

## Gender and Translation: A European Map

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### Introduction

Can we talk about a European gender translation geography and is it possible to outline it? In a recent paper given at the conference at the University of Calabria,<sup>1</sup> José Santaemilia mapped a new European tradition of ‘gender and translation’ proposing a ‘word cloud’ field with key issues terms such as: gender, sex, woman, translatress, genealogy, archaeology and many others showing that after the important work of Canadian writers and translators, a number of European researchers began to explore a growing list of themes and perspectives on ‘feminist translation’. There are various questions that should be included as starting points of a possible mapping on gender and translation in Europe, questions that consider many factors such as specific issues in the field resulting from the works of Canadian scholars, the institutionalisation of translation and gender in European countries or the translation techniques and strategies considered as feminist and the objectives there have been outlined in these last decades. These questions are:

1) Are we dealing today with the same issues of the 90s when the most important works on the subject came out in Canada?<sup>2</sup>

2) Has the ‘gender and translation field’ got the same academic presence in Canada and Europe?

3) What happened since the Canadian ‘factor’ questioned the field of Translation Studies? Did the study of gender and translation acquire institutionalisation? (Are there in Europe MA and PhD courses on Gender and translation in Europe? Are translation and Gender Studies courses taught in Translation Studies programs?); moreover, has the research on the subject been visible through seminars and conferences which played a central role in the articulation and dissemination of translation and gender? Are there research projects on these issues? Have volumes on this topic been published in Europe?

4) Have the main objectives and the truly cross-disciplinary character been maintained and how? Have Canadian feminist strategies (supplementing, footnoting, prefacing, hijacking) been used? Can we find translators who proclaim to be feminist?

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<sup>1</sup> “Translation and Gender: A Gap Between Theory and Practice”, University of Calabria, Nov. 7 e 8, 2011. The paper “Gender and Translation: a New European Tradition?” will be published in the volume *Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice in Translation and Gender Studies*, edited by E. Federici and V. Leonardi, Newcastle, Cambridge Scholar Publishing House, 2013 (forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> I am referring here to Sherry Simon’s *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*, London and New York, Routledge, 1996 and Luise von Flotow’s *Translation and Gender: Translating in the Era of Feminism*, Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 1997.

5) Are these studies important for the teaching and researching about Women's and Gender Studies in Europe?

Looking for possible answers to these questions we immediately understand the importance of the field of translation and gender in the wider panorama on Gender Studies in Europe. Translation has always been an instrument of widening up literary canons and 'translating' knowledge from one culture to another. The rich and fruitful debate occurred within the interdisciplinary field of Translation Studies after the 'Cultural Turn' together with changes of perspective and developments within the discipline due to the influence of Postcolonial Studies, Deconstruction, Post-Structuralism and Sociolinguistics has outlined a different path to the notion of translation itself, to the strategies and tools in the translation process and to the debate on the results of translation of texts into different languages/contexts. In order to understand how a possible European map emerges we have to retrace some important points in question arisen in the last decades in the field of Gender and Translation starting from a chronological perspective of a feminist translation.

#### 1. Some 'herstories' in Translation Studies:

Since the 1970s Canadian feminist scholars have promoted the debate on translation and gender. The Canadian context has proven to be a very fruitful ground both for feminist theories and practices of translation. This phenomenon has probably been due to a specific ideological, political and cultural environment; a social conjuncture developed partly as a result of the diglossic situation in the country united to a major concern about language in Québec where the feeling of political powerlessness in the 1970s and 1980s was very strong. These concerns also inspired Québec authors from the late 1970s to create innovative ways of writing when language was used in a disruptive way to visualize gender and cultural differences. At the same time, scholars and translators such as Barbara Godard, Susanne de Lotbinière Harwood, Kathy Mezei, Sherry Simon, and Luise von Flotow discussed translation theories from a feminist point of view and translated texts bearing these issues in mind, often in concordance with feminist poststructuralist debates.<sup>3</sup> Feminist translations were the consequence of various crossroads which brought together the Canadian *écriture au féminin*, the second wave of Feminism, French Feminism, the cultural turn in Translation Studies, Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction. These theoretical approaches were united by the will to write and read the text in a critical way, the importance of the linguistic and

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<sup>3</sup> B. Godard, "Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation" in S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere, eds., *Translation, History, Culture*, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 87-95; Godard, B., "Writing Between Cultures", *TTR : traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, vol. 10, 1, 1997, pp. 53-99; S. de Lotbinière Harwood, *Re-Belle et infidèle la traduction comme pratique de réécriture au féminin/The Body Bilingual Translation as Rewriting in the Feminine*, Toronto, Women's Press, 1991; K. Mezei, "Traverse" *Tessera* 6 'La traduction au féminin/ Translating Women', 1989, pp. 9-10; S. Simon, *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*, London: Routledge, 1996; L. von Flotow, "Feminist Translation: Contexts, Practices and Theories", *TTR traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, vol. 4, n. 2, 1991, pp. 69-84; L. von Flotow, *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'*, Manchester: St Jerome Press, 1997; L. von Flotow, "Genders and the Translated Text: Developments in 'Transformance'", *Textus XII*, 1999, pp. 275-87.

cultural context in the writing/reading of the text, the idea of gender as an important category in textual interpretation, the notion of female authorship in writing and translation, a fluid conception of writing and translation as part of the same process, the performativity implicit in language and the production of meaning, the social, political and ideological implications of texts.

