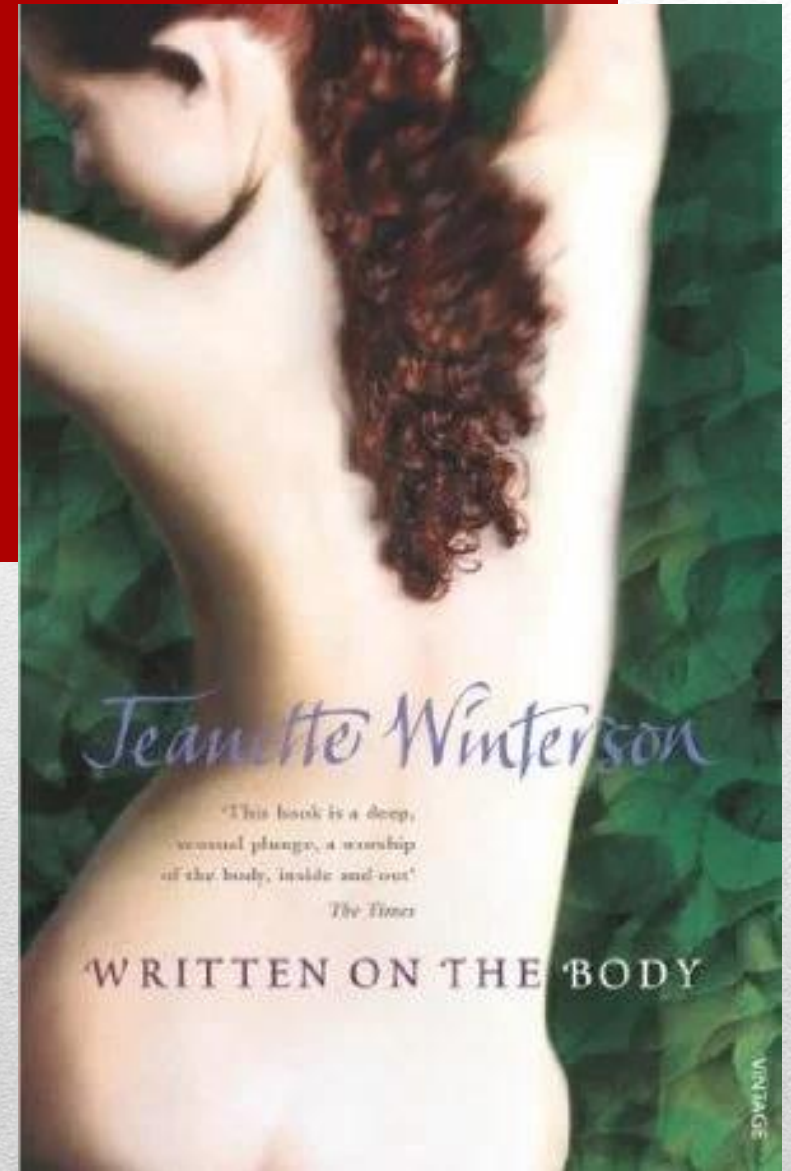
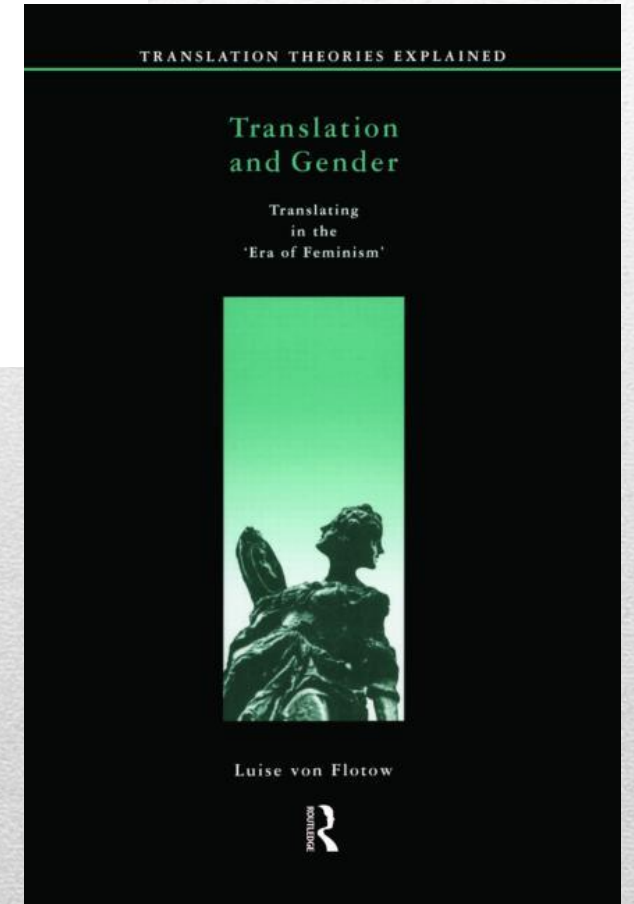
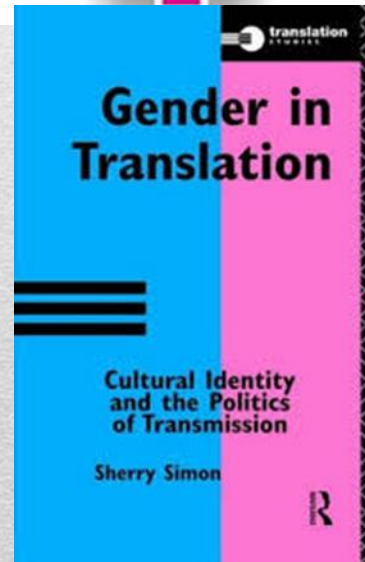
