



## A Space for Translation: Thresholds of Interpretation

Presentation Details	
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Rhizomizing the Translation Zone: Xiaolu Guo and <i>A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers</i>
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<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>In a world marked by increasing linguistic and cultural mobility, translation has gone way beyond the idea of mechanical/cultural transmission of meaning and saturated our everyday life. Translation zone, as one of the many spatial metaphors for translation, is proposed by Emily Apter and meant to debunk the myth of monolingual complacency as a norm and to highlight translation as a significant medium of subject re-formation. Although her transcoding model is path-breaking, Apter seems to insist on the intersubjective limits that resist translation, arguing about the issue of border trouble arising from occasions “where the lines dividing discrete languages are muddy and disputatious” (129).</p> <p>In this paper, I argue that the translation zone shall be reconceptualized as a rhizomatic zone, where both translation and mis-/non-translation constitute an adventitious mode of transformation that highlights processuality. In order to add this Deleuzian layer to the translation zone, I examine how translational literature, which “straddle[s] two languages, at once foregrounding, performing, and problematizing the act of translation” (Hassan 2006, 754), reflects a perpetual state of in-translation and encompasses the process of flight and movement. Specific examples are drawn from Xiaolu Guo’s novel, <i>A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers</i>, which features a narrative characterized by malapropism, mis-hearings, mis-interpretations, and interlanguage. Incorporating translation as a constitutive element into her story, Guo highlights the interplay between linguistic creativity and (un-)translatability, complicates the process of cultural transfer, and underlines the centrality of migration and porosity which Apter fails to attribute to her framework. The novel, therefore, mimics a rhizomatic translation zone, where migration, transformation, and linguistic heterogeneity are enmeshed.</p>

## References

- Apter, Emily (2006). *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*. Princeton UP.
- Hassan, Wail S (2006). "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'." *PMLA*, vol. 121, no. 3, 753-768. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25486352>.

## Author's Biography

**Wangtaolue GUO** is a first-year MA student of Transnational and Comparative literatures in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies at the University of Alberta. Before joining the U of A, he received his BA in Translation from Jinan University and MA in Translation from The Chinese University of Hong Kong. His research interests include gender and queer studies, postcolonial studies, translation, and multi-ethnic literature. He is currently working on a chapter in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation, Feminism and Gender*.