

Feminismus, Gender und Uebersetzungs- wissenschaft

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Plan:

- Feminist theories: 2000: Pandora's Box and translation as seriality; Ettinger's *Metramorphosis*
- Moving away from 'simplistic' binary of male/female
- Gender studies vs feminisms
- « Gender trouble » : Judith Butler/Eve Sedgwick
- Gay translation studies: Harvey, Keenaghan, Larkosh
- Queer (anti-identity) and translation

Feminist Translation Theory : Pandora 1 (Karin Littau: TTR 2000)

- Ancient myths around translation: Babel and Pandora (Steiner 1975)
- Ba-bel : Derrida – in “Difference in Translation” 1985
- Pan-dora: Karin Littau 2000
- - a “feminized version of the scattering of languages”
- - a “rewrite of the negative and misogynist association of Pandora/woman with man’s fall” (Pandora: the dangerous femme fatale, the woman driven by curiosity to disobey, woman as source of chaos and misunderstanding)
- - Babel: loss of one language/Oedipus: fear of castration
- - Pandora: threat of linguistic chaos/threat of women’s sexuality
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Pandora 2

- Pandora embodies phallogentric anxieties about “Woman”:
 - - language as ‘mother tongue’
 - - sexuality: the secret (dangerous) box with unknown content
- BUT there are other, conflicting versions of Pandora:
 - - a figure of plenty with cornucopia
 - - a Mother Earth figure
- AND many conflicting versions of the story of the “box”
 - - a jar, a container, opened by Pandora? or her companion?
 - - only *hope* remains? only *expectation* or *awareness* remains?

Pandora 3

- The multiplicity of images/stories/versions of Pandora shows:
 - - un-decidability (Derrida) of meaning in language
 - - women's sexuality as multiple, and not phallic (Irigaray)
- AND HOW: translation decides; translation offers decidability that reduces poly-meaning to the one – 'phallogocentric' – version;
- the decisions made in translation: are politically, ideologically, socially motivated: a necessity of the everyday;
- - (feminist) Pandora stands for seriality, multiplicity, always another version of Pandora, and of any text;

Pandora 4

- The many Pandora myths lend emphasis not to the impossibility of translation, but **the impossibility of putting a stop to endless retranslation**, in short, show us **the serial nature of translation**: there are always more translations, retranslations.
- **Nothing lacks here, nothing gets lost, with each and every translation there is always one more.** The Pandora myth, which metaphorically links the female body and its speech — the mother-tongue — allows us [...] to see with fresh eyes new possibilities for translation and gender. (2000)

Feminist Intersections: USA (1980s+)

- **Intersections:** all the other aspects besides sexual identity that make life difficult:
 - - race, social class, age, handicaps, etc: (USA 1983+)
- **Intersectionality:**
 - - Kadish and Massardier-Kenney: Madame de Stael: intellectual woman and abolitionist anti-slavery texts
 - - Gayatri Spivak: focus on third-world women's texts
 - - USA: Latina writers on La Malinche: Gloria Anzaldua
- fear of generalization, fear of essentialism, many intersections = many little case studies

The 20th century unconscious: and feminist psychoanalysis

- Overarching 20th century theory (Joan Scott 1999):
 - - the unconscious and its focus on origins, sexuality, sex (Freud and co.) and the need to separate, establish identity, be unique
- - feminist considerations:
 - - Luce Irigaray: women's sexual multiplicity – *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (19
 - - Bracha Ettinger: separateness is a “phallic” fantasy; focus not on borders or frontiers, but on thresholds and interdependence and communication.
 - - a privileged relationship with the unknown or the foreign: embodied in late-pregnancy: a matrixial relationship, or a metamorphic event.

Metramorphosis: Ettinger

- A neologism that brings together and resonates with the terms “meta,” “mater,” and “morpheus”:
 - : processes of change (metaphor, metonymy, metatext)
 - : mother, womb, matrice
 - : morpheus: god of sleep and dreams/change (to morph)
- The *metramorphic* relationship of late-pregnancy:
 - - tolerance and acceptance of the other, of difference, of the “non-I”;
 - - communication between two separate, two separable beings;
 - - interdependence and not separation.

