Queering Translation: Transcultural Communication and the Site of the You

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Translators are often construed as mere intermediaries in transcultural communication, doing little more than transferring packages of meanings that have been unambiguously defined by other parties that really matter. However, translation is hardly innocent, and translation is hardly powerless. Translators produce texts and thereby identities/realities, and this text/identity/reality production cannot happen without interference/intervention from all participants in communication (which includes those parties that are usually theorised as passive, such as translators or recipients). Submission to hegemonic discourses is not a neutral non-decision, but a political act. Therefore, translators take part in the construction of identities. Transcultural communication is an ideal site to expose the cultural constructedness of identities/realities, thereby deconstructing these identities/realities and enabling allegedly passive recipients to see through and behind social constructs.

Keywords: translation, transcultural communication, queer theory, identity construction

In accordance with Butler's (2006 [1990], xix) notion that neither grammar nor style are politically neutral, I will be using 'oq' as an all-purpose personal pronoun and an all-purpose ending for nouns describing people throughout this text. I have deliberately chosen these two letters which contradict all English conventions so that 'oq' constantly nags and jumps out at the readoq, drawing oqs attention to the constructedness of gendered, sexualised, etc. subjects instead of letting oq creep back into a cosy final/-ised/-ising world after one or two sentences. However, I might not have applied this strategy everywhere or consistently and would therefore like to invite You to look for constructed identities/subjects in this text as well.

Introduction: Why should I care?

The question of visibility of marginalised groups – amongst them deviant sexualities, deviant cultures, and translatoqs themselves – features strongly in translation studies (c. f. Keenaghan 1998, Venuti 1994). However, such examinations often presuppose the existence of stable, homogeneous

marginalised identities which then need little more than a little sunlight – visibility – to prosper and thrive. Thereby, they deny/obfuscate that these identities/subjects, whether thriving or not, may very well not already be planted, waiting readily for the right time to emerge, but much rather emerge only through emerging itself: someone's identity is not a pre-social given, but much rather something oq acquires / is being acquired in and through society.

This article is based on the idea that there is no presocial, prediscursive essence to any subject or identity – any I[1] –, but that this subject is instead constructed discursively and interactively. I will argue that transcultural communication as an interface – or, much rather, *trans*face – between, as well as in, cultures can be regarded as an ideal site to expose this cultural constructedness of identities/realities. However, My purpose with this text is not to offer conclusive, one-size-fits-all answers, but much rather to pose questions, including questioning whether My purpose with this text should/could matter to You. Consequently, some or many of the suggestions presented in this article might seem radical, extreme or quite simply egocentric and ignorant as I'd like to offer them as a corrective to hegemonic humanist notions of the absolute/-ly free subject who decides what oq wants, needs, etc. by oqself, free from social/outside influences.

I will firstly offer a short overview of identities and communities, their interrelations and, most importantly, how they are constructed every day. After that, I will look at the belief in translation as the transfer of distinct packages of predefined meanings from one distinct predefined culture to another. I will also examine the idea that translatoqs are active participantoqs in communication, interactantoqs, agentoqs with agency – whether they want it or not. Thereafter, I will introduce the notion of transcultural drag, acknowledging translatoqs' power in text/reality production. Finally, I will investigate the question of right vs. wrong, which will prove to be an uneven fight.

Questionable Identities: *There is no I in I, but there might be some I in U.*

In this article, I understand identity as the outcome as well as the source of two dimensions: personal identity and collective identity. I'd like to stress that they are – or should for the purpose of this text be regarded as – interrelated. Namely, our personal identities are strongly influenced by the collective identities that are available for us to *identify* with; at the same time, personal identities may influence which collective identities arise for others to identify with. Harvey (2000, 146) posits that 'the central question of identity formation – "Who am I?" – is recast as "Where do I belong?"'.

One example of this identification of the self via identification with a collective identity is that of gayoqs whose various identities are often influenced by the blueprint identities they are offered in various 'gay communities'.

