

## **New Perspectives on Gender and Translation: New Voices for Transnational Dialogue**

FEDERICI, E., & SANTAEMILIA JOSÉ (eds.). 2022. *New Perspectives on Gender and Translation: New Voices for Transnational Dialogues*. New York & London: Routledge.

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“*New Perspectives on Gender and Translation, New Voices for Transnational Dialogues*,” an edited work by Eleonora Federici and José Santaemilia, enhances the body of study on the confluence of gender and translation by highlighting perspectives from several European nations, tracing the field’s evolution from its inception with the rise of feminist translation in Quebec thirty years ago. The book examines the growth of the field in evolving translation practises and research across a variety of European countries, with a focus on overlooked regions such as Malta, Serbia, and Poland. The various chapters examine key developments such as the critical reframing of gender and identity, the viewing of historical translation activity by women through the lens of ideological and political motivations, and the analysis of socio-political contexts in which feminist or gender-inspired translation has had an impact on translators’ practises. The volume examines both the European and non-European contexts concurrently, highlighting new voices in translation and gender studies in the region while also stimulating international debates on critical topics in the field and pushing it in new directions. The articles are intended for academics, particularly those interested in translation studies, gender studies, and European literature.

In the very first chapter “*Gender and Translation in/from Europe: Reviewing the Translation and Feminism Interface*”, José Santaemilia tries to explore the importance of translation in feminist and sexual studies. These two form the term “transdisciplines,” (Flotow & Scott 2016) which are

complementary to each other. Nonetheless, the gender/sexuality and translation field are currently growing, guided by projects and perspectives that are primarily European or Anglo-American. She is of the view that the more heterogeneous feminism and translation become, the more complicated their theorisations become, and the more they may influence and promote a more self-reflective practice. These sometimes contentious and varied classifications of feminist translation methodologies are valuable contributions to the ongoing reflection on translation and the significance of feminism for translation. This essay presents a study of the shared goals of feminism and translation and demonstrates the existence of an asymmetrical interface while simultaneously fostering a closer relationship between the two. The purpose of this work is to initiate an examination of the complex, yet constructive and vital relationship between feminism and translation. She explains that in the field of translation studies, for example, it is important to note the various naming practices in use (feminist translation, gender and translation, and women and translation) (Santaemilia 2017) which may indicate (more or less unstated) slightly divergent ideological projects, gender and translation being the most prevalent terms today, with feminism sometimes not even mentioned. This fact raises a number of problems, including whether the three naming practices correspond to the same objective. The chapter raises some relevant questions in this area about translators addressing identical issues, gender and feminist principles, and the devotion of so-called gender and translation scholars.

In the second chapter “*Three Generations of British Women Translators Sarah Austin’s Legacy in the Long Nineteenth Century*”, Claudia Capancioni examines the intellectual pursuits of Sarah Austin a British woman author who, in the nineteenth century, achieved European recognition as an outstanding English translator whose work was both well-

received and popular. By translating into English philosophical, historical, and literary texts originally written in French, German, and Italian, she facilitated intellectual exchanges, discussions, and collaborations. She passed down to her daughter, Lucie Duff Gordon, and granddaughter, Janet Ross, an intellectually active role for the translator that anticipated that of a cultural mediator (Janet 1893). In the long nineteenth century, they too developed successful literary careers by mediating the history, literature, and political and philosophical debates of other European countries, in which they had spent time, for the British audience. The author stresses that translation was a valued form of writing for these three generations of women authors because it afforded them authority, authorship, and financial independence. For Austin, her daughter Duff Gordon, and her granddaughter Ross, translation enabled literary careers, financial independence, and intellectual autonomy for all. Through a multigenerational lens, this chapter affirms their role as catalysts of international intellectual networks and mediators of new scholarly developments and philosophical debates. It firmly situates them within the European intellectual scene of the nineteenth century as cultural mediators who facilitated the circulation of German, French, and Italian scholarship, comparative platforms, and broader debates on education, social and gender equality, democracy, and the modern nation. As nineteenth-century translators, they use strategies for power and visibility that Simon, Flotow, and Godard have found in feminist translators.