In her essay on “Gender and Translation”<sup>4</sup> Luise von Flotow outlined: A) a ‘first paradigm’ in feminist translation which focused on women as a minority group within patriarchal society and for which gender was conceived in terms of binary oppositions. The main objective was to make the feminine visible in language; in a sense it was based on an essentialist approach to gender and sexual identity. B) a ‘second paradigm’ which was born in the wake of Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction and presented a dynamic social constructionist approach where gender became a performative model and was considered as discursively constructed since, as Judith Butler affirms, gender is a ‘Performance’.<sup>5</sup> In this phase practices of translation were considered as performative utterances and as a battleground for linguistic, cultural and gendered identities. It was a practice that aimed at deconstructing the myths of objectivity and transparency in language. The notion of performativity became central in feminist translation studies and feminist translators opted for a practice of translation where the translator’s traces in the text were clearly visible and her agency fully acknowledged; they signalled the sexism of the text and demonstrated that translation is not a neutral act but takes place in a specific socio-cultural ideological context where language is deeply marked by categories of gender, race, ethnicity and class.<sup>6</sup> In her last edited volume *Translating Women* published in 2011 von Flotow still refers to translation as a performance and she further develops her archival work on translatresses and translated key texts emphasizing the term ‘women’ and not gender.<sup>7</sup>

For our mapping of a history of gender and translation it is possible to visualize within these two paradigms few central issues outlined by various scholars. The first certainly is the ‘archival work’ carried out by feminist translators who outlined the importance of retrieving the work of translatresses, women translators who clearly acted as cultural agents of their time. From the mid-80s a few books on women’s role in translation were published such as, for example, Margaret Hannay’s *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works*, Tina Krontiris’s *Oppositional Voices. Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in*

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<sup>4</sup> L. von Flotow, “Gender and Translation” in P. Kuhiwczk and K. Littau, eds., *A Companion to Translation Studies*, Clevendon, Multilingual Matters, 2007, pp. 92-105.

<sup>5</sup> J. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York, Routledge, 1990.

<sup>6</sup> I have developed this notion of feminist translation as performativity in E. Federici, “Doing Things with Words: Feminist Performative Translators”, in *Estudos Performativos. Global Performance/Political Performance*, eds. A. G. Macedo, C. Mendes de Sousa e V. Moura, Braga: CEHUM, 2010, pp. 37-48.

<sup>7</sup> It is quite interesting that in the last three years von Flotow’s focus has shifted towards Bracha Ettinger’s psychoanalytic theories and a conception of translation as labour, reproductive maternal activity. Her most recent essays deal with issues such as intersectionality and, referring to Carolyn Shread’s work on feminist translation and the plurality of many texts prior to translation, amplification of Source Text, metamorphics. See L. von Flotow, ed., *Translating Women*, Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 2011 and L. von Flotow “Translating Women: from Recent Histories and Re-translations to “Queerying” Translation, and Metamorphosis”, *Quaderns Revista de Traducció*, 19, 2012, pp. 127-139.

*the English Renaissance*, Gillian Dow's *Translators, Interpreters, Mediators. Women Writers 1700–1900*, and Jean Delisle's *Portraits de traductrices*.<sup>8</sup> Archival work involved a lively discussion on the practices of translation: first of all, it concerned practices and analysis of translations of key texts by women authors. Secondly, it meant to look for chronological differences and adaptations of texts in different contexts and periods of publication; thirdly, it also meant a comparative analysis of target texts in different languages.

This discussion on translators and translations brought also to the fore the importance of a practice of re-reading religious traditions and texts such as women's translations of the Bible and the recovery of Reformation women translators. This debate included a discussion on an "inclusive language" version of the Bible in the recent version published by Oxford University Press<sup>9</sup> where the editor clearly delineates the greater specificity given to gender and the many discussions on the Quran, especially Laleh Bakhtiar's controversial version, *The Sublime Qur'an*.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, this discussion went in parallel with another important issue, that is, the translation of 'ideologically unfriendly texts', 'antagonistic' texts where the language used by the author and the misogynistic representations of women rendered the practice of translation very difficult.<sup>11</sup> Archival work also meant to analyse the translations of European canonical feminist texts, such as, for example, Simone de Beauvoir's *Le deuxième sexe*. In her essay on the reception of French Feminism in North America, Bina Freiwald stresses the importance of translation in the transmission of texts and culture and the risk of a selective translation which ends up in silencing the specificity of the different/ 'other's' theoretical stance.<sup>12</sup> The translations of French Feminism works in English have unveiled the differences both in linguistic expressions and ideological conceptualizations. Probably mis-translation and a simplification/ 'domestication' of these theories heavily bounded in the French context of those years have caused some misunderstanding and critical responses in the North American context. The scholar heavily criticises the first translation of de Beauvoir's book published by Knopf in 1953. The translator was Madison Parshley, professor of zoology who decided for omissions, cuts, a clear 'domestication' of the text. However, also the choice for the second translation of the work published recently in 2010 does not seem appropriate since the two translators, Constance Barde and Sheila Malovany Chevallier are both untrained in philosophy. This discussion on Anglophone translations of French feminist texts made clear that differences between social and cultural contexts are many and that the translator should act as a