What is important here is that there is not only a whole lot of interconnectedness between personal and collective identities, but that both are constructed discursively, that is, in and by society, and that consequently both personal and collective identities are culturally, temporally, spatially, etc. contingent. For the purpose of this article, discourses – which I believe to be the most relevant and, contrary to bodily essentials, influencable site of inter-active identity construction – can be regarded as ways of communicating about something (and communication need not be verbal); importantly, far from merely describing what is *already there* (read: presocial, prediscursive, essential), discourses *produce* what they describe (Foucault 1972, 49). Furthermore, as society consciously or unconsciously constructs both Us and Me (and these two construct each other), I am You are We are governed by societal norms and thereby societal power relations. As identity construction is an interactive process, the passive/-ly constructed actively take part in their own construction, by either submitting to or challenging dominant ideas about what their identity is supposed to look like: af-

ter all, there might be some I in I, or, more importantly, some We in I and some I in We. Although We might not construct Ourselves, We take part in each otheroq's construction. One important example of this taking part in one's own construction is the concept/-ion of so-called *communities*. These communities enforce the unitedness of the homogeneous/homogenised/homogenising deviant subjects by fostering a feeling of togetherness, supporting them with baulks and bars (c. f. Jagose, et al. 2001, Harvey 2000). As a result, subjects that deviate from a community's normative deviance might be marginalised even further. For example, the homepage of a usoq-founded 'club' on a gay dating website that focuses on BDSM relationships/sex stresses that slavoqs with taboos are not welcome, overtly prescribing which slaves are to be considered 'good'/'real' slaves (Sir Erik 2011).

This marginalisation was one main reason for critiques of the supposedly unitary feminist subject: the postulated fundamental/essential female identity was primarily that of the dominant white, heterosexual middle class, who themselves marginalised groups such as lesbioqs (Holland-Cunz 1996). As Crenshaw (1991, 1242) states, 'the problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference … but rather the opposite—that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences.'

Therefore, many exponentoqs of some of today's mainstream deviances favour an approach that is usually conflated under the term 'Queer Theory'. 'Queer' is understood/presented to be the ultimate non-category category, the non-identity identity, basically open for everyone who wants to become part of it (Jagose, et al. 2001). Queer Theory relies heavily on the notion that subjects and identities are constructed. For example, Judith Butler states that '[there] is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results' (Butler 2006 [1990], 34). There is no natural gendered essence inherent to every body, but instead every body produces this essence / these essences oqself. Furthermore, by constantly performing gendered identities, We naturalise them, offering them a place to stay and settle as well as making them seem natural (that is, unquestionable). However, We cannot choose our gender/-ed identities freely and voluntarily, but are constricted in doing so by 'oppressive and painful gender norms' (Butler and Kotz 1992, 83).

Consequently, identities are not neutral, no matter how / by whom they are constructed, but are both constructed in interaction with power relations and placed into hierarchies themselves. As the subject is brought into a context (and without context, there is no text – no sub-

ject), oq enters the manifold fields of power, and while all fields are supposed to be equally fertile and re-productive, some might enjoy an hour more of warm/-ing sunlight.

'Effectively, the attitudes, values, rights and so on of the dominant group are taken to be not the partial construct which they really are, but a universal standard applicable to all. … It is not possible to be in the words of the catch-phrase "different but equal" if the standard of equality is a construct of group A.' (Shildrick 1997, 109; oqs emphasis)

Identity construction, and consequently, identities are not neutral but instilled/infested with discourses, with power, with hierarchies. Consequently, the de-naturalisation of identities, although it might lead to expulsion, is an important step towards making these negative effects accessible to politics (Cameron 2003, 453). Rendering identities questionable contributes to making them political, that is, relevant to discussions of 'valid' citizoqship.

The Neutrality Myth: *Let's transfer some packages of predefined meanings from one culture to another.*

There is a popular belief amongst both 'ordinary peoploqs' and some 'professional translatoqs' which regards translatoqs and interpretoqs as mere intermediaroqs in the

communication between parties that really matter (c. f. Kahane and Smith 2007). Consequently, these irrelevant intermediaroqs are often expected/expect to stay/be/-come neutral and only convey what was unambiguously expressed by someone else in another language.

This 'neutrality myth' is based on the idea that meaning is an inherent property of signs and texts, and that therefore, translation is quite simply the transferring of distinct packages of predefined meanings (that is, meanings that either exist in some kind of read-only space from which they are taken, or that depend solely on the 'intention' of their 'original' authoq) from one culture to another. However, just as with identity, meaning is produced discursively and interactively (Shildrick 1997). It is therefore the act of interpreting – that is, understanding – that attaches meaning to texts, and as translatoqs need to understand what they translate, they attach meaning to the texts they translate, whether they want / believe / are aware of it or not. Consequently, texts aren't simply either a holy/divine/profane original that holds the Original Meaning or an unworthy copy that is destined to fail at conveying said trademarked Original Meaning. Much rather, every text is, in a way, a translation: each time You interpret a text, You attach meaning to it, depending on Your personal biography, that is, Your multiple identities.