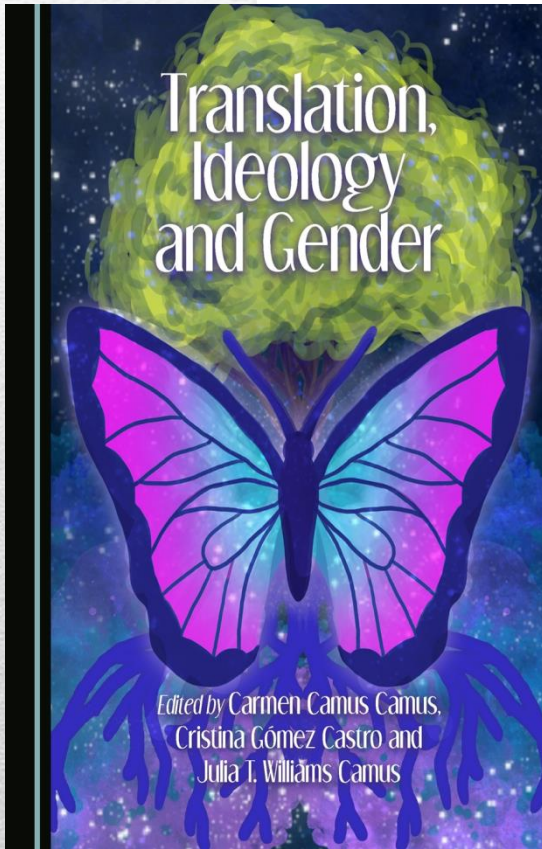
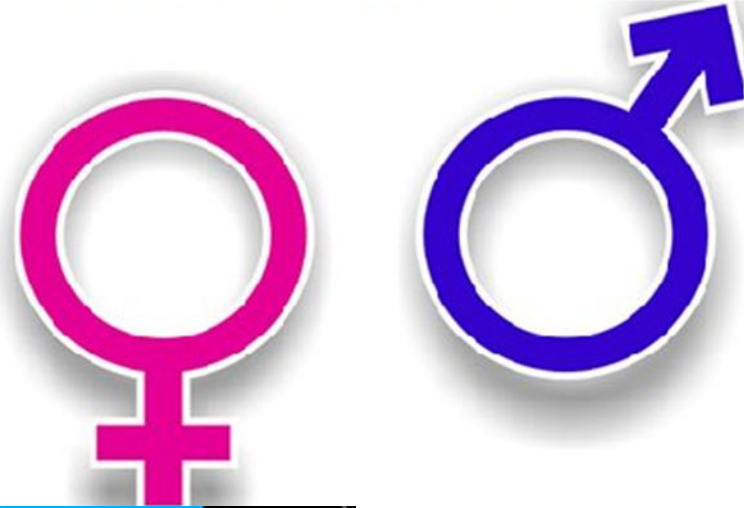


