Found in Translation: An Ongoing Dialogue Between Theory and Practice

by

Zola Kell
B.A., University of Victoria, 2012

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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In this thesis I outline my theory of translation as an interpretive tool. I undertake an analysis of the concepts of heteroglossia, hybridity, and positionality, as conceived of by Mikhail Bakhtin, Homi K. Bhabha, and Linda Alcoff, respectively. These ideas function similarly: heteroglossic forces are constantly being brought to bear upon languages, the hybrid nature of culture is continually being rearticulated, and the positionality of the interpreter is always subject to change. I establish a theory that allows for translation to remain open, a theory that sees all incarnations of a text (the source and all of its translations) as being perpetually discursive, rather than fixing upon one version as the definitive or "correct" rendering. Translations occupy a fluctuating, unstable, and therefore creative location; they provide an ever-shifting temporal and spatial perspective. I translate excerpts from texts written by the Afro-German poet May Ayim and the Turkish German author Emine Sevgi Özdamar from German into English. This brings my theory into application and demonstrates both the fluidity of translation and the depth of interpretation to be found within this process.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memories of May Ayim and Audre Lorde, whose words I look to for strength and guidance and whose wisdom and grace continue to inspire me.

And as of August 14, 2014, to the memory of my best friend, Yuki–I love you forever.

Introduction

When people believe in boundaries, they become part of them.[1]

"Lost in translation," I argue, is a trope that has little application in today's multifaceted, multilingual, and multifarious world. This expression conveys an idea of translation that positions the source text[2] as having sole access to a "true" meaning, thus implying that translations are always deceptive, incomplete, or diminished echoes of this meaning. The idea that meaning can be *lost,* when meaning must necessarily be relative (or the entire activity of literary analysis would be for naught), serves translations poorly, implying that, from the outset, they are always lacking something, always imbued with false meaning, always struggling to be taken seriously. These constraints on translation's potential, I argue, are needless and detrimental to the way translation is approached. For translation scholars, translators-in-training, and translators seeking publication, the two goals that have always been paramount, transparent fluency in the target language and fidelity to the source text, in fact reduce the potential of translation. The act of translation becomes a reductive process, wherein a translator attempts to reproduce a text with a culturally-specific interpretation in its first language into another language with an

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[1] Cherry, Don. qtd. in DowDell, D.C. "Jazz Quotes – Quotations About Jazz excerpted from *Basic Musicianship for Jazz Pianists, Vocalists, and Composers.*" Web. *apassion4jazz.net*. 11 July 2014.

[2] In this thesis, I use the terms "source," as in the expressions "source text" and "source language," to mean the original work created and/or the language in which a text was first created (the language being translated from), and "target," as in "target text" and "target language," to mean the translation version of a text and/or the language into which a text is translated. These expressions are related specifically to the discourse of translation studies. "Source text" corresponds to "original," which is found in many of the quotations cited herein, and to "foreign text," a term often used by authors such as Lawrence Venuti and Claire Kramsch, who are cited throughout this thesis. I prefer to avoid the term 'foreign' because I feel it makes the source text exotic by emphasizing its otherness.

equivalent interpretation intelligible to the target culture. Translation, I argue, can be much more than that.

But first, what is translation? Roman Jakobson, a turn of the 20th century linguist, formulated a definition now considered a standard in translation studies. I borrow a summary of this definition from a current translation theorist, Edwin Gentzler, who states that Jakobson

> breaks the field down into three areas: *intralingual* translation, a rewording of signs in one language with signs from the same language; *interlingual* translation, or the interpretation of signs in one language with signs from another language (translation 'proper'); and *intersemiotic* translation, or the transfer ('transmutation') of the signs in one language to non-verbal sign systems (from language into art or music). All of Jakobson's fields mutually reinforce one another, and, accepting this definition, one can easily see how translation theory can quickly enmesh the student in the entire intersemiotic network of language and culture, one touching on all disciplines and discourses. (1)

With definitions in hand, the next question is: Why study translation? Translation is a powerful tool for the dissemination and spread of thoughts and ideas, as it serves to bring information to a fresh audience. However, not only does it bring new and vital information from one culture to another, it can also alter the way in which cultures interact with one another. Translation can perpetuate stereotypes or break them down; it can produce entirely false ideas of culture and identity or bridge the gap between two disparate languages and cultures. The translation theorist Lawrence Venuti states that:

> The violent effects of translation are felt at home as well as abroad. On the one hand, translation wields enormous power in the construction of identities for foreign cultures, and hence it potentially figures in ethnic discrimination, geopolitical configurations, colonialism, terrorism, war. . . . On the other hand, translation enlists the foreign text in the maintenance or revision of literary canons in the receiving culture, inscribing poetry and fiction, for example, with the various poetic, narrative, and ideological discourses that compete for cultural dominance in the translating language. . . . Translation also enlists the foreign text in the maintenance or revision of dominant conceptual paradigms, research methodologies and clinical practices that inform disciplines and professions in the receiving culture. (*Translator's Invisibility* 15-16)

The study of translation, therefore, is more than merely the clear-cut reproduction of texts into multiple languages; indeed, it is a study of linguistic and cultural *sea changes*. Translators-in-training are often encouraged to work in a unidirectional manner, translating from their foreign language into their first language, as the process of translating into one's mother tongue is considered to produce translations with fewer errors and a quality of authenticity or transparency.[3] This strategy equates the worth of a translation with two factors: how easy it is to read in the target language and how close it appears to be to the meaning of the source text. Traditionally, the emphasis in translation studies is to seek out an *authentic* or *true* meaning, rather than generate meaning anew in one's interpretation. In order to challenge this paradigm, I draw upon a number of different theories and concepts to establish a new critical theory. This new theory

[3] For an overview of the issue of "directionality" in translation studies, please see the chapter on "Direction of Translation (directionality)" in: Baker, Mona, ed. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London: Routledge, 1998. 63-67.Web. *MyiLibrary*. 2 July 2014.

incorporates awareness of translation's fluidity and intangibility, rather than attempting to create and define a method of translation that claims to be consistently effective across cultures and texts. I argue that an understanding of the innately protean nature of translation can free the process of translation to function as an interpretive tool. To demonstrate the potential benefit of implementing such a strategy, I undertake a translation with commentary, namely "a form of introspective and retrospective research where you yourself translate a text and, at the same time, write a commentary on your own translation process," according to a recently published handbook for scholars doing research in translation studies (Williams and Chesterman 7). Also referred to as "annotated translation" (Williams and Chesterman 7), such a critical engagement with the text allows me to put forth my own interpretation. The scope of my thesis is to provide a framework for a new critical theory, rather than engage in a literary analysis. However, it is essential that I take the theoretical and make it practical by implementing my proposition of translation as an interpretive tool.

In the context of North America's Germanic Studies discipline, translations are primarily used to bring German texts to an English-speaking audience, to introduce and illustrate the richness of Germany's literary accomplishments. However, the translation is often provided with a caveat–that greater understanding and deeper truths are to be found in the source texts. I would like to introduce an approach that broadens this perspective. I do not wish to diminish or disregard the worth of source texts, nor any outstanding translation. I want to do more than bring translations into view as texts in their own right. I seek to establish translation as a tool for enriching the interpretive process. In proposing a new approach, that of a creative translation strategy without a predetermined and

definitive end product, I provide a *way of seeing* that allows for renewal and reinterpretation and prevents stagnation and ossification in interpreting these texts.

In order to establish my theoretical framework and elucidate its capability, I describe certain theories drawn from a mixture of linguistic and cultural studies theorists, and build upon their ideas. Furthermore, to demonstrate how my theory works in practice, I translate anew excerpts from texts by two German-language authors: May Ayim, the Afro-German poet and activist, and Emine Sevgi Özdamar, the Turkish German author and playwright. Their status as German-language authors allows me to connect my translation theory to the study of modern German literature, thus enlarging the field of study. Ayim and Özdamar create works that tap into the liminal or interstitial perspective of minority-culture authors.[4] This cultural positioning makes their texts ideal examples for demonstrating the applicability of my working theory. The works of these two women, through the placement and performance of language(s) within the texts, stage identities that cannot be restricted or reduced to one cultural component. The emphasis these two authors place on the fluidity of identity informs my theory. Their position of identification, as being *more* than in-between two worlds, affirms my conviction that translation processes, in occupying a similar type of location (in the interstices between source and target texts), contain an inherent adaptability that can generate new meanings. It is through writing that "multilingual subjects . . . manage to define a third, symbolic place between two incompatible linguistic and cultural worlds" (Kramsch 88). Thereby, through *rewriting*–that is, translation–it is conceivable to again move past this binary of

[4] This is not to imply that the works I examine are in any way autobiographical, but merely that texts written by minority-culture authors are informed by their particular life experiences. By minority-culture, I am referring to a culture of people whose identification (in this instance as Afro-German and Turkish German) relegates them to a cultural status other than that of the majority (the stereotypical white German). This identification as "in the minority" can either be self-defined, or it can be a designation from outside.

"incompatible linguistic and cultural worlds" and delineate a new discursive space. Identity and translation both involve "a dialogue between different cultural codes," and are "open to contradiction, ambiguity, and constant revision" (Goertz, "Borderless and Brazen" 74). This dialogue allows translation the flexibility to present the multivalent and pluricultural attitude of these authors as evidenced in their texts.

I believe that the *translation process* may hold the key to a new form of discourse–one in which various interpretive positions can be discussed openly, with agency and admission, and can add to the conversation without reducing the reality of cultural differences or reinforcing the concept of an impenetrable border between cultures. Translation, according to Lawrence Venuti, can be called "a cultural political practice, constructing or critiquing ideology-stamped identities for foreign cultures, affirming or transgressing discursive values and institutional limits in the receiving culture" (*Translator's Invisibility* 15). The role of the translator in such a practice must not be overstated; rather than lauded as occupying a privileged location, the position of the interlocutor and the effect his or her position has on the interpretive process must be put under scrutiny. It is the *process*–an on-going, multi-directional movement, a conversation wherein many languages and identities are constructed, dismantled, and reconstructed–that opens up a productive space of interpretation. Translation brings new depths of the text to the surface, available and vulnerable to criticism and observation.

Venuti alleges that, "translation, like every cultural practice, involves the creation of values, linguistic and literary, religious and political, commercial and educational, as the particular case may be. What makes translation unique is that the value-creating process takes the form of an inscribed interpretation" ("Retranslations" 25). The

inscription of new values and meaning into a text comes from the translator and is dictated by that translator's position: his or her relationships with both the source culture and the target culture. When I embark on a translation the stance I take affects all of my interpretive choices. As translation theorist Maria Tymoczko declares,[5]

> another name for the choices, emphases and selectivity [of both translators and post-colonial writers] is *interpretation*. Judgment is inescapable in the process; 'objectivity' is impossible. And just as there can be no final translation, there can be no final interpretation of a culture through a literary mode. There is no last word. ("Post-Colonial" 24)

This is precisely what my critical theory aims to incorporate–the ambivalence of individual perspective. I contend that the equivocal nature of interpretation enables the fixed text of a translation to be opened up to new interpretations *ad infinitum*. By allowing for an ongoing re-imagining and re-invigorating of meaning, translation acts as a generative dialogue, recognizing each interpretation as having equal weight, like a voice in a constructive conversation. Rather than subsuming the previous version, a translation can be considered to be a single layer of a palimpsest[6] wherein each new perspective is influenced by and *layered* upon previous versions. The process of interpretation visible in interlingual translation exhibits the same fluidity in culture. Translation necessitates new forms of communication, as it always calls for movement across, through, and between language and cultures. Once a text is seen as *moving* through interpretation, rather than as being removed from its previous version and

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[5] Please see Maria Tymoczko's article "Post-colonial Writing and Literary Translation" 19-40, wherein she states: "[s]trictly speaking the purview of this investigation is broader than post-colonial writing *per se* and includes minority-culture writing that involves the negotiation of significant cultural and / or linguistic boundaries, as, for examples, is the case with African-Americans and Irish writers" (36).

[6] "Palimpsest," used figuratively and defined by the *New Oxford American Dictionary*, refers to "something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form."

recreated wholly anew, it becomes possible to recognize the contemporaneous nature of translation. It is simultaneously creating a new text and new meaning, and opening that text and its meaning up for reinterpretation. Translation is able to reinvigorate and add to a text's capacity for communication, precisely by remaining susceptible to change.

With this revealed, a text can no longer be seen as static, but subject to flux. Once identified as being in flux, translation can be seen as a productive embodiment of Homi K. Bhabha's concept of "cultural difference," which expands on "cultural diversity" (Bhabha, "Cultural Diversity" 155). According to Bhabha, cultural diversity refers to rigid delineations of particular aspects of a culture. For example, qualities A, B, and C are associated with culture *x*. Therefore, by referring to those qualities, it becomes possible to define culture *x* as unlike culture *y*, which is associated with attributes D, E, and F. However, as cultures blend and interact, cultural affiliations with these qualities are actually always expanding, merging, and shifting. Bhabha thus regards his concept of cultural difference as a productive amplification of cultural diversity. Recognizing cultural difference as being contingent upon a temporal perspective allows for the understanding that cultural differences are always being re-articulated. To put it simply, Bhabha considers cultural difference a *process*, while cultural diversity is always already defined and delineated (*Location* 49-54, 211, 232). I see the process of translation as a linguistic representation of this concept of cultural difference, for it necessarily lives in the intersection of the source text and its translation, "in the ambivalent movement in between . . . *seemingly* contradictory or incommensurate moments" (Bhabha, "Surviving Theory" 378-79, emphasis added).

This paradoxical nature of translation–a text in a new language is at once different from the source text yet conceived of as being the same text–can be made productive. Participating in the process of translating a text provides a broadening of available meanings. It can enrich both source and target languages. Through engaging with translation as an interpretive process, I make overt the variability of language and potential multiplicity of meaning. A translational approach may further broaden the dialogue between texts, languages, and cultures. By opening up a contestable space between my own interpretation and all other possibilities, I add to the ongoing conversation. In synthesizing theories from Bakhtin, Bhabha, and Alcoff, I make an original contribution to translation scholarship. My thesis is a call to encourage further investigation into the potential of translation as a tool to generate new meanings and interpretations. This capacity to *generate*–a word with synonyms such as to produce, create, trigger, procreate, and so forth–results in a name for my working theory: *generative translation*. Generative translation is a translation process that allows a translator to interpret and create new meaning without prescribing a definitive conclusion to the meaning of the text.

In the following chapters, I undertake a four-step process. First, I establish the building blocks of my theory by drawing on three major concepts: *heteroglossia* as conceived of by Mikhail Bakhtin, *hybridity* from Homi Bhabha's perspective, and Linda Alcoff's notion of *positionality*. Second, I elaborate on these concepts, developing them into a working theory. Third, I explain and justify the authors and texts upon which I have chosen to test my theory's applicability. Fourth, I implement my theory, putting it

into practice by producing my own translations from German to English. Together, these steps demonstrate the form and functionality of my working theory.

My first chapter is concerned with outlining heteroglossia, hybridity, and positionality. These ideas from Bakhtin, Bhabha, and Alcoff facilitate comprehension of translation as a *process*, rather than a product. Heteroglossia is primarily concerned with the structure of language and its evolution, and helps to negotiate my understanding of the translator's word choice. Hybridity stems from Bhabha's text *The Location of Culture* and it imparts an understanding of cultures as never truly distinct from one another. Positionality has to do with the stance of an individual; how one arranges oneself in the process of communicating. All three of these terms are fruitful in the explanation of how translations are produced, and act as a framework for the development of my theory.

