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Conference Report: *Who's Afraid of Translator Studies? The Human Translator in Focus*, Trinity College Dublin. Hosted by the Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation PhDs (May 12th & 13th)

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Conference Report: *Who's Afraid of Translator Studies? The Human Translator in Focus*, Trinity College Dublin. Hosted by the Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation PhDs (May 12th & 13th)

This conference at the Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation, founded in 2012 and currently directed by Professor Michael Cronin, was the first conference organized by the PhD students of the Centre. The research presented over the two days in Dublin in May 2022 focused on translators, as the conference title promised. Translator Studies, popularized by Anthony Pym in the late 1990s and given its name by Andrew Chesterman in 2009, has given scholars greater license and impetus to focus on the people who are involved in the processes of translation. As the conference showed, translator studies can encompass a wide range of topics, proving its interdisciplinary nature.

Over the two days, five sessions took place. The sessions, with two or three presentations each, focused on different topics within the framework of translator studies and were titled “Translator agency and subversive translation”, “Human translators in the digital age”, “Public (im)perceptions of translators”, “Translators in sociopolitical contexts”, and “Lives, welfare, and working conditions of translators”.

The presentations focused on the human translator to differing degrees. On one end of the spectrum, some researched translators as a group in order to draw generalized conclusions, while on the other end, individual translators were scrutinized in order to find information specific to them. For *Chronotopos*, the presentations with elements of translation history are naturally the most interesting, therefore it is these presentations that will receive the most attention in this report.

KIAWNA BREWSTER (University of Wisconsin-Madison) examined the London-based author and translator Charlotte Lennox (c. 1730-1804) and her 1753 text *Shakespeare Illustrated*. According to Brewster, Lennox challenged Shakespeare’s status as a genius, criticizing his characterization of women and his (improper) use of source material – something Lennox was able to judge as she had learned Italian specifically for the purpose of translating the sources he had drawn on. Shakespeare’s use of Boccaccio’s *The Decameron*, specifically, the ninth novel of the second day, as a source for the play *Cymbeline* was criticized by Lennox and was in turn at the heart of Brewster’s own examination. Brewster used textual analysis to compare Lennox’ translation in *Shakespeare Illustrated* with the Italian-language source text, concluding that Lennox made subtle subversions herself, such as adding or removing content to enhance the characterization of female figures, thus emphasizing the agency Lennox criticized Shakespeare for removing.

Historical context was a focus for KYRIAKI-EVLALIA ILIADOU (University of Manchester) during her presentation, which she held on the topic of controversial cinema and its subtitling during the Greek Junta (1967-1974). The film censorship practiced during this period resulted in cut scenes, banned films, and carefully controlled subtitle translation. Iliadou argued that censorship can be seen not only as the external, repressive act it is generally viewed as, but as a multidimensional, perhaps even productive act

carried out by a great number of agents, including film distribution companies, subtitle technicians, and film translators. The archival work carried out by Iliadou was complemented by an interview with a film translator active during the researched time period, granting insight into self-censorship, working practices, and individual experiences. The multidimensional nature of people who translate was highlighted by JOANNA SOBESTO (Jagiellonian University) in her chiefly biographical presentation on Piotr Grzegorzcyk. Sobesto combined concepts from the sociology of translation, translator studies, and translation history in order to shape her approach to Grzegorzcyk (1894-1968), presented as a case study. Grzegorzcyk's work as a bibliographer, biographer, editor of periodicals, literary critic, and translator was examined in the context of his time period in an attempt to shed light on his views on politics, culture, and translation. DR. CATHY McATEER (University of Exeter) presented brief portraits of three women active in the literary translation field during the Cold War. Termed "Constance Garnett's granddaughters" by McAteer, these women likewise translated from Russian into English, albeit at a later time. Using archival, sociological, and microhistorical approaches, McAteer first explored the professional career and the socio-political context of Moura Budberg (1892-1974), a flamboyant Russian-British character under scrutiny from the Foreign Office for suspected espionage for much of her life. She had ties to literary figures such as Maxim Gorky (she was the first translator of *Fragments from my Diary* into English) and H.G. Wells. Next, McAteer examined the American-born Margaret Wettlin (1907-2003), who moved to the Soviet Union at the age of 25 and was a prolific literary translator for Progress Publishers. Additionally, she was an active agent for Russian-US mediation, even holding a series of lectures in the United States. McAteer focused last on Olga Andreyeva Carlisle (1931-), a granddaughter of Leonid Andreyev, born in France and later based in New York. After meeting Boris Pasternak and many others on a 1960 trip to Moscow, her enthusiasm for becoming a "channel" for Russian literature was sparked. In this context, Carlisle also took up the responsibility for translating and publishing Solzhenitsyn's novel *The First Circle* upon his request in a 1967 meeting, additionally acting as a courier for manuscripts and letters in and out of the Soviet Union and the United States for many others.