Translation and Gender

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University of Silesia in Katowice



GENDER ISSUES IN 'TRANSLATION



Open Ended

the question of language

Masculinity, feminism

Discrimination

The form of verbs in past tense, the difference between Polish and English;

Discrimination

Inequality

Differences in describing gender in different languages

inequality

Grammatical, gender-marked differences between languages

Open Ended

Problems with the identification of the narrator (the gender)

Social gender

problems with identifying narrator, sometimes characters, too

Grammatical gender

Violence against women

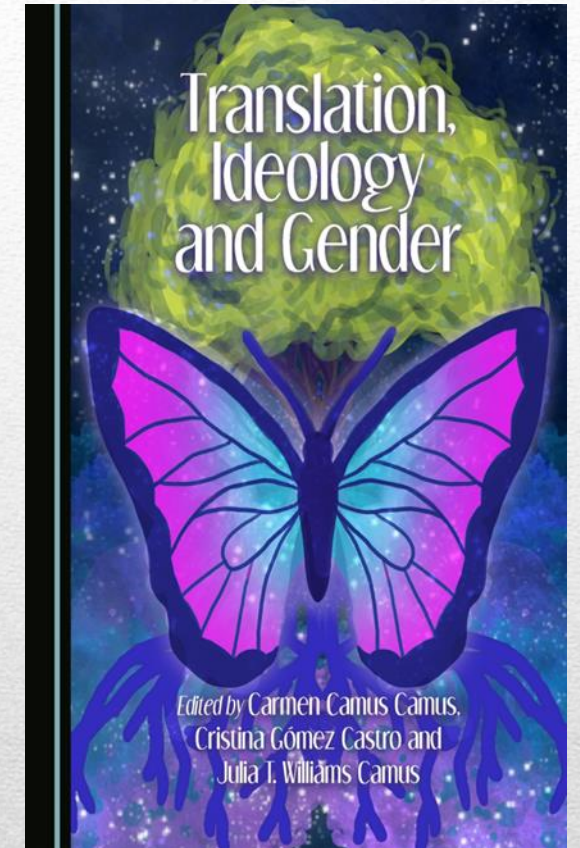
Masculinity/femininity

Inequity Gender-specific articles Misinterpretations

On Gender Ideology in Translation:

"Gender bias in translation is not just a technical issue but a cultural and ideological one, raising questions about how language constructs gender and how translation either perpetuates or disrupts these constructs.,,"

– *Sherry Simon*



Translation, ideology, gender

On the Power of Feminist Translation:

"The feminist translator assumes the right to make her work visible, to use it as a political tool in the service of women—and by extension, humanity. She refuses to adhere to a neutral position or the traditional 'invisibility' of the translator."

– *Barbara Godard*

On Translator's Choices and Gender Representation:

"Translation is a performative act of rewriting in which translators can subvert the original to give more presence to silenced or marginalized voices, particularly regarding gender."

– *Carol Maier*

On the Translator as an Agent of Change:

"Every translation is a recontextualization. Gender-sensitive translation recognizes this recontextualization as a means to challenge conventional ideologies and offer new perspectives on gender identity."

– *Luise von Flotow*

- **Key Concepts:**

- 1. Feminist Translation:**

1. Feminist translation practices aim to amplify women's voices and challenge patriarchal language structures.
2. This approach often involves reinterpreting or even rewording texts to make gender inequalities visible or to empower marginalized perspectives.

- 2. Gender and Ideology in Translation:**

1. Gendered language is deeply ideological. Translators must often navigate these ideological undercurrents, making decisions that can either reinforce or challenge societal norms.
2. The way a translator chooses to handle gender-neutral language or gender-specific pronouns can have ideological implications.

Translation, Ideology, and Gender,

1. Visibility of the Translator:

1. - A feminist perspective on translation emphasizes the visibility of the translator.
2. - Feminist translation foregrounds the translator's role and voice, highlighting that translation is an interpretive, subjective act.

2. Gendered Language and Cultural Context:

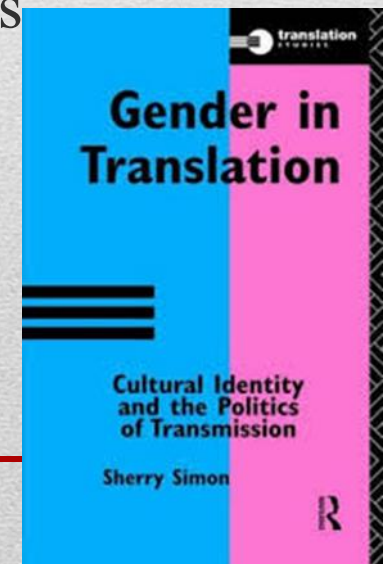
1. Different cultures and languages have varying degrees of gendered language and gender-related norms.
 2. Translators must be sensitive to these differences, balancing fidelity to the source text with respect for the target culture's gender perceptions.
-

Translation as a Political and Cultural Act:

- Translation is not a neutral act but one deeply embedded in cultural and political power dynamics.
- Simon emphasizes that translation can either maintain the status quo or serve as a tool for cultural change.