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<sup>8</sup> M. Hannay, *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works*, Kent, Kent State University, 1985; T. Krontiris, *Oppositional Voices. Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance*, London and New York, Routledge, 1992; G. Dow, ed., *Translators, Interpreters, Mediators. Women Writers 1700–1900*, Oxford and Bern, Peter Lang, 2007; J. Delisle, *Portraits de traductrices*, Ottawa, Artois Presses Université, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> V. R. Gold, ed., *New Testament and Psalms. An inclusive version*, New York, Oxford UP, 1995.

<sup>10</sup> R. Hassen, "English Translation of the Quran by Women: the Challenges of 'Gender Balance' in and through Language", *MonTi Monografias de Traducccion e Interpretacion*, 2011, 3, pp. 211-230.

<sup>11</sup> See S. Simon and C. Zaharia "Gender in Translation", 1996 ([http://www.uab.ro/reviste\\_recunoscute/philologica/2004\\_tom2/62.doc](http://www.uab.ro/reviste_recunoscute/philologica/2004_tom2/62.doc))

<sup>12</sup> B. Freiwald, "The Problems of Trans-Lation: Reading French Feminisms", *TTR Traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, vol. 4, n. 2, 1991, pp. 55-68.

mediator providing an interpretative and explanatory apparatus (footnotes, glossaries, explanations around keywords) so that the density of the source text can be perceived by the target reader who can guess the complexity of this kind of writing while understanding it.

A second and important issue was the recognition of gendered metaphors and their dismantling. In her well known essay on the metaphors of translation, Lori Chamberlain (1988) has highlighted the sexualization of translation through the issue of fidelity.<sup>13</sup> Starting from the historical trope of the ‘femininity of translation’ (*les belles et infidèles*) feminist scholars have subverted the traditional masculine/feminine imagery of the translator/translation and deconstructed the misogynist metaphors. Furthermore, since translation is a way of writing/reading/interpreting women’s voices they have created their own metaphors: translation has become a practice of translation/performance, ‘transformance’, a performative act, a daring act which requires courage and faith’, ‘a living process, ever beginning anew’, an act of skilled ‘manipulation’, an assertive practice. Feminist translators have visualized metaphors of territory, discoverers of intertextual maps, translators working in the ‘contact-zone’, translations as ‘political acts’ and translations as archaeological works.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, since gender and translation are interdisciplinary, these metaphors were created thanks to fruitful encounters with feminist literary criticism. Elaine Showalter’s ‘gynocriticism’ is clearly retraceable behind these new feminist voices, her idea of a ‘doubled voice discourse’ which embodies the social, literary and cultural heritage is still at stake.<sup>15</sup> So is Annette Kolodny’s response to Adrienne Rich’s ‘revision’, a ‘revisionary re-reading’ which sounds implicit in the task of the feminist translator. All the metaphors created for a feminist reading of texts, the ‘resisting reader’, ‘over-reading’ and ‘arachnology’, the ‘geography of identity and all the figurations connected to the ‘positionality’ theories (Spivak, Anzaldúa, Spelman, Trinh Min-Ha, De Lauretis) stand behind the work of feminist translators. The idea of ‘rewriting’ texts and the ‘positionality’ of the writer and translator are central for translators.<sup>16</sup> The text has been considered as a texture to be composed, re-woven and re-ordered. If Jonathan Culler talked about ‘reading as a woman’<sup>17</sup> and other feminist scholars have widely discussed about women readers,

<sup>13</sup> L. Chamberlain, “Gender and the Metaphors of Translation”. In L. Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader*, Routledge, New York, 2004, pp. 306-21.

<sup>14</sup> E. Federici, “Metaphors in Dialogue: Feminist Literary Critics, Translators and Writers”, *MonTi Monografias de Traducción e Interpretación*, 2011, 3, 355-376.

<sup>15</sup> E. Showalter, “Towards a Feminist Poetics” In *Women’s Writing and Writing about Women*, ed. M. Jacobus, London, Croom Helm, pp. 22-41.