Synthesizing these concepts in my second chapter allows me to expand and refine my theory of generative translation as an interpretive tool. Composing a translation creates an embodiment of a temporary moment, that can be used to reveal the forces of heteroglossia and hybridity as they are brought to bear, as well as the positionality of the translator at the moment the translation was fixed upon. Considering how the position of the translator can be identified in a translation, I elect to expand on a term from Lawrence Venuti–retranslations–and explore why retranslations should be included in the consideration of translation's potential for interpretation. In this chapter I declare my intention to exhibit and test my theory by producing my own retranslations.

In my third chapter, I consider the authors whose texts I will retranslate: May Ayim and Emine Sevgi Özdamar. After providing a brief sketch of the social and political atmosphere in which they lived and wrote, I discuss how the construction of

their texts is informed by their positionality. Ayim and Özdamar's cultural status as neither stereotypically German nor foreigner makes their writings ideal samples for retranslation. The interstitial positions the authors occupied in Germany informed their work, resulting in heterogeneity to already be present in their texts before the translation began to interpret it.

In chapter four I create my own retranslations, putting my theory into practice. Working with short excerpts that I feel best articulate the pivotal points of fluidity in the process of my translations, I examine my choices and put my process under scrutiny. My participation in the construction of meaning reveals my positionality, and informs my analysis of how I present the translated text in relation to this position. However, the process of interpretation can never be finished, it can only be paused, and every interpretation only leads to more meanings being generated, thus calling for new interpretations. I produce examples, and I consider how best to communicate the meanings I discovered upon this translatorial undertaking.

After the practical application of my theory, I submit a summary of the goals of this thesis. I review the course of action I have followed and explore the repercussions and implications of my theory, critically assessing how successful my analysis was and how my examples support my theory. Positing new directions for further research, I consider how multilingualism and language acquisition will affect the future of generative translation and propose questions for future research. To conclude my thesis, I call for translation to be regarded as a beneficial tool for any scholar or student who seeks to create interpretations with tolerance, curiosity, and openness, and who recognizes that this process cannot have an endpoint.

Chapter 1: Building Blocks

Letters are symbols. They are building blocks of words which form our languages. Languages help us communicate. Even with complicated languages used by intelligent people, misunderstanding is a common occurrence. We write things down sometimes–letters, words–hoping they will serve us and those with whom we communicate. Letters and words calling out for understanding.[7]

Introduction

In this section, I outline the concepts I feel are essential to a cohesive and functional understanding of the translation *process*, where process is defined as: "a natural or involuntary series of changes" ("Process," def. 1b). I provide an overview of heteroglossia, hybridity, and positionality, as constructed by Mikhail Bakhtin, Homi K. Bhabha, and Linda Alcoff, respectively. I relate these three concepts to three aspects that inform the translator in the construction of a translation: I see heteroglossia as concerned with language, hybridity with culture, and positionality with identity. The goal of this chapter is to outline these concepts in brief and discuss their unifying feature: heteroglossia, hybridity, and positionality each destabilize perceptions that regard them as rigid. By recognizing the qualities that inform a translation as being in flux or open to change and re-establishment, the nature of translating is likewise revealed as more fluid and transient.

[7]"The Man Behind Glass." *Twin Peaks.* Dir. David Lynch. Bravo. 20 Aug. 1993. *Twin Peaks: The Definitive Gold Box Edition*. Paramount, 2007. DVD. This quote comes from this episode's "Log Lady Introduction" opening segment filmed by Lynch as a form of commentary in 1993, narrated and acted by Catherine E. Coulsen.

Unsettling the stability of preconceived notions regarding language, culture, and identity is particularly important for translation studies, as it questions a major tenet of the discipline–that of the fundamental superiority of the source text. Scholarly examination of translation's potential has frequently been limited by the use of binary language to describe the relationship between source and target, or the positioning of authors and translators as perpetually in opposition to one another. However, the reality of translation is that the "social affiliations and effects – written into the materiality of the translated text, into its discursive strategy and its range of allusiveness for the translating-language reader," and "the very choice to translate it," reveal the specific position of the text and the socio-historical context surrounding the translation (Venuti, *Translator's Invisibility* 15). These effects are always in flux, not rigid or fixed. Destabilizing the binary between source and target texts reveals the interactive nature inherent in the act of translation.

Linking Heteroglossia and Hybridity

In establishing the integral parts of my working theory, I merge concepts from two authors: Mikhail Bakhtin, the literary theorist and semiotician, and Homi K. Bhabha, the cultural theorist. Bakhtin formulates the concept of *heteroglossia* inherent to all languages and language relationships, observable in every utterance, while Bhabha discusses *hybridity* as a process of cultural enunciation that expresses the fluid nature of culture. These two theorists are concerned with interpretive processes: of bringing something into form, of translating, of becoming, be it a word, a phrase, or a culture. A comparison of Bakhtin's term *heteroglossia* and Homi Bhabha's *hybridity* reveals that,

though engaged in different theoretical domains, both concepts refute the notion of closed systems. Incorporating the acknowledgement that concepts cannot and do not exist in a vacuum, both theorists are aware that concepts commonly viewed as stable, such as "meaning" or "culture," are actually influenced by, affected by, and engaged with all that surrounds them. These processes are simultaneously linguistic and cultural.

Mikhail Bakhtin and Heteroglossia

Bakhtin, in the text "The Dialogic Imagination"–a translation of four essays published in 1975,[8] perceives the structure of language as something that is always subject to change. Bakhtin declares: "[e]very utterance participates in the 'unitary language' (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time partakes of social and historical heteroglossia (the centrifugal, stratifying forces)" (272). Defined in more simple terms, heteroglossia is the simultaneous existence of individual and diverse forms of language within one "unitary" language. Bakhtin believes that language–"like the living concrete environment in which the consciousness of the verbal artist lives"–is never truly unitary but inherently heterogeneous (288). Any language can be observed as being layered or fragmented into multiple and varied voices. The various strata or layers of language, or voices, if you will, stem from socially-constructed differences, such as class, age, and gender groups, dialects and regional variations, and other arenas and social groupings. Heterogeneity is always present in any language that can be seen as a system encompassing additional diverse systems of communication. A language, Bakhtin

[8] This volume, translated by Michael Holquist, is widely considered the definitive English-language compendium of Bakhtin. However, it is far from a straightforward linguistic "equivalent" of Bakhtin's original Russian-language text, as it contains many interpretations and elaborations by Holquist.

believes, "is unitary only as an abstract grammatical system of normative forms, taken in isolation from the concrete, ideological conceptualizations that fill it, and in isolation from the uninterrupted process of historical becoming that is a characteristic of all living language" (288). Language and language systems are always subject to growth and reinterpretation–subject to dialogism, defined by Bakhtin as

> the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood, as a part of a greater whole–there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others. Which will affect the other, how it will do so and in what degree is what is actually settled at the moment of utterance. This language imperative, mandated by the pre-existence of the language world relative to any of its current inhabitants, insures that there can be no actual monologue . . . the unitariness is relative to the overpowering force of heteroglossia, and thus dialogism. (426)

Despite the accepted idea of phrases and terms being connected conclusively to specific meanings, the reality is that the connotative and denotative meanings of terms and phrases are always being augmented as language encounters new constructions and concepts. In order for words to serve as tools of communication, meaning must be attached to them. The reality of language is that it is constantly evolving. Despite being ultimately mutable, humankind's need to communicate tangible impressions requires a suspension of disbelief in regards to the function and form of language. We resist language change by *fixing* upon specific denotative meanings, even as connotations slip and are attached anew.

As Bakhtin states: “[e]very concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear” (272). By centrifugal forces he means forces that move the language towards stratification–being broken into individual perspectives, and by centripetal he means the opposing forces–those that move towards a central, fixed, singular meaning. These “processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance” (Bakhtin 272).

Homi Bhabha and Hybridity

In Homi K. Bhabha’s seminal text *The Location of Culture* he sketches a theory of cultural *hybridity*. Bhabha’s theory also concerns a dynamic process, as does *heteroglossia,* albeit related to culture rather than language. Hybridity can be understood as liminal: transitional or inhabiting a threshold position–either at a border or on both sides of a division. It is an “interstitial passage between fixed identifications” that “opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha, *Location* 5). According to Bhabha, cultural hybridity is “the social articulation of difference . . . a complex, on-going negotiation” (*Location* 3). A culture may not appreciate the concept of its being unified, “especially those that have known long and tyrannical histories of domination and misrecognition. Cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic in relation of Self to Other” (Bhabha, *Location* 207), rather they are always being built, dismantled and rebuilt. Bhabha’s insight that culture, in all its forms, is perpetually engaged with the process of hybridity (Bhabha qtd.

in Rutherford 211), informs my theory by refuting the idea of a monolithic cultural identity. He declares that hybridity is

> a process of identifying with and through another object, an object of otherness, at which point the agency of identification – the subject – is itself always ambivalent, because of the intervention of that otherness. But the importance of hybridity is that it bears the traces of those feelings and practices which inform it, just like a translation, so that hybridity puts together the traces of certain other meanings of discourses. It does not give them the authority of being prior in the sense of being original. . . . The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation. (Bhabha qtd. in Rutherford, 211)

I choose to read Bhabha's discussion as an advantageous lens through which to view the construction of culture–as an ongoing process of enunciation, rather than a fixed and defined subject. According to Bhabha, "[t]his process estranges any immediate access to an originary [cultural] identity or a received tradition" (*Location* 3), thereby linking it to my hypothesis regarding the source text. Texts and translations are informed by the cultural atmosphere in which they are constructed, but a recognition of the fluidity of that cultural ambience allows for a single, definitive meaning's grip upon a text to be broken. For "hybridity is precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them" (Bhabha qtd. in Rutherford, 216).

Linda Alcoff and Positionality

Viewing translation as a binary system–the source text seen in opposition to its translation–limits translation's constructive potential. In order to combat this, I propose building on Linda Alcoff's conception of 'positionality,' as described in her 1988 text "Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory." Linda Alcoff's discussion of positionality was originally intended to articulate a way to validate the unique experience of women without locking them into a stance. I use the term in regard to how individual factors influence the interpretation and translation of a text. Drawing from Alcoff, I agree that no 'true meaning' of a concept can be discovered, but rather only new interpretations can be defined "using all the empirical data, ethical arguments, political implications, and coherence constraints at hand" (430)–that is, all the analytical tools and contexts at one's disposal.

I propose recognizing the 'positionality' of the translation. To accomplish this, I place Alcoff's words on positionality into a new context, that of translation. I quote Alcoff almost verbatim, merely replacing "woman" with "translation," in order to illustrate the usefulness of her development of the term. She declares that "the concept of positionality includes two points:" first, that the concept (of translation) "is a relational term identifiable only within a (constantly moving) context" (Alcoff 434). Secondly that a position "can be actively utilized (rather than transcended) as a location for the construction of meaning, a place from where meaning is constructed, rather than simply the place where a meaning can be *discovered*" (Alcoff 434, emphasis in original). This disrupts the understanding of meaning as rigid and fixed.

Alcoff continues her argument by merging her postulation of positionality with "identity politics . . . the idea . . . that one's identity is taken (and defined) as a political point of departure, as a motivation for actions, and as a delineation of one's politics" (431-32), thus rendering the subject as "nonessentialized and emergent from a historical experience" yet capable of retaining agency (433). Such a positional definition makes "identity relative to a constantly shifting context, to a situation that includes a network of elements involving others, the objective economic conditions, cultural and political institutions and ideologies, and so on" (Alcoff 433-34). Further to this concept, I examine how an awareness of positionality affects the translator's interpretive potential. Like Alcoff's reasoning in regard to gender, one's position is

> not a point to start from in the sense of being a given thing but is, instead, a posit or construct, formalizable in a nonarbitrary way through a matrix of habits, practices, and discourses. Further, it is an interpretation of our history within a particular discursive constellation, a history in which we are both subjects of and subjected to social construction. (Alcoff 431)

This discursive constellation grants a position to the translation in order to recognize its "historical movement" and its ability to alter its context, thereby avoiding essentialism (Alcoff 435). This approach affords the translator freedom of movement. Alcoff declares that "through a conception of human subjectivity as an emergent property of a historicized experience, we can say 'feminine subjectivity is construed here and now in such and such a way' without this ever entailing a universalizable maxim about the 'feminine'" (431). Such a hypothesis, of course, holds true for any form of subjectivity, including that of the translated text.

Through textual analysis and self-critical translation processes, it is possible to identify a translation's position in relation to the culture and language in which it is formed. As Alcoff herself identifies, "[t]he advantage of such an analysis is its *ability to articulate* a concept of [gendered] subjectivity *without pinning it down one way or another for all time*" (431, emphasis added). This recognition of the evolutionary nature of positionality ties Alcoff concept to the aforementioned theories of Bhabha and Bakhtin.

Conclusion

As an interpretive tool, interlingual translation is an instance of Bhabha's concept of "the language of critique" (*Location* 37). The effectiveness of a language of critique is dependent on "the extent to which it *overcomes the given grounds of opposition and opens up a space of translation: a place of hybridity*" (Bhabha, *Location* 37, emphasis added). I view translation as an "enunciatory act of splitting," from one language to another, that produces "an undecidability between contraries or oppositions" (Bhabha, *Location* 183). Translation functions to make overt the subjectivity of the interpretive moment.

I argue that the process of translation furthers the inherent dialogue found between all utterances and makes the conversation available to a new audience. Translation forces a *re*writing, a *re*imagining, a *re*telling: "[t]ranslations are profoundly linked to their historical moment because they always reflect the cultural formation where they are produced, the hierarchical arrangement of values that circulate in institutions and undergo various developments over time" (Venuti, "Retranslations" 34).

Translation studies should take advantage of all that is to be gained from the observation of the reciprocal nature of all forms of communication and interpretation. Gloria Anzaldúa, in her book *Borderlands / La Frontera*, contends: “it is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank . . . a counterstance locks one into a duel of oppressor and oppressed. . . . At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two . . . somehow healed so that we are *on both shores at once*” (78, emphasis added). In a discipline where the voice of the author and the voice of the translator are often viewed as *merging* in the creation of the translated text, or as appearing or attempting to occupy the same space, embracing the temporality and instability of the interstitial and intersectional pause is key. The beauty of instability and constant fluctuation lies in the inevitability of intersection. One may never occupy the same perspective, but it is possible to locate points of reference–ever evolving and developing–that intersect temporarily. This renders all things, in a way, infinitely translatable and ultimately untranslatable simultaneously. Rather than building a solid bridge across the river, one can expand one’s consciousness to encompass both positions without creating a hierarchy between one shore and the other.

The disruptive potential found in the inherent heteroglot nature of texts, languages, cultures, and identity should not be lost on those involved in translation studies. Language, in the process of translation, can be the tool to liberate cultural discourses from the security of specifically designated boundaries. According to Karein Goertz, when translating from one language to another, “the art of interpreting forces us to think cross-culturally” (“Showing Her Colors” 312). As heteroglossia affects a word within a language even as that language seeks unity, so too do cultures simultaneously

strain to resist difference and to resist becoming monolithic.[9] By a conscious and respectful translational analysis, I argue, it can be made plain that

> cultures are never homogeneous or unified, but always 'impure' and heterogeneous, they are always self-differentiated and permeated by other cultures. A hermeneutics of intercultural understanding and translation does not look for a (dis)solution of cultural differences, but sets out to recognize, dramatize, and negotiate the asymmetries, ambivalences, and mutual blind spots in inter- (and intra-)cultural encounters in historical contexts of often unequal power relationships and articulates the transformative potential in these encounters of cultural difference and otherness in open-ended, dialogical, multifocal critical discourses. (Lenz 147-48)

The re-interpretation of translation adds another layer of meaning to the text, creating innovative new meanings and adding to the heteroglossia inherent in language. A translation can be seen as an overt example of an utterance under the influence of heteroglossic forces, and simultaneously an embodiment of a cultural hybridity.