Once a translatoq has understood and thereby recreated – created anew, not copied – a certain text, oq produces yet another text: based on a certain source text (which is both situated and recreated in a spatial, cultural, historic, subjective, …[2] con-text), oq creates a target text, which is then resituated and recreated as a new source text by other participantoqs in communication. Authoq A creates a text based on the textual resources available to oq > translatoq B interprets and thereby re-creates it. Then, translatoq B creates a text based on oqs recreation of authoq A's text and based on the textual resources available to oq > 'recipientoq' C interprets and thereby re-creates translatoq B's text. Consequently, recipientoqs, far from merely perceiving/receiving predefined meanings, create these meanings themselves.

However, the authoq/translatoq is not entirely dead. By choosing from the discourses available in a particular situation, oq, under certain circumstances, influences which interpretations will be more likely to emerge than others in which contexts. Discourses, however, are already instilled with the intentions of others that use them (c. f. Resch 2001, Bakhtin 1981), and discourses produce identities and subjects. Furthermore, as meaning is produced interactively, each interactantoq re-interprets and thereby re-creates these discourses.[3] As We have already seen/shown, discours-

es both reflect and create political ideas; consequently, they are not neutral. What this means for translatoqs (and everyone else) is that there are *no neutral decisions* when it comes to discourses or communication in general. By using, and at the same time, submitting to discourses, We validate and reproduce them and thereby the realities/identities they construct. By submitting to certain hegemonic discourses, translatoqs construct identities according to these hegemonic views (and possible influence these views themselves). It seems therefore that translatoqs are no more passively neutral than anyonoq else, but just as actively (and often, unconsciously) political insofar as that they necessarily influence individuals/identities/society in one way or another by choosing to represent/reproduce society/identities/reality in certain discursive ways, be they hegemonic or not.

We will now examine a few examples of how translated texts construct identities. I have chosen a self-help book / advice book / guide for gay men for this purpose. As gay manoqs dis-/un-covering their assumedly previously buried essential sexuality/sexualities might turn to books such as this one, it can be considered to have an exceptional influence how its readoqs construe/construct oqsselves. The book was first written and published in English (Ford 2004) and then translated to German (Ford and Kalkreuth

2004).[4] I will look specifically at its title, who the respective authoqs include/exclude in the communal gay identity, and the stance oqs take on pornography.

The English version of the book is titled 'Ultimate Gay Sex', and its contents are exactly as advertised: the chapter 'sex' spreads over 72 of its 176 pages, and almost all other chapters refer to sex in one way or another. For example, the chapter about 'Your amazing body' concerns itself with 'Erogenous zones', 'Sex and health' and 'Different ages of sex'.

The German version of the book is titled 'Gay Love: Liebe, Sex und Partnerschaft' ('Gay Love: Love, Sex, and Partnership').[5] In the meantime, it is just as interested in the intricacies of giving head and receiving cock as the English version. However, the title sets these unquestionably valuable pieces of advice in a context that is very different from that of the English version. Whilst the latter overtly declares that it is primarily about sex, the German version constructs its *loving gay* subject as someone who identifies oqself not only via oqs sexuality, but actually predominantly via oqs sex.

In one of the introductory chapters – titled 'Diversity'/'Vielfalt' –, the identity of this gay subject is referred to explicitly:

English:
This all makes for an incredibly diverse community of people; a massive, richly textured patch-

work of guys who are sometimes at odds with one another. But even when we disagree, we still have that one thing that makes us family. *Drag queens, gym rats, circuit queens, everyday Joes*—we may be completely different from each other, but we have a shared experience, the experience of living in the world as gay men. (Ford 2004, 18; my emphasis)

German:
Daher ist die schwule Welt so vielfältig, ein buntes Netzwerk von Individuen, die manchmal nicht miteinander auskommen. Dennoch gehören sie zur selben Familie. *Tunten, Muskelmänner, Bären, Landpomeranzen* – sie mögen sich in vieler Hinsicht unterscheiden, aber eines verbindet sie: das Leben als schwuler Mann in dieser Welt. (Ford and Kalkreuth 2004, 18; my emphasis)

Firstly, these passages show that the authoqs indeed presume a gay identity, a gay 'community' even, assuming a 'shared experience' that is common to all gay manoqs. Secondly, whilst the authoq of the English version uses the first person pronoun 'we' to refer to 'the gays', effectively including oqself in the homogeneous/homogenised/homogenising gay identity and constructing and fostering a feeling of togetherness, the authoq of the German version chose to refer to the book's subject(s) – *them* – using less communal third person pronouns.