<sup>16</sup> J. Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978; N. Miller, *Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writing*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988; S. Stanford Friedman, “Beyond Gynocriticism and Gynesis: the Geographics of Identity and the Future of Feminist Criticism”, *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, vol. 15, n. 1, 1996, pp. 13-40; G.C. Spivak, “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism”, *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 12, n. 1, 1985, pp. 243-61; G. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La frontera: The New Mestiza*, San Francisco, Aunt Lute Book Company, 1987; E.V. Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problem of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*, London, the Women’s Press, 1988; Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1989; T. De Lauretis, “Eccentric Subjects: Feminist theory and Historical Consciousness”, *Feminist Studies* vol. 16, n. 1, 1990, pp. 115-150.

<sup>17</sup> J. Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982.

translators have emphasized how in the act of reading and interpreting a text the discursive texture is amplified in the passage from one language into another. After all, the translator is the ideal ‘reader’, the ‘lector in fabula’ so long idealized by Umberto Eco (1979) in his search for a complicity between authors, texts and readers.<sup>18</sup> The translator is the perfect reader able to grasp all the author’s hints and to follow the intertextual references, wordplay and ‘unsaid’ words.

The feminist translator makes evident her role as an interpreter of texts and explains her translation choices and strategies. Her work has been seen as a “language war” because she disrupts the linearity of conventional discourse and grammar, stripping words of their meaning. The feminist translator has become a “word warrior” because language matters and supports ideologies.<sup>19</sup> The manipulation of language has been strictly correlated to one of the main issues in translation, that is, ‘fidelity’ to the original text. In their interpretation and rewriting of the ST feminist translators have transformed the issue of fidelity into faithfulness to the writing project and to the idea of a close correlation between writing and translation. This link between the writing act and translation has been widely analysed – not only from a feminist perspective - by Susan Bassnett and Peter Bush in the volume *The Translator as Writer*.<sup>20</sup> Within feminist translation studies already in 1989 a whole number of *Tessera* was dedicated to this issue.<sup>21</sup> Simon has considered translation a “fluid production of meaning similar to other kinds of writing”;<sup>22</sup> she has talked about a writing project in which both writer and translator participate. Feminist translators in fact, see themselves as co-writers and their signature in the text is very important, it is the sign of their difference, subjectivity and interpretative hermeneutic process. This question is strictly connected to the idea of visibility and agency of the translator. The translators’ intentionality and agency became more and more evident in the work of feminist translators. If translators have always known that a translation carries the voices of the original but also those of the translated text, feminist translators have demonstrated that translation can be considered as an heteroglossic, multivoiced practice. With their use of paratextual elements (prefaces, footnotes, glossaries) they have unveiled a dialogic relationship between ST and TT; they have claimed a new authority over source text. Talking about a ‘woman-identified approach’ Carol Maier affirms that “it is the responsibility of translators to reflect on their thinking in political terms, to reflect on their motives and on the effect their work might have on the reader”.<sup>23</sup> A woman identified translator declares responsibility for the text and the community it is destined for. This issue goes hand in hand with the concern of the translator’s awareness, that is to say, the recognition of the importance of the context in which the translator lives and the inherent historical, social and political implications. Translating as a feminist means

<sup>18</sup> U. Eco, *Lector in Fabula*, Milano, Bompiani, 1979.

<sup>19</sup> N. Lavigne, “Word Warrior – Feminist Translation in Canada, Casting Doubt on the Phallic Order of Things” in J. Santaemilia, *Género, lenguaje y traducción*, Universitat de Valencia, Valencia, 2003, pp. 393-405.

<sup>20</sup> S. Bassnett and P. Bush, eds., *The Translator as Writer*, London, Continuum, 2006.

<sup>21</sup> ‘La traduction au féminin/ Translating Women’, *Tessera* 6, 1989; see also B. Godard, “Collaboration in the Feminine: Writings on Women and Culture from *Tessera*”, Toronto, Second Story Press, 1994.

<sup>22</sup> S. Simon, *Gender in Translation*, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> C. Maier and F. Massadier Kenney, “Gender in/and Literary Translation”, *Translation Perspectives*, New York, State University New York, 1996.

working while keeping in mind differences among women, their diverse ‘positionality’ in terms of race, class, ethnic group, and social and cultural context, the so-called ‘situated knowledge’.

