



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

**Department
of Asian and
North African
Studies**

LABORATORI
sulla traduzione delle lingue orientali



JAPAN FOUNDATION
国際交流基金

International Symposium

FAMILIARIZING THE UNFAMILIAR

TRANSLATION AS A TOOL OR AN OBSTACLE IN
GLOBALIZING JAPAN

November 23rd – 24th, 2016



BOOKLET OF ABSTRACTS

ABSTRACTS

BAYARD-SAKAI , Anne (INALCO, Paris) Staging Translation. Some Reflections on Authors and Discourses on Translation in Contemporary Japan	p. 10
EMMERICH , Michael (UCLA) This Other English: <i>Akira</i> , Anime, and the Global	p. 6
HEIN , Ina (University of Wien) Concepts of Translation in Tawada Yôko's Works	p. 11
SATO-ROSSBERG , Nana (SOAS, University of London) Why <i>Translation Studies</i> = " <i>Others</i> " in Japan?	p. 7
SHIBATA , Motoyuki (University of Tokyo) New Voices from Japan: Just How New Are They?	p. 5
VENUTI , Lawrence (Temple University) Translation Proverbs: The Instrumentalism of Conventional Wisdom	p. 4
WADA , Tadahiko (TUFS) On the Traveling Voices: A Comparative Consideration of Translation and Contemporary Japanese Poetry	p. 8

Lawrence Venuti

TRANSLATION PROVERBS:
THE INSTRUMENTALISM OF CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

Since antiquity commentary on translation, whether it takes the form of a theoretical statement or a set of belletristic remarks, has been dominated by clichés and proverbs. The cliché may be a dichotomy indicating opposed translation strategies, such as “word-for-word” vs. “sense-for-sense,” which derives from Jerome’s pronouncement in his Letter to Pammachius (395CE): “non verbum e verbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu.” Or the cliché may enunciate a set of goals for translation, such as “faithfulness, comprehensibility, and elegance,” which derive from Yan Fu’s preface to his 1901 version of T.H. Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics* (1893): 信 (xìn), 達 (dá), 雅 (yǎ). It may develop into a fully-fledged proverb about translation, a pithy statement that is believed to encapsulate an accepted truth and therefore to be worthy of repeated application, whether in elite or in popular cultures. Here belong catchphrases like “traduttore traditore” and Robert Frost’s “poetry is what gets lost in translation.” Yet even Jacques Derrida’s paradox--“Rien n’est intraduisible en un sens, mais en un autre sens tout est intraduisible” --has now been used so many times as to risk becoming a theoretical chestnut. These discursive phenomena indicate that translation has long been the site of rote thinking.

In my talk, I want to initiate a rigorous interrogation of translation proverbs. I will start with an examination of the proverb as a genre and then return a particular translation proverb--“traduttore traditore”—to various contexts where it has been used, both originary and subsequent. Translation proverbs, I will argue, advance notions of untranslatability that assume an instrumental model of translation as the reproduction or transfer of an invariant contained in the source text. The aim is to defamiliarize notions that have come to be all too familiar as truths of translation, to show how they actually limit thinking about what translation is and does, and to indicate to other, more productive directions that thinking can take.

Shibata Motoyuki

NEW VOICES FROM JAPAN: JUST HOW NEW ARE THEY?

Rhythm, tone, music – these used to be important elements in premodern Japanese literature, when poetry was called *uta*, literally “song.” Back then, literature was something to be heard as much as to be read. All this changed in the 1860s, however, when the country opened up after more than two centuries’ isolation, and things Western, including Western literature, suddenly became the new models. Literature now was what you read, often in translation, silently to yourself. As a result, the musicality of words became largely absent in Japanese literature, and stayed that way for many years. It took until the late 1970s and early 1980s for writers with a new sensibility—Haruki Murakami, Ryū Murakami, and Gen’ichirō Takahashi among others— who had incorporated Western culture more comfortably within themselves, to revive the sense of music in literary prose. Now an even newer generation of writers, some of whom are literally musicians, have pushed the element of music even further. This has given birth to a rich variety of exciting fiction; yet at the same time it has created quite practical problems for translators. I will discuss the new translation challenges posed by the kind of prose produced by writers like Hideo Furukawa (b. 1966), Mieko Kawakami (b. 1976), and Kō Machida (b. 1962).