The third chapter, “*Multilingualism and Women Translators in the Mediterranean Island of Malta*” by *Clare Vassallo*, provides a historical overview of the presence and absence of translation in Malta’s multilingual environment, with a focus on the visibility of women translators and writers, given their relative absence until the late 20th century. In post-WWII Malta, when Maltese had become an official national language for the first time in the island’s history, the role of translation

and of women in translation began to change, and it eventually vanished when Malta joined the EU in 2004 and the University of Malta launched a postgraduate course in Translation and Interpreting Studies with the aim of training translators and interpreters for jobs in the EU. The European Union, according to the author, is the most visible contemporary example of a successful multilingual political and administrative structure that prioritised translation and multilingualism. It was decided to adopt Umberto Eco's insight and make translation, in his words, "the language of Europe" rather than choosing one language among many to dominate and assume prestige over all other member languages. Since joining the EU, Malta has fully embraced the power of translation. This has made the national language stronger than expected, while other languages, like English, have kept their importance.

Ewa Rajewska in the fourth chapter, "*Polish Women Translators in the Twentieth Century*", examines the history of the empowerment of women literary translators and the professionalisation of their work during the twentieth century, identifying three distinct periods. From the turn of the twentieth century to the outbreak of World War II, non-professionals worked on translations of children's literature and popular novels, primarily in French, English, and Russian, although English was beginning to gain popularity. Polish women's regaining of independence after World War I, granting them the right to vote in 1918, and their broad entry into the public sphere led to a mass appearance of women in literature, although literary translation was frequently the only form of their writing (Zawiszewska 2014). The second period, which followed World War II, was marked by a radical shift: in Poland, a communist country close to the West but still separated by the Iron Curtain, carefully chosen classic works of world literature were being translated within the parameters of national publishing policy. Prestigious translation series

published by newly established, powerful state-owned publishing houses were frequently designed, edited, and translated by women who were highly educated and fluent in multiple languages prior to World War II and who were now editors and literary translators for a living. Access to the profession was restricted, and the subsidies were a clear form of control. In addition, for many women poets of the time, literary translation became a complementary activity to their original work. The third period commenced in 1989 with the political transformation and the May 12, 1990, abolition of censorship. However, a new phenomenon has emerged: academic literary translators who combine theory and practice by lecturing on translation studies and translating literary and scientific texts successfully.

In the fifth chapter "*There Is Only One Way in Serbia the Reception of Gender Equality in Serbian Translation*", Sonja Duric focuses on the reception of a Serbian translation of gender equality and gender stereotypes, which was harshly criticised in the Serbian tabloid media and social media, as an example of a misunderstanding of the terms sex, gender, and sexuality. The excerpts have been taken from the translation out of context. Certain tabloid journalists referred to the handbook as "a manual for raising homosexuals," alarming the Serbian public (Dekic 2016). The work finds that translation was at the centre of media attention for several months, and it remains a recurring and contentious issue. According to the author, a systematic and organised translation could promote tolerance and understanding in Serbia. The media hunt highlights the need to introduce gender issues in Serbia through original works and translations. This work also presents and analyses the media coverage (print, online, social media, and audio-visual media) following the publication of the Serbian translation of giving Your Child 100 Possibilities instead of 22 in order to demonstrate how the concepts of sex,

gender, and sexuality are conflated in the media. The chapter also talks about how important it is to translate feminist topics into Serbian so that people can learn more about gender equality.

In chapter sixth “*Reclaiming Ancestry/Resisting Amnesia Finding the “Other” Half in Portuguese-American Women Writers,*” Maria Amélia Ribeiro de Carvalho primarily examines the reconstruction of the hyphenated identities of second-and third-generation North American writers through the recuperation and preservation of memories of a “recollected” nation. She considered Katherine Vaz and Paula Neves, two Portuguese-American women writers. Despite the fact that both authors are descendants of Portuguese immigrants, they belong to different generations and write in different literary genres, as their age difference is approximately 30 years. She discussed the concept of Portuguese-American identity as a collage of crystallised ancestral memories, the palimpsestic memory of the intergenerational heritage of Portuguese-Americans. There is also an examination of works such as *Fado & Other Stories* by Vaz and *Capricornucopia* by Neves. Katherine Vaz is the most renowned Portuguese-American female author and the first to receive recognition from the most prestigious North American publishing houses. Vaz is one of the first Portuguese-American authors to address (in English) the identity issues of the descendants of the first generations of immigrants to the United States. Her most celebrated works include *Saudade*, *Fado & Other Stories*, and *Mariana*. Paula Neves is a Portuguese-American author, mixed-media artist, and educator from Newark’s Ironbound neighbourhood. She intended to demonstrate that the preservation of untranslatable and untranslated words through storytelling is evident in the language of immigrant descendants through heterolingualism, where they function as nation-words or aides-mémoires

