



## A Space for Translation: Thresholds of Interpretation

Presentation Details	
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	From Threshold to Threshold: Translation as a Liminal Activity
<b>Speaker:</b>	Rainer Guldin, Professor for German Culture and Language Faculties of Communication Sciences and Economics Università della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano
<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>In my presentation, I will focus on metaphorical dimensions of the spatiotemporal notion of liminality and the way these can be mapped onto translation processes and the role of the translator. The notion of liminality that can be traced back to Arnold van Gennep’s (1960) rites of passage and their re-elaboration by Victor Turner (1967) has been recently theorized as a central concept within the social sciences (Thomassen 2014) that allows to rethink the relationship between structure and agency, creativity and constraint. Liminality is not only a space of potentiality but also represents a limiting moment that is both formative and transformative. The concept of liminality has been used as a synonym of the notions of in-betweenness and third space. However, despite some common traits, liminality offers a more dynamic approach that focuses on a plurality of simultaneous spaces and the individual decisions of the translator (Johnston 2007). Two intimately related attempts to rethink translation in liminal terms, that I want to discuss in my presentation, are the notions of threshold (<i>Schwelle</i>) and arcade (<i>Passage</i>) from Walter Benjamin’s <i>The Arcades Project</i> (2002) and Yoko Tawada’s concept of the gate (<i>Tor</i>) developed through a reading of Japanese translations of the poetry of the German writer Paul Celan (Tawada 2003). Naoki Sakai (2011) proposed to use the spatial metaphor of the gate as the leading trope in translation in general.</p>
<b>References</b>	<p>Benjamin, Walter (2002). <i>The Arcades Project</i>. New York: Belknap Press.</p> <p>Johnston, David (2007). “Mapping the Geographies of Translation.” In <i>Betwixt and Between: Place and Cultural Translation</i>, 254-268. Cambridge: Scholars Publishing.</p> <p>Sakai, Naoki (2011). “The Grammatology of Heterolingual Address – Transnational Literature and National Language,” in <i>Transpostcross</i> 1(1).</p>

[https://issuu.com/transpostcross/docs/sakai\\_transnational](https://issuu.com/transpostcross/docs/sakai_transnational). Accessed 30 October 2018.

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### Author's Biography

**Rainer Guldin** is professor for German Culture and Language at the Faculties of Communication Sciences and Economics of the Università della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano (Switzerland). He is Editor-in-Chief of the peer-reviewed multilingual open access e-journal *Flusser Studies* (<http://www.flusserstudies.net/>). Main areas of research: metaphor theory, translation and self-translation, multilingual literature, landscape theory, history of the body. Publications: *Metaphors of Multilingualism. Changing Attitudes towards Language Diversity in Literature, Linguistics and Philosophy* (forthcoming, New York 2020); *Best of Flusser Studies 2005-2017* (together with Gustavo Bernardo), São Paulo 2018; *Vilém Flusser (1920-1991). Ein Leben in der Bodenlosigkeit. Biographie*, Bielefeld 2017 and *O homem sem chão. A biografia de Vilém Flusser* (together with Gustavo Bernardo), São Paulo 2017; *Translation as Metaphor*, New York 2016; *Politische Landschaften. Zum Verhältnis von Raum und nationaler Identität*, Bielefeld 2014.