

NEW LOGICS OF EXCHANGE

Translation as the source of a unified tradition, a coherent linear framework for the transmission of meaning, is today no longer really available as an ideal. In a world of increasing diversity and competing interests, common norms are conjunctural and fluctuating. Models of universality are more often the reflection of figures of domination. We can wonder, however, if the idea of a unified common culture ever in fact became historical reality. Those spaces which were identified as universal (the great humanist tradition, the canon of great books, the public space associated with democratic communication, the model of culture which sustained the ideal of citizenship) have been exposed as being essentially expressive of the values of the white, European and middle-class male. The universality attributed to these vectors of culture turns out to be supported by longstanding processes of exclusion, and by the silencing of differences.

Divorcing itself from the unrealizable ideals of universal humanism, translation must work today through new logics of communication, through new configurations of commonality. Feminist interventions into translation have served to highlight the fact that cultural transmission is undertaken from partial (and not universal) perspectives, from constantly evolving cultural positions.

The movement of ideas and texts is influenced by the subject positions of those who undertake the work of translation. Gender is central to the creation and the definition of these positions. But as we have seen, the way that gender shapes the action of translation can be very variable. Historically, gender may have been a factor which confined women to restricted writing roles, but it also provided the social networks which make translation necessary, as in women's anti-slavery work in the nineteenth century or the discipline of women's studies in the twentieth.

Contemporary feminist translation has made gender the site of a consciously transformative project, one which reframes conditions of textual authority. This authority can be exercised in a "corrective" mode, as when it attempts to bring the message of the Bible into line with current forms of belief, when it participates in a movement toward ever more completely achieved versions of the truth; it is more fruitfully used to trouble sedimented accretions of dogma, to loosen the bonds of accepted verities, to challenge social and conceptual hierarchies.

Foregrounding the role of gender in translation points to the ways in which channels of communication are opened and maintained by the interests of evolving communities; and how the work of translation at once elicits and confuses the link between self and community, recognition and estrangement.

- Simon Sherry. *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*. Routledge 2005.

1. Why is the idea of a unified common culture no longer available as an ideal in translation?

- A) Increasing diversity and competing interests
- B) Lack of common norms in translation
- C) Decline of universal humanism
- D) Unrealizable ideals in translation

2. According to the essay, what are the identified spaces of universality associated with?

- A) Cultural transmission
- B) Gendered positions in translation
- C) Values of white, European, and middle-class males
- D) Constantly evolving cultural positions

3. What role does gender play in the movement of ideas and texts in translation?

- A) It shapes the subject positions of translators
- B) It restricts women to limited writing roles
- C) It determines the universal perspectives in translation
- D) It has no influence on the action of translation

4. How has gender historically influenced translation, according to the essay?

- A) It confined women to restricted writing roles
- B) It promoted social networks for translation
- C) It eliminated the need for translation in women's work
- D) It restricted the discipline of women's studies

5. What does feminist translation aim to do in relation to textual authority?

- A) Correct and enforce dogmatic beliefs
- B) Align texts with traditional forms of belief
- C) Establish universal hierarchies in translation
- D) Challenge and question accepted verities

Answer 1: A) Increasing diversity and competing interests

Answer 2: C) Values of white, European, and middle-class males

Answer 3: A) It shapes the subject positions of translators

Answer 4: B) It promoted social networks for translation

Answer 5: D) Challenge and question accepted verities