

## The Gender and Queer Politics of Translation: New Approaches

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In recent years, we have come to understand translation as exceeding the exact reproduction of a text from one language into another and as intimately intertwined with new forms of textual and cultural production. Arguing against models of translation as pure fidelity to an original text, Walter Benjamin asserts in “The Task of the Translator” that translation is at best a contingent and provisional way of coming to terms with the foreignness of languages, given that even the most painstaking fidelity in the translation of individual words can never reproduce fully the meaning they have in the original text.<sup>1</sup> Far from merely transmitting subject matter or content, a translation addresses the mode of signification of the source text by touching, perhaps caressing, to add a slightly queer touch, “the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux.”<sup>2</sup> Here Benjamin is asking us to allow the source text to touch and affect in new ways our own language, or the language into which we are translating, and to inhabit difference by and through language. This textual caress incites translation as an act of *recreation*, which produces in the target language an *echo*, not a mere copy, of the original, hinting at the utter impossibility of equivalent correspondence between the source and translated text. As Benjamin writes, the translator’s task lies in “aiming at that single spot where the echo is able to give, in its own language, the *reverberation* of the [original] work in the alien one.”<sup>3</sup> These echoes and their reverberations, and the multiple potentialities of translations and/as counter-translations as they intersect with the social, historical, and cultural conditions that produce them, remain at the heart of contemporary translation studies, of what Gayatri Spivak has referred to as the translator’s task of tracing

“the very moves of languaging.”<sup>4</sup> This complicates and transforms the original text, and creates new conditions of its reception in the target language, while simultaneously queering the target language and culture by both displacing and broadening its semiotic circuits and intertextual modes of signification.

The actual contingency of translation in terms of its varying and shifting relation to the source text beyond semantic equivalence and transparent communication, which Benjamin challenged, and the ability of the translated text to continue to accrue, as Laurence Venuti explains, meanings and values that may differ from those invested in the source text,<sup>5</sup> not only exposes translation as a socially mediated and ideologically constructed practice, but as one that is potentially dissident and resistant to unimpeded correspondence between languages. Catherine Porter, in the introduction to the published versions of papers presented at the Presidential Forum on translation studies she organised at the Modern Language Association in 2009, reminds us that translation is a multi-dimensional site of cross-lingual correspondence on which diverse social tasks are simultaneously performed.<sup>6</sup> This relational focus, what Emily Apter describes as “the places where languages touch,”<sup>7</sup> indeed an echo of Benjamin, is not reducible to maintaining a hierarchical opposition between original and translated text, nor does it assume that languages are self-contained within, or limited to, discrete national borders. Translation not only crosses linguistic and national borders, but, as Apter argues, also reveals their limits by giving us glimpses of languages touching in zones of non-national belonging perhaps at the very edge of mutual unintelligibility;<sup>8</sup> indeed, at the spaces in between and beyond discrete linguistic and national borders. As I have argued elsewhere, the work of translation crosses social categories as well, producing new, hybrid forms of meaning and new knowledge through these very encounters, even calling into question the very borders themselves, linguistic or otherwise, at the point at which they are crossed.<sup>9</sup> Writing at the nexus of language, culture, politics, and translation, and speaking of

hybridity as an effect of all translation work, Alfonso de Toro indicates that he prefers the term *translation* over the more commonly used term in French *traduction*, since the latter, he argues, is linked in a rather limited way to the linguistic and semantic domains of working across languages but are part of the broader term *translation*, where various cultural systems, in addition to language, intersect, converge, and transform. De Toro writes:

Par le terme de « translation », on peut entendre un processus culturel très complexe: un processus médial, social et pragmasémiotique dans les domaines de l'anthropologie, de l'ethnologie, de la philosophie, de l'histoire, des médias, de la gestualité, du corps et de divers systèmes discursifs. . . . La stratégie de la translation met en évidence la « recodification », la « transformation », la « réinvention » et « l'invention » de l'énonciation véhiculant divers systèmes culturels (langue, religion, mœurs, savoir, organisation sociale, nature, etc). De cet acte naissent de nouveaux systèmes culturels qui se concrétisent dans un processus sémiotique de codification, de décodification et de recodification, de déterritorialisation et reterritorialisation, de production et de mise en scène avec de nouvelles fonctions.<sup>10</sup>