The Italian translator Francesco Cusani Confalonieri (1802-1879), active during the *Risorgimento*, was at the heart of the research presented by FEDERICA RE (Filippo Burzio Foundation, Turin) and MARCO BARLETTA (University of Bari Aldo Moro). In this two-pronged presentation, Re first focused on Cusani's educational and cultural environment and network and, using the family archives as a source, explored how they may have shaped his cultural and political aims. In the second part of the presentation, Barletta took a closer look at Cusani's work as a translator, specifically, as a translator of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's novels. Through the analysis of paratextual elements, especially footnotes, Barletta explored Cusani's translation strategy and drew conclusions about his means and clear subjectivity in defense of Italian culture.

Two of the three interspersed poster presentations, which all focused on female translators, were based around historical figures: ANNA MASLENOVA (University of Exeter) presented her research on the Russian emigree Nadezhda Zharintseva (1871-1930) and M. GIULIA LADDAGO (University of Bari Aldo Moro) investigated the concept of self-translation in Virginia Woolf's (and Annie Ernaux's) works (1882-1941 and 1940- , respectively).

The presentations related to translation history focused on translators and agents of translation and spanned the 18th to the 20th century, with the 20th century clearly a favorite for exploration. Excepting Iliadou's research, all of the presenters had a specific historical figure (or figures, in McAteer's case) at the core of their research. The

methods used to approach the historical subject(s) varied across the board, with textual and paratextual analysis, microhistory, interviews, and archival work all being implemented. The concept of agency played a role in nearly all the presentations connected to translation history, emphasizing the current pervasiveness of sociological concepts in translation and translator studies.

The remaining presentations focused on the figure of the translator to varying degrees and showed the impressive breadth of topics that can be found under the umbrella of translator studies: from exophonic literary L2 translators (Lúcia Collischonn, University of Warwick), to an analysis of 100 job advertisements to find out what requirements must be met to work as an in-house translator in Finland (Minna Hjort, University of Turku), translator visibility in Arabic popular science (Mohammad Aboomar, Dublin City University), celebrity translators as exemplified by Haruki Murakami (Motoko Akashi, University of East Anglia), the (perceived) agency of translators for the European Union (Tereza Afonso, Universidad de Salamanca), and the question of the construction of translation expertise (Daniela Schlager, University of Vienna). Topics also included the fields of subtitling and audio-visual description with a focus on user-generated subtitles on the Chinese video sharing platform Bilibili (Jincai Jiang, University of Bristol) and on audio-visual description using Translation Process Research (Alicja Zajdel, University of Antwerp). The only figure missing entirely was that of the interpreter, explicitly included in the field of translator studies as defined by Chesterman (CHESTERMAN 2009: 13). These presentations also implemented a wide variety of methods, such as paratextual analysis, corpus work, interviews, and questionnaires.

This conference showcased the spectrum of research and the wide applicability of the term translator studies research – which may also be a point of criticism, as translator studies, at least when viewed through the lens of presentations at this conference, could be said to lack a clear profile. On the other hand, the very same interdisciplinarity also means translator studies can function as a melting pot, allowing those conducting research in and around the field to make use of concepts and methods found in a variety of other fields, ultimately leading to a richer, more diverse, and fruitful body of research.

The conference was organized well; its scale and the number of participants and presenters creating an almost familial atmosphere and allowing space for a number of questions and genuine discussions to unfold after the presentations. One can only hope the TCLCT PhDs' next conference is not too far off.

References

CHESTERMAN, Andrew (2009): "The Name and Nature of Translator Studies", *HERMES – Journal of Language and Communication in Business* (42): 13-22.