“Translation is a site where the dynamics of culture are negotiated. It is not simply a matter of transferring information but also a political activity, which engages the translator in a dialogue with the text’s ideological implications”

Gender in translation



Gender and the Translator's Voice:

- Simon argues for the visibility of the translator, especially in feminist translation, where translators openly reshape gendered meanings within the text.
 - “The feminist translator, affirming her critical difference, her delight in interminable re-reading and rewriting, flaunts her signature in the text, marking the feminine here and there in a playful manner.”
-

Feminist Translation Theory:

- Simon presents feminist translation as a way to challenge patriarchal norms and amplify marginalized voices.
 - Feminist translators may intentionally adapt texts to empower female perspectives and subvert male-centred language.
 - **Quote:** “Feminist translation theory begins with the recognition that translation has traditionally been viewed as a secondary, derivative activity, associated with femininity, and seeks to give the translator a stronger, more assertive voice.”
-

The Politics of Language and Gender Representation:

- Simon examines how linguistic structures impact gender representation in translation. Translators working with gendered languages face unique challenges in accurately and sensitively representing gender.
 - **Quote:** “The grammatical gender of languages like French or Spanish forces the translator into constant decisions about gender that are less apparent in English, leading to a politicization of linguistic choices.”
-

Challenges in Translating Gendered Language:

- Translating from a language with grammatical gender to one without requires careful decision-making to capture or adapt the gendered nuances, especially when translating feminist or gender-focused texts.
 - **Quote:** “The translator faces choices that are inevitably ideological. The choice to maintain, modify, or eliminate gendered terms is a choice that reflects the translator’s engagement with the cultural politics of language.”
-

- **Translating the Feminine:**
 - Simon discusses the importance of “translating the feminine,” ensuring that female voices and experiences are visible in translation, as traditional translation often marginalizes these perspectives.
 - **Quote:** “Translating the feminine is about making women’s voices heard in a text. It is a means of countering the historical marginalization of women’s perspectives within both literature and translation.”
-

- A key text in gender studies that challenges traditional understandings of gender and identity.
- Butler argues that gender is performative, meaning it is constructed through repeated actions rather than being an innate quality.
- **Gender as Performance** – Butler suggests that gender is something we "do" rather than something we "are."
- **2. Relevance to Translation Studies**
- Butler's theories on gender challenge translators to think about how language constructs gender and identity.
- When translating texts that discuss or represent gender, translators must navigate these constructs and consider how they impact the portrayal of gender in the target language.

***Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* by
Judith Butler (1990)**



3. Translation and the Subversion of Gender Norms

- Butler's idea of **subversion** of gender norms can inspire translators to engage critically with gendered language, especially when translating texts from feminist or queer perspectives.
- Translators might adopt non-standard or innovative approaches to language that question binary understandings of gender, reflecting Butler's call to resist fixed gender categories.

4. Gender Performativity in Language and Translation

- Gender is produced through repetitive acts. Similarly, language can reinforce or disrupt gendered expectations.
 - In translation it encourages sensitivity to how gender is performed in the source text and the potential for reshaping this performance in the target language. For example, translating pronouns and gendered terms can either reinforce traditional norms or subvert them.
-

5. Challenges for Translators: Handling Gender-Neutral or Non-Binary Language

- Butler's work raises questions about how to translate non-binary or gender-neutral language, particularly between languages with different grammatical gender structures (e.g., English vs. languages with gendered nouns like Spanish or French).
 - Translators may need to balance fidelity to Butler's ideas with the constraints and possibilities of the target language.
-

6. Quotes to Reflect Butler's Influence on Translation and Gender:

- **"Gender is performative... it is produced and reproduced through repeated actions."**
 - Translation can participate in this "repetition" by either maintaining conventional gendered expressions or challenging them through innovative language choices.
 - **"There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results."**
 - This idea challenges translators to rethink how gender identity is represented in text, especially when translating culturally or politically charged terms that carry different gender connotations.
-

7. Implications for Feminist and Queer Translation Studies

- Butler's theories encourage a more activist approach to translation, where translators consciously engage with gendered language to reflect or challenge societal norms.
 - In feminist and queer translation, Butler's work serves as a foundation for questioning heteronormative language and embracing translations that reflect diverse gender identities.
-

- [An introduction to Judith Butler *Gender Trouble*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3i-8JEWSk8&t=76s)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3i-8JEWSk8&t=76s>