Finally, both authoqs offer an explicit list of prototypical gay sub-identities: 'Drag queens, gym rats, circuit queens, everyday Joes' and 'Tunten, Muskelmänner, Bären, Landpomeranzen' ('Queens, musclemen, bears, Nancies'). These lists overtly show who gets to be included in / excluded from the assumed and thereby realised common identity. First, drag queenoqs apparently aren't part of the German-speaking 'gay community' and the authoq of the German text marginalises them. Secondly, whilst the English version includes flamboyant circuit queenoqs as well as more mundane everyday Joeoqs, the German gay subjects seem to live at the fringes of normal/-ised/-ising society. They can choose to be either effeminate fagoqs or cuddly bearoqs. Both versions fail to include / exclude a range of even more deviant identities, for example people who are into BDSM. This can be considered to be both a result as well as a source of the marginalised status that these groups have, inside the gay community that is supposedly united in the shared experience of Ultimate Gay Sex as well as Gay Love.

We have now seen/invented how the authoqs of both the English and the German version of the self-help book construct particular gay identities, offering certain people opportunities for identification – a 'home'

– whilst denying them to others, and at the same time shaping their readoqs through these very opportunities and how they are presented. Another example of how the authoqs construct identities is a short info box about pornography in the book. The titles of this info box are 'Is it exploitation?' / 'Ausbeutung?', which already hints at the more-or-less moralising tone that follows.

English:
Not everyone finds pornography appealing or useful. While some of us may enjoy watching guys having sex on film or get off on seeing naked men in magazines, for others this is a turn-off. Many men who are in relationships feel that using porn for sexual gratification is degrading or disrespectful to their partner. *It just depends on who you are and what you're comfortable with*. (Ford 2004, 157; my emphasis)

German:
Nicht jeder kann sich für Pornografie begeistern. Während die einen Spaß daran haben, Männern beim Sex auf dem Bildschirm zuzuschauen oder nackte Körper in Zeitschriften zu betrachten, törnt es andere *schlichtweg* ab. Viele Männer in Liebesbeziehungen finden, Pornografie zur sexuellen Befriedigung zu „*benutzen*", sei erniedrigend oder respektlos dem Partner gegenüber. (Ford and Kalkreuth 2004, 157;

my emphasis)

Interestingly, the German text perceives/produces pornography as even less positive than the English one does. First, it emphasises the negative aspects of pornography. For example, the authoq of the German text claims that 'törnt es andere *schlichtweg* ab' ('for others this is *simply* a turn-off') – in the English version, the corresponding extract reads 'for others this is a turn-off'. Additionally, the sentence 'Pornografie … zu "*benutzen*"' ('"*using*" porn') leans more towards 'abusing' as the authoq of the German text introduces the quotation marks to distance oqself from the word 'benutzen' (in the English version, there are no quotation marks around 'using'/'benutzen'). Secondly, whilst the English version emphasises/acknowledges readoqs' agency, the German version simply ends in 'sei erniedrigend oder respektlos dem Partner gegenüber' ('is degrading or disrespectful to their partner'), without even alluding to the idea that some people might have a different moral stance on the matter. It seems that the authoqs of the two versions, although agreeing on some important points, come to different conclusions.

There are many possible reasons for the differences between the German and the English version of 'Ultimate Gay Sex'/'Gay Love'. For example, it is possible that the authoq of the German text tried to 'adapt' it to its German target audi-

ence (although thereby also adapting the target audience). Maybe oq thought that German gayoqs were more interested in discovering/creating their identity rather than sex than gayoqs in the United States. Maybe Kalkreuth's choices are unconscious reflections of oqs own identity, oqs own alignment/alliance with certain ideas/discourses. Maybe, in the case of the 'missing' last sentence in the German extract about pornography, the 'reason' for this striking difference is just that the translatoq missed that sentence, or that the layoutoq of the German book missed it, etc. However, My focus in this text is not on possible motivations/non-motivations for why a translatoq did what oq did, but rather on the arte-/fact that these doings might influence identity/reality construction.

Transcultural Drag: *Look at me, I'm ~~fabulous~~ obvious!*

We have seen/shown/created that not only are non-neutral identities constructed discursively, but that how they are constructed is also culturally, temporally, spatially, subjectively, … contingent. Cultural practices are 'central to the production of subjects, rather than simply reflecting them' (Simon 1996, 134). Therefore, transcultural communication – and translation as one form of transcultural communication – can be posited as an ideal site for exposing the cultural constructedness of stereotypes, subjects, identities, realities.