## 2. A European framework

But what happened in Europe regarding translation and gender? Were all these issues taken on and developed in a different way? Were feminist strategies such as prefacing, footnoting or hijacking adopted? Borrowing Gentzler’s notion of ‘macro and micro’ turns<sup>24</sup> in TS can we define a micro-turn of translation and gender in Europe? In 1995 von Flotow wrote an essay on feminist translation as “a European project” seen as a site of encounter, exchange, mutual transformation and envisioning translation as a generative practice.<sup>25</sup> Certainly a strong impulse to translation studies in Europe has been given by Susan Bassnett who first of all changed with the ‘Cultural Turn’ the perception of translation theory and practice outlining the importance of the position of the translator, the circumstances, the different audiences and gender and then visualized a translation turn in Cultural Studies. While creating our map we must remember that translation takes different shades according to the socio cultural transformations of each country. Contexts shape, influence, change or prohibit certain texts at certain times, so that, we should always keep in mind three important issues: identity (of the writer, translator and reader); positionality and historical dimension that make the difference in translation in relation to concrete habits, practices and discourses. It is now clear that we should take for granted that the location of translators is connected to social practices and that translation is mainly an intercultural exchange which necessitates a profound awareness of linguistic and cultural boundaries. Another important question is the gap between cultures and the consequent change in the reception of a translated text. As a matter of fact, some cultures are reluctant to accept change to such cultural politics and different cultural contexts limit or promote gender awareness in translation. Moreover, readers have distinctive cultural and social background and therefore a different competence both on the translated text and the practice of feminist translation. If we take a quick glance at the European context the main area where feminist TS voices have emerged is Spain, where the interest in women’s and gender studies is strong. In Catalonia issues of identity and language are central; the post-structuralist approach by Pilar Godayol well exemplifies her discussion on translation and on what she defines as “frontier spaces” based on the translator’s perception of her identity as hybrid and multicultural. Her work began with *Espais de frontera* 2000, and was followed by a massive amount of work on Catalan women writers and translators. Recently she has coordinated a project on this topic and organized in 2011 a conference on ‘Gender, development and textuality’ whose

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<sup>24</sup> E. Gentzler, “Macro and Micro-Turns in Translation Studies”, *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, vol. 6, n. 2, 2011, pp. 121-41.

<sup>25</sup> L. von Flotow, “Beginnings of a European Project: Feminisms and Translation Studies”, *TTR*, vol. 8, n.1, pp. 271-77.

aim was to achieve a better understanding of the contributions provided by fundamental texts that have given momentum to the revolution in interdisciplinary studies involving women and their development.<sup>26</sup>

Another region where feminist translation has been investigated is Galicia, again an area with a minority language. Among the various scholars discussing feminist translation into Galician, a young one, Olga Castro envisaged a ‘Third Wave’ feminist translation addressing discursive representations of women and men in the text. She outlined an interaction of gender and other variables – especially discourse analysis and opened the discussion to other textual typologies, not only literature, to cultural and media studies.<sup>27</sup> At the University of Salamanca Carmen Africa Vidal Claramonte has discussed in *El futuro de la traducción* the ethical limits of feminist translation and focused on issues of cultural identity and gender.<sup>28</sup> In her study she also refers to discourse analysis as a tool for a wider understanding of translation, perceiving as acts of translations also gender representations in media. Another research group in Spain is at the University of Valencia where José Santaemilia coordinates *Gentext* a project on “Gender, Language and Sexual (in)Equality”. Author of *Gender, Sex and Translation: The Manipulation of Identities* and many articles on feminist translation he has recently edited with von Flotow a monographic issue of the journal *MonTi* on “Woman and Translation: Geographies, Voices, Identities”, beginning to map a European landscape of translation and gender.<sup>29</sup> Another important research group is coordinated by Mercedes Bengoechea at the University of Alcalà working on a project entitled “Neuter, World-View and Sexed Translation: From Theory to Strategies” whose aim is to focus on more practical aspects of feminist translation strategies through the creation of glossaries, terminology databases and dictionaries.<sup>30</sup> The main issues addressed are: has the translator positioned herself or himself as a feminist? Does the translator address gender? Does it sustain, subvert or stimulate gender representations? Have their feminist translators turned to neologisms, new metaphors or word-play like in the ST, or have they contented themselves with ‘ordinary’ well-accepted forms of language? Have translators challenged dominant values in language? Have they deceived the ‘original’ meanings by subordinating form to contents? The corpus is made of translations of a feminist essay by a gender aware scholar published in a feminist collection or publisher; translations of a woman’s text which had been previously mis-translated and translations which has tackled sexist contents, gender misrepresentation or the inscription of female body and sexual difference in language. We

<sup>26</sup> P. Godayol, *Espais de frontera: Gènere i traducció*, Vic, Eumo Editorial, 2000; “Gènere i traducció en català. Bases arqueològiques per a un estat de la qüestió” / “Gender and translation in Catalan. Archaeological groundwork for assessing the state of affairs”, *MonTi. Monografías de Traducción e Interpretación* vol. 3, 2011, pp. 53-74.

<sup>27</sup> O. Castro, “(Re)examining Horizons in Feminist Translation Studies: Towards a Third Wave?”, *MonTi – Monographs on Translation and Interpreting* 1, 2009, pp. 59-86.

<sup>28</sup> A. Vidal Claramonte, *El futuro de la traducción*, Valencia, Institucion Alfonso el Magnanimo, 1998; *Translation/Power/Subversion* (co-edited with Román Álvarez), Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 1996.

<sup>29</sup> J. Santaemilia, ed., *Gender, Sex and Translation: the Manipulation of Identities*, Manchester: St Jerome, 2005.