Michael Emmerich

THIS OTHER ENGLISH: *AKIRA*, ANIME, AND THE GLOBAL

In this talk, I will consider the roles two different types of English played in two contrasting viewings of a subtitled version of the seminal Japanese animated film *Akira* (1988): the first on my own sometime in the early 1990s, the second in an undergraduate seminar I taught at UCLA in 2015.

Through this comparison, I will offer an analysis of at least some of the ways in which translation and the status of English and Japanese as global languages have shifted over the past twenty-five years, from the perspective of a translator and scholar of Japanese literature active in Los Angeles.

Nana Sato-Rossberg

WHY *TRANSLATION STUDIES* = “OTHERS” IN JAPAN?

Japan still appears reluctant to wholly accept and foster Translation Studies, quite different from developments in other East Asian countries. There are now not only Translation Studies scholars, but also Japanese Studies scholars who are becoming interested in the subject and using concepts from Translation Studies in their works. Yet, this adoption is often only partial. Authors might use some terminology of the field, such as foreignisation and domestication, but not deepen and develop these concepts within Japanese contexts. Until recently, it was a common belief among Translation Studies scholars based in Japan that Japanese Translation Studies had begun to emerge only in the 21st century (Takeda 2012). On the other hand, Japan is well known as a culture of translation and has a rich tradition of research on translation. Even when this traditional research does not rely much on theory, it is not possible to ignore it when thinking of Japanese Translation Studies. From the reverse perspective, we could say that Western origin Translation Studies is failing to communicate with the Japanese translation research culture. Why do generalizations of Translation Studies not always apply in Japan? Are there any ways to develop Translation Studies specific to Japan? How can Translation Studies and Japanese translation research communicate? With these questions in mind, this paper will discuss recent Translation Studies developments in Japan.

Partially answering the questions, I suggest that Translation Studies has now reached a point where it needs to communicate with the specificities of each geographic area to develop further.

Wada Tadahiko

ON THE TRAVELING VOICES: A COMPARATIVE CONSIDERATION OF TRANSLATION AND CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE POETRY

“Every act of thinking is subject to the enchantment of language.” The British writer Tim Parks, referring to reflections of the poet Leopardi and pointing out how difficult it is to escape from the typical rigidity of the 19th century—not to say of Romanticism—that words like “individual freedom” and “liberation” connote, once suggested to the Italian writer Enrico Palandri that it might be fruitful to discuss the specific reality that the two of them share in their daily lives, in “living in one language and writing in another”. What Parks expresses here in the phrase “the enchantment of language” operates under a quite reasonable and natural logic, one according to which you cannot obtain your own individual voice without having once “joined a chorus (*entrare in canto*)” of people who share the same language.

If it is, however, undeniable that the remains of 19th century Western Romanticism show themselves not rarely even today, when both “globalization” the term and “globalization” the phenomenon are widespread, it is possible to think that the logic Parks suggests might give us a key to resolving some of the difficulties and contradictions we now face. How can we really liberate ourselves from the Romantic idea described by Isaiah Berlin as “if it is true for you, it comes to be your truth”? Parks seems to suggest that the key to the question resides in thinking about the “enchantment of language” in our daily lives.

Parks, who now writes in both Italian and English, seems to imply that one could choose to get outside of a “country” and a “language” in order to become capable of singing well both in chorus and solo, involving oneself in the “enchantment of language.” One troublesome thing we may encounter, however, is that we do not know for sure if it is really possible to put such an idea into practice in one’s own writing.

Parks’ suggestion, though, does offer significant attractions when we read, for instance, a certain dialogue, conducted in Japanese poems and exchanged over a two-year period starting in 2004, in which we can find an actual example of such a practice of “being outside” in one’s own writing and living. The “lives” and “language” that Masayo Koike and Yasuhiro Yotsumoto deal with in their poetry collection *Taishi* — *shi to seikatsu* (Dialogue in Poems — Poetry and Life) undoubtedly reflect a struggle between chorus and solo. Each of the poets, while struggling to discern the place where the other manages to live by means of his or her own language, also struggles to draw an outline of his or her own place.