Because language is a social invention and ideologically layered, working across languages through translation will always already produce an array of new codifications, textualities, and cultural meanings, as well as deterritorialisations and reterritorialisations of discursive and cultural spaces, rather than simply repeating what is thought to be *given* in the original text in another linguistic code. Indeed, Derridean theories of meaning indicate strongly that language itself works by a process of translatability, whereby one signifier continually replaces, and simultaneously displaces, another through an endless play of signification in the

absence or deferral of a final meaning. In translation work, this suggests a sort of epistemological pause, or an attempt, according to Apter, citing the late critic Barbara Johnson, to allow contradictory meanings to emerge and come into play, so that one learns to pay more attention to that which gets lost in translation and to activate translation as a way of doing theory rather than as performing a mere philological exercise.<sup>11</sup> But attention to that which gets lost in translation, to that which cannot be contained within the new textual space that is the translated text, is not superfluous residue to be discarded, but is a site of supplementarity and difference, that is, a space of indeterminacy that also points to the possibilities of translation as a *queer* praxis.

Attending to translation as a site of knowledge production, to sites of heterogeneity and non-reciprocity between source and target languages, and to the possibilities for difference, raises questions beyond the practice of translation as facilitating communication across languages, shedding light instead on the extent to which translation operates as a highly dissident and politically transgressive act. As Laurence Venuti reminds us, translation is not exempt from its configuration within power relations between dominance and marginality. Should translation, he asks, serve to domesticate the linguistic and cultural difference of the so-called foreign text by making these forms of otherness intelligible in the target language, thereby domesticating them; or, to what extent should the translator resist an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to the values of the target language culture by putting deliberate pressure on those values through inscribing linguistic and cultural difference in the very act of translation itself?<sup>12</sup> Venuti acknowledges that a resistance to the domestication of the foreign text should not essentialise the foreign, but that its value is always strategic depending on the cultural formation into which a text is translated. In this way, he argues, translation, as an inscription of alterity, rather than of homogeneity, can enable the disruption of target language cultural values that reinscribe ethnocentrism, racism,

cultural narcissism, and neo-imperialism (not to mention misogyny and homophobia), and through this process of textual dissidence serve the interests of more democratic geopolitical relations.<sup>13</sup> By attempting to inhabit the otherness of the source text when we work across languages and cultures, by bringing to light the slippages of signification that cannot be accommodated in accordance with the predominant cultural values of the target language, translation becomes a transgressive practice that disrupts and challenges, producing new, unassimilable circuits of linguistic and cultural difference. Speaking to this directly, Gayatri Spivak urges us “to supplement the uniformization necessary for globality” by resisting translation as a tool of globalisation that reduces all linguistic performance to equivalence and by thinking of ourselves, as translators, as the custodians of the world’s wealth of languages rather than as “impresarios of a multicultural circus in English.”<sup>14</sup> Here translation becomes a site of social activism against the capitalistic conveniences of monolingualism, especially with respect to English, which demand the homogenisation of linguistic differences in a globalised world. If we understand translation as a transcultural and mediating practice, it seems important to pay attention to the multiple strategies available for moving a text from one language and culture to another while being careful not to lose sight of the ideological inflections and cadences that are imbricated within a textual and cultural practice like translation and operate in the very spaces where disparate languages and cultures intersect and collide.