In my next chapter I will elaborate on the theoretical concepts outlined here, which act as a roadmap in my creation of a new theory, and interweave them into a workable theory of generative translation. My theory of translation is like the terms that Bhabha declares: "insistently gesture to the beyond," but can "only embody its restless and revisionary energy if they transform the present into an expanded and ex-centric site

[9] For an additional reading on the relationship between heteroglossia and culture, see Greenall, Annjo Klungervik. "Translation as Dialogue." *Translation Studies at the Interface of Disciplines*. Ed. João Ferreira Duarte, Alexandra Assis Rosa, and Teresa Seruya. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins Pub. Co, 2006. Print. Benjamins Translation Library 68.

of experience and empowerment" (*Location* 7). Thus in the next chapter, I develop my theory. It recognizes the power of the present moment embodied in translation.

Chapter 2: Translation as Interpretive Tool

You are so young, so much more before all beginning, and I would like to beg you, dear Sir, to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves *as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.*[10]

Introduction

Having introduced the integral components of my theory, I synthesize them into a workable format. Using the perspectives of heteroglossia, hybridity, and positionality, one can arrive at an alternative intention for translation: to interpret a text without the intention of creating a definitive rendition. To translate is to interpret a text and it is through the act of translation that the infinite potential of the text can be made intelligible, made manifest, as it is *fixed* into the written word. The concepts explored in the previous chapter serve as tools and provide a framework to accomplish this. The guiding principle in the development of my theory is this: all readers and translators bring supplementary and equally-valued truths to the text. Bhabha and Bakhtin provide insight into the complex origins of personal context that have led to the iterative moment. However, it is insufficient to observe only the heteroglossic and hybrid forces that

[10] Rilke, Rainer Maria. *Letters to a Young Poet*. Trans. Stephen Mitchell. NY: Vintage Books, 1986. Print. Emphasis in original.

influence the translator. Positionality is the key addition because it enables one to recognize the moment of fixity. The features that influence the creation of a translation–the linguistic knowledge, cultural history, and personal identity of the translator–are constantly being re-established and reconstructed. Acceptance of this rationale would seem to defeat the purpose of analysis for many critics. It would be easy to say that it is impossible to analyze a fleeting perspective because any meaning ascribed to it is temporary and subjective, rather than absolute. I argue, however, that recognition of the temporary and oscillating nature of perspective creates value for translation as an interpretive tool.

Building Upon Hybridity and Heteroglossia

Bhabha emphasizes the worth of a "translational move that opens up an interstitial space for the negotiation of meaning, value, judgment" ("Surviving Theory" 376-77). Bhabha uses negotiation "to convey a temporality that makes it possible to conceive of the articulation of antagonistic or contradictory elements: a dialectic without the emergence of a teleological or transcendent History" (*Location* 37). Building on this concept, I use translation to explore the dialectic or contradictory possibilities in the source text.

Bhabha's use of the word "negotiation" is an "attempt to draw attention to the structure of *iteration*" (*Location* 37-38). He conceives of iteration in such a way as to "articulate antagonistic and oppositional elements without the redemptive rationality of sublation or transcendence" (*Location* 37-38). A negotiation neither erases a previous interpretation nor removes itself from such a prior version. Embracing this concept

allows translation to be seen as a dialectic unencumbered by the notion of being derivative of an original truth. "In such a discursive temporality," a translation embodies "the negotiation of contradictory and antagonistic instances that open up hybrid sites and objectives of struggle, and destroy those negative polarities between knowledge and its objects, and between theory and practical-political reason" (Bhabha, *Location* 37-38). Bhabha even goes so far as to propose "negotiation" and "translation" as synonyms, affirming my interpretation of his description as a fruitful and productive process of *translation* (*Location* 38). I go one step further and apply this meaning to interlingual translation of literary texts.

Heteroglossia, as I have defined previously, is the presence of individual and diverse kinds of language existing simultaneously within one language. This term aids in negotiating the location and perspective of the translator. Furthermore, examining the shifts that occur when distinct and individual voices are transformed from one language to the next assists in critically reading extant translations. Each word as it is affected by fluctuating connotations at any given moment effectively takes a place in a constellation formed of trajectories and axes as they transform and intermingle. Part of the process of discerning where perspective lies involves graphing and visualizing the movements and shifts between words as individual terms influence and connect to one another. Although Bakhtin is referring to heteroglossia in the novel specifically when he says that heteroglossia is "another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way" (324), I argue that this understanding can be brought out of this context and made productive in the realm of translation.

Honing in on this concept of refraction, wherein the “intention of the word” (Bakhtin 432) passes through additional voices, it becomes possible to identify the heteroglossic influence exerted upon a term. I broaden the meaning of this expression to recognize the forces that exert influence on the iterative moment of the translator. As a text is realized, and *iterated*, by the translator, the way these influences are exerted become *fixed* and therefore visible to the reader.

Recognizing translations as one voice in an ongoing discourse makes it possible to see how the process of translation steps outside a binary framework that posits source text in opposition to translation by generating a text that is *more than an equivalent*. In translating, the interpretive process is made overt–the interpretation of the text is laid bare and made tangible. The text is fixed to the page. A critical analysis of the trajectories and influences of the positionality of the translator can reveal both the heteroglossia of language systems and hybridity of cultures.

Positionality

To illustrate the role of positionality, I draw a metaphor of an individual observing the stars. If one looks at the night sky and sees a constellation, constructs an image from the position of the stars, and imagines it as concrete, it does not affect the reality that infinitely more stars (and other objects) exist beyond and behind those that make up the constellation. The star-watching individual only *appears* to be in a fixed location, but is actually subject to the continuous movement of the earth (rotation and revolution). Any other individual in any other time or place (the visibility of certain stars shifts depending on where one is on the earth) will have an entirely different *perspective*

of the stars and/or other stars, and will create new constellations from that perspective. Committing to one perspective, like a point on a graph, allows us to *fix upon* a select set of stars and it becomes possible to interpret what we see of the stars, some of the light they shed.

Yoko Tawada uses a homogeneous metaphor in her discussion of the sub-text that emerges in Japanese translations of Paul Célan's poetry. She states:

> the poems that most interest me are the ones that correspond to constellations of foreign languages and ways of thinking that they had not previously encountered at the time of their composition. I am describing foreign systems of thought here as constellations because every sign within them is like a star casting its light on the original. . . . The ray from the star is not yet visible. . . . Not until the translator comes to give the way a form does it finally become visible. ("The Translator's Gate" n.pag.)

Moving Linda Alcoff's discussion of positionality away from a gender perspective and moving it to a translatorial perspective, the viability of positionality as a tool for interpretation becomes clear. A text can always be retranslated and reinterpreted– the translator can articulate a set of interests and ground an interpretation of the source text "from the perspective of that 'fixed' position," which nonetheless remains "inherently fluid and mutable" (Alcoff 435). An interpretation is not to be seen as a copy of the source text, but its own literary text, available to be interpreted anew. The decision to translate (and how one chooses to translate) "is to take a position within a moving historical context and to be able to choose what we make of this position and how we alter this context" (Alcoff 435). Observing this positionality allows for an uncovering of

"the 'angle of refraction' of authorial discourse as it passes through various other voices, or voice-, and character-zones" and "other refracting media as well, including that mass of alien words present not in the object but in the consciousness of the listener" (Holquist, 432, emphasis in original). These voices include that of the source text author and previous translators, as informed by their particular positionalities in time and space. It is in the formation of the translation that these voices and influences are brought to bear.

Although speaking here specifically about the experience of Afro-German women in her article "Afro-German Cultural Identity and the Politics of Positionality: Contests and Contexts in the Formulation of a German Ethnic Identity," Tina Campt refers to "the notion of *Positionen*, a plurality of positions, as well as the capacity of *Wendigkeit*, translated here as 'flexibility' or 'versatility,'" as "crucial elements in the construction of identity" (115). Campt's development of the term positionality, which "refers to the plural cultural, political, and ideological subject positions occupied by individuals in society," as "a capacity for movement among a variety of cultural and ethnic identifications, a versatility which allows these women to resist both complete marginalization and assimilation within German society" (115-6), stems from the definition set in place by Linda Alcoff.[11] Campt argues that authors such as May Ayim are positioned "simultaneously on the margins of German culture and thoroughly permeated by it," and their positionality "has lead [*sic*] to their developing a cultural and ideological 'agility'" (115). However, the fluid and flexible plurality of subject positions can be expanded to include more than the unique experience of Afro-Germans. The

[11] The concept of seeing each translation as a representation of positionality shows how a translation can use "positional perspective as a place from which values are interpreted and constructed rather than as a locus of an already determined set of values" (Alcoff 434).

agility that Campt describes in the Afro-German experience can also be read in the production of translations.

In using translation as an interpretive tool it is possible to see the benefit of positionality, for it "allows for a determinate though fluid identity . . . that does not fall into essentialism" (Alcoff 435). Linking the influences that affect the act of translation "to positionality enables us [translators] to explore strategies of resistance to, and complicity in, cultural subjection in situations of colonial conflict" (Cronin 39) and cross-cultural communication.

Claire Kramsch argues for a similar flexibility to positionality, stating that "multilingual speakers can occupy many positions simultaneously depending on which language they choose to use, with whom, on which topic, and depending on the different memories evoked by different codes as well as the different expectations each of these codes raises in their interlocutors or in their readers" (20). I claim that all translators, as multilingual authors, have the potential to engage in a similar *Wendigkeit*. I must recognize the privilege of such a position, however. For translators of literary texts, their "capacity for movement between a number of subject positions," is less a mode of "survival and resistance in the face of various forms of cultural and ideological domination" (Campt 116), than it is a creative and constructive benefit provided by a wider range of possible connotations facilitated by the knowledge of an additional language or languages.

Like a perspective from which the stars are viewed as a constellation, a translation expresses a *position* in motion, "rather than a set of attributes that are 'objectively identifiable'" (Alcoff 435). The translator establishes that position by articulating his or

her interpretation manifest in the text of the translation. This makes it possible to see a temporally-specific position, as it has been expressed in language. The temporal position of the translation at the moment of iteration and fixity is informed by the ongoing processes of heteroglossia, hybridity, and positionality, as they influence the language, culture, and identity of the translator, respectively.

Yoko Tawada holds this sentiment: “if I imagine a poem as a receptor for rays of light, it becomes meaningless to look for something ‘typically German’ in a German poem. *For what it picks up is always foreign to it and never the poem itself*” (“The Translator’s Gate” n.pag., emphasis added).

The uncertainty and instability of both translated and source text should be embraced, for it is only in an awareness and examination of the reciprocal relationship of *refraction* between these texts–words, languages, cultures–that the process of becoming can be observed. As Bakhtin declares, “[e]very utterance participates in the ‘unitary language’ (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time partakes of social and historical heteroglossia (the centrifugal, stratifying forces)” (272). The state of flux, of development, of perpetual reformation is what my theory seeks to embrace–the observation not only of one’s own position, but also of what one refracts. It is in the attempt to recognize other perspectives, to plot out the relationships between one chosen perspective and the path that the text, word, or utterance has taken, that the mutable, transitory, ephemeral nature of language and culture can be understood.

Retranslations

Perspectival awareness and acceptance is the key first step to a new awakening in translation studies. With the acceptance that a perspective cannot be reproduced precisely, the necessity for generating new meaning to spark creativity and communication becomes apparent. Venuti states that meaning "is an effect of relations and differences among signifiers along a potentially endless chain (polysemous, intertextual, subject to infinite linkages)" (*Translator's Invisibility* 13). These links are continually opening up new paths of discursive and productive articulations of the ambiguity and ongoingness of meaning. Venuti, paraphrasing Derrida's 1982 essay, "Différance," states: "[meaning] is always differential and deferred, never present as an original unity" (*Translator's Invisibility* 13).[12] Following a Derridean de-privileging of both the source text and the translation, Venuti states that "both consist of diverse linguistic and cultural materials that neither the foreign writer nor the translator originates, and that destabilize the work of signification, inevitably exceeding and possibly conflicting with their intentions" (*Translator's Invisibility* 14). Therefore, both source text and target text are sites of

> many different semantic possibilities that are fixed only provisionally in any one translation, on the basis of varying cultural assumptions and interpretive choices, in specific social situations, in different historical periods. Meaning is a plural and contingent relation, not an unchanging unified essence. (Venuti, *Translator's Invisibility* 14)

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[12] Should you wish to clarify what Derrida meant more precisely, please see: Derrida, Jacques. "Différance." *Margins of Philosophy*. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982. 1-28. Print.

What this revelation implies for the translator is that each interpretation of the text adds meaning–each version layers nuance and significance onto the text. In the process of creating generative translations that explore the various influences of interpretations, it is beneficial to have more layers of interpretation and influence to investigate. In order to tap into this ambiguity and potential, it is crucial to appreciate the fixity of the translation and also the fluidity of meaning–this paradoxical status is difficult to articulate without demonstration.

Therefore, following Venuti's allegation that "retranslation can help to advance translation studies by illuminating several key issues that bear directly on practice and research" ("Retranslations" 27), I propose to produce my own retranslations, as each reinterpretation, in creating new meaning, adds value to the text. Interpretation is the ongoing creation of meaning through dialogue between each version of the text. I propose that my own *retranslations* provide an overt method to engage with and increase the dynamic and generative potential of the dialogue between multiple interlocutors. By opening the interpretive process up to an additional *fixed-upon* translation–a retranslation–the dialogue gains additional voices.

Re-addressing a text opens it up to ambiguity and re-interpretation, thus reaffirming the possibility of generating new meaning:

> in the case of retranslations, the translator's agency is distinguished by a significant increase in self-consciousness that seeks to take into account the manifold conditions and consequences of the translating. Retranslations typically highlight the translator's intentionality because they are designed to make an appreciable difference. (Venuti, "Retranslations" 29)

An "increase in self-consciousness" of the positionality of the previous translation allows the translator the opportunity to choose to create a generative translation. Indeed, performing retranslations provides the interpreter with an ever-fluctuating space of meaning to work within. Retranslations, according to Venuti "deliberately mark the passage of time by aiming to distinguish themselves from a previous version through differences in discursive strategies and interpretations" ("Retranslations" 35).

One of the primary concerns with the power of interpretation in the production of retranslations is (the influence of)

> the translator's agency, the ensemble of motivations, conditions, and consequences that decisively inform the work of translating and allow it to produce far-reaching social effects. . . . the issues of agency and intertextuality ultimately point to the role of history in translation, not only the influence of the historical moment in which the translator works, but the literary and cultural histories on which the translator draws to bring the foreign text into the translating language. (Venuti, "Retranslations" 27-28)

These influences are related to the linguistic, cultural, and personal identity of the translator. Having previously examined these aspects in relation to the concepts of heteroglossia, hybridity, and positionality in order to reveal their fluctuating nature, the retranslation appears to be the ideal form to exhibit my theory. Using the process of retranslating to ground my interpretation, I engage with a viable and energetic dialogue between texts while remaining aware of my positionality. The ultimate benefit of retranslations, is that they not only

> reflect changes in the values and institutions of the translating culture, but they can also produce such changes by inspiring new ways of reading and appreciating foreign texts. To study retranslation is to realize that translating can't be viewed as a simple act of communication because it creates values in social formations at specific historical moments, and these values redefine the foreign text and culture from moment to moment. To retranslate is to confront anew and more urgently the translator's ethical responsibility to prevent the translating language and culture from effacing the foreignness of the foreign text. The lesson of retranslation is that this responsibility can be met most effectively by allowing the retranslator's situation, especially the existence of a previous version, to open up new paths of invention. (Venuti, "Retranslations" 33)

I perform retranslations actively and consciously, observing the layering of meaning that occurs when I add my voice to that of previous translators. I do not attempt to offer a definitive methodology to translate or to retranslate, but instead use my retranslations to demonstrate translation's potential as a tool to interpret texts.