(Meylaerts 2006). Also, they are a good way to fight against forgetting and the inevitable loss of collective cultural memory that comes with time and distance, as well as the host country's inevitable assimilation.

Pilar Godayol in the seventh chapter "*The Personal Is Political, Radical Feminism and Translation in the Post-Franco Era*" seeks to illuminate and vindicate the memory of women in the history of translation, as well as the memory of translation in the history of women, on the basis of a feminist historiographic approach to translation that seeks to contextualise the factors that favour, determine, censor, or veto the production and circulation of the works and translations written by women. In short, it proposes to study the interaction of two subaltern histories during the democratic transition in Spain, those of women and translation, which have been largely ignored by patriarchal discourses of history, by focusing on the reception and censorship in the context of Catalonia of three North American radical symbolic mothers of the 1970s, who are again a fresh inspiration for the renewed radical spirit of present-day feminisms that are battling agape.

In the eighth chapter, "*Feminisms across the Ocean: Translating Theories and Practices*," Eleonora Federici discusses how feminist texts have traversed national borders since the 1970s and whether these translations have had a political impact on the receiving country. She analyses the intellectual exchange between North America and Italy by analysing the translation of feminist texts. Translation has played a crucial role in expanding the global reception of feminist theories and in facilitating the development of feminist knowledge that transcends national boundaries. But what is more significant is that local feminisms, feminist theories, and practices born in one context have been re-contextualized, re-shaped, and acquired new nuances in other contexts. What therefore transpired between North American

and Italian feminists? The ways of their conversing. The expected outcomes of these conversations and exchanges. The corpus consists of American feminist texts translated into Italian, as well as Italian feminist texts translated for the North American context. It is stated that a new wave of feminist theories and practises is on the rise, and an international discourse is taking place concerning various feminist issues (Dongchao 2017; Rattanakantadilok 2017). The objective of the dual perspective is to demonstrate how feminist ideas, thoughts, and practices have been exchanged and have brought vitality not only to academic or intellectual circles but also to society.

In chapter ninth, *(Un)Successful Feminisms? Mapping Chick Lit Fiction in Europe*, Vanessa Leonardi tries to outline some potential avenues that could be pursued by other researchers and academics in an effort to devote ever-increasing academic attention and research to this overwhelming phenomenon. Chick lit has the merit of revealing how young women are and behave in their respective contemporary societies, and it should be considered a valuable cultural, socioeconomic, political, and ideological tool for evaluating gender issues and women's roles globally.

In the last chapter titled *“Marie Darrieussecq, Translator: Or How to Write French from a Female Body”*, Pascale Sardin discusses Marie Darrieussecq and her works. She also frequently questions the difficulty of writing in French while being a woman, that is, writing in French from a female body. According to Darrieussecq, translating is a meditative activity that provides relief from the internal violence of writing. Therefore, these two activities are quite close: “Translation is still writing, but at a distance from oneself,” she adds Her analysis has led her to believe that a small amount of money and a space are required to be creative. The author also finds Woolf's essay differs from the traditionally masculine one,



which is frequently written in a more dogmatic tone, by asserting that no conclusion will ever be reached on the issue, by employing the metaphor of the stream to suggest an active but elusive thought, and by establishing a complicity relationship with her audience. In her translation, which was published prior to the release of this report, Darrieussecq uses the feminine pronoun whenever she deems it necessary (2009). These translations, in which she endeavours to make the feminine gender visible, respond to and are embedded in a specific sociocultural context. Thus, the translated text is a suitable environment for experimentation and innovation. This transgressive instrument allowed her to progress toward a language that she desires to be distinct, either a feminine form of French or, alternatively, a neutral form of French, one would require a language that can be spoken in the feminine. Or genderless, but genderless for all genders.

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