With these issues in mind, this special issue extends contemporary debates in translation studies by exploring the gender and queer politics of translation across multiple languages and cultural contexts from the early modern period to the present day, and by engaging the very queerness of translation work in the various forms of relationality and difference between source and target language and culture. The essays contained herein will

also be asking some of the following questions: How do we work with translating terms for naming genders and sexualities in comparing texts and cultures of the past which may not be translatable to modern understandings of gender or to contemporary understandings of gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer difference? How might we work with the specificity of queer which has its origins in western Anglophonic cultures, when translating texts from non-Anglophonic and non-western contexts? How has translation functioned as a site of social change when dissident forms of sexuality in certain source texts, considered to be foreign to a particular target culture, become part of, and challenge, that culture's official discourses through the dialogical processes of interlingual transfer and cultural exchange? What new translation issues arise when we work within postcolonial cultures, for example, where terms for same-sex sexual desires may not be inscribed discursively in indigenous languages, or, if they are, may have emerged under a different set of material, ideological, and cultural conditions, such as colonial history and the effects of transnational migration and diaspora? How do race and class differences impede the straightforward translation of gender and desire? This implies, in many cases, careful, nuanced attention to the gaps and transgressions that emerge in translating gender and sexual difference(s) when working comparatively across various languages, cultures, and temporalities. At the same time, the articles in this issue are not only concerned with gender and sexuality alone as axes of investigation in translation studies, but ask, or in various ways imply, how translation studies may be broadened through the pressures of queer theoretical orientations, while problematizing the still existent monolingualism, and largely Anglophonic biases, of contemporary academic queer studies, thereby opening up new spaces of dissidence in both disciplines.

Certainly, analyses of gender and sexual difference(s) in translation work will provoke new sites of knowledge production, as well as stimulate significant shifts in social identities and categories, as the articles in this issue demonstrate, while focusing attention on

the complex and nuanced ways in which gender and sexuality are inscribed in different languages—a problem which often becomes elided or unapparent when one works in and through only a single language. But if translation exceeds the functionality of facilitating communication across languages when it is reduced to a rather limited focus on relaying what is thought to be *signified* conceptually, it is important to examine the very queerness of translation work itself—its eccentric rather than its centred nature—evident in the play of the *signifier* in order to debunk the myth of precise correspondence between languages and to expose dissimilarities and differences between cultures. In queering the notion of translation as fidelity to the source text—Philip Lewis terms this “abusive fidelity”—translation attempts to link “the polyvalences or plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own.”<sup>15</sup> Translation, then, becomes a site of struggle in the negotiation and production of meaning not simply embodied in, or reducible to, the original text by calling into question the very gendered relation between the sovereign original text and the more feminised, more peripheral translated text and to the impossibilities of translation as pure fidelity. Speaking of translation as operating between multiple languages in the Maghreb, Abdelkébir Khatibi, in his book *Maghreb pluriel*, asks us to focus on what cannot be translated directly, that is, on what is deferred, what is absent, what is *untranslatable*. He writes: « la langue étrangère *transforme* la langue première et la déporte vers l’intraduisible . . . la traduction opère selon cette intraitabilité, cette distanciation sans cesse reculée et disruptive ».<sup>16</sup> [The foreign language *transforms* the original language and moves it toward the untranslatable . . . translation operates according to this untranslatability, this gap [between languages] always being a setback and disruptive.] In this regard, the translated text no longer forms a dependency on the original text, but actually transforms it, subverting radically the binary between the original and copy. This not only once again evokes Benjamin, but takes him further, calling attention to the *performativity* of translation in much

the same way as Judith Butler has written about the performativity of gender, given that gender performativity, as “the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame,”<sup>17</sup> is similarly an embodied *translation* of social and cultural norms, never a mere copy of normative, hegemonic gender assumed to be originary, and never reducible to the (textual) body alone. Coming back to the ever-present persistence and proliferation of *l'intraduisible*, Gayatri Spivak argues, in citing Barbara Cassin, that our obligation to translate should be determined by the idea of the untranslatable as not merely something that one is unable to translate, “but something one never stops (not) translating.”<sup>18</sup> I would surmise that attention to this disruptive, subversive space of indeterminacy between source and target languages, the space of *l'intraduisible*, is a queer space, one that challenges any normative idea of straightforward, untroubled translatability. It is precisely this point that operates as the impetus for this special issue of *Comparative Literature Studies*.