In order to understand/create how transcultural communication can expose these cultural constructions, We need to think about what transcultural communication can be. Transcultural communication is often conflated with intercultural communication to designate communication across a language barrier, which is sitting peacefully between one distinct, homogeneous/homogenised/homogenising culture and another. People who communicate transculturally are regarded as walking up to that language barrier and throwing meanings to the other side. However, it might not be as simple as that. First, the idea of homogeneous identities, communities, cultures, etc. is inadequate. Although all sheep in a herd might seem identical to an outsidoq (and although they might even consider oqsselves more-or-less identical), they are not. However, they are not simply different but equal, there are always some that are (made) a little darker than others, who then detect/elect new darker ones themselves and so on. Secondly, depending on which aspects a sheepoq considers most relevant for oqs identity and which aspects other sheepoqs consider most relevant for any sheepoq's identity, oq might be counted towards different cultures at the same time.[6] Finally, as cultures and identities are often not as distinct as We would like them to be, but are in fact diffuse polymor-

phic spectres, so is transcultural communication. As there is not a-cultural, a-social, a-political space that We could ever access (Shildrick 1997), transcultural communication is not simply the interface *between* distinct cultures, but interacts with the (already indistinct) cultures it is supposed to sit silently between.

As transcultural communication transcends homogeneous/homogenised/homogenising cultures in which identities/realities seem all-to-easy to naturalise – but are naturalised in different ways –, it can expose the cultural constructedness of these identities/realities. This is where what I would like to call 'transcultural drag' comes into play. The term is an homage to Butler's (2006 [1990]) idea that drag shows can destabilise heteronormative realities by exposing that gender is performative – a performance. Additionally, transcultural drag seeks to not only unobtrusively nudge certain privileged deviant identities into the sunlight so that they might thrive a little better (maybe at the cost of others), but instead *drag* identity and reality constructions to the light, making them visible and thereby accessible to politics. In arte-/fact, transcultural drag can put into question the very notion of identity – that is, an assumed/created coherent 'personality'.

Of course, there are many ways to do this, which is why We will only look at a few possible variants of queering translation. For example,

when translating a love story, the translatoq could randomly change gendered personal pronouns to challenge the monolithic binarity of gendered reality. If a source text makes strong use of stereotypical identities, the translatoq could further exaggerate them to expose them as stereotypes; or dismantle and dissolve them; or create new, deviant stereotypes; or add subversive footnotes to point at the constructedness of identities and realities.

A concrete example I'd like to offer here is a German translation of Bruno Latour's 'Nous n'avons jamais été modernes' / 'We Have Never Been Modern' / 'Wir sind nie modern gewesen' (Latour and Roßler 2008). This text contains a reference to the child's play 'Wer hat Angst vorm schwarzen Mann?' ('Who's afraid of the black man?' – 'Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?') (Latour and Roßler 2008, 53), which submits to / transports / re-creates racist discourses. In this case, the translatoq could have used another metaphor – or added a footnote pointing to these racist discourses – or overexaggerated the phrase, replacing the 'black man' with any other constructed group, for example, 'Who's afraid of the green tree?'. In this case, the readoqs would probably have recognised the 'original' name of the game and wondered why the translatoq had chosen a different name, or attributed this decision to Latour as the *original* authoq

of the text, which might be more probable.[7]

Which solution seems most promising always depends on the context, and this context includes the identities of those involved in translation, including the authoq of the source text, the translatoq, the clientoq and the active recipientoqs. For example, the clientoq who ordered the translation of 'Ultimate Gay Sex' might not have accepted aggressive transcultural drag for ideological, financial, … reasons. Therefore, the translatoq could have tried not to reinforce/reproduce a belief in monolithic identities, nor marginalise certain deviant groups and bolster social norms. In the explicit list of sub-identities of the unified gay identity, the translatoq could have included additional otherwise marginalised groups, thereby more strongly showing that *the* gay community is in fact fragmented and diverse. Oq could also have moved the focus away from sex or changed the title to something more explicitly connected to sex, or oq could have taken a less moralising stance on pornography.

Importantly, again, it might not be possible or even desirable to take extreme measures. Under certain circumstances, a translatoq might want to strive to be 'neutral'; under certain circumstances, a translatoq won't get a job if oq's aim is to excessively queer texts; under certain circumstances, too 'obvious' transcultural drag might not work; un-

der certain circumstances, radical transcultural drag might be possible and desirable. Of course, these are just a few possible answers to a few possible questions, and a few possible questions to a few possible answers.

