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*TRANSLATION AND GENDER  
TRANSLATING IN THE "ERA  
OF FEMINISM".* Flotow, L..  
Manchester: St. Jerome  
Publishing, 1997, 114 pp..

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The academic relationship between Gender Studies and Translation Studies is anything but new. Many, in recent years, have exposed the different types of textual manipulation used in both areas to serve specific ideological agendas. Moreover, many studies establish a clear-headed connection between Gender Studies and Translation Studies in the sense that they both highlight the so-called "recognition of the other".

Flotow's book is no exception to this last rule. There are, however, certain aspects of her writing which certainly deserve special attention. First of all, her account of feminism, of feminist writing, and of feminist translation is relevantly clearer than previous ones. Her discourse is not obscure; neither marked by extreme positions. Secondly, and this is significantly relevant for translation students, Flotow does not try to persuade her readers that

feminist translation is the "right" type of translation. She certainly tries to connect the two areas. But, as opposed to what most feminist translators do, she avoids explicit evaluation. She evidently acknowledges the most distinctive feature of feminist translation: interventionism. Yet she does not posit in this distinctive feature the qualities of universality. Her argument, for example, that feminist writing and feminist translation can only exist in communities where there is a public demand for this type of texts (as in Canada, the USA and in some European countries) foregrounds her rather sensible position. The fact that she does not herald that all translations *should* have the interventionist character, typical of feminist translation further indicates that Flotow does not advocate that interventionism is, or should be, a trait of all translations everywhere. Contrariwise, she crystal-clearly explains the reasons why feminist writing and feminist translation boomed in certain areas of the globe but were, and still are, ignored in many, many others for several different reasons.

Flotow's two first chapters encapsulate the best of her book: "Historical Background" and

“Gender and the Practice of Translation”. The first chapter is particularly relevant for those who are taking the first steps into the relationship between “The Women’s Movement” and the idea of gender. Her discussion of these issues is significant because she presents an introductory historical review on the women’s movement in Europe and America. She also reviews the connections this movement established with the representations of women in texts. Finally, She closes this chapter revisiting and further detailing the concept of gender itself. In her second chapter, Flotow addresses the different ways translation has been approached by feminists, highlighting the changes that marked these different approaches. In doing so, she recognises that the alleged links between translation and gender have changed considerably since the two areas were first cuffed to each other. This acknowledgement shows her intellectual maturity: she is able to point out that the view of translation envisaged by first wave feminists has been thoroughly elaborated. This elaboration implies a more sophisticated theoretical framework, one that expands the boundaries of inclusive language, a framework that is able to deal with the notion of a

translated text as a text that may stand on its own.

But Flotow’s best contribution is undoubtedly her recognition that despite the connections established between Gender Studies and Translation Studies, they are two different subject areas, each of them having its own and proper object of study. She asserts that the questions of gender brought out by the Feminist Movement had, and still have, an enormous impact upon almost every field of research, including Translation Studies. In this sense the question of gender in Translation assumes a new perspective: it is only one among the several variables involved in the complex communicative event that translation is.

I seriously consider that Flotow’s book is a need in the shelves of both translation teachers and students, especially undergraduates. This is so not only because of her language, but also because of the clearness of her arguments. *Translating in the Era of Feminism* is a good starting point for those who, perhaps in the future, would like to get into more intricate studies involving the issue of gender *in* translation.

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