The premise for this issue developed out of a seminar at the American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA) in Vancouver in 2011, sponsored by the International Comparative Literature Association’s Committee on Comparative Gender Studies, which I chair. While we only had four seminar papers, enough for a one-day seminar, most likely given the rather high degree of specialism necessary in both translation studies and comparative gender or comparative queer studies, we had a lively and engaged audience and an intense discussion and debate after the papers, which convinced me of the critical importance of taking this topic further. While only two of the original ACLA papers have been developed for inclusion, the special issue now consists of six articles by scholars working comparatively in a variety of historical periods, addressing the gender and queer politics of translation studies across such diverse language fields as Spanish, French, Russian, Italian, English, German, and Arabic, and working with a range of literary, historical,



theoretical, philosophical, visual, autobiographical, and popular texts from within postcolonial and diasporic locations in addition to, and sometimes alongside, those texts which have originated from the West. At the same time, the articles collected in this issue present new ways of thinking about the relationality between source and target texts and cultures, and their differences, within the context of translation, in addition to speaking to the queerness of translation and to its efficacy as a dissident practice.

Arguing for translation as an embodied act implies an examination of not only textual or linguistic distance between texts, but of corporeal difference. This issue begins with an evocative essay by Aarón Lacayo who uses Luce Irigaray's theory of sexual difference to posit the act of translation as an encounter with a (textual) body that is yet to come into existence, that is, "a body created—and that only exists—in the act of translation." Just as in an Irigarayan erotics, a space of uncertainty and unknowability, or an interval or gap, will always remain in bodily encounters, given that all bodies, even within the most proximate and intimate of encounters, will always remain foreign to one another, the act of translation, according to Lacayo, similarly performs the sexual encounter between physical bodies in approaching the textual encounter through respecting the distance between texts brought into close proximity and by preserving the difference marking one language from another. Lacayo's theory of translation as embodied difference, and his example through his own translation of one of American conceptual artist Gordon Matta-Clark's architecturally-inscribed art cards from English into Spanish, speaks to translation as a dissidently queer act I mentioned earlier to the extent that linguistic variation and cultural alterity are not subsumed or domesticated through the textual encounter that *is* translation, but are maintained and respected through resisting politically and ethically problematic metaphors of fidelity and transparency between the source and translated text.

At the same time, the gender politics of translation have important implications for thinking about the so-called generic use of the masculine forms of nouns and pronouns, and their sexist connotations, when translating temporally distant texts. Pierre Zoberman, in his essay “‘*Homme*’ peut-il vouloir dire ‘*femme*’? Gender and Translation in Seventeenth-Century French Moral Literature,” raises the extent to which moralist literature in *ancien régime* France included women in its discourse on man, and more specifically, whether such gendered nouns as *homme* or *les hommes* in these texts encompassed both genders. Zoberman questions the contemporary efficacy of correcting retroactively perceived gender imbalances in modern-day translations of early modern texts which potentially domesticate historical differences to present-day concerns. Reflecting on the politics of gender in the translation of Pascal’s *Pensées* into English, and on the ways in which translation exposes a politics of gender as a case in point, Zoberman asks the extent to which the translator should erase the mark of gender by using more inclusive terms instead of *man* or *men* to translate *homme(s)* in order to address or assuage the political concerns of contemporary readerships. Or, he asks, could the very act of gender exclusion in early modern texts be better exposed and analysed if the translator remains more or less faithful to the linguistic practices of the historical period in question by maintaining the ostensibly gender-neutral, original, lexically masculine phrasing? In other words, in this specific context, how far should translation be transgressive, and how can it best negotiate the boundaries of fidelity and dissidence in order to develop a knowledge of the gendered cultural underpinnings of a given historical text and cultural context?

