

September 14, 2011 Research Symposium “Translation, Globalization, and Localization”

The intellectual context of the research symposium lies in the effort of modern translation studies to come to grips with a fundamental shift in our understanding of what constitutes translation and where translation locates itself in the vast range of human cognition and behavior. Long gone are the times when translation amounted to a simple exchange of words and phrases across languages; long gone too is the always questionable perception that translation limited itself to literary or technical works.

Today, translation embraces a full range of cognitive, behavioral, and social activities, so much so in fact that scholars now speak of translation as a trans-discipline, rising above all academic and professional fields, belonging to none, but incubating and activating the transfer of knowledge and culture in areas as diverse as memory and migration, in behaviors as different as



Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak



Anthony Pym

hospitality and bordering, in media as complicated as film and the internet, and in performances as varied as drama and music. From the latest research, translation emerges as a powerful opportunity and form of intellectual, interpersonal, and cultural mediation in the course of which values, beliefs, norms, institutional identities and social movements along with forms of authority and power find new expression and move in multiple directions across boundaries of language and media, time and space.

The Nida School of Translation Studies, a program of the New York City-based Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship, invited Professor Anthony Pym (Tarragona) and University Professor Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Columbia) as principal lecturers in the first of a new series of research symposia designed to raise public awareness of this emerging and dramatic profile that translation

is beginning to enjoy in the academy and the professions. The symposium met on September 14, 2011, in New York City, at the College Board Building. Anthony Pym, speaking on "Enculturation," raised a fundamental question in translation studies, namely, How does modernity move? Three case studies, each designed to lift up an aspect of modernity's global and local movement, centered on the work of noted linguist and translation scholar Eugene A. Nida (after whom the Institute and School are named), on the picaresque novel *Hajji Baba*, and on recent developments in the translation policy of the Vatican.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who lectured on "Gender and Translation in the Global Utopia," explored the double binds that inhabit the world of translation. She problematized clashing and contemporary notions of culture, calling them "a package of largely unacknowledged assumptions." She challenged modern visions of utopia that want to create "level playing fields" and delivered a penetrating exposé of them as false promises. On the topic of gender in translation and utopian thinking she positioned herself among those who understand that the "management of gender provides alibis for all kinds of activities." Arching over all these double binds, Spivak asserted, is the hope that we can check our arrogance and learn with humility to "celebrate the possibility of meaning in a grounding medium that is meaning-less."

Professors Edwin Gentzler (UMass Amherst) and Sandra Bermann (Princeton) responded with detailed and thought-provoking proposals and counterproposals to the lectures of the two principals.

Video records of the lectures, responses, and question and answer sessions will be available at nsts.fusp.it. What follows is Spivak's revised version of both her written and oral lecture, a summary of Pym's lecture, and Gentzler's response to the two. Parts of Bermann's response will be included in translation's second issue, together with an interview with both her and Spivak. The journal's website (translation.fusp.it) will also publish interviews and select portions of the sessions.



Edwin Gentzler



Sandra Bermann