



Centre for Translation Studies (CenTraS) and School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES)

Nothing Happened: Translation Studies before James Holmes

9-10 November 2023

Venue: University College London (UCL), UK

Keynote Speakers

Prof Theo Hermans (UCL)

Dr Hephzibah Israel (University of Edinburgh)

Prof Daniele Monticelli (Tallinn University)

Call for Papers

Submission Deadline: 15 September 2023

Frequently rehearsed narratives of Translation Studies typically trace the origins of the discipline to James Holmes's 1972 paper, 'The Name and Nature of Translation Studies', and suggest that little of interest happened prior to that date, or at least prior to the 1950s. Reflections on translation from earlier periods have been characterised as sterile, imprecise, or circular, or as taking place outside the bounds of academic or scientific endeavour. Teleological narratives of disciplinary progress and development have been widely reproduced and accepted.

Several attempts have been made to foreground the fact that Translation Studies is far more diverse than its established representation as a Western scholarly tradition that began in the 1970s (e.g. van Doorslaer and Naajkens 2021; Hang and Wakabayashi 2016; Schippel and Zwischenberger 2016; Ceccherelli, Costantino and Diddi 2015), but – as Yves Gambier (2021) has rightly concluded – the field has yet to 'acknowledge the fragmented nature of its origins, traditions and filiations.'

As Brian Baer (2020) has pointed out, the standard account of the discipline's history constitutes a 'mythhistory', functioning to 'supply a foundational narrative that helps a group of people to form a collective identity', rather than to reflect the details of historical records more closely. Baer takes issue in particular with the geographical, even neo-imperialist, limitations of this foundational narrative, showing that extensive institutionally anchored translation and interpreting research was taking place in Eastern Europe from 1918 onwards. Other contestations, from other geographical perspectives, are also possible, as are challenges from within Western European or Anglo-American traditions.

In this conference, we invite participants to explore the period in which 'nothing happened'. We particularly encourage submissions from scholars working on Slavonic and East European languages, but we warmly welcome papers exploring any language or place.

Contributions might address, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Bibliographical research into writings on translation from ancient times to the mid-20th century
- Close readings of writings on translation from ancient times to the mid-20th century
- Comparative studies of widely read Translation Studies texts and texts from earlier periods, particularly from other geographical spaces or in other languages
- Reflections on processes of disciplinary formation and its conceptual mapping
- Reflections on the development, reinforcement, and challenging of textual canons
- Reflections on the functions of disciplinary narratives and the reasons for challenging them
- Historical studies of how 'Translation Studies' came into existence or was retrospectively affirmed
- Studies of institutional or geopolitical power dynamics and the consolidation of Translation Studies
- Transdisciplinary models and approaches to the historiography of Translation Studies
- The relevance of gender, race or language to canon formation or disciplinary formation
- The mutual influencing (or lack thereof) of translation-related disciplines or fields of inquiry across different national or regional spaces

Organisers

Prof. Kathryn Batchelor (Centre for Translation Studies UCL, UK)

Assoc. Prof. Dr Iryna Odrekhyvska (School of Slavonic and East European Studies UCL, UK and Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine)

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 15 September 2023

Submissions

All submissions should be made by email to k.batchelor@ucl.ac.uk and i.odrekhyvska@ucl.ac.uk

We welcome proposals for individual papers as well as for 3- or 4-person panels. For individual papers, please submit an abstract of max 250 words. For panel proposals, please submit a short rationale for the panel as a whole (approx 200 words) as well as abstracts for each individual paper (max 250 words per abstract).

We will aim to send notifications of acceptance by 22 September 2023.

Mode of attendance: We hope that the majority of speakers and participants will be able to attend in person. However, an online option will be available for those for whom this is not possible.

Registration fees

In-person attendance (includes refreshments and lunch on both days): £75

In-person attendance discounted rate (for students and unwaged): £50

Conference dinner on Thursday 9 November (optional): £40

Online attendance: free