While much work addressing the history of same-sex desire in literature in Russia has focused primarily on the twentieth century, Sergey Tyulenev investigates this history in the specific context of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Russia’s political programme to westernize through its new-found interest at the time in the absorption of a shared cultural

heritage with Europe that dates back to classical Antiquity. Tyulenev argues that a variety of translation strategies were activated in the translation of literary works into Russian with distinct sexual components ranging from the neutralisation or domestication of unconventional sexualities, such as lesbian desire, to a more faithful rendering which challenged official discourses and dominant cultural values, thus demonstrating the ways in which translation operated as a powerful mechanism of social change in the history of the secularization of Russia. Tyulenev does not limit his understanding of translation only to strict interlingual transfer, but includes other forms of textual transfer including adaptations and imitation, but his more interesting example lies in the history of the translation of Sappho's Second Ode during this period as part of Russia's absorption of the canon of ancient classical literature. His essay demonstrates how the history of the translation of the Second Ode into Russian (from Boileau's French translation of Longinus from the original Ancient Greek) ranged from such strategies as shifting the gender of the female narrator of the poem (who notices a male talking with another female, the latter of whom is usually considered the object of the female narrator's desire) to a male narrator; to eliminating gendered adjectives describing the narrator as female, thus confusing the gender of the narrator and that of the object of desire; to having the female narrator simply suffer unrequited love for the male in the poem; to making sapphic desire palatable to predominant Russian mores by othering it as idiosyncratic sexual taste; to keeping the lesbian passion in the poem without judgment or censorship, the latter of which by Gavriil Derzhavin, in his series of translations of the Ode in the 1790s, would have challenged most directly conventional tastes and existing norms of sexuality at the time. These varying strategies in this short history of the translation of Sappho demonstrate how translation is not limited to the transfer of texts into another linguistic code, but is very much configured within a matrix of power relations, or, as Tyulenev puts it, within the "clashes between the dominant, the

conventional, the orthodox, on the one hand, and the radically new, on the other” through exposing the politics of sexuality in the secularization of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Russia. Moreover, closer fidelity to the source text in this instance is highly political insofar as its very “foreignness” challenged sexual normativities in the target culture.

While Zoberman and Tyulenev address the gender and sexual politics of translation through the examining the translation of French moralist literature of the seventeenth century and the broader translation of European ideas around sexuality into Russian in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, respectively, Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, in “Translation is Blind: Reflections on Narcissus and the Possibility of a Queer Echo,” similar to Lacayo, brings us back to the relationality of proximity and difference in translation. She examines how certain writers of the previous *fin de siècle*, such as Oscar Wilde, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Lou Andreas-Salomé, instantiate translation as a *queer* echo that is more than a mere copy as it both displaces and varies its original through the very process of repeating it. Using Derrida’s reimagining of Ovid’s myth of Narcissus, wherein Echo blindly repeats what Narcissus says, but with a difference, repeating exactly, “but not completely, the words of the other, echoing them in part,” Richmond-Garza suggests that translation functions in the queer subcultures of the turn of the nineteenth century as the Derridean “blind echo” by using his (re)reading of the myth to frame an analysis of Oscar Wilde’s prose poem “The Disciple,” Rilke’s poem “Narziß,” and Andreas-Salomé’s psychoanalytic writings on Narcissus (in relation to her theory of femininity in “Der Mensch als Weib”), all of which address and repeat, in varying ways, the Narcissus myth. These forms of translation constitute the possibility of a queer echo, an iteration not resulting in unity, equivalence, or exact repetition, but remaining in an imperfect relationship to the original source, ensuring that the very gap of difference and otherness is not elided, but remains “without limitations and without abjection” in a reciprocal process of intertextual illumination.