Conclusion

Translations, I argue, as re-creations of texts, have the ability to turn ambivalence into something else (Anzaldúa 79)–a communication that does not seek to produce a "truth-effect" (Venuti, *Translator's Invisibility* 249). I use ambivalence to my advantage as I create retranslations and observe my place in the dialogue that emerges, with the intention of provoking further retranslations and interpretations, rather than seeking to produce a definitive interpretation of a text's "truth."

I turn back to Homi Bhabha to articulate the necessity of witnessing translation as a form of ongoing motion and perpetually expanding collection of meanings. When Bhabha discusses the communication of concepts, he refers to himself as "a survivor in solidarity with other ideas. . . . survival is not only a sticking with something to the end; it's also, for me, an experience of how, in motion, in transition, in movement, you must continually build a habitation for your ideas, your thoughts, and yourself" ("Surviving Theory" 373). This "collaborative relocation" (Bhabha, "Surviving Theory" 372) that necessitates embodying a paradox is a tenet of my theory: that of constantly reconstructing and rebuilding ideas in the process of interpretation. One is always re-appropriating and re-structuring ideas, thoughts, words, in order to formulate a new perspective. To recognize the futility of notions of fidelity, the translator must develop a state of awareness of the inherent instability of language and culture. Only by adopting the paradoxical attitude of embracing ambivalence while asserting awareness of one's subject position, can the text continually move meaning forward through hybridity and heteroglossia. New meanings can then emerge, be reiterated, and grow in an on-going process.

Doris Bachmann-Medick, in her call for a new cultural understanding of translation, says:

> What we need more than ever today are *concepts that negotiate borders, translations, and relationships* in order to gain insight into the logical progressions of, for instance, intercultural and interreligious translation processes. Meanwhile, situations of cultural encounter have become so complex that the multilayered interactions of such contacts must be specified and literally broken

> down into steps of translation in order to reveal their tacit cultural assumptions, prejudices, and (power) advantages. (6)

My theory makes these "multilayered interactions" and instances of cross-pollination available to the translator by viewing translation processes as productive and capable of creating generative interpretations. I argue that this is particularly important for authors such as Ayim and Özdamar, whose texts embody their nonstandard and multifarious identities, because it allows them to be translated in such a way that a dialogue between various positions may be opened up and the stance of the translator (and thus his or her intention) critically examined. Instead of *fixing upon* definitive interpretations as revealing inherent truths of the "original," the validity of diverse translations becomes apparent and accessible. The constellation can still be seen and appreciated even while its location is recognized as in motion and as a part of a much larger system of stars and planets within the universe.

We must accept and embrace our uncertainty. As Lynda Barry observes in her class on unlocking the creative mind, "[the] active state of not knowing is what's required for insight."[13] The formulation of new and imaginative ideas is hampered by adherence to a set of forgone conclusions. Bhabha declares: "what is theoretically innovative and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences" (*Location* 2). Translation is capable of articulating those cultural differences by remaining open to ambivalence. The moment of translation introduces

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[13] Barry, Lynda. The Image Lab: Wisconsin Institute of Discovery, University of Wisconsin–Madison. (quoted by user: thegreatravelledknot on Tumblr.com) Accessed. July 30, 2013.

> into the process of cultural judgement and interpretation that sudden shock of the successive, non-synchronic time of signification. . . . the very possibility of cultural contestation, the ability to shift the ground of knowledges, or to engage in the 'war of position', marks the establishment of new forms of meaning, and strategies of identification. Designations of cultural difference interpellate forms of identity which, because of their continual implication in other symbolic systems, are always 'incomplete' or open to cultural translation. (Bhabha, *Location* 233)

Although Bhabha is speaking here about cultural, rather than interlingual, translation, I argue that his insight allows us to see why interlingual translations are "effective as literature. The translation is not the image of the original but rather, in the translation a meaning of the original is given a new body" (Tawada, "Translator's Gate" 9). This new embodiment, as Tawada notes deals with *a* meaning, rather than one meaning. Instead of viewing the translation as derivative, I recognize these texts as occupying a fluctuating, unstable, and therefore creative location: an ever-shifting temporal and spatial perspective. Shifting perspectives must be recognized and their unstable nature utilized, as it is instability that breaks down the concept of monolithic nations and cultures. Tawada imagines this creative practice as "something awakening through its own translation . . . Perhaps this process will continue until the poem has been translated into the last language" ("Translator's Gate" 9).

When the process of translation is undertaken it operates in a similar fashion to Gloria Anzaldúa's envisioning of the hybrid identity of the new *mestiza*. Much like the

borderlands-dwelling new *mestiza*, whose existence is defined by living between, overlapping with, and intersecting with multiple cultures, translation, too, opens up that

> focal point or fulcrum, that juncture where the mestiza stands. . . . where the possibility of uniting all that is separate occurs. This assembly is not one where severed or separated pieces merely come together. Nor is it a balancing of opposing powers. In attempting to work out a synthesis, the self has added a third element . . . a new consciousness–a mestiza consciousness. . . . its energy comes from continual creative motion that keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm. (Anzaldúa 79-80)

This process is always already ongoing–the text is never not under the influence of heteroglossic and hybrid forces–but translation allows us a space to observe and analyze how ambivalence unfolds. The positionality of the translation informs this unfolding, fixing it into a rigid version of the text that can be read in such a way as to discern the angle of refraction. The texts by Ayim and Özdamar examined herein can be seen to be embodiments of "concrete and living language" (Bakhtin 288). In the next chapter, I will discuss how the positionality of the authors as not merely "between" two cultures but as "concrete and living" existences that reveal cultures as heterogeneous and multifarious informs their texts, thus making them ideal samples for my retranslation.

Chapter 3: May Ayim and Emine Sevgi Özdamar

Whoever speaks in a foreign tongue is both bird and ornithologist in one person.[14]

Introduction:

In order to demonstrate the potential for translation to open a productive dialogue and be used as an interpretive tool, I describe the cultural experience of the two authors whose works I have chosen to translate as examples. To justify my choice of authors, May Ayim and Emine Sevgi Özdamar, I first provide a brief sketch of the experience of the Afro-German and Turkish German populations within Germany at the time when these two women were writing. The unique *Gastarbeiter* experience, the racially-charged interactions with soldiers of African descent after the First and Second World Wars, and the history of German colonialism have all affected how Turkish Germans and Afro-Germans are viewed in German society.[15] The narrow and rigid ideas of what defines *Deutschtum* ("German-ness") have fostered the perception that inhabitants of Germany who do not fit the stereotypical "cultural norm" of the middle-class Caucasian German are recent immigrants, the children of guest workers, and/or simply not from Germany.[16] The situation in Germany during the 1980's and 1990's was unique for authors such as Ayim and Özdamar. As Karein Goertz observes in her analysis of the works of Ayim and Turkish German poet Zehra Çirak, "their biographies bear testimony to the harsh

[14] Tawada qtd. in "Workshop Blog," n.pag.

[15] For additional information on this vast subject, please see works by: Carol Aisha Blackshire-Belay; Sander Gilman; Mischa Honeck, Martin Klimke, and Anne Kuhlmann-Smirnov, eds.; David Horrocks and Eva Kolinsky, eds.; Karin Obermeier; and Marilya Veteto-Conrad in the Further Reading List.

[16] As I am unable to go into more detail regarding Germany's current cultural policies at this juncture, please see: Esin Bozkurt; and Thomas Faist and Eyüp Özveren in the Further Reading List.

underside of displacement, alienation, and marginalization in German society," ("Borderless and Brazen" 73) an experience shared by Özdamar.[17]

Though the historical realities of Germany's relationship to its immigrant population set the stage for the difficulties faced by those who did not fit the stereotypical German norm, it was the cultural climate both before and after the unification of the Federal Republic of German and the German Democratic Republic that defined the atmosphere[18] in which Ayim and Özdamar[19] were published. Throughout the 1980's West Germany was often defined as promising and enterprising, against the harsh image of the oppressive East. West Berlin, especially, was a hub for activism, intellectual engagement, and artistic endeavors. As the political and social trajectories of East and West Germany were uncertain, living in the "borderlands" environment of West Berlin fostered new possibilities for the future. After the Berlin Wall fell on November 9th, 1989, the back-and-forth discussions between East and West leaders on political and social policy-making produced a volatile year. One of the slogans of the reunification movement, "Wir sind ein Volk"[20] ("We are one people"), exemplifies the atmosphere of nationalism that seemed to exclude any and all persons of color. This drive for a unified-through-exclusion Germany was rampant at the time. Racial tension reached a fever

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[17] For an overview of the experience of Turkish Germans, both during and after the influx of *Gastarbeiter/Innen* to Germany, please see Cheesman 69-74.

[18] For an intimate account of the Afro-German experience, please see, "Racism Here and Now," in *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out.* Ed. Opitz, May (*see also* Ayim, May), Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1992. 125-227. Print.; and "Das Jahr 1990: Heimat and Einheit aus afro-deutscher Perspektive." *Entfernte Verbindungen: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Klassenunterdruckung*. Ed. Ika Hügel, Chris Lange, May Ayim, Ilona Brubeck, Gülsen Aktas, and Dagmar Schultz. Berlin: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1993. 208-14. Print.

[19] This is not to imply that the late 1980's and 1990's were the only time the authors discussed here were published. Cultural climates have changed in Germany since the dawn of the 21st century, but given Ayim's untimely death in 1996, I choose to restrict my examination of Özdamar's works to those produced to a similar time frame so as to focus on the similarity of their experiences. Özdamar is still published widely and her most recent novel appeared in 2003.

[20] As seen in documentary footage in *Hoffnung im Herz: mündliche Poesie: May Ayim / Hope in My Heart: Oral Poetry: May Ayim***.** Dir. Maria Binder. Orlanda, 2006. Film.

pitch, culminating with a number of violent crimes being committed against Afro-Germans, Turkish Germans, Germans of color, and immigrants. Karein Goertz declares that "the process of recognizing and accepting ethnic diversity as an integral part of Germany's national identity has been one of heated public debate over the past decade and a half, since the traditional concept of German identity is rooted in an ethnically exclusive idea of *das deutsche Volk* ("Borderless and Brazen" 69). The backlash against foreigners (and people who are perceived as foreigners) in Germany has continued to be a major focus in political and social agendas, demonstrating just how reluctant that nation has been to see itself as a multicultural nation.[21]

Despite the difference in their personal histories, Ayim having been born in Germany[22] and Özdamar working as a *Gastarbeiter* before eventually settling there,[23] their work has often been classified under the same name: *Migrantenliteratur*.[24]As Fischer and McGowan describe it, this catch-all term ostensibly refers to texts specifically written by immigrants and other "non-native" Germans writing in German.[25] The literature, however, has

> attained a diversity contradicting all attempts to label it. *Gastarbeiterliteratur* (guest-worker literature), *Migrantenliteratur* (migrant literature), *Ausländerliteratur* (foreigner literature), *Literatur deutschschreibender Ausländer*

[21] For a discussion of the "Immigrant Nation" issue in contemporary Germany, please see Chase, Jennifer Lynn. "'We Are Not an Immigrant Nation': Race, Sexuality and Citizenship in the New Germany." Diss. U of California, 2009. *DAI* 70.01 (2009). Web. *ProQuest*. 8 July 2014.

[22] For more biographical information on Ayim please see Adams, *Blues In Black and White*.

[23] For a detailed overview of Özdamar's biographical trajectory, see Adelson 40.

[24] Another controversial term, *Migrantenliteratur,* is appropriate for use in my thesis. Although outdated, it reflects how the works discussed herein have been categorized for the majority of the time they have been in publication. I acknowledge that the term is obsolete and note that has been replaced by the expression "Texte von Autoren/Autorinnen mit Migrationshintergrund" / "texts by authors with immigrant backgrounds."

[25] For a recent overview, see: Hübner, Klaus. "Hardly Anybody Any Longer Says 'Immigrant' – German Literature by Authors Whose Mother Tongue is not German." *Magazine – Cultures on the Move.* Web. *Goethe Institut*. 11 July 2014. <http://www.goethe.de/lhr/prj/daz/mag/ksz/en10134309.htm>

> (the literature of foreigners writing in German): all are either too narrow . . . potentially patronising or indeed racist (in implying that these texts are inferior appendages to some culturally homogeneous 'real' German literature), or so general that they erase crucial socio-economic, ethnic, cultural, gender or generational differences between the authors, between the patterns of experience their texts manifest. (2)

In the 1970's, such work was referred to specifically as *Betroffenheitsliteratur*,[26] a form of literature that used autobiographical narrative to affirm the "commonality of experience" (Fisher and McGowan 4) of persons stigmatized as guest-worker, immigrant, or foreigner. I note these obsolete terms in order to establish for my reader the cultural climate in which these texts were situated upon publication. For authors who are women of color, such a classification of their literature can be seen as marginalizing their works. Michelle Wright declares that, for Afro-Germans, "as the contributors to *Showing Our Colors* attest," despite having been born and raised in Germany, they are "consistently misrecognized as *Africans,* even after extensive conversation has established a German birthplace, parents, and education for that Afro-German" (297). Karein Goertz attests that "although Afro-Germans are [often] native Germans by birth, language, socialization, and citizenship, they are treated as outsiders in a society that defines itself primarily as white" ("Borderless and Brazen" 73). Although the reality of each individual's

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[26] Fisher and McGowan define this literary phenomenon as follows: "The texts [of the 1970s] generally focused on immediate *Gastarbeiter* experience: workplace, hostel, station, government office, the annual journey home; the themes were the dreams of German as promised land of material wealth; the reality of heavy, dirty, unhealthy work in poor conditions and the experience of prejudice, indifference and rejection; homesickness and dreams of return; life between two worlds and two languages. This binary view reflected both the *Gastarbeiter*'s internalisation of the host culture's simplistic polarisation, and his undifferentiated projections and stereotypes acquired before, during and after the migration process. This literature was seen as, and to some extent was *Betroffenheitsliteratur*: therapeutic writings by victims of social processes, articulating, objectifying and establishing the commonality of experience by recording it in simple, conventional, usually autobiographical forms" (4).

experience is not as clear-cut as her statement, for the most part "foreignness is attributed" to both Afro-Germans and Turkish Germans ("Showing Her Colors" 307).

In order to resist misrepresentation and/or being stigmatized, the authors discussed here construct texts that explore interstitial identities, challenging the stereotype that a German identity must necessarily be a *white*[27] identity. Rather, they suggest that identities are made up of a multitude of different and variable elements. Karein Goertz sees May Ayim's poetry as creating "a hybrid language, in which African and German are no longer antagonistic, mutually exclusive terms, but rather two interwoven strands of a 'textured identity'" ("Showing Her Colors" 307). Meliz Ergin states that, in sharing her experience of being "at home in the state of exile," Özdamar allows both author and audience "to perceive homeland and hostland in terms of their entanglements, rather than as two incommensurable paradigms" (35).

I implement my theory by translating excerpts from the poem "afro-deutsch I" and the short story "Mutterzunge." These works, by May Ayim and Emine Sevgi Özdamar respectively, demonstrate that "the exploration and construction of a hybrid identity between cultures [also] takes place on the level of language" (Goertz, "Borderless and Brazen" 79). For Ayim and Özdamar it is the "experience of being an outcast" that "links the personal and the political" in their works (Goertz, "Showing Her Colors" 309). The idiosyncratic voice and distinctive wordplay of these authors provides the translator with a wealth of intricacies that can be utilized in creative ways when rendering the text into English. Translations, in resisting simple equivalence, foster ambivalence. The equivocation within the text can then be read as a literary embodiment

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[27] For discussion on the construction of "white" identity, please see, for example, Frankenberg, Ruth. *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2005 (1993). Print.

of the paradoxical nature of identity that these two women used to define themselves, while also resisting definition.