The language that the poets individually use in their dialogue, which takes the form of exchanged poems, is surprisingly similar despite the geographical distance between Munich and Tokyo, where the two respectively reside. It is too lively to be described as “moribund” and too cool-headed to be described as “self-torturing,” and it contains a sort of extraordinarily acute eyesight, cruelly highlighting the outlines of the poets themselves.

Toru Takemitsu once said that the “meaning of travel” is the act of “moving” sustained by a desire for “eternity”, unaccompanied by “purpose,” and free from the control of “artificial intention.” He did not, of course, forget to point out the difficulties encountered in attempting to persevere in such travel. The composer knew well that you cannot continue your “travel” if you do not feel something sensual about the anxieties of a kind of “travel” that has neither destination nor end-point.

Masayo Koike, who writes her poetry in Japanese, is also aware of the anxious and sensual entanglement between “travel” and the act of expression: she superposes it on memories of a city she once visited, one in which the West and the East face one another across a strait.

To keep “moving” endlessly: in order to call that act “travel”, you need to have a “mind” that will accept the anxieties of being suspended—unable to return to the same place, unable to reach anywhere—and that will feel something sensual and elegant about the experience. This means desiring the same “sensuality” that the composer Takemitsu found in the art of Isamu Noguchi, describing his work as “a form of endless desire for eternity, always full of the premonition of a beginning.” The act of “moving” can only be called “travel” when you do not merely feel comfortable about the anxieties encountered in facing a goalless perpetuity but also desire to gain the discernment necessary to discover from what the pleasures derive.

When Koike wrote, through the mouth of the woman she had met in Istanbul, that “travelling means awakening,” she was aware that the anxieties and pleasures of “moving” are sustained by a daily life immersed in the experiences of “dreams,” which would apparently seem to be the opposite of “awakening” but is actually the other side of the same coin.

I will explore here, then, questions of language and translation in Japanese contemporary poetry within the phenomenon of “globalization,” taking as examples works of the two poets Yasuhiro Yotsumoto and Masayo Koike, and tracing the “route maps” of their imaginations and their “traveling voices.”

Anne Bayard-Sakai

STAGING TRANSLATION. SOME REFLECTIONS ON AUTHORS AND DISCOURSES ON TRANSLATION IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

In the last decades, a growing interest and concern in the way Japanese literature may (or may not) participate in world literature has led to the publishing of an increasing number of discourses on translation in Japan, either in books or in the literary reviews. Some of those texts are written by plurilingual authors considered as representatives of the so-called *ekkyô bungaku*, “border-crossing literature”, as Tawada Yôko or Mizumura Minae.

How do those discourses, and more generally the focus on plurilingual literary phenomenon, lead to stage translation as a core activity in the definition of a renewed “authority of authors” in the globalized cultural scene?

Ina Hein

CONCEPTS OF TRANSLATION IN TAWADA YÔKO'S WORKS

Translation is one of the central topics and, at the same time, used as a characteristic narrative device in the literary texts by Japanese author Tawada Yôko. Writing in two languages, Japanese and German, she creatively plays with words and language(s), often experimenting with literal translation, thus creating new images, associations and meanings. At the same time, Tawada frequently addresses the topic of translation and the role of translators in a very direct manner.

At the heart of Tawada's literary enterprise lies the relationship between self and other. The author challenges the long-held notion of this relation as being a binary, dichotomous one. Her strategies of subversion comprise the recognition of the familiar in the (supposedly) unknown and, vice, versa, the identification of strange (alien, foreign) elements which are always part of the (allegedly) familiar.

This paper asks what concepts of translation lie behind Tawada's literary treatment of intercultural encounters, or sometimes even transcultural states of being. How does the author address the questions of (un)translatability, the (im)possibilities of comprehension, and (non)understanding? These questions will be discussed by referring to a selection of some of her most well-known prose texts.