The final two essays address contemporary cultural translations of sexual alterity. Serena Bassi analyzes and critiques the political choices made in representing gay identity in Lawrence Venuti's translation of a contemporary Italian novel by Melissa Panarello *Cento colpi di spazzola prima di andare a dormire* into English (*A Hundred Strokes of the Brush Before Bed*) for British and North American book markets. Arguing that the processes of globalisation had already affected the internationalisation of gay identity and showed up in the initial Italian version of the novel, Bassi examines Venuti's correspondence with his editor and found that he resisted "domesticating" the Italian novel in his translation for Anglophone audiences so as to maintain a degree of foreignness, particularly in his representation of the novel's protagonist, Melissa, as not reducible to an American teenager. This seems to square with Venuti's concerns about translation as domestication of the foreign in his essay "Translation as Cultural Politics" discussed earlier. Yet, according to Bassi, Venuti does not seem to account for the ways in which the original Italian version of the novel was already a product of discourses around gay identity that had travelled from the United States to Italy, especially through the figure of "the gay best friend" of Melissa, Ernesto, a figure easily identifiable in contemporary American popular culture and often translated and renegotiated into local contexts. In translating, or more accurately, in deliberately tweaking the way in which Ernesto articulates his gay identity by translating his friendship with Melissa from Italian into English as "kindred spirits," which links the two characters more causally in the target text than in the source text; in endowing Ernesto with camp in the target text to make him more visibly gay, and thereby divesting him of his more macho portrayal in the source text; and by translating him as sexually passive, since he likes to cross dress, rather than as sexually active (as he is in the source text) in his sex work as a male escort for other men, Venuti's translation, according to Bassi, is underwritten by Anglophonic homonormative understandings of gay identity indifferent to power imbalances

around race and class, and bolstered by late capitalism and the transnational flow of queer identities and cultural products in global markets originating from hegemonic centres like the US. Venuti's overdetermination of textual meaning through translation with regard to the character of Ernesto seems to restore the idea of gay identity as fixed and as knowable in the target text, which was better challenged in the source text, given the greater complexity of Ernesto's character in the Italian version. According to Bassi, this seems contradictory to Venuti's own theoretical instruments regarding translation and his attempts to challenge the global dominance of English in the international translation market and the hegemony of American culture that often accompanies it.

Examining the sexualisation of postcolonial relations, particularly how postcolonial resentment is portrayed in literature "via the figure of the 'Arab boy,' transplanted from an exploited status in colonial settings to an unassimilated status in contemporary France," Mehammed Amadeus Mack, in the final essay of the issue "Untranslatable Desire: Inter-Ethnic Relationships in Franco-Arab Literature," analyzes translation encompassing intra-linguistic and cultural divides and highlights questions of non-intelligibility between French and North African gay writers who enter into partnerships of literary collaboration. While so-called "Arab boys" seemed transparent and intelligible, that is "translatable," through being sexually available and servile to an earlier generation of Western male writers, such as André Gide, Paul Bowles, William Burroughs, and Joe Orton, whose homoerotic collaborations with them often nourished their ability to write as Joseph Boone implies,<sup>19</sup> postcolonisation and the aftermath of immigration to urban France, according to Mack, has created a gap of *untranslatability* between French and North African gay writers working in collaboration. This, he argues, is the result of resentment on the part of Franco-Arab writers toward their French partners for not recognising power imbalances in collaborative relationships of the past, which were marked by race and class differentials, colonial

privilege, and the history of sex tourism between Western and indigenous men in North Africa. Mack offers an example of cultural translation through the literary collaboration of established French journal writer Renaud Camus and the younger Franco-Arab author Farid Tali, both of whom are gay and write a journal jointly about their literary encounter and their desires in *Incomparable* with the journal entries placed one after the other. While the title of the work very much implies untranslatable desire, since both mentor and apprentice must decipher and decode each other's references, motives, and speech, translatability fails, Mack argues, not because of educational disparities given that Camus' references are not lost on Tali, but from Camus' reluctance to see Tali as a purely intellectual peer. Mack marks a shift in the figure of the Arab boy who has transitioned from being sexually exploitable by male foreign writers visiting North Africa to an independent, equally proficient writer in French, but not yet fully assimilated in France and decisively capable of unreciprocated desire toward his French male collaborator as a strategy against exploitation. Cultural untranslatability emerges from incommensurate vantage points, given that the scene of literary collaboration has now shifted from North Africa to France, and from the resentments and frustrated desires of both parties, shaped by the history of entangled relations between France and North Africa and by resultant postcolonial and post-immigration conditions.