Why "afro-deutsch I" and "Mutterzunge"

I have chosen to translate these particular works because of their capacity to express liminality. What I mean by this is that these texts employ the German language in such a way as to inform the reader of the linguistic, cultural, and personal identifications of the author. While May Ayim wrote primarily poetry and non-fictive prose, Emine Sevgi Özdamar is known as a playwright and author of both short stories and novels.[28] In comparing Ayim and Özdamar, I am working with two different genres of literature: a poem and a short story. My goal is not to place these two works under a comparative light, but rather to see where they share modes of cultural communication. In both of these works the language used reflects the authors' awareness of their subordinate positions within German society, positions that nonetheless fostered flexibility and adaptability. I do not claim that these are autobiographical texts, but merely that the cultural climate and social experiences of these authors influenced the way in which they wrote. Unlike texts of more canonical German authors that are more well-known in the target language of English, the texts of Ayim and Özdamar are not. Since the texts are less established in the target readership it is less likely that a single interpretation has been heralded as the "correct" and definitive version. This relative obscurity allows the translator more opportunity for interpretation.

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[28] Please see the Further Reading List for additional works by these two authors.

I am interested particularly in pivot points *I* identify in each work–a key word or phrase upon which the translation can turn. As another translator or scholar may find it elsewhere, each pivot word is specific to *my* interpretation. They are parts of the larger texts upon which I fix based on my specific interpretation at that moment. I treat the pivot word to be translated as a node from which a wealth of meaning may spring. In some ways my interest in these pivot words and their translation potential parallels Yasmin Yildiz's analysis of "Mutterzunge." For where Yildiz analyzes the "operations of literal translation, though relying to a degree on an underlying Turkish matrix," as casting "that language in a new light, as being both necessary and insufficient to the text" (160), I go one step further and examine how this new light is found in the English translation. As the Turkish idiomatic expressions gain "this at once threatening *and* evocative quality only when defamiliarized in literal translation" (Yildiz 160) into German, I argue they gain again new and diverse connotations in their English translation. The carrying-across of meaning from one language to the next is an ongoing process. Ayim's poem, too, gains a wealth of new connotations and associations when it is rendered into English, although the trajectory differs as Ayim's mother tongue was German. As Goertz has observed, however,

> May Ayim turns towards her Ghanaian heritage and transforms the derogatory label of difference, as defined by Germans, into a rich source of meaning. Through her poetry, she creates a hybrid language, in which African and German are no longer antagonistic, mutually exclusive terms, but rather two interwoven strands of a 'textured identity.' ("Showing Her Colors" 307)

The texts I have chosen to work with, the poem “afro-deutsch I” by Ayim and the short story “Mutterzunge” by Özdamar, are, respectively, each complementary pieces of a larger whole. Ayim’s poem has a companion piece, entitled “afro-deutsch II,” and the two poems are but a small part of the collection *blues in schwarz weiss*. This compilation of her poetic works published in 1995 is the only one that was published in her lifetime, approximately a year before her death by suicide. The poetry of May Ayim deals primarily with themes informed by her personal experience of being Afro-German. Carolyn Hodges, in her article on Afro-Germans, states that many “experienced isolation because most Germans categorized them as ‘foreigners’; this was compounded by isolation from and, ironically, consequent fear of other Blacks and Afro-Germans” (227). Ayim’s work speaks to the history of erasure and oppression to which Afro-Germans were subjected. Karein Goertz says of Ayim, that her “poetry is inherently political” (“Showing Her Colors” 307). Although focusing on themes of being ostracized, exoticized, sexualized, demonized, and excommunicated from the society into which she was born, Ayim’s poetry is nonetheless filled with wit, humor, and hope. Goertz observes that Ayim, in her writing style, “takes pleasure in verbal puns to foreground hidden meanings within and between words” (“Showing Her Colors” 312). Her exuberant and intricate word play “serves as a valuable device to reveal irony, ambiguity and the inherent instability of language and, by extension, identity” (Goertz, “Showing Her Colors” 312). Her eloquent and accessible poetry has, over the last twenty years, become emblematic of the Afro-German movement for recognition and equality. According to Dirk Göttsche in his article on Afro-German self-assertion and identity formation, the poem “afro-deutsch I” epitomizes “Ayim’s humorous satire of residual racism and

colonialist stereotypes in mainstream white German society" (93). The poem, along with its companion piece, stages "only the white voice in a digest of typical dialogues between black and white Germans. . . . [T]hese poems expose German society's inability to acknowledge the very existence of Black Germans and the tendency to cast them as Africans" (Göttsche 93). Ayim, by bringing attention to the plight of Afro-Germans within German society, uses her poetry to shine light on the fact that not all members of society are given an equal footing.

Emine Sevgi Özdamar's short story "Mutterzunge" is the first in a collection of five stories, which also bears the name *Mutterzunge*. The first two stories are connected and feature the same narrator as the central character. Set in a divided Berlin, the Turkish German narrator continually queries herself as to "when it was that she lost her mother tongue. In response to her own question, she recalls seemingly disjointed scenes from the past that all figure as possible moments of loss" (Yildiz 147). "Mutterzunge" examines the relationship between Turkish and German from the perspective of someone who speaks German as a second language. The second story, "Großvaterzunge" ("Grandfathertongue"), however, is concerned with the history of the Turkish language and its relationship with the Arabic script. According to Yasmin Yildiz, the "guiding motif" of Özdamar's text "is the loss of the 'mothertongue'" (147). However, I argue that Özdamar's text speaks less to the concept of *loss* as it does to the idea of a cross-pollination of languages. Meliz Ergin similarly states: "Özdamar dismantles the notions of homogeneous national and linguistic identity by mapping out the disjunctive new idioms that arise through crossings across cultures and languages" (26). Özdamar's complex interaction with the German language, I contend, refers to more than an

understanding of either life in Turkey or in Germany. The narrator in “Mutterzunge” is fascinated with how phrases are constructed and delineated by the German language. Her interactions with language are evocative of Yoko Tawada’s comments from an interview with Monika Totten, wherein Tawada remarks: “I cannot bend and fold this foreign language the way I want to. I perceive it rather like an independent entity” (“Writing in Two Languages” 95). The narrator of “Mutterzunge” also appears to interface with both German and Turkish directly, rather than merely using language as a tool of communication. Her particular use of German “draws on the history of German . . . [and] references the discourse on the post-Holocaust German language that aims to come to terms with a tainted language, yet she transfers this problematic to Turkish” (Yildiz 166). This ability to tap into a uniquely German historical perspective enlivens Özdamar’s work. The text reveals a life lived in the interstices between two languages and cultures. For “[i]n place of a hierarchy of languages and cultures, . . . the narrator experiments with diverse languages and roles in an impressionistic narrative, simultaneously participating in and remaining detached from the cultural references available to her” (Ergin 30). This liminality between languages can be drawn out and used as an interpretive tool in the process of translation. Yildiz continues, noting that the “translational exchange between the two tongues creates a constellation in which German offers the means to remember and rework a Turkish trauma–a trauma brought on by state violence, but brought to language by migration” (168). It is translation that allows for the “recoding” of language, through the return of concepts once familiar as something new and strange (Yildiz 168). I use this insight to justify my translation process because of–not in spite of–its individuality, and demonstrate how translations can be productive. Adding to the

dialogue surrounding the text and providing insight into the text by creating additional meanings removes the cloak of privilege from the source text.

Conclusion

I chose to work with these particular authors because their experience as women of color in German society forced them to create and maintain a pluricultural identity–as being *more* than between two points. Recalling Anzaldúa's statement about hybrid identity, "we perceive the version of reality that our culture communicates," by "having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages" (Anzaldúa 78). The multiplicities of hybrid identity represent culturally dynamic sites of tension that translation occupies linguistically. Much of the scholarship that surrounds these two authors consists of literary analyses of their works in German and in translation and examinations of their roles in Germany's literary history. However, very little work has been done on the explicit shifts that occur when their complex texts are transposed from German to English. Translating the texts affords the translator the opportunity to draw upon the liminal identity that Ayim and Özdamar demonstrate in their texts, thereby drawing out new meaning and enriching the dialogue between the texts. Tina Campt observes that the Afro-German women being interviewed by Dagmar Schultz in *Showing Our Colors* "insist upon a plurality of identifications. For the notion of a single, primary identity, or even distinct multiple identities seems inconceivable to them due to their position between ethnic and cultural identifications and the configurations of meaning attached to them in German society" (116). I argue that a plurality of identities is evident in texts both by Ayim *and* by Özdamar. Culture is always heterogeneous and in flux, as

revealed by hybridity, just as language is subject to the forces of heteroglossia. The benefit of recognizing the fluidity of such a "variety of identifications" is that it "also destabilizes the opposition between dominant and marginal socio-cultural positioning. For rather than constructing their identity simply in opposition to German culture," it is possible for those who claim a plurality of subject positions "to include seemingly conflicting ethnic, national, and cultural elements by weaving them into the larger fabric of their lives" (Campt 116). The hybridity inherent to both authors is specific and important because it reveals that concepts of monolithic and pure cultural identities are incorrect.

Michelle Wright, writing about the experience of Afro-Germans, declares that "[m]ost often, Afro-Germans identify themselves as connected to a rather rich array of nations, ethnicities, and communities" (302). This suggests that they construct "their identities less in terms of a single racial identity than as a plurality of mutually inflected ethnic and cultural identifications" (Campt 113).

As Yasmin Yildiz recognizes in Özdamar's use of German, translating by employing one's knowledge of more than one language can be read as a way of working through and giving new voice to emotions and experiences. In her analysis of a passage from "Mutterzunge," Yildiz says: "the words in the new language produce an enlivened environment full of suggestive movement. It is in these German words–that is, in the form of a nonnormative translation–that new affects are produced" (165). I argue that her statement is also applicable to the process of translation, for I, too, create a compelling new language in my retranslations. In translating it becomes possible to uncover and discover an additional layer of connotative meaning and free-found associations.

Drawing on my own experience as a second-language learner of German, I embrace the ambivalence in my retranslations.

Chapter 4: Retranslations

A single word can inspire me. When this happens, I want to create a whole text out of that one word, which seems to contain the entire microcosm. That is my dream, and it is how I often start writing. I use variations of this work, place associations next to each other, create word chains like branches of a tree, and play with different forms and shapes. Finally, I realize that I have to create an ending, but I don't find an ending because I don't want to and cannot have a result. A text is a weird and wonderful plant that has grown in all directions out of a single word knot.[29]

Introduction

In my thesis so far, I have revealed how the poetry and prose of May Ayim and Emine Sevgi Özdamar function to dismantle rigid and stultified ideas about the delineations between texts, languages, and cultures. As these authors construct their texts to "interweave supposedly discrepant elements from different cultural realms, they de-construct binary oppositions of self and other, and describe their identities in terms of a fluid, acentered, and constantly changing locale," as Goertz has observed in her analysis of Ayim and Zehra Çirak (Goertz, "Borderless and Brazen" 74). Taking that deconstruction to the next level, I contend that *translation*, and a critical examination and exploration of the *translation process*, may hold the key to a new form of discourse–one in which cultural difference can be discussed openly, with agency and admission, and can

[29] Yoko Tawada qtd in Brandt, Bettina. "The Post-Communist Eye: An Interview With Yoko Tawada." *World Literature Today* 80.1 Jan-Feb (2006): 43-45. Web. *ProQuest.* 11 July 2014.

add to the conversation without reducing the reality of cultural difference or reinforcing divisions between cultures. As I translated the German text into my mother tongue of English, I found that my comprehension of the cultural relationships of which I was part was deepened. That is, how my relationship with my language and culture became a part of the translation process and affected how the resulting target text was formed. The re-envisioning of the source text entitles the translator to a level of authorship; positionality and ideology become intrinsic to the text, affecting not only subsequent translations, but also the very way the source text is interpreted. My voice, as I ingest and translate Ayim and Özdamar's work, enters into a chorus of voices, a polyphony, creating both dissonance and harmony. By looking at my own position and praxis, in dialogue with previous translations that reveal social and historical positioning and context, I can explore the influences of the translation in both directions–how it affects my understanding of both English and German versions.

Putting Theory into Practice

I explore how I approached and interpreted a small selection from texts by May Ayim and Emine Sevgi Özdamar, specifically sections that speak to my earlier comments regarding how the authors express an interstitial identity in their texts. By keeping a critical eye on my own positionality, I can delineate my responses to the source text and previous translations of the texts that I have encountered. Then I am able to approach my retranslation process by mapping out how my reactions affect my inclination towards or away from certain terms. Claire Kramsch, writing in the context of language-learning, states: "the experience of the foreign always implies a reconsideration of the familiar"

(Kramsch 5). I do not intend to produce a definitive translation, nor do I intend to "take on" and criticize another translator's interpretation and claim superiority. Rather, I wish to demonstrate how translating these texts enlarged my view of what translation affords the study of literature and culture. I hope to provide an insight into how the act of undertaking a translation can encourage a greater understanding of cultural *difference*. Returning to Bhabha, I see the fluidity of ambiguous translation. When a text is constantly being opened up to re-interpretation, it embodies cultural difference. Bhabha declares that an acceptance of the unfamiliar–such as my appeal to embrace the instability found in interlingual translation–may "open the way to conceptualizing an *inter*national culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*" (Bhabha, *Location* 56, emphasis in original). Through the elucidation of my attempt at translation, I endeavor to expose the broadening of scope: that is, how the capacity for interpretation is increased. Karein Goertz declares that the identities of Afro-Germans and Turkish Germans "should not be understood as a finite end-product, but rather as a position from which fixed notions of what it means to be German or Turkish or African are pulled apart" ("Borderless and Brazen" 75).

Therefore a translation of these texts requires a re-positioning–a new place to stand and pull apart notions of identity as immutable. Rather than having "the aim . . . to bring back a cultural other as the recognizable, the familiar, even the same" (Venuti, *Translator's Invisibility* 14), I argue for a recognition of ambivalence. When notions of identity, culture, and language are opened up in a continual process of discovery–an ongoing dialogue between positions–the construction of meaning is revealed as an ever-

widening process. According to Günter H. Lenz in his work on border discourses, "the project of cultural translation, of the translational, of processes of translation and retranslation from one culture to another culture with a signifying difference at the crossing of cultures" is to emphasize "the interactions from *both* sides of the border. This process "therefore is not only inherently dialogical, but also asks us to move beyond the monological positioning of a self-reflexive cultural critic toward a critical dialogue (and confrontation) with critics positioned on a different side (or site) of the border" (147, 149-50). A dialogue is ultimately the appropriate location for ambivalence to be realized, for it is in discourse that binary oppositions are prevented from becoming rigid and fixed. As in a conversation, the reality of many interlocutors means that multiplying voices bring new connotations and associations to the conversation. By examining the positionality of each participant, one may determine the direction from which the translators approached the text and the directions towards which they guided it. When the reader discovers and grasps these refractions, it allows, like light passing through a prism, for new connotations to enrich the text and the heteroglossia that surrounds it.

In translation, the text enters into an obvious state of flux, the movement it makes between places and times becomes overtly visible to the translator. As the translation shifts between selected words based on individual connotations and meanings, it destabilizes the established or *fixed-upon* meaning of the text. By immersing oneself in that tension, examining the boundaries and limits, and by exposing and critiquing one's intention, it becomes possible to be aware of one's active role in the literary process. Such a perspective is inevitable because translation is, by definition, an interpretive process of declaration and reconstruction. In taking this stance openly, the translator

reveals his or her specific positionality and can make it productive. The process of translation broadens the scope of the potential dialogue and the new voices involved enhance its communicative value. Such a dialogue, where a language and/or a text can be seen speaking to another, benefits from the new voices such a conduit brings to the work.

