

# Feminismus, Gender und Uebersetzungs- wissenschaft

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# PLAN: Feminismen, Gender und Uebersetzungswissenschaft

- 20. 3.: Feminisms and Translation: focus on Canada 1980s : Susanne de Lotbiniere-Harwood 1992; Sherry Simon 1996; Luise von Flotow 1997.
- 21. 3.: Feminist Translation Studies
- 27. 3: Gender: a term for the 1990s : anti-essentialism and Butler; Gay and lesbian interests in translation: 2000s; Queer, or « people referred to as women »: 2005+
- 28.3. *Translating Women* 2011, and « Metramorphosis »

# Feministische Uebersetzungswissenschaft

- I.
- Feminist Translation and Commentary
- - production of translations of women writers;
- - collections of women writers, their translation and dissemination
- - commentaries, prefaces, paratexts that explain the political thrust of these works;
- - establishment of women's publishing houses (Frauenverlag, Editions remue-ménage, etc.), bookstores, systems of dissemination.

# Feministische Uebersetzungswissenschaft 2

- II.
- Feminist Translation Studies:
  - translation criticism and re-translation: ‘key texts’ : Bible, Beauvoir’s “feminist bible.”
  - research on “lost” women translators: Tudor England, women translators of science texts, Korean women translators, Chinese women translators at end of Qing dynasty; reviving knowledge about women intellectuals (foremothers);
  - Feminist approaches to translation theories and metalanguage: “les belles infideles”; Pandora; the non-rejection of the unknown non-I (Ettinger)..

# Feminist Revisionism: 'key texts'

- Revisionism: focus on new understanding, new un-patriarchal meanings of old 'key' texts that underlie Western culture; now also Koran/Qu'ran.
- - influence of reader-reception theories
- - ongoing focus on the power of language use and abuse
- - post-structuralism and deconstruction

# Bible Neu-uebersetzungen

- Where linguistic change brings cultural and social change:
- *The Word for Us* : Joann Haugerud 1977 – re-translation of the books of John and Mark;
- *An Inclusive Language Lectionary* 1983 ff.: a collection of Biblical texts for use in liturgy over the course of the church year;
- *At the Start*. 1992 Mary Phil Korsak: a re-translation of Genesis.

# ***“Inclusive Language”***

- Bible re-translations with preface, footnotes, appendices – explaining the use and purpose of :
- “inclusive language” vs *male-biased* language, *male* imagery, metaphors couched in language “that people can scarcely avoid thinking of God as a male person” (Haugerud)
- “inclusive language” expresses that “All persons are equally loved, judged, and accepted by God” (ILL)

## Because:

- “Women have been denied full humanity by a pattern of exclusion in English usage” – “in this lectionary all readings have been recast so that no masculine word *pretends* to include a woman.”(ILL)

# Examples of “*Inclusive Language*” 1

- “Masculine language” is recast:
  - - brethren: sisters and brothers
  - - king: ruler, sovereign
  - - man: women and men, people
- Language to describe God is de-masculinized: “God is beyond sex”: (Haugerud)
  - - God the Mother and Father – Jesus born *de utero patris* (out of the very essence of God: God is the motherly father.)
  - - God the Sovereign One...



# Examples of “Inclusive language” 2

- “ponderous weight” of the masculine pronoun “he/He” is weakened:
- - “I am the bread of life; *anyone/he* who comes to me shall not hunger, and *anyone/he* who believes in me shall never thirst...”
- or removed through repetition of noun: Genesis 2, 18-21
- Then God the Sovereign One said, “it is not good that the human being should be alone; I will make a companion corresponding to the creature [...] So God the Sovereign One caused a deep sleep to fall upon the human being and took a rib out of the sleeping human being... and God the Sovereign One built the rib which God took from the human being into woman...”

# ***At the Start:*** **Another Bible Re-Translation**

- Etymological and cultural revision: *the adam* in the Garden of Eden
- and there was no *adam* to serve the *adamah*
- but a surge went up from the earth
- and gave drink to all the face of the *adamah*
- YHWH Elohim formed the *adam*, soil of the *adamah*
- He blew into his nostrils the blast of life
- and the *adam* became a living soul
- YHWH Elohim planted a garden in Eden to the east
- There he set the *adam* he had formed
- YHWH Elohim made sprout from the *adamah*
- all trees attractive to see and good for eating