<sup>30</sup> The research group is made by the University of Alcalà de Henares, the University of Ferrara and University of Calabria and is funded by the Spanish Ministry of Education (*Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación* (grant research FEM2009- 10976).



should also add that in Spain activity and publication of feminist translations seems to be more visible than in other European countries, therefore we can assume that the practice of feminist translation has been carried out or anyway discussed also by the media. To cite two opposite examples we can think about Milagros Rivera Garretas's famous translation of *Un cuarto propio* considered as an excellent example of feminist strategies put into practice and the refused publication of Maria Reimondez's translation into Galician of Mark Haddon's *The curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* by Rinoceronte publisher which did not agree with the changes from neuter to feminine or masculine, made by the translator.<sup>31</sup>

Notwithstanding the heritage of Italian feminism and the work of feminist scholars as translators in Italy the situation is quite different; first of all there is certainly a gap between theory and practice. It is very hard to find cases of declared feminist translators and one of the biggest difficulties is probably to establish clear principles which allow us to define a translation as 'feminist' taking into account acknowledged feminist strategies such as supplementing, prefacing, footnoting and hijacking. Since it is not possible to identify Italian translators as 'feminist', the attempt can be to classify their translation strategies as 'feminist' or 'non feminist' according to various questions:

- 1) Do they question grammatical gender?
- 2) Do they deal with neuter in translation?
- 3) Do they break away from an androcentric view inscribed in language?
- 4) Do they subvert gender constructs and representations?
- 5) Do they deal with gender issues and if so, how?
- 6) What is their position in the text? Is it acknowledged? Are they 'visible translators'?
- 7) Is it possible to retrace the translator's self-reflection process in the translated texts?

Translators can refer to gender issue in language and society and opt for linguistic choices that unveil patriarchal language and representations. They can follow some of these lines but decide they do not want to be defined as 'feminist', a term highly connotated. Another important step can be to analyze how their identity shapes the interpretation of the text: who are the translators? What about their linguistic/cultural/social identity, education, background and nationality? If we cannot claim Italian translators to be feminist maybe we can define them as 'gender aware' translators. In the last years conferences on translation and gender were organized at the University of Naples and at the University of Calabria continuing the archival work, discussing the strategies of translation

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<sup>31</sup> V. Woolf, *Un cuarto propio*, Madrid, horas y HORAS, 2003 translated by M. Milagros Rivera Garretas. For a discussion on this translation see J. Santaemilia, "Virginia Woolf's *Un cuarto propio*: Feminist Translation, from Practice to Theory" in O. Palusci, ed., *Traduttrici Female Voices across Languages*, Trento, Tangram, 2011, pp. 133-146. The book by Haddon has been published in Galician in 2008 with the translation of Moises Barcia, *O curioso incidente do can à media noite*, Rinoceronte Editora. An interesting article on the failure of publication of the feminist translation by Reimondez is V. Leonardi and A. Taronna, "Translators VS Translatresses's Strategies: Ethical and Ideological Challenges", in *MonTi* 3, 2011, pp. 377-402. For a discussion on the Italian translations of Virginia Woolf's *Una stanza tutta per sé* see E. Federici and V. Leonardi, "Using and Abusing Gender in Translation. The Case of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* Translated into Italian", *Quaderns Revista de Traducció*, vol. 19, 2012, pp. 183-98.

and the gap between theory and practice. The results of these debates can be found in various publications.<sup>32</sup> Archival work has been done by Mirella Agorni and Annarita Taronna while Vanessa Leonardi has tackled the issue of the translator's gender.<sup>33</sup> In the new journal *Translation*, the editor, Siri Neergaard has opened the discussion to issues of gender and Cultural Studies.

The Mediterranean areas are showing an increasing interest in translation and gender. For example, in Turkey Ergun Emek bridges across feminist translation and sociolinguistics and focuses on 'transnational feminist knowledge', that is to say, translation and language in use analysing gender in power structures as identity marker, resistance to sexist language, the use of masculine forms, feminization of the text and discursive visibility.<sup>34</sup> Some archival work has been done by Arzu Akbatur Turkish on women writers in English translation and an analysis of translation as a tool to understand the differences between Western feminisms and Turkish Feminism has been carried out by Aysenaz Kos.<sup>35</sup> Another interesting area for translation and gender is Poland, where scholars such as Ewa Kraskowska and Agnieszka Pantuchowicz have focused on feminist discourses in translation, the debate on translation and gender in Eastern Europe in the 90s (highly determined by ethnic, religious and social customs). Moreover, they have emphasized how the absence of critical theorizations of identity in translators' approaches to literary texts is reflected in the absence of linguistic practices that can adequately indicate a number of gender and identity related issues.<sup>36</sup> Some voices have emerged also about the Russian context such as for example, Sergej Tyulenev who discussed the ways in which translators participate in social processes and how they contribute to literary process and Wendy Rosslyn who outlined the importance of women in the 17th and 18th century.<sup>37</sup> In France the research group coordinated by Christine Raguét has

<sup>32</sup> O. Palusci, *Traduttrici. Questioni di gender nella letteratura in lingua inglese*, Napoli, Liguori, 2010; O. Palusci, ed., *Traduttrici Female Voices across Languages* Trento, tangram edizioni, 2011; O. Palusci, *Translating Virginia Woolf*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2012; E. Federici, ed. (in collaboration with M. Coppola, M. Cronin and R. Oggero), *Translating Gender*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2011; E. Federici, and V. Leonardi, eds., *Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice in Translation and Gender Studies*, Cambridge Scholar Publishing House, 2013 (forthcoming).