Turning a critical eye on myself as a translator forces introspection: I see the effect my subjective interpretation has had in creating an alternative text and in altering the atmosphere surrounding the text for the future. And in providing my working process and showing my audience where I struggled, I can better demonstrate the trajectories and offshoots that are to be found in the dialogue between the source text and target text. In seeing translation as a *generative act*–rather than a reductive or transformative one–I can enter the conversation actively, on equal footing with the source text and outstanding translations. In observing *the resultant pattern of positions* I am better able to discern where my voice fits in the resultant harmony or discord.

I limit my close examinations of my step-by-step process to specific excerpts from Ayim and Özdamar that I feel most eloquently represent the conundrum and the potential in translating these particular texts. In explaining and examining my process, I hope to spark further thought about the avenues and trajectories that are opened in literature as a translation progresses and transgresses new boundaries. This widening and deepening of the texts–source texts and translations–is stimulated by the conversation between them. In doing the translation myself, I gain a unique critical perspective on the work. Mapping where I come from and how I come to the poem, I can discern my position and how it affects my interpretation. The recognition of my positionality

provides me with new insight into Ayim and Özdamar's works and the particular constellation of language, culture, and identity that informed my translation process.

Translating Ayim

The day I was born, a lot of stories of my life came in the world. Each one carries its truth and wisdom … I can only tell my story as it made its impression on me.[30]

An emblematic voice of the Afro-German movement, May Ayim was born in Hamburg, West Germany, in 1960 to a Ghanaian father and a German mother and raised in Münster, West Germany, by foster parents. Her childhood was difficult as the only person of color in her small community and she struggled to feel a sense of self-worth.[31] However, in her short life she successfully completed her dissertation on the presence of Africans and Afro-Germans in German history, which makes up the majority of the momentous publication *Showing Our Colors* (*Farbe bekennen*),[32] contributed widely to the Afro-German movement, and wrote challenging poetry that many regard as deeply moving. She lived, read, and wrote almost exclusively in German. Although she learned and spoke English, assisted and directed translations of her work from German into English, and performed some of her poetry aloud in English at lectures, events, and festivals, German was the tool that allowed her to speak her mind. Silke Mertins, in her short biography of May Ayim, writes: "[i]f May felt at home anywhere, it was in her

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[30] Opitz 204. May Ayim was born Sylvia Optiz, but went by May Opitz when she was involved in the publication of *Farbe bekennen* (*Showing Our Colors*).
[31] For a more in-depth discussion of Ayim's biography, please see Mertins in *Blues in Black and White*.
[32] Since its appearance in German in 1986, *Farbe bekennen* has become one of the canonical texts of the Afro-German movement. I have elected to cite the English translation throughout to preserve fluidity and maintain accessibility for the benefit of non-German readers.

mother tongue. She snuggled in its folds, sharpened them into word-weapons, to hit ‘the bull’s eye’ with a formulation, took it apart, put it back together anew, contorted and against assumptions disfigured it or played around with its letters” (147-48). Her eloquent and erudite use of German in her poetry often appears to be writing back against assumptions made by the predominantly white German society that encircled her–such as the assumption that she had learned German as an additional language and/or was an immigrant from somewhere in Africa. As a native speaker of German, a scholar of linguistics and history, and a speech therapist, Ayim possessed a knowledge of the intricacies of the German language that she used to full advantage in her poetry and prose (Goertz, “Borderless and Brazen” 72). Her poetry is almost exclusively free verse, without a regular metre or rhyme scheme, and with an emphasis on the spoken texts’ cadence and rhythm. Her style was influenced by the clarity and sparseness of the poetry of the African-American scholar and activist Audre Lorde, her friend and mentor. Ayim’s work is also informed by her knowledge of African and African-American oral traditions.

The poem I have chosen to examine is from her first book of poetry *blues in schwarz weiss*, published in 1995, a year before her death. This poem, “afro-deutsch I” was written in 1985 and presents an intimate look at the subtlety of racism as it is demonstrated in seemingly casual conversation. The title of this work, which is translated consistently as “Afro-German,” although the choice of capitalization varies, is significant. In the preface to *Showing Our Colors*, Audre Lorde recounts her experience teaching at the *Freie Universität Berlin* (Free University of Berlin) in 1984. The term she proposed to encapsulate the women of color who attended her class was Afro-German, and the women had never heard the term before, only having been subjected to slurs and

derogatory language previously. Ayim, as a participant in those classes with Lorde, was present when the first term for re-claiming a positive identification for women of color was established. Her choice of title reflects her self-declaration of her identity as Afro-German. The text of the poem, however, stands in stark contrast to that powerful assertion. Imagined as a dialogue between two people, one of the participants remains silent while the active speaker reacts and responds to stimuli to which the reader is not privy. This poem engages the reader, as the blanks in conversation invite one to speculate on what might trigger such responses in the active speaker, whose racist and offensive presumptions serve as criticism of the racist undertones Ayim felt in the social mores of both the West Germany she grew up in and the newly reunited Germany after 1990. Staged as a transcript, albeit of only half the conversation, Michelle Wright states that the poem underscores "the metaphorical erasure of self, or material existence, that the Afro-German undergoes in German racist discourse" (299). It is conceivable to imagine the words of the active speaker as an amalgamation of genuine conversations many Afro-Germans have had to endure. The identity of the silent figure is explicitly stated in the first line ("Sie sind afro-deutsch?"),[33] yet the remainder of the poem is a diatribe that seeks to efface this clear declaration of identity. The silence that speaks within this poem also effectively serves to draw attention to the status of Black Germans at the time this poem was written–erased by being singled out, and singled out by erasure. With this poem, Ayim takes control of an oppressive situation by turning the language of the oppressor around, displaying it as a poem that actively exposes the danger of regarding identity as being locked into rigid "us" versus "them" binaries. The speaker of the poem

[33] "You are Afro-German?" The use of "Sie" indicates that the narrator is using the formal form of address, rather than the more personal "Du," possibly indicating that they are meeting for the first time.

"moves from astonishment and incomprehension towards a formula he can understand by (re)producing identity as a binary: 'African and German'" (Wright 299). The reader of this work, given his or her position as outside the conversation, is witness to the uneven binary between the two figures of the poem and between being deemed African or being deemed German.

I discuss in this section how my translation process has been affected by the ways in which the poem has been previously translated. The mutability of the poem struck me while I was attending an English seminar on Afro-German identity and literature at a German university.[34] The class was assigned a reading of a translation of the poem in English. When discussing the reading during the seminar, most of the class revealed that they had not read any works by Ayim before that moment. I was shocked to hear how different the poem, with which I was familiar, appeared in that context. In being read to native German speakers in English, which was either their second language or an additional language, the immediacy of Ayim's experience within Germany was removed. After I re-read the German source text, I knew I wanted to find out how native German speakers would respond to Ayim's words in their mother tongue. Having been given the opportunity to present my research in a short talk to the class, I elected to provide the class with all the versions of the poem that I was aware of and ask them to discuss their responses. During that presentation, I asked the class if they found the disparity between the source and target text to be surprising. Upon the discussion that followed, the students expressed little surprise at the alteration to the text. Several offered glib maxims such as the seemingly ubiquitous "lost in translation," and "the original is always superior." I

[34] The seminar in question, "Audre Lorde and Berlin" was taught by Dr. Christine Vogt-William, in the 2013/14 Winter Term at the Albert-Ludwigs Universität Freiburg. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Vogt-William for sharing her knowledge with me by allowing me to attend and participate in her class.

realized that it was *my* way of reading in German and in English that made the texts seem so divergent. It was my positionality that brought that specific meaning to the text for me. This event truly opened my eyes to the ambivalence of the translation and the potential to be found in that process. I was determined to try to discern how I could tap into this mutability.

In translating the excerpt that follows, I discuss the potential for dichotomous translations of a specific word. The contrary and yet equally valid meanings and connotations attached to each English rendering exemplify the ambiguity of translation. Translations likewise inhabit that impossible space between the rigidity of the fixed written word and the instability of meaning. The only way to reconcile these two points is to recognize their changeability–by celebrating the fluidity of a hybrid identity or the ambiguity of the meaning of language as it progresses through dialogized heteroglossia.

So 'ne Herkunft, das prägt eben doch ganz schön.
Ich z.B., ich bin aus Westfalen
und ich finde
Da gehör' ich auch hin …

Ach Menschenkind! Dat ganze Elend in der Welt!
    Sei'n Se froh
    das Se nich im Busch geblieben sind
    Da wär'n Se heute nich so weit! (16-23, Ayim)

A background like that, it sure does leave its mark

Me, for example, I'm from Westphalia,

and I think

that's where I belong…

Lord have mercy! All the suff'rin' in the world!

    Be glad

    you didn't stay in the bush.

    You wouldn't be where you are today! (15-22, Adams)[35]

A person's origin, see, really leaves quite a

    Mark.

Take me, I'm from Westphalia,

and I feel

that's where I belong…

Oh boy! All the misery there is in the world!

Be glad

You didn't stay in the bush

You wouldn't be where you are today! (15-22, Müller)

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[35] In this translation from *Showing Our Colors* the poem is merely entitled "Afro-German" rather than "afro-german I."

The word I hone in on here is *Menschenkind*, which functions as a pivot for the two very dissimilar translations cited here. In the 1992 translation of *Farbe bekennen* (*Showing Our Colors*) this line appears as "Lord have mercy, all the suff'rin' in the world" (19). In Anne V. Adams "Blues in Black in White,"[36] a compilation of essays and poems by Ayim published posthumously, this poem appears in a retranslated version. In the translation by Ilse Müller the line is rendered as "Oh boy! All the misery there is in the world!" (21). When I read the rendering of this word as "Lord have Mercy," as appears in the *Showing Our Colors* version, it produces a very specific image in my mind of the speaker–it conflates Ayim's voice with that of my impression of the stereotypical "Southern Black Mammy" voice,[37] as I understand it from my cultural and academic experience. This association may be problematic, as it creates an association between two disparate historical realities and may even conflate them. However, it may also lead readers to a fruitful discussion of the difference of experience between African-Americans and Afro-Germans. Responding to this translation, even critiquing it, can bring about elucidation as to the different cultural contexts in which the source text and translation were written. In Ilse Müller's version, however, "*Menschenkind*" has been transformed into "Oh Boy!" This is very much a casual, off-hand use of language, evoking in my memory the type of expression used in comic strips and by sports announcers of the 1950's. It appears cavalier, and although this insouciant quality can be conferred upon the speaker of the poem–the presumably white stereotypical German–it

[36] Despite the confusing title translation (*Blues in Black and White* is a literal translation of the title of Ayim's book of poetry *blues in schwarz weiss)*, this book more closely echoes in content the German publication of collected works by Ayim, *grenzenlos und unverschämt*.

[37] For a discussion of the conflation of "common" or "base" speech patterns with the stereotypical "Mammy" figure of American literature and history, please see Kowalski, Jennifer. "Stereotypes of History: Reconstructing Truth and the Black Mammy." *transcending silence* 6 (2009): n.pag. Web. *U of Albany Archives.* 9 July 2014.

does not have that characteristic in English. Rather it breaks the flow of the dialogue, and reduces the impact of the remainder of the sentence.

So how do I, as translator, approach the hurdle of translating such a term? The first step is to address my position. When I approach the word *Menschenkind*, I do so through the lens of my mother tongue, English. Claire Kramsch, says that "[n]ewcomers to the language apprehend the linguistic system in all its fantastic dimensions: the sounds, the shapes, the unfamiliar combinations, the odd grammatical structures. And they give meaning to all" (13). The first complication I come across, working from within English (the language I think in) to German (the language I read in and translate from), is to read this term as a 'false friend' or a linguistic equivalent of the English word "Mankind." However, were I a German native speaker, my interpretation may be quite different, as I would be under the influence of different heteroglossic forces. To clarify, I provide an example: a German native speaker with knowledge of the Bible might be familiar with the word "Menschenkind," as it appears numerous times throughout that text. That reader may then bring biblical associations to Ayim's poem upon reading that term, perhaps connecting it to missionaries or Christian charity, or even to an outdated and archaic way of speaking that recalls previous generations. The German language reader builds a particular structure of associations and connections to that word, connections not likely to correlate with that of a reader who had German as a second or additional language. Of course, it is impossible to know how each individual who comes to this word in the poem will interpret it. That is the beauty of translation, and its power–it can embrace instability and embody a naturally occurring flux.

As a translator with the flexibility and instability of language in mind, it becomes relevant to examine many possible trajectories for a single word. For example, *Menschenkind* occurs in the biblical story of the Tower of Babel.[38] This connotation is especially potent for a translator, as the story of the Tower of Babel deals with the legend of how the nations of the earth became multilingual. In a translation I produced of this text previously,[39] I ultimately selected the word "people." This resulted in the line, "Oh people, all the unhappiness in the world." I initially chose this word because it conveys a concept of sorrow as a worldwide issue; however, I am keenly aware of what would be *lost* by this conversion–the biblical connections. Would a rendering of the line as " Oh God's children, all the sufferings of man" be suitable? I would argue not, as it almost sounds clerical–as though it belonged in a sermon. It would not fit with the image of a stereotypical white German spouting a tirade against a perceived foreigner. My associations and my experience are always influencing and wielding power over the direction my translation wants to take. In other words, the accumulation of a lifetime's experiences, knowledges, and intertextualities come to bear upon the precise moment I initiate a translation. My understanding of the text is encompassed by dialogized heteroglossia.

Unlike the retranslation of Özdamar that follows this section, my work with Ayim's text is concerned more overtly with how my relationship to my mother tongue acts as a lens in my understanding of Ayim, as my introduction to her work was through

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[38] The plural form of the noun Menschenkind appears in this passage regarding the Tower of Babel: "Da fuhr der HERR hernieder, daß er sähe die Stadt und den Turm, die die Menschenkinder bauten." (Genesis 11.5). *Luther Bibel.* n.pag. 1912. Web. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lut/genesis/11-5.hml> 26 May 2014.

[39] I translated this poem in full in October 2013 for my contribution to a poster session at the *Women in German* Annual Conference.

reading it in English. As my knowledge of English leaches into my understanding of German, my translation processes are affected. My instinct is to make Ayim readable in order to bring her to a new audience. However, in order to combat this, I must consciously observe the shifts in meaning that take place during translation. I must be cognizant of her positionality and allow her intentional linguistic complexity to speak to the text and inform my translatorial process. Yoko Tawada, in a discussion of her issues in translating one of her novels from Japanese (her mother tongue) into German (a language in which she also writes and publishes), describes this difficulty similarly. She states: "when I write Japanese I want to forget German. But on a deeper level I am always corresponding with *the idea* of the German language. That's why I can't translate this novel into German" ("Workshop Blog" n.pag., emphasis added). Like Tawada's relationship to her mother tongue, I recognize that when I read Ayim's words in German I am always reaching back towards my first encounter with her in English. I recall how Tejaswini Niranjana, in her book *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context*, demands that translation scholars be aware that "[r]ewriting is necessarily based on the act of reading" (89), and I use this insight to recognize the correspondence and ongoing dialogue between my two languages. My observations of how I read Ayim into the text of "afro-deutsch I" affects all of my interpretations of her work. It can allow me a productive position from which to rewrite, although it requires a declarative and open recognition of the ambivalence of that translation. The benefit of this critical analysis of the translation process is that it makes obvious the conclusion that all translations are points of reference on an endlessly fluctuating non-linear trajectory. Such a supposition removes the stability of a conceived origin point. For a foreign

language learner, such as myself, "the symbolic nature of language is enhanced as connotations multiply across codes and additional meanings thrive in the interstices of different linguistic systems" (Kramsch 13). By remaining aware of this inevitable adjustment of sign and signifier, I can "carry across" (*übertragen*) meaning from my interpretation of the German and imbue my English retranslation with new connotative power. With this conscious commitment to ambiguity in mind, I hope to provide retranslations that serve as jumping-off points–new positions from which new rewrites may be undertaken.

