

LORI CHAMBERLAIN

“Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation”

Keywords:

authoritative discourse, gender, gender-based paradigm, maternity, metaphorics of translation, misreading, paternity

### 1. Author information

Lori Chamberlain was a visiting lecturer in the Department of Literature at the University of California, San Diego. She published many articles on contemporary poetry and fiction, and only one on translation. She is not thought of as an active researcher on translation, still she is said to be the most important theorist in the field of gender research.

Although she wrote just one thesis, her contribution to TS is quite recognized as she was one of the first researchers who analyzed views on gender in translation. She effectively compiled different theories, which is why she is still often quoted.

### 2. Abstract

The text consists of three basic parts – the introduction, the main part and the conclusion.

In the introduction, the author outlines the problem of gender in translation by presenting an example of a nineteenth-century composer and violinist, Clara Schumann, who was Robert Schumann’s wife and who was a composer only because her husband was one; as a woman, she was not a member of the Schumann family on whom music lovers and historians have focused.

The major points of the thesis are then presented. The author discusses and describes the thoughts of, respectively, Wentworth Dillon, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Roscommon, Thomas Francklin,

William Cowper, Meyer Howard Abrams, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, Thomas Drant – and, of contemporary researchers – Serge Gavronsky, George Steiner, Terry Eagleton, Jacques Derrida, Suzanne Jill Levine and Carol Maier, and gives examples to each of them.

In the conclusion, the gist of the text is contained. Chamberlain emphasizes the need of moving the sex of the author or translator beyond the questions of gender discrimination. Just like feminists, she hopes that “the female translator of a female author’s text and the male translator of a male author’s text will be bound by the same power relations.”

### 3. Terminology

The article is written in a clear and straightforward style. All terms used in the metaphors of translation are thoroughly explained by Chamberlain. However, some definitions can be given.

Source text term	Meaning	Term in Polish
authoritative discourse	discourse which demands to be assimilated by the reader and listener	dyskurs autoratywny ?
derivative work	is a work based upon one or more pre-existing works	dzieło zależne
ex nihilo	creating the text out of nothing	ex nihilo
fidelity of translation	exact correspondence of the source text and the target text	wierność tłumaczenia
gender-based paradigm	paradigm focused on contrast between the “feminine” and “masculine”	paradygmat płciowy ?
les belles infidèles	suggestion that translation is like a woman – either faithful or beautiful, but not both	les belles infidèles
metaphors of translation	image of translation based on metaphors and anthropomorphisms	metaforyka przekładu
mother tongue	here: native language, language of the original text	język rodzimy

#### 4. Methodology

The research conducted by Lori Chamberlain is based on the method of exploratory research, which relies on secondary research. The article contains summary, collation and synthesis of the research done by Francklin, Gavronsky, Steiner and others. This helps to determine the problem which has not been clearly defined by previous researches.

#### 5. Links with other publications on the subject

Arrojo, R. 1994. "Fidelity and The Gendered Translation", in: *TTR : traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, vol. 7, n° 2. Montréal: Canadian Association for Translation Studies.

Leonardi, V. 2007. *Gender and Ideology in Translation: Do Women and Men Translate Differently? A Contrastive Analysis from Italian to English*. New York: Peter Lang.

Simon, S. 1996. *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and The Politics of Transmission*. London. New York: Routledge.

Von Flotow, L. 2001. *Gender in Translation: The Issues Go on*. University of Ottawa.

#### 6. Critical commentary

In my opinion, Chamberlain's article, besides being absorbing, presents the situation of femininity over the centuries in a clear way, on the basis of plainly described theses. It also points out how these theses should change in the face of the changing reality. Moreover, the fact that this article is still quoted and mentioned in many present-day dissertations concerning gender in translation only confirms that it is a valuable piece of work.

## 7. Quotation to remember the text by

“Working within the conventional hierarchies we have already seen, the female translator of a female author’s text and the male translator of a male author’s text will be bound by the same power relations: what must be subverted is the process by which translation complies with gender constructs (...) As women write their own metaphors of cultural production, it may be possible to consider the acts of authoring, creating, or legitimizing a text outside of the gender binaries that have made women, like translations, mistresses of the sort of work that kept Clara Schumann from her composing” (Venuti 2000: 327).

## 8. References

Chamberlain, L. 2000. “Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation”, in: *Lawrence Venuti (ed.) Translation Studies Reader*. London. New York: Routledge. 341–329.

Kadish, D. Y. 1994. “Translation in Context”, in: Doris Y. Kadish (ed.), *Translating Slavery: Gender and Race in French Women’s Writing, 1783–1823*. Kent: The Kent State University Press.

Massardier-Kenney, F. 1994. “Translation Theory and Practice”, in: Doris Y. Kadish (ed.), *Translating Slavery: Gender and Race in French Women’s Writing, 1783–1823*. Kent: The Kent State University Press.

<http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org> (retrieved 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2011)

<http://www.wordreference.com> (retrieved 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2011)

eo