Feminismus, Gender und Übersetzungs-wissenschaft
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 Sedgewick
- 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)
- 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
Pandora 2

- Pandora embodies phallocentric 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?
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 – ‘phallologocentric’ – 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;
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 metramorphic 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: Queerying 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?