> Your parentage left quite a mark on you, didn't it?
> I, for example, I'm from Westphalia
> and I find
> that's where I belong.
>
> Humanity, what a wretched bunch!
>> You're lucky
>> you're not still out there in the bush!
>> You'd never have made it this far.

There is no definitive answer that solves how to join all of the connotations inherent to an interpretation, only alternative constructions based upon one's temporal perspective. In reproducing a version of the text for my thesis, the immediate concerns of the specific temporal moment in which I am working influence the direction my interpretation takes. The first line of the stanzas represented here ("So 'ne Herkunft, das prägt eben doch ganz schön"), I have previously translated in a very similar fashion to

both Anne Adams and Ilse Müller. However, examining this sentence afresh, I now discern an attitude that has become much more threatening. Responding to this inference, I compose a version of the line that is overt and explicit in its rudeness. I wanted this line to hit the English-language reader; to reveal the abuse that Ayim must have been subjected to daily. In order to contrast this polemic text, however, I chose to rework my interpretation of *Menschenkind*. I fix upon "humanity," a word that evokes in my mind mercy, mortality, and fellowship. This word, couched within such a tirade of abuse and negativity, brings out in the line the sense of community and the inspiration that *I* find in the works of Ayim. I wanted to express the spark of hope and compassion that reading Ayim has instilled in me and share it with a new audience. The ambiguity between my own vascillating interpretations and those I present here highlights the aspect of my translation theory I most chiefly want to impress upon my reader. The conversation with a text is never finished. There is always room to add meaning to a text and to approach a word differently. Each incarnation of a text is equally valid for it reflects the position of the translator at that moment in which he or she *fixes* upon a word in the target language to represent a word in the source language. These connections enrich both languages and ultimately both cultures.

Translating Özdamar

In a foreign language, words have no childhood.[40]

As a Turkish German author writing in German, Özdamar's North American reception has been almost entirely informed by the dissemination of translations of her

[40] Özdamar, *Mutterzunge* 52.

work.[41] Before beginning this project, I was only familiar with the story in English. I had read the existing translation "Mothertongue," translated by Craig Thomas in 1994, in the collection of short stories of the same name and so was only peripherally aware of its origin in German. Özdamar's capability in her additional language of German creates an enigma for the German reader, as it does not conform to the stereotypical view of immigrant speakers' level of fluency in German. "Mutterzunge," written in 1990, is a five-page story that challenges the German-language audience. It does not follow a linear narrative structure, instead it moves among several vantage points: the narrator's point of view, the dialogue of other characters, memories, and reported speech. Özdamar purposefully employs different 'types' of German. This ranges from conventional *Hochdeutsch* (High or Standard German) with strict, formal grammatical rules, to playful *Migrantendeutsch* (Immigrant German), which makes use of nonstandard and potentially thorny constructions, and creates an experimental and unique form of German.[42]

Addressing the source text for the first time, I was mindful of how my status as a second-language learner of German, as a native English-speaker, and as a reader who had previously been introduced to an English interpretation of the text, informed my reading. Paying special attention to both the oral and written *flow* of the text, I attempted to produce a translation of "Mutterzunge." In recognizing that this intention is my own, informed by my personal experience, I gradually came to realize how an in-depth examination of just the title and the first line could illustrate the greater problem I sought to articulate. Focusing on these few words and observing the lines of communication that

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[41] Please see the Further Reading List for published translations of Özdamar's texts.

[42] The terms "Hochdeutsch" and "Migrantendeutsch" may be considered outdated (please see: *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*, available online at http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp). However, they are still used informally in Germany and their explicit nature is beneficial in the context in which I use it.

emerged between Özdamar's text and my own, I hope to make evident how the translator may function as a lens, *as one layer of many*, if you will. Rather than responding to the disparities between English-language reproductions of the text, as I did with Ayim, with Özdamar I wanted to see if I could carry-across (*übertragen*) some of the lyricality that she had suffused in the German. Özdamar's hybridizing approach to German is impacted by her relationship to her first language of Turkish, and I sought to emulate and expand on that potential in moving from German to English.

Özdamar begins the story with a brief explanation of the nonsensical German neologism,[43] *Mutterzunge*, that makes up the title: "[i]n meiner Sprache heißt Zunge: Sprache" (Özdamar, *Mutterzunge* 9). Yasemin Yildiz, in her study of multilingualism, feels that for a German-language reader encountering it for the first time, the title word is at once familiar and unfamiliar. Both parts, *Mutter* (mother) and *Zunge* (tongue), are clearly German, as is the principle of linking two nouns to create a new word. Yet this neologism departs from the idiomatic expression *Muttersprache* (mother tongue, literally mother language) and thus inscribes difference into the word (Yildiz 143). Such a linguistically-inscribed difference is more than an expression of otherness. This expression is a *conscious unification* of two disparate elements, namely, the rigid construction of what is "German" and what is "Turkish."

I first discuss the intricacies of re-working the title. "Mutterzunge," which literally translated becomes "mother tongue," is an English idiomatic expression that is synonymous with first or native language. In German, however, *Mutterzunge* is a nonsense word. The link it establishes in its English translation between the abstract

[43] For more information on the evolution of neologisms in languages, please see: Rey, Alain. "The Concept of Neologism and the Evolution of Terminologies in Individual Languages." *Essays on Terminology*. Benjamins Translation Library Vol. 9. Amsterdam: John Benjamins P, 1995. 63-84. Print.

concept of language, *die Sprache*, and the physical organ of the tongue, *die Zunge*, is not in as common usage in German as it is in English. Therefore, in my translation, I sought to create a dissonance, a discomfort that could echo the awkwardness of the term in German. Attempting to balance the wealth of connotations that are afforded to English, while retaining the emphasis I felt was placed on the physical connection, I tried a number of alternative translations. These ranged from the potentially vulgar, "Motherlips," to the obscure "Maternal Argot," before I found a term that had the sort of symmetry I was looking for: Mothermouth.

Why did I decide that Mothermouth was the ideal term for my translation? The principal reason is that the disquieting sensation I recognized in German but could not articulate *is* present in my understanding of this English term. Saying Mothermouth aloud not only feels unwieldy, but it also feels *incorrect* to me, a native speaker of English–as though it were a foreign language idiom that could not be carried over. The conscious choice to echo the maladroit speaker in the source text privileges a native English reader, which reflects how I interpreted Özdamar's intention. Recognizing my presumption, I must analyze and declare the repercussions of that supposition. Additionally influencing my choice is the denotation of "mouth," the opening in the lower part of the human face, surrounded by the lips, through which food is *taken in* and from which speech and other sounds *are emitted*, represents a body part that can be both receptive and productive–like a translation. This inversion of the mouth, inherently understood as a space that both consumes and generates, contains a similar connotation of movement as is found in the German. *Zunge* functions as an indicator of how the narrator moves through the story, bending back-and-forth from place to place to disseminate meanings. "Mouth," however,

is further distinguished in the following ways: it can refer to a person's talkativeness or impudence, to an opening or entrance of a structure that is hollow, concave, or almost completely enclosed, the opening for filling or emptying something used as a container, the muzzle of a gun, the opening or entrance to a harbor or bay, and the place where a river enters the sea. These visual images all reinforce the concept of the mouth as a place from which meaning is generated, harking back not only to the power of speech and the word, but also to my hypothesis: translation can be a generative tool. As a verb, to mouth can mean: to say (something dull or unoriginal), to utter very clearly and distinctly, to move the lips as if saying (something) or in a grimace, and to take in or touch with the mouth.[44] My choice of term addresses who I envision as being my audience, took into account my position and interpretation of the author and the source text, as well as exploring the denotative and connotative possibilities that my understanding of English as a native speaker brings me.

I argue that Mothermouth has the additional advantage of being able to function in conjunction with the references to it that occur throughout the text, beginning with the first sentence. *In meiner Sprache heißt Zunge: Sprache.* This opening sentence is easily rendered as: "In my language, tongue means language," a straightforward enough passage to make transparent, as English contains this precise idiom. I presume that native English speakers will recognize the convention of saying tongue and meaning language. By expressing this sentence in plain, intelligible English, which so conveniently contains the same idiom, a sense of commonality between the narrator and the English-language reader is established. Establishing such a rapport, however, removes the sensation of

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[44] All definitions of "Mouth" are paraphrased from the *New Oxford American Dictionary,* and were accessed electronically on August 24th, 2013. Full bibliographic entry in Works Cited.

difference by domesticating the translation to provide readers with an ease of understanding. Readers feel they can imagine the experience or that they may have experienced parallel feelings to those of the narrator.

Initially, I thought the sense of displacement I sought could be achieved by simply substituting an alternate noun into the phrase. I knew I could not insert a word from another language other than English into the sentence, because the narrator's first language is not made clear in this sentence. Is it Turkish? German? Or some other language entirely that she refers to as hers? We are not to know. The masking of the narrator's origins is deliberate. The choice of translation here can produce a variety of different results. For example, if a translation encourages a level of commonality with the English language reader, the delicate complexity of a hybrid existence is obscured, altering the relationship between the thrust of the sentence's meaning and the reader-response, taking it one step further away from Özdamar's specifically Turkish-German foreign constructions.

I was unable to find a synonym that I felt was appropriate by continuing to use standard English. I struggled with the use of "lips"–"In my language, lips mean language." I found the sexual connotations inherent in English led the text in a direction I felt was incongruous with the theme. Next I substituted "mouth" for "tongue," but this also created an inelegant sentence that felt insufficient–"In my language, mouth means language." This awkward sentence merely reiterated the title, but did not enlarge the context. Neither choice is superior; but both have different reverberations in the target language.

Unable to find a suitable substitute noun for tongue, my next tactic was to transform the main clause of the sentence completely, replacing both nouns with verbs. "In my language, we say one tastes and eats words." This incarnation, though it brought out the lyricality of the language, was too expressive–it unraveled the meaning for the reader. By that I mean that it suggested that the text would require a deeper and more involved approach from the reader; rather than simply being *read*, it would have to be *digested*. This version did not emphasize the difficulties of being different, but rather glamourized the state of strangeness. A *domestication* of the text results in the erasure of Özdamar's unique Turkish German voice, and this speaks to a larger erasure of narratives of immigrant experience, insofar as their experiences are *made familiar* to the target audience.

I knew I wanted to retain the modifier of "In my language," because of the rhythm it created. Beginning with a clause, the reader is drawn into the sentence, and the addition of a comma creates a pause. A similar pause is found in the German source text, though the punctuation mark is a colon preceding the final word, and so the pause is more pronounced. Özdamar's attention to the cadence of the German language demonstrates her mastery of it. She is willing to challenge the conventional. Her care and attention to German cadence and her intimate understanding of the rhythm of German fashions the impression of nonchalance and ease. This competency stands in contrast to both the stereotypical conception of immigrant speakers of German and to the deliberately non-standard German expressions chosen. I sought to emulate in English such a rift between reader expectation and the actual construction of the text by Özdamar.

I ultimately opted for an elaboration and re-design of the sentence in order to make it more opaque. My reasoning is such: as Özdamar writes in German, but makes clear that is not *her* language, a level of dissonance, of disconnect, exists between the German-speaking audience and the unnamed language the narrator refers to as her own. She declares that she is different, an outsider from elsewhere. Her origins and her language do not resonate in the same way as German. From the outset, the narrator declares herself to be someone who does not fit perfectly into the mold of her new language. Like a tongue, she moves, jabbing and prodding herself to create sounds, to form words, to establish meaning.

I returned to my interpretation of the title and my consideration of the variety of meanings available to the word mouth. If I were to make mouth explicitly a verb, by using the infinitive form ("to mouth") I could draw upon those connections that are associated only with its active form: to mouth platitudes, to enunciate precisely, to move the mouth as if speaking, to pull or make a face, and place one's mouth or lips upon an object. Such a translation furnishes the reader with a number of evocative connotations, ranging from mimicry to silence. By replacing the colon with a comma, it alters the staccato opening and replaces it with fluidity, sounding comfortable and confident in English. Yet, it also creates a dissonance, a discomfort for the native English-speaking audience that echoes the awkwardness of the German and evades a sense of commonality between the narrator and the English-language reader. In order to keep the sentence relatively readable and elegant, I choose a parallel construction, emerging with: "In my language, *to mouth* means *to speak*."

Such a reproduction of Özdamar's opening sentence sets up a very specific way of reading the text. This re-envisioning of the source text entitles the translator to a level of authorship; positionality and ideology become intrinsic to the text, affecting not only subsequent translations, but the very way the source text is interpreted. Yildiz through her knowledge of an additional language, Latin, is able to draw another layer of intricacy out of this word. She states:

> Mother tongue, *Muttersprache*, *langue maternelle*: although these words have come to be read as signs of authenticity, origin, and uniqueness, their origin lies elsewhere–namely, in translation. They are literal translations of the Latin *lingua materna*, which initially referred to the vernaculars over against the learned language Latin. 'Mother tongue' is thus, ironically, always already a translated concept. (147)

Yildiz's quote exemplifies the power of translation as I have demonstrated here–additional meanings are always available for further interpretation.

Conclusion

Using my imaginative connotations and connecting with both languages in unexpected and unique ways, I use my status as a foreign language learner "to manipulate the foreign symbolic system in such a way as to express [my] personal experience," resorting to "metaphoric, poetic language" (Kramsch 99). My voice, as I ingest and translate Özdamar's and Ayim's work, enters into a chorus of voices, creating both dissonance and harmony. My translation enters into the vast heteroglossia of language, but more specifically the heteroglossia surrounding the texts I have retranslated. Drawing

on my "subject position," which is informed by my multilingualism as one aspect of my positionality, I gain access to "more modalities of signification than one single symbolic system" (Kramsch 99). The polyvalence of expression available to translation emphasizes its ambivalence and its resemblance to an ongoing dialogue. I have attempted to carry over the meaning that I read through my second-language learner interpretation of the German, conscious of my own positionality, as it influences and affects my retranslation process. Without an understanding of positionality and a conscious and critical self-awareness, a translator might focus on producing versions designed purely for transparency. This quality, according to Venuti,

> is an illusionistic effect: it depends on the translator's work with language, but it hides this work, even the very presence of language, by suggesting that the author can be seen in the translation, that in it the author speaks in his or her own voice. If the illusion of transparency is strong enough, it may well produce a truth-effect, wherein the authorial voice becomes authoritative, heard as speaking what is right, true, obvious. (*Translator's Invisibility* 249)

Kramsch declares that "part of the privilege of using a foreign language is the ability to transform it" (99). However, I maintain that translators are responsible for accounting for those transformations. In creating my own translation and documenting the steps I take, I am able to show the repercussions of the steps taken: what choices result in altered meaning, how word connotations are lost or gained, and what I felt must be changed in order to make sense for a different cultural audience. By providing my own translation approach and interpretation, I can observe and dismantle my process as I work between languages. In providing explanations and examinations of my process–a projection of

how a translation progresses and transgresses new boundaries–I aspire to stimulate further thought about the avenues and trajectories that are ready to be opened in literature. As translation is always a radical re-envisioning of the source text, the translator may feel entitled to a level of authorship.

In recognizing that translation dismantles texts and reconstructs them in a process of exchange, it is possible to interrupt the one-directional flow of knowledge and gain new insights from exploring the texts from within an inter-relational zone of fluctuating and destabilized translation. Interpretation will always be limited by one's temporal stance, but it can also be seen as boundless, in that, if one were to retranslate this passage again, the points of emphasis might fall on different sections, different words, different connections, each time. Meaning is always created in relation to a subjective stance, allowing for limitless possibilities.