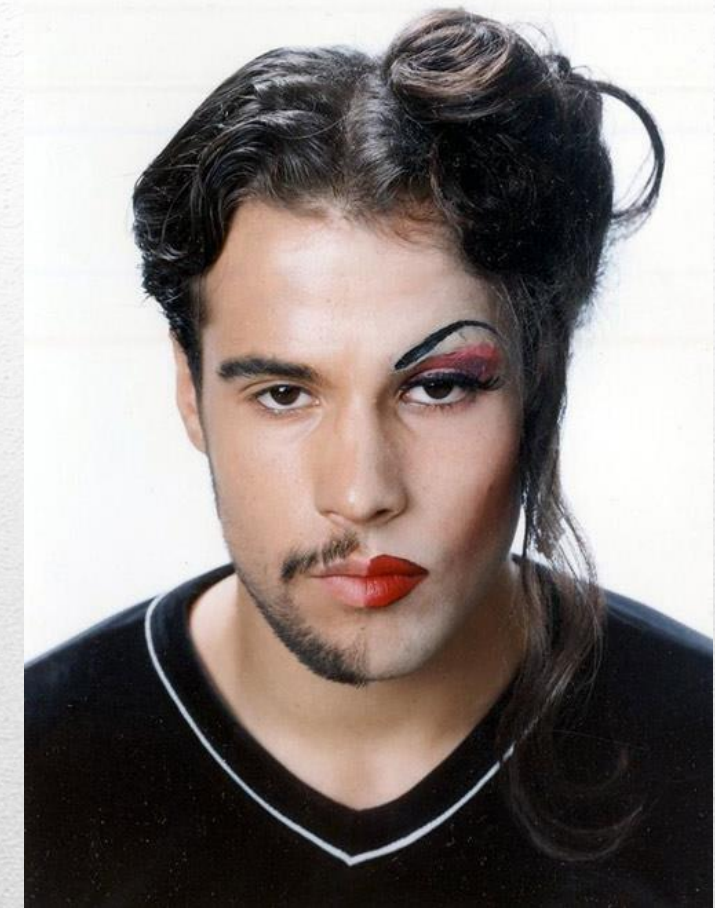


- Judith Butler „Gender in translation: Beyond Monolingualism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CK47Js9oUuA&list=RDLVCK47Js9oUuA&index=2>

- Judith Butler „How can we put "gender norms" into social policy and practice?"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8B2Ya7hZN0&list=RDLVCK47Js9oUuA&index=3>

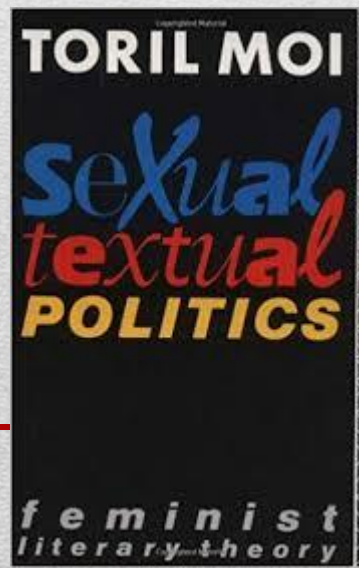


A board director Sebastian Berggren demonstrates the concept of dual gender as featured in [Wild Side Story](#), January 1, 1999 | [Wikipedia](#) | Public Domain
Source: <http://lab.cccb.org/en/what-gender-owes-to-grammar/>

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (1990)

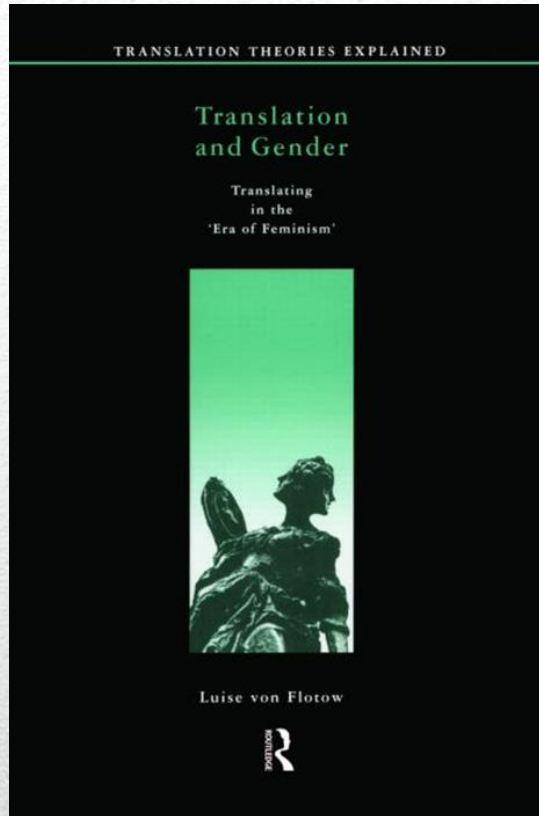
- In 1970s Translation Studies isolated from the humanities with a focus on determining equivalence.
- At the same time there appeared feminist texts on gender and language in the United States, Canada, Great Britain and France.
- Prominent feminist thinkers: Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous and Simone de Beauvoir
- Toril Moi „Sexual/Textual Politics” (1986) → introduction to and development of different feminist approaches to language.