Ettinger's Metramorphosis and Translation

- Importance of : communication, interdependence, tolerance, recognition and acceptance of difference;
- Embodied in and activated by female sexuality, reproduction, unconscious and conscious tolerance of (uncomfortable) otherness; and part of all human experience.
- “Useful to theorize and understand processes that do not involve single unities acting through the condensation of metaphor or the displacement of metonymy;” (Shread 2005)
- instead these processes provoke changes that mutually alter the meaning they create, are mutually dependent.

“Non-rejection of unknown and unassimilated non-I(s)”

- Reference to late-pregnancy evokes a feminine Symbolic that welcomes and accepts difference rather than replacing it;
- The focus on dependency and interrelatedness reveals our multiple dependencies and the connectedness underlying the fictions of absolute autonomy; (Shread/Cronin)
- In contrast to *metamorphosis*, [...] the new forms and shapes of the *metramorphosis* do not send [...] each of the preceding ones into oblivion or eliminate them, but lets them shine through the transparency, disarrange and lead to an existence of multitude rather than unity.

Social sciences/Humanities move to “Gender” in 1990s

- Away from noisy, tiresome, simplistic, ‘essentialist’ “feminisms” – (a backlash?) away from binary certainties and limitations:
- to broader questions of learnt and *performed* behaviour;
- interest in lesbianism and homosexual gender performances: socio-critical focus on dignity for homosexual genders;
- focus on the *individual and optional performance* vs group dynamics;
- focus on social contexts – intersectionalities (race, poverty, class, ages, post-colonial status, histories, etc;)
- complications around ‘essentialist’ identities.’

“Gender”: mainstream and descriptive

- ‘Gender’ becomes a mainstream, polite, term (Joan Scott 1999);
- Often a-politically descriptive;
- women’s mainstream ‘gendered’ writing (Margaret Atwood) in translation: “können sogar Männer lesen;” (1990s)
- “keine ‘Kampfschriften’ sondern gehobene ‘gendered’ Unterhaltungsliteratur.”
- In Translation Studies “gender in translation” is still all about women: *Gender and Translation. Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (Simon 1996); *Translation and Gender. Translating in the ‘Era of Feminism’* (Flotow 1997); *Gender, Sex and Translation* (Santaemilia 2005).

Gay (and Lesbian?) Interests in Translation

- Gender in discourse and language (Judith Butler *Gender Trouble* 1992)
- linguistic performance of homosexuality.
- **Keith Harvey** on Anglo-American “gay community,” its “camp” language, and translation of gay writers between French and Anglo-America: *Intercultural Movements* (2000);
- - where gendered language use reveals closeted gay “identity;”
- “camp” language : an “extrasexual performative gesture” (Harvey 1998) that denotes and generates gay self-identification:
- colour consciousness: mauve
- exaggerated pronunciation
- intertexts: current stars of gay popular culture – Marilyn, Marlene, Judy Garland.

Gay Texts in Translation

- Translation or non-translation of homosexual content and terms, **allusive, often closeted, often local, temporally limited:**
- Keenaghan: on Lorca in American (gaying very modest texts);
- German work on Plautus: (censoring openly homo-erotic work);
- Quebec Theatre: Michel Marc Bouchard's openly homosexual narratives within Catholicism into Scots Catholic environment
- socially and temporarily local forms...
- Chris Larkosh on “closeted translation” around Argentinian journal *Sur*, and
- *Re-Engendering Translation* (2012)

Queer in Translation: Queering Translation

- problem of what to study ... “the very idea of “queer” is to avoid definitions and categorizations” (Lewis 2010). Avoids “identities,” undermines labels, subverts meaning and interpretation;
- “people referred to as women”: the ultimate anti-label
- BUT without fixed identity categories “which are both a basis of oppression and the basis for political power, there is neither a politics of identity nor a politics of transgression” (Gamson 1995)

Gender as Performance = Translation as Performance?

- If gender is a performance (and an always changeable, optional, multiple, polysemic, contingent event) ... *Is it?*
- and
- if translation is a performance (an always changeable, optional, multiple, polysemic, contingent event ... *Is it?*)
- Can these two ideas be combined? Can they work together?
Can they be elaborated?