In an ideal world, the publication of the complete texts that I began to translate here would be online. Given that communication and dialogue are so essential to the understanding of a generative translation process, the opportunities afforded by a medium such as the internet are hard to ignore. The potential to realize the data in a space that allows for additional comment, annotation, and indeed, conversation, as the internet does, would provide generative translations the space needed to simultaneously challenge our predetermined ideas that "truth" can exist as a singularity and to enrich ourselves by broadening our perspectives.

Although data visualization is not my field, I envision an interactive webpage wherein the texts are displayed–source text on the right half on the screen and translation on the left–and mouse roll-overs provide additional information about each word. For

example, if a user were to place the cursor over a word in the source text a pop-up dialogue box would appear, displaying a list of potential translations and equivalents in the target language (in this case English). Likewise when a user hovered his or her cursor over a word in the translation, the history of previous annotations and alterations made would appear in another pop-up box. This would allow the user to engage with the material by observing the different layers of the interpretation as it continued to progress. Suggestions to the annotation and interpretation would be inputted through a forum-based conversation window at the bottom of the screen.

Since I began to visualize what this website would look like and what its operative goals would be, I have been introduced to the website *Rap Genius* (re-branded as simply *Genius* in July 2014), created by Tom Lehman and Illan Zechory. To quote from the mission statement, *Genius* views texts as "living documents" ("About Genius" np). By giving users the freedom to annotate and edit previous annotations, *Genius* allows texts ranging from poetry to news broadcasts to rap lyrics to "transform into definitive guides as people … from around the world add bits of knowledge to them" ("About Genius" np). This process of "accretive magic" ("About Genius" np) is a productive way of engaging with a sentiment that closely echoes the intention and design of generative translation. Having already established the programming and code required to make such a website function, I intend to draft a proposal to *Genius* that would expand the outstanding working model to translation, as I feel it is a practical and logical next step.

Gloria Anzaldúa states that, "the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures" (80). The ambivalence

of translation frees the text to "straddle" a multiplicity of cultures and positions and it also embodies the concept of cultural difference, as derived from Homi Bhabha's *Location of Culture*. In an interview with Jonathan Rutherford, Bhabha says that

> although there is always an endorsement and encouragement of cultural diversity, there is always a corresponding containment of it. A transparent norm is constituted, a norm given by the host society or dominant culture, which says that 'these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid'. . . .[w]ith the notion of cultural difference, I try to place myself in that position of liminality, in that productive space of the construction of culture *as difference*, in the spirit of alterity or otherness. (qtd. in Rutherford 208-9)

Much like translation's emphasis on and obsession with equivalence and fidelity, the social drive to embrace diversity can be counter-productive in actually recognizing the experiences of minorities. In following this reasoning, I concur with Bhabha that it is only through an understanding of cultural difference and an exploration of "hybridity," that "we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves" (*Location* 209). This "othering of oneself," I argue, is critical, for it allows us to observe ourselves from different and disparate points. Translations, like the hybrid texts of Afro-German and Turkish German authors, involve a "liberated voice" whose "idiom is bold and playful–language transformed and made strange through the re-constellation of semantic and linguistic codes" (Goertz, "Borderless and Brazen" 69). This process of "re-constellation" will always provide new points from which to view ourselves as other. Cultural difference is to be found when languages, cultures, and individuals glance off one another: it is to be found in translation.

Summary and Reflections

This is my voice, my weapon of choice.[45]

The focus of my thesis is to propose an original critical theory of translation for the further development of translation studies and as an analytical and interpretive tool for the study of literature in translation. To this end, I propose an interpretive hypothesis based on the concepts of heteroglossia, hybridity, and positionality. Elaborating this hypothesis and exploring the most functional method for administering it, I establish my own theory of *generative translation* and test this theory by creating new retranslations of excerpts from works by May Ayim and Emine Sevgi Özdamar. My theory offers potential for new meaning to be generated through the application and examination of translation processes. Having applied this theory to texts that embody the concept I wish to articulate–that of liminality and the potential found with that instability–I demonstrate my theory's potential as an interpretive tool that operates without prescribing meaning.

In researching this thesis, I was introduced to the works of Audre Lorde. Lorde was an African-American poet, activist, and friend of May Ayim. She was instrumental in the development of the term *Afro-Deutsch*, and helped the Afro-German movement to gain strength when she taught at the *Freie Universität Berlin* (Free University of Berlin) in 1984. Her words as to why it is important to speak, to write, and to dialogue are especially relevant for this thesis. Lorde wrote:

> For those of us who write, it is necessary to scrutinize not only the truth of what we speak, but *the truth of that language by which we speak it*. For others, it is to

[45] Jones, Grace."This Is." *Hurricane.* Wall of Sound, 11 Nov. 2008. CD.

> share and spread also those words which are meaningful to us. But primarily for us all, it is necessary to teach by living and speaking those truths which we believe and know beyond understanding. Because in this way alone we can survive, *by taking part in a process of life that is creative and continuing, that is growth*. (Lorde, "Transformation" 43, emphasis added)

Recognition of the inherent fluidity of things we consider to be stable, such as identity, language, and culture, is what makes room for growth. The very quality of language that makes it constructive is its openness to change. The forces of heteroglossia are constantly solidifying and dissolving meaning as they attach and detach to words and phrases. Hybridity, an endlessly unfolding process of cultural enunciation, allows for the re-definition of the context of heritage and furthers exploration in the undertaking of self-identification. Embracing this ambivalence, allowing a text to move *through* re-interpretation as it is influenced by linguistic and cultural factors, is critical for generative translation. It allows the interpreter of the texts the freedom to create meaning for him or herself. An examination of the multiple positions that may be established between the author and/or translator and the text grants insight into how each of those layers affects those that come after. To return to Alcoff's discussion of positionality, I declare that the key to making translation a generative and productive accomplishment lies "in formulating a new theory within the process of reinterpreting our position, and reconstructing our political identity in relation to the world and to one another" (436). Difference has been seen as a barrier, a chasm that prevents one from seeing through the eyes of another. However, I subscribe to Audre Lorde's conviction that embracing difference is the key to further understanding. Differences of interpretation, like any

difference, “must not be merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic” (Lorde qtd. in Byrd 26). To generate “the power to seek new ways of being in the world” can only be discovered “within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal” (Lorde qtd. in Byrd 26).

To demonstrate just how fluid a translation may be, and the depth of meaning that can be found in a text in translation, I retranslate from German to English examples from the works of May Ayim and Emine Sevgi Özdamar. Ayim and Özdamar represent two different communities (Afro-German and Turkish German) that have been (and continue to be) socially marginalized within Germany. In order to combat ostracism and stereotyping, both authors claim space through their texts to express a multicultural identity and to establish positive identifications for themselves rather than locating their cultural difference as “in-between” two binaries, and thus excluded from both. My approach encourages a translation process that addresses the boundless possibilities their complex identities offer, by cultivating an understanding of meaning as expansive, rather than limited to binary oppositions. My strategy does not seek to replace the cultural difference of these authors with perseverance and faithfulness to an *original meaning,* but rather recognizes the meaning that each translation can bring to the text and the dialogue that can grow from those new interpretations. Enlarging upon the concept identified by Venuti, I label these new interpretations *retranslations*, because they are affected by and aware of previous translations.

What do my retranslations say to, or mean to, the reader? How do they reflect the forces of heteroglossia and hybridity? What do they reveal about the process of translation, interpretation, or positionality?

As retranslator, I can declare that my version has entered into heteroglossic dialogue with the source text and previously existing translations, thereby destabilizing the binary opposition between "original" and "translation." Analysis of my translation of the texts by Ayim and Özdamar reveals my personal awareness of the cultural and cross-cultural connections to the text. In each case, I chose a fragment to elucidate the difficulties and possibilities fundamental to the process of translation. The reconfiguring of the text–my appropriation of meaning based on my specific interpretation–is presented to an audience in conjunction with a caveat: this is how I read this, so this is how I wrote it.

As a theorist, however, I can explore the fluidity and flux of creating and recreating a text. I reject a binary rhetoric that emphasizes finding a personal balance between adherence and invention; between fidelity and inspiration. Rather, I recognize the inefficacy of such an enterprise, and I encourage an ongoing, ever-expanding translation praxis. With this praxis mindful of the futility of resisting heteroglossia and hybridity new meanings and constructive interpretations can be brought into dialogue. Producing a retranslation that is cognizant of my positionality reveals my individual location within the social-historical context of my *here and now.* When my position is examined in comparison to other translations and/or the context of the source text, it sheds light on the specific social and historical contexts of those moments.

I call for an active reader, and I call for a deliberate and conscious translator, and I call for these two roles to work in conjunction. Translators are not privileged to work *in a space that is somehow between* languages or between cultures, on the contrary they have a responsibility to engage with a process–and, indeed, a discipline–that is always in motion, always in flux. Therefore, when approaching a text to interpret it and read meaning into it, it must necessarily be done conscious of what is being carried to the text. As interpreters and communicators, translators are responsible for recognizing how each of us, how everyone, and every communication, is steeped in a constantly changing commingling of cultures and languages.

Lorde's call for a positive evaluation of difference echoes Bhabha's endorsement of cultural difference, as a strategy for resistance that allows for the continual re-articulation of culture and meaning. By seeing culture as open-ended, rather than a stable and fixed system of reference, difference can be used to continue the conversation. This perspective continually brings the "us" versus "them" rhetoric under scrutiny as the identity of "us" or "them" is always open to discussion and ever-changing definitions.

As a second-language learner of German I am privy to a certain stance. Having English as my mother tongue and having learned German at the university level, I have a way of interacting with German that is unlike a native speaker. I cannot read German in the same way, I must bring my own meaning to the text as I understand and interpret it. My sense of my second language is informed by and enriched by the connections I make with and the interpretations I draw out through English. Interpreting a text in my second language grants me a wealth of imaginative connotations that I can attempt to "carry-over" ("*übertragen"*) to my mother tongue of English. This enrichment of both languages

can be witnessed best in the translated text, which serves as a vital embodiment of the living, fluctuating, expanding nature of language. Kramsch states that second-language learners are "like poets and advertisement designers," in that they are particularly inclined to "go beyond the truth value of language and draw on its subjective potential" (13). Such a position provides a translator with the means to enrich both languages and texts–source and target–and stimulate an ongoing dialogue, wherein new connotations are added and included. This assists in cross-cultural communication, as it breaks down barriers erected by the notion that exclusive truths are available only to native speakers. For native speakers of a language, growing up in a linguistic system where standard usage of signs and signifiers is expected and encouraged, speakers develop "the expectation that 'words mean what they say and say what they mean'" (Kramsch 13). I argue that many translators, particularly those who either undergo translator training or those who are introduced to texts in their second language at a university level have the potential to augment both the target and source languages through translation. Kramsch posits that "[b]eginning learners and non-native speakers who have not been socialized in the target culture make quite different associations, *construct different truths* from those of socialized native speakers" (13). As Yoko Tawada states:

> [i]n your mother tongue, words are attached to your person, so you rarely experience a playful, pleasurable sense of language. In your mother tongue, thoughts cling so closely to words that neither can take flight independently. In a foreign language, however, you have something like a staple remover: it removes what makes things cling to one another. ("From Mother Tongue" 143)

Disengagement from fixed meanings allows a translator, conscious of his or her status as additional language learner, to playfully and creatively imbue language with new and unexpected meanings. To return to the metaphor of the translation as constellation, in my retranslations I read into my second language an image that is meaningful to *me*, but those who came before me read them in such a way as to make a meaningful picture for *them.* Translations, as living and fluctuating embodiments of the ongoing nature of heteroglossia and hybridity, behave like constellations. Stars remain visible and open to interpretation despite always being in motion under the many diverse forces of the universe. In producing an interpretive text, a translator unlocks the infinite potential of meaning. Harnessing the potential that my understanding of German as my second language offers, I recognize my subject position as multilingual and produce retranslations that *construct different truths* (Kramsch 13).

All communication is necessarily interpreted through a lens that is informed by one's personal, social, and cultural experience. And as we progress that mingling deepens and places an ever-widening pool of meanings at our disposal. And as we study those meanings "we become more active participants in the interpretive process and are initiated into a new form of communication" (Goertz, "Showing Her Colors" 312). Participating in this new form of communication gives the reader the opportunity to recognize all participants without privileging one voice–or cultural identity–over another.

Françoise Lionnet understands the act of reading to be "a two-way street," of which she writes, "by implicating myself in my reading, I am in turn transformed by that activity"(28). Taking this assertion a step further–beyond merely reading, where the reader recognizes how his or her position affects and influences the text being read–

translation makes manifest the positionality of all those involved. Translation is a multilateral dialogue that brings both author and translator (who is necessarily a reader) into conversation, each voice adding to a chorus that continues to deepen in complexity with each new interpretation. The translator observes his or her position as both reader and re-writer and communicates this position through the creation of the new text, enriched with additional meanings, connotations, and connections. This discourse is an ongoing interpretive process, as translations are assembled by new interpreters and simultaneously dismantled by new interlocutors entering the dialogue.

I have many further questions that could not be addressed within the confines of this thesis. For instance, in this work I relied on the specific experience of second-language learners in producing translations–I felt confident in my understanding, as this is my own experience–but in the face of continuing globalization and a rising standard of multilingualism, how will the creation and study of translations change? Translating *into* one's mother tongue is currently preferred by the Western discourse surrounding translation, but will the privileged position of one's first language soon be outdated? A consideration of differences among translation processes by second-language speakers and those who have grown up in a multilingual environment would likely also be fruitful. What can be learned from translating from one's first language and into one's second and vice versa? How will advancing a notion of de-privileging of the source text challenge the hierarchy between mother tongue and additional languages? The most pressing consideration of this theoretical framework is further exploration of how it can be useful in practical applications. In a world that demands equivalence and faithfulness, the repercussions of ambivalence are disruptive. How can a translator-in-training reconcile

being taught that any and all choices are valid? What would a promotion of fluidity mean for the publishing world? In my ongoing research and continuing education, I hope to address these questions and further explore the potential of translation as an interpretive tool.

My thesis, in coalescing the concepts of heteroglossia, hybridity, and positionality into an original theory of generative translation, offers a new perspective on translation's potential as an interpretive tool. In establishing my innovative working theory, I hope to provoke new ways of thinking about the relationship between a source text and a translation and to encourage reflection on how sharing translational interpretations may broaden perspective. In this thesis my goal was to jumpstart translation students and scholars into new and challenging directions. I presented the foundations of a theory that contests the compulsion to find definitive answers. This is an important step that needs to be taken by scholars and translators of today–the recognition of multiple perspectives and the respective truths of those positions. I strive to divulge the hazard of reductive binary reasoning and to extol the benefits of using translation as a tool to open dialogues across languages and cultures. Conversation and communication for the exchange of ideas is pivotal in today's social climate, for it is only through discourse that we can expand our understanding. Translation, in providing a material blueprint (the text of the translation) for further comprehension and discussion, is the epitome of an interpretive tool.

Audre Lorde, too, called for communication, declaring that, "in the transformation of silence into language and action, it is vitally necessary for each one of us to establish or examine her function in that transformation and to recognize her role as vital within that transformation" (Lorde, "Transformation" 43). Translation must be recognized as

more than a mere linguistic process, but a transformative process that provokes new meanings–and the cultural repercussions of these new meanings must be explored. Meaning can no longer be read as an absolute, as a truth–the presence of heteroglossia and hybridity and the acknowledgement of the positionality of the translator require a new recognition: recognition that meaning should no longer be seen as lost in translation, but found anew therein.

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