<sup>33</sup> M. Agorni, *Translating Italy for the Eighteenth Century. Women, Translation, and Travel Writing, 1739–1797*, Manchester, St. Jerome Publishing, 2002; A. Taronna, *Pratiche traduttive e gender studies*, Roma, Aracne, 2006; V. Leonardi, *Gender and Ideology in Translation: Do Women and Men Translate Differently? A Contrastive Analysis from Italian into English*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2007.

<sup>34</sup> E. Ergun, "Bridging Across Feminist Translation and Sociolinguistics", *Language and Linguistics Compass*, vol. 4, n.5, pp. 307-318.

<sup>35</sup> A. Akbatur, "Turkish Women Writers in English Translation", *MonTi* 3, 2011, pp. 161-180; A. Koş, "Analysis of the paratexts of Simone de Beauvoir's works in Turkish" in A. Pym and A. Perekrestenko, eds, *Translation Research Projects 1*, Tarragona, Intercultural Studies Group, 2008, pp. 59-68.

<sup>36</sup> E. Kraskowa, "Feminism Polish Style: Our Own Tradition or a Borrowed One?" (<http://womenswriting.fi/files/2008/10/kraskowska.pdf>); "On the Circulation of Feminist Discourse via Translation (V. Woolf, S. de Beauvoir, J. Butler)

([https://repozytorium.amu.edu.pl/jspui/bitstream/10593/786/1/Ewa%20Kraskowska\\_On%20the%20Circulation%20of%20feminist%20Discourse.pdf](https://repozytorium.amu.edu.pl/jspui/bitstream/10593/786/1/Ewa%20Kraskowska_On%20the%20Circulation%20of%20feminist%20Discourse.pdf)); E. Kraskowska, "Gender Discourse in Slavic Literature, Literary Criticism and Theory at the Turn of the 21st Century", *Neohelicon*, 2006, vol. 33, n.2, pp. 119-128; A. Pantuchowicz, "Przekładanie feminizmu czyli o mówieniu 'tak' [Translating Feminism, or on Saying 'Yes']", in P. Fast, (ed) Katowice: "Śląsk" Wydawnictwo Naukowe: *Przekład artystyczny a współczesne teorie translatologiczne*, 1998, pp. 177-185.

<sup>37</sup> S. Tulyenev, "Women-Translators in Russia," in *MonTi*, "Woman and Translation: Geographies, Voices and Identities," J. Santaemilia & L. von Flotow (eds.), 2011, no. 3, pp. 75-105.; W. Rosslyn, *Feats of Agreeable Usefulness: Translations by Russian Women 1763-1825* Verlag F. K. Göpfert, 2000; W. Rosslyn, *Women and Gender in 18th Century Russia*, Burlington, Ashgate. 2003.

focused on the linguistic aspects of translation and gender and Pascal Sardin has also published about translation and gender issues.<sup>38</sup> In Austria the seminal work by Michaela Wolf has been central in a re-discussion of these themes.<sup>39</sup> In England Valerie Henitiuk has considered translation and gender together with issues about globalization and Marcella de Marco has dealt with gender stereotypes in audiovisual translation.<sup>40</sup>

However, in any mapping of translation and gender in Europe we should always bear in mind that today the ethics of translation involves being aware of the risks deriving from speaking for others, erasing a Euro-centric notion of translation and above all, understanding the geo-socio-political context in which the original texts are produced. Bella Brodski affirms that “translation is now understood to be a politics as well as a poetics, an ethics as well as an aesthetics”.<sup>41</sup> Voices of translation and gender have come from various geographical areas outside Europe problematising gender as one element of identity and experience; to cite a few examples, Kim Wallmach in South Africa tackled the issue of feminist translations as ‘different or derived?’, discussing the issue of creativity and visibility,<sup>42</sup> Rosemary Arroyo in Brazil - a cradle for TS- strongly criticized Canadian feminist translation,<sup>43</sup> and Isabel Garayta in Puerto Rico discussed feminist strategies in translation.<sup>44</sup> A very interesting area to look at is also the Middle East where gender and translation are analysed in the Arab context; just to cite two examples, Sonia Mehrez in Egypt highlighted the importance to elaborate and disseminate translations of gender thus enabling agency and Kamal Hala’s work as coordinator of the translation project at Women and memory forum in Cairo is enlightening. Analysing the *Encyclopedia of women and Islamic cultures into Arabic* originally published in English, she carries on a project which is very important for knowledge production in the field of women’s studies in Islamic cultures.<sup>45</sup> New approaches are coming also from the Far East, not only for gender issues in translation if we think about Wang Ning’s important work in the reformulation of translation theoretical and practical questions, with Martha Cheung’s work on the history of translation.<sup>46</sup> Zhongly Yu has analysed the translation of Feminist works (for example De

<sup>38</sup> P. Sardin, ed., “Traduire le genre: femmes en traduction”, *Palimpsestes*, 22, 2009.