## ***At the Start 2***

- The “rib” in literal translation:
- YHWH Elohim made a swoon fall upon *the groundling*
- *it* slept
- He took one of *its sides*
- and closed up the place with flesh in its place
- YHWH Elohim built the side
- he had taken from *the groundling* into woman
- He brought her to *the groundling* (Korsak, p. 7)

# The rib: feminist commentary in 1895

- Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1895: *The Woman's Bible*
- There is something sublime in bringing order out of chaos; light out of darkness; giving each planet its place in the solar system; oceans and lands their limits; *wholly inconsistent with a petty surgical operation to find material for the mother of the race.*
- It is on this allegory that all the enemies of women rest their battering rams, to prove her inferiority. Accepting the view that man was prior in creation, some Scriptural writers say that as the woman was of the man, therefore her position should be one of subjection. (Stanton 1895, p. 20).

# **Julia Smith 1844+ and Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *The Woman's Bible***

- “Women, Bibles, Ideologies” *TTR*, 2000, Vol. 1 (an example of feminist translation studies)
- 1850: new (literal) Bible translation: Julia Smith (“The Jersey Cow Bible”);
- 1848: beginnings of suffragette movement in USA (Elizabeth Cady Stanton);
- 1876: publication of Julia Smith’s Bible (to “show what one woman can do” and raise money for suffragette movement);
- 1895: publication of *The Woman’s Bible* (Stanton), ferocious attack on images of and stories about women in St. James Bible: Smith’s Bible used as literal reference.

# **Last Bible translation example: Hawwa – Eva - Life**

- It is a pity that all versions of the Bible do not give this word instead of the Hebrew Eve. She was Life, the eternal mother, the first representative of the more valuable and important half of the human race. (Stanton, 1895 p. 27).
- when the woman takes the fruit of the tree ... she becomes life's channel, bringing within the sphere of human experience all that life represents for good and bad. The gift of life is necessarily attended by its concomitant, death (Korsak, 1992 p. 232).

## **Vatican: *Liturgiam authenticam* (2001)**

- Rules on Bible translation, and special section entitled “gender” (only in English):
  - - all angels are masculine
  - - all references to the Church should be feminine
  - - God is masculine
  - - all masculine forms of language include the feminine...

# Simone de Beauvoir: and the “feminist bible”

- Feminist criticism and re-translation of founding text:
- *Le deuxième sexe* (1949): *The Second Sex* (1952)
- Simone de Beauvoir: Howard Parshley
- Since 1983: severe criticism of Parshley translation: mis-translations, wide (unmarked) deletions of text “especially of women’s history,” mis-representation of feminist forethinker.
- 2009: MA dissertation “Rehabilitating Parshley”
- Since 2010: a new English version of *The Second Sex* (cf. Toril Moi’s equally severe criticism);
- “*This translation provides the true voice of Beauvoir...*”



# Translating Other Feminist Forethinkers and Intellectuals

- Problematics of recovering the intellectual (abolitionist) work of 'feminist foremothers' through translation and commentary:
- Madame de Stael, Olympe de Gouges, Madame de Duras, women abolitionists: in *Translating Slavery: Gender and Race in French Women's Writing (1783-1832)* Doris Kadish and Francoise Massardier-Kenney, eds. (1994)
- - enormous translation problems around the terminology of slavery, Negroes, and abolitionism;
- - lengthy considerations around translation theory, translation contexts and language as an expression of power differentials.

# Researching Women Translators

- Tudor England: *Silent but for the Word* (Hannay 1985): examines personal and political interventions in texts: more feminist lineage;
- *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance* (Krontiris 1992);
- Women translators of scientific texts 1650-1850: PhD diss (Healy, Uottawa 2001): Aphra Behn, Ada Lovelace, etc.
- La Malinche: young woman, interpreter between Aztec, Mayan and Spanish conquistadores, consort of Cortez(?): “a whore, the mother of a race of mestizos, and a traitress to her country” [malinchismo] or “intelligent, multi-lingual survivor of slavery and conquest?”

# Feminist approaches to Translation Theory

- Critique: the metalanguage of translation:
- “les belles infidèles”; treating translations like slave women, shaving their heads and cutting their nails; translation as penetration (George Steiner) and rape (Serge Gavronsky); (Lori Chamberlain 1988/2002).
  
- Feminist theorization of translation:
- Pandora and the seriality of translation: Karin Littau (2000): deconstruction and Luce Irigaray
- Metramorphosis: Ettinger (1990s) : feminist psychoanalysis: translation parallels the interdependence, tolerance of difference, and communication of mother/child in late pregnancy (the non-rejection of the unknown non-I)....