Western Feminisms and Translation studies



- **The Cultural Turn**: coined by Bassnett and Lefevere in *Translation, History and Culture*. London: Printer Publishers. (1990)
 - culture in translation,
 - the social background,
 - the influence of cultural tradition imposed on translation,
 - the subjectivity of translators
 - researching shift from **linguistic** to **culture**,
 - improving the literariness of translated texts.
- A new field of study
- Rejection of linguistics-based translation studies research
- Foundation in **comparative literature**
- Incorporation of **new strands** from varieties of cultural studies

The **cultural turn** in Translation Studies

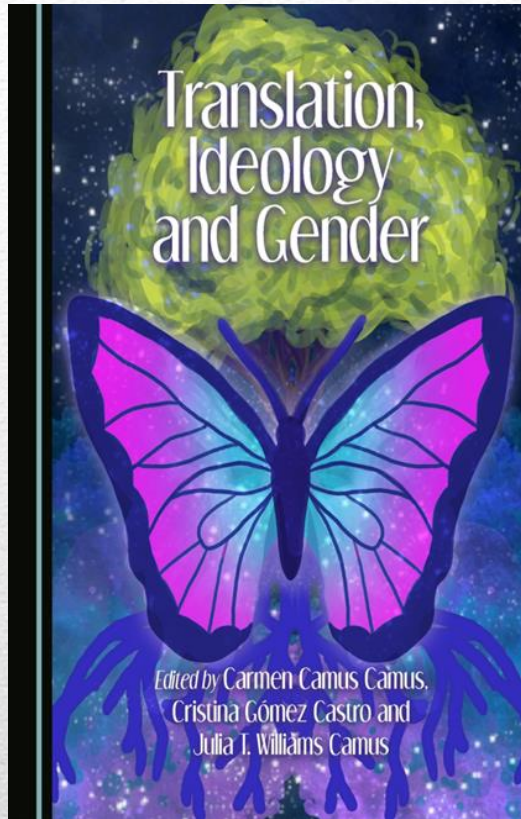


- translation against the background of the women's movement and its critique of 'patriarchal' language.
- the development of openly interventionist translation strategies.
- the initiative to retranslate fundamental texts such as the Bible.
- translating as a battle '**lost**' in **patriarchy**.

Louise von Flotow
Translation and gender: translating in the
“era of feminism”. Manchester: St. Jerome 1997

- Gender and the Practice of Translation
 - Experimental Feminist Writing and its Translation
 - Translating the Body
 - Translating Puns of Cultural References
 - Translating Experiments with Language
- Reading and Rewriting Translations
 - Rewriting Existing Translations
 - The Bible
 - Comparing 'Pre-feminist' and 'Post-feminist' Translations

The discussed aspects



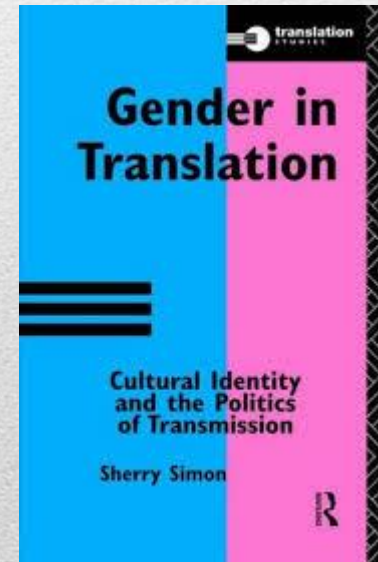
- Translation, Ideology and Gender in Narrative and Poetry
- Simone de Beauvoir: Censorship and Reception
- Rewriting and Sexual Self-censorship and translation

**Carmen Camus et al., eds.
Translation, Ideology and Gender. (2017)**

„Through the French feminists, English-language readers came into contact with continental philosophy and critical thought, modes of thinking which allowed a change to the very representation of knowledge and to the discursive construction of sexual identity.”