<sup>39</sup> M. Wolf, “The Creation of A ‘Room of One’s Own’: Feminist Translators as Mediators Between Cultures and Genders” in J. Santaemilia, *Gender. Sex and Translation: the Manipulation of Identities*, Manchester, St Jerome, 2003, pp. 15-25.

<sup>40</sup> V. Henitiuk, “Translating Woman: Reading the Female through the male”, *Meta*, vol. 44, n. 3, pp. 469-484; De Marco M., *Audiovisual Translation through a Gender Lens*, Rodopi, Amsterdam/New York, 2012.

<sup>41</sup> B. Brodski, *Can These Bones Live? Translation, Survival and Cultural Memory*, Stranford, Stanford University Press, 2007, p. 12.

<sup>42</sup> K. Wallmach, “Feminist Translation Strategies: Different or Derived?”, *JLS/TLW*, 22: 1-2 (2006), pp. 1-26.

<sup>43</sup> R. Arroyo, “Fidelity and the Gendered Translation”, *TTR*, 7: 2 (1994), pp. 147-64.

<sup>44</sup> I. Garayta, “Womanhandling the text: feminism, rewriting and translation” PHD Thesis at Austin Texas 1998.

<sup>45</sup> S. Mehrez, “Translating Gender”, *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies*, vol. 3, n. 1, 2007, pp. 106-127; H. Kamal, “Translating Women and Gender: the Experience of Translating the Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures into Arabic”, *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, 2008, vol. 36, n. ¾, pp. 284-268. See also B. Karoubi, “Gender and Translation”, (<http://www.translationdirectory.com/article528.htm>) and E. Golavar, “The Effects of Translator’s Gender on Translation Evaluation”, *Translation Journal*, vol. 13, n. 2, 2009 (online).

<sup>46</sup> N. Wang, ed., “Translation Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches”, special issue of *Perspectives Studies in translatology*, 2010, vol. 11, n. 1; N. Wang and S. Yifeng, *Translation, Globalisation and Localisation: a Chinese Perspective*, Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 2008; M. Cheung, “From ‘Theory’ to ‘Discourse’: The Making of a

Beauvoir's *Second Sex*) in China,<sup>47</sup> while Theresa Hyun has done some archival work on Korean writers in the colonial period,<sup>48</sup> and Xuefei Bai's reflection on the myth of Europe.<sup>49</sup>

### 3. Conclusions

The necessity of opening up to a non-European approach in translation and gender studies is evident, interest in translation today involves a reflection on the changing world situation and the movement of people from one continent to another. In a situation of constant migrations and diaspora, the bounded categories of location and space, national identity, national language, literary canon and gender must be reassessed. Interest in translation also involves a reflection on globalisation and the use of global English. The urge to rethink Western translation and literary theories is the result of the interweaving of postcolonial theories with Cultural Studies and Gender Studies that have opened a fruitful debate on the deconstruction of dichotomical thought and the issue of representation. Moreover, the findings in Deconstruction and Post-Structuralism have yielded new insights into translation issues. A recent publication by Christopher Larkosh can help us to see how the term 'trans' is nowadays a clear sign of a different approach to translation: "How is translation, as a gendered performative act, inextricably configured within a constellation of other 'trans' terms such as transnationality, transculturation, transgender? How do these terms challenge the very notions of fixed source and target languages and cultures as much as they complicate understanding of intersubjectivity?"<sup>50</sup> After the 'post' says Larkosh here comes the trans and it opens a new perspective on literary, cultural studies and translation in Europe and beyond.

Our mapping of a European translation and gender map is an important step in order to recognize the state of art in the various contexts and the possible routes to acknowledge the many issues that have come out in the literary, cultural and translation theoretical debates in the last decades and which have intersected with gender. Interdisciplinarity and a wider perspective on translation theories, practices and the translator's role are requisites for a mapping of the rich and challenging European tapestry on gender and translation.

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Translation Anthology", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, vol. 66, n. 3, 2003, pp. 390-401.

<sup>47</sup> Y. Zhongli, "Gender in Translating Lesbianism in *The Second Sex*", *MonTi* 3, 2011, pp. 421-446.

<sup>48</sup> T. Hyun, *Writing Women in Korea*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2003.

<sup>49</sup> X. Bai, "Woman and Translation: Beyond the Myth of Europa" in O. Azadibougar, ed, *Translation Effects, Selected Papers of the CETRA Research Seminar in Translation Studies 2009*, (<http://www.kuleuven.be/cetra/papers/papers.html>).

<sup>50</sup> C. Larkosh, ed., *Re-Engendering Translation Transcultural Practice, Gender/Sexuality and the Politics of Alterity*, Manchester, St Jerome Publishing, 2011.