The issue ends with a final commentary by Sandra Bermann in an Afterword. In closing, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to those who helped make this special issue of *Comparative Literature Studies* possible. I am especially grateful to Thomas Beebe, the journal editor, for his sincere interest in this new and exciting topic and for so generously giving us a full issue dedicated to it. I would like to thank my colleagues on the Comparative Gender Studies Committee of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA), and I would like to thank especially the American Comparative Literature Association for graciously allowing our Committee programme space at its annual convention in the years

when the ICLA does not meet since this special issue came out of an ACLA seminar sponsored by the Comparative Gender Studies Committee. Of course, this special issue would not have been possible without the hard work and patience of the contributors whose essays are contained herein. I am both grateful and appreciative to those who submitted work in response to the call for papers for this special issue but could not be accommodated because of space limitations. This is indicative of the wide range of exciting work being done in the emergent field of queer translation studies, and it is hoped that this issue will stimulate new and innovative work in this area. Queering translation brings to the forefront the heuristic power of translation to navigate and linger in the ambiguities and gaps woven into the asymmetrical relations between languages and cultures rather than necessarily privileging the source text which may underpin and perpetuate relations of power while undermining the very processes of cross-cultural negotiation that are so intimately intertwined with the practice of translation. At the same time, the very dissidence of translation remains an act of negotiation. Care must be taken not to domesticate texts temporally or culturally distant to the hegemony of the target culture, but to preserve the cultural and historical differences of source texts as a way of queering the target language and interrupting the continued flow of its cultural values dictated by monolingualism and ethnocentrism with little regard for different ways of reading texts and reading the world. Being especially attentive to the gender, sexual, and broader politics of translation, and to spaces of untranslatability, resists the depoliticization of translating practices and enables the work of translation to touch, caress, fondle, inhabit, but never possess fully, another textual body always already foreign to the translator's own.

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," 1923, trans. Harry Zohn, *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, ed. Rainer Schulte and John Bigunet (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992), 76, 79.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin, 81.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin, 77; emphasis and brackets mine.

<sup>4</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Translating in a World of Languages," *Profession 2010*, ed. Rosemary G. Feal (New York: Modern Language Association, 2010), 37.

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence Venuti, Introduction, *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., ed. Lawrence Venuti (New York: Routledge, 2012), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Catherine Porter, "Introduction. Presidential Forum: The Tasks of Translation in the Global Context," *Profession 2010*, ed. Rosemary G. Feal (New York: Modern Language Association, 2010), 6.

<sup>7</sup> Emily Apter, "Philosophical Translation and Untranslatability: Translation as Critical Pedagogy," *Profession 2010*, ed. Rosemary G. Feal (New York: Modern Language Association, 2010), 61.

<sup>8</sup> Apter, 61.

<sup>9</sup> William J. Spurlin, "Queering Translation," *A Companion to Translation Studies*, eds. Sandra Bermann and Catherine Porter (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, forthcoming 2014), 299.

<sup>10</sup> Alfonso De Toro, "La pensée hybride, culture des diasporas et culture planétaire le Maghreb (Abdelkébir Khatibi – Assia Djebar)," *Le Magreb Writes Back: Figures de l'hybridité dans la culture et la littérature maghrébines*, eds. Alfonso de Toro and Charles Bonn (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2009), 80.

<sup>11</sup> Apter, 53-54.

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence Venuti, "Translation as Cultural Politics: Régimes of Domestication in English," *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*, ed. Mona Baker (New York: Routledge, 2010), 68-69.

<sup>13</sup> Venuti, "Translation as Cultural Politics," 78.

<sup>14</sup> Spivak, 36.

<sup>15</sup> Philip E. Lewis, "The Measure of Translation Effects," *Difference in Translation*, ed. Joseph Graham (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985), 41; qtd. in Venuti, "Translation as Cultural Politics," 75.

<sup>16</sup> Abdelkébir Khatibi, *Maghreb pluriel* (Paris: Denoël, 1983), 186.

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<sup>17</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 1990 (New York: Routledge, 1999), 43.

<sup>18</sup> Spivak, 38. See also Barbara Cassin, ed., *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles*, Paris: Seuil, 2004.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph A. Boone, "Vacation Cruises; or, the Homoerotics of Orientalism," *PMLA* 110.1 (1995): 102.