„Because they are necessarily „defective”,
all translations are „reputed females.”

Sherry Simon Gender and Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission (1996)



- Challenging grammatical gender
- The violence of appropriation
- What is a translator?
- Women at the borders
- Corrective measures: the Bible in feminist frame
- Revising the boundaries of culture and translation
- Gender to culture: Gayatri Spivak
- Producing difference

Gender and translation

- What is language?
- What are the functions of language?
- What does Spivak say about language?
- Can you see the link between the politics of translation and the use of language?
- Translation as a tool?



G.C. Spivak „The Politics of Translation”

- „Translation is the most intimate act of reading.”
G.C.Spivak
- Language may be one of many elements is
‘translatese’ (transjęzyk przekładu)? p. 315
- The two English titles of Devi’s short story „The Breast-giver” (Dająca pierś)
 1. „The Wet-nurse” (Mamka)



G.C. Spivak

- „To surrender in translation is more erotic than ethical” G.C. Spivak
- Do you find Spivak’s concepts, such as seduction, intimacy, yielding/surrendering to the text, convincing?
- Are there similarities between the translating the text and studying/penetrating the body.

Translation and eroticism

- Bassnett and Lefevere in *Translation, History and Culture*. London: Printer Publishers. (1990)
- Butler Judith *Gender Trouble* (1990)
- Moi Tori *Sexual/Textual Politics* (1986)
- Simon Sherry *Gender and Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (1996)
- Williams Julia et al., eds. *Translation, Ideology and Gender*. (2017)
- von Flotow Louise *Translation and gender: translating in the “era of feminism”* . Manchester: St. Jerome 1997
- Ward Jouve Nicole *White woman speaks with forked tongue: Criticism as autobiography*. (1991)

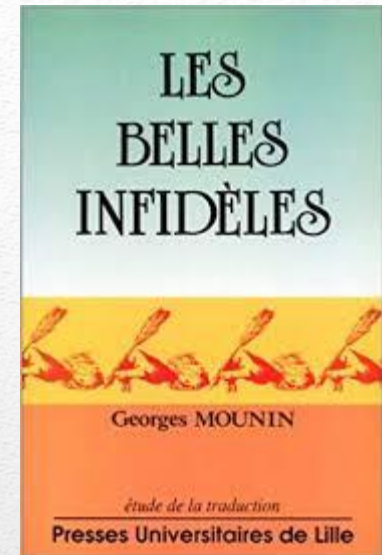
Bibliography

- „There are no great women artists“.
- the opposition between **productive and reproductive work** organizes the way a culture values work.
- this paradigm depicts **originality or creativity** in terms of **paternity and authority**, relegating the figure of the female to a variety of secondary roles.
- the distinction between **writing** and **translating-marking**
- the one to be **original and "masculine,"** the other **to be derivative and "feminine"**.
- „A translation is at best an echo“

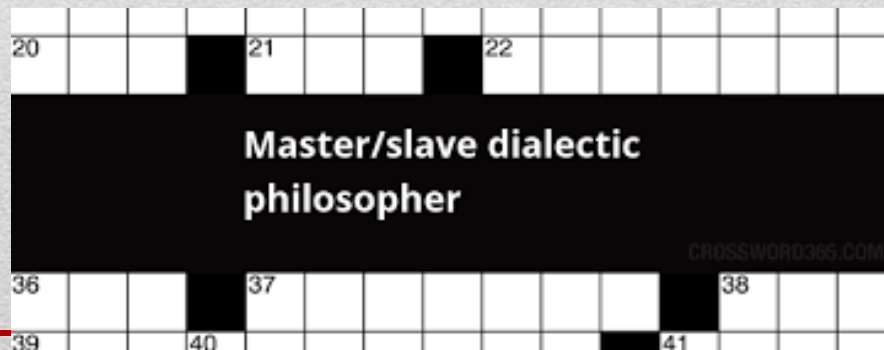
Lori Chamberlain "Gender and the metaphors of translation"



- The sexualization of translation
- *Les belles infidèles*
- Either beautiful or faithful
- „Fidelity is defined by an implicit contract between translation (as woman) and original (as husband, father, or author).”
- **unfaithful wife/translation** versus **husband/original**



- Is language (and text) figured in masculine or feminine terms?
- Can you see translation as a form of conquest?
- „The politics of colonialism overlap significantly with the politics of gender” The master/slave dichotomy
- „**The slave** is the willing one (a hyperbolic servant, a faithful): the translator considers himself as the child of **the father-creator**, his rival, while the text becomes the object of desire”





