instances can thus never be constant. If we conceive of genre as itself functional and productive, this has a double significance for translation: does the target text seek to instantiate the same genre as the source?; how might the translation collaborate with the reader to make best use of genre conventions current in the target culture? More specifically, if we accept that linguistic analysis alone cannot adequately account for the semantics of multimodal documents, what might be the implications for translation? This presentation seeks to problematize and shed light upon such questions, drawing on examples from original texts, translations and candidate texts for translation of types which we encounter in everyday life.