- **The four-part process of translation**
 1. Initiative trust - the translator's willingness to approach the text
 2. Penetrating/capturing the text - erotic possession
 3. Naturalization of the 'imprisoned text'
 4. Act of reciprocity - restoring the balance, amends for the act of aggression

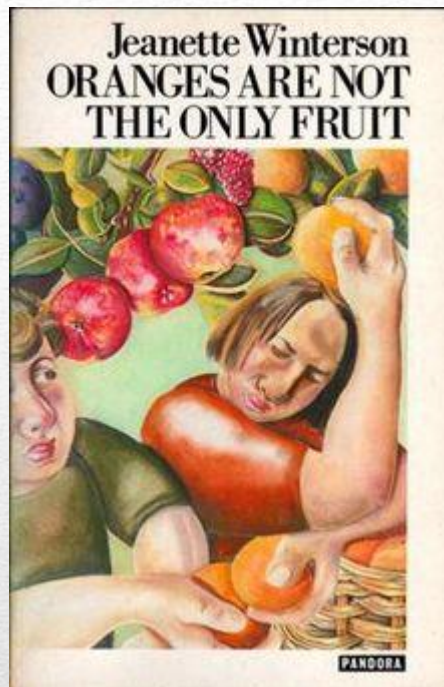
George Steiner *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*

- The concept of marriage and translation in terms of (in)fidelity.
- „As in marriage, so in translation, there is a legal dimension to the concept of infidelity” L. Chamberlain
- -----
- "Translation is writing; that is it is not translation only in the sense of trascription. It is the production of writing called forth by the original text.”
- **Derrida blurs the distinction between original and translation.**



Jacques Derrida

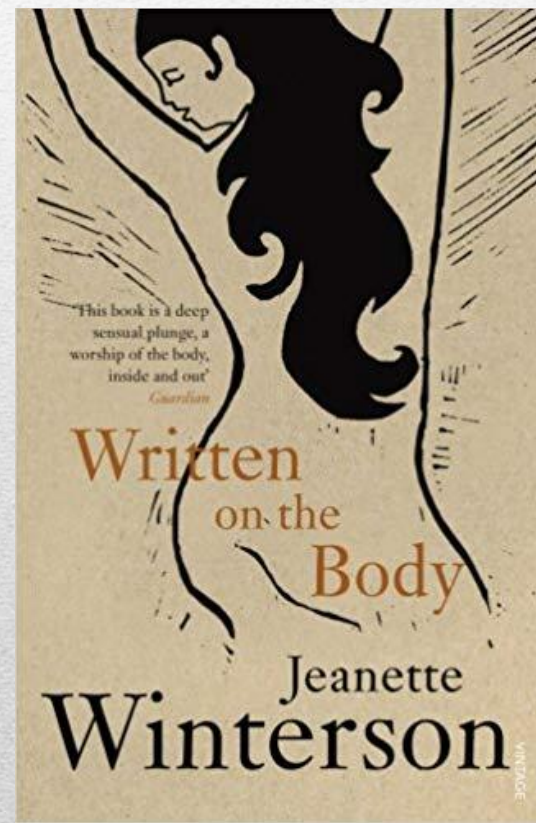
"Living On/Border Lines", "The Ear of the Other"



Jeanette Winterson

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit, (1985) a semi-autobiographical novel about a sensitive teenage girl rebelling against conventional values

The most seductive novel to date from the author of **The Passion** and **Sexing the Cherry**. Winterson chronicles the affair between the narrator, who is given neither name nor gender, and the beloved, a complex and confused married woman. **Written on the Body**, 1994. (Amazon.com)



- Powieść o miłości. O miłości odwzajemnionej, a jednak niespełnionej.
- Książka zainspirowana *Orlandem* Virginii Woolf. Główny/a bohater/ka nie ma płci.
- Poprzez niemożliwość przetłumaczenia historii „bezpłciowo” na język polski, tłumaczka nadała bohaterowi/ce płeć żeńską,
- Jednak należy ją czytać tak, jakby narrator/ka i główna postać nie była ani kobietą, ani mężczyzną.
- Do *Orlanda* nawiązuje również pomieszanie czasów akcji. Przeszłość, przyszłość i teraźniejszość mieszają...

Wydawnictwo Rebis, www.rebis.com.pl

Jeanette Winterson, Zapisane na ciele, **tłum. Hanna Mizerska, 2000**