Ethics/morality: *Mine, Yours, Ours?*

We have already briefly looked at the problem of what translatoqs should do and what they should not be allowed to do. We have also already examined the belief that translatoqs may not 'interfere' with the intentions of other parties that really matter / donate materiality and discovered/invented that translatoqs are participants in communication, whether they/We want it or not. There is no way of transferring anyone's original intentions, because they are inaccessible to other beings (and maybe even to the *original* oqself). Consequently, one of the traditional pillars of translation – that translatoqs should not do anything that runs contrary to the intentions of the source text's authoq – might not be stable enough to support a roof shielding those translatoqs who would want that from their agency. Additionally, We might want to ask Ourselves whether hegemonic discourses that have been naturalised, and are therefore used unconsciously, can actually be considered to be part of someone's 'core' 'intentions'.

It is usually argued that translatoqs have to consider loyalties to different parties that hold a stake in communication. At first, this was the original authoq and oq alone. Then, clientoqs and passive recipientoqs joined the authoq in partisanship, and finally, the translatoq oqself was allowed to take a place in what was henceforth called the 'power rectangle' (Prunč 2011, 331–2).[8] The underlying idea is that if the translatoq doesn't want to do a certain translation for personal/ethical reasons, oq should decline to do it. However, easy as this solution might seem (if we ignore that translatoqs also inhabit the fields of, for example, economic power), it might be insufficient. Just as allegedly passively submitting to hegemonic discourses has similar effects to *actively* pursuing them (in prolongation and support), simply rejecting jobs might have the effect that someone else takes them. Translatoqs produce texts/identities/realities even by claiming/believing that they refuse to do so.

In parallel to identity, ethics/morality is usually believed to be, above all, a normative source of inspiration, when it is, at the same time, a reflection of the outside world (that is, the fields of power with Us indifferent, but unequal sheepoqs grazing on them). A particular act is ethical only if it is supported by society and the morals it enforces – even though this supportive society might not be the immediate society in the context of which that act is committed. An ethical act is a socially sanctioned act, it seems / is seamed. Consequently, ethics is itself situated and therefore culturally, temporally, spatially, … contingent. In arte-/fact, ideas about ethics/morality might very well be part of or accomplicoq to the very hegemonic mechanisms of identity construction that transcultural drag tries to expose.

Additionally, morality/ethics is more often than not heterogeneous and contradictory. In some cases, We can either submit to the part of morality that forbids passive translatoqs to interfere with communication, or to that part that shuns misogyny, homophobia, racism, etc. By following one part of morality into battle, We attack another one. Either way, We will face a situation of incoherence/inconsequence which cannot be resolved by simply appealing to 'ethical principles'.

Conclusions: *Are there any?*

Over the course of this text, We have looked at Ourselves and at each other, constructing and creating every body and every thing involved in the process. We have discovered/invented that We communicate using discourses that re-produce what they claim to re-present. We have taught/learned that translatoqs have inevitable agency, that they can't escape their agency, and that they exert agency even by refusing agency – in principle, it seems / is seamed, every communicative act

involves agency in meaning/identity/reality production. Importantly, this involves not only the authoqs of 'originals' but all people involved in the making of a text, including an assumedly unassuming/innocent audience. In the examples taken from 'Ultimate Gay Sex'/'Gay Love', You interpreted/created My interpretations/creations of the translatoq's interpretations/creations of a text by an authoq who interpreted/created identities/realities and was influenced by otheroqs' interpretations/creations of identities/realities. Consequently, as transcultural communication is the inter-/transface between/across/in cultures, and as the ways in which identities/realities are constructed are culturally, spatially, etceterally contingent, transcultural communication and translation can be sites in/on/around which the constructedness of these identities/realities can be *drag*ged into the light instead of merely making pre-constructed identities more or less visible. Translatoqs can paint the nails which hold together reality pink and black and indulge oqsselves in transcultural drag. Finally, We have seen/shown that ethics and practice are strongly interrelated. Complex, situated questions don't have universal/-ist, simple, omnipresent and omnivalid answers. I am of course not arguing for a translative/transformative world revolution (if only because that would be unquestionably/unquestionedly unethical). Much rather, the solution I'd like to propose for all these questions – if they need to be liquidated at all – is consciousness/reflexivity on the parts of all participantoqs in communication. However, this final/finite answer is, first and foremost, a question, an offer to You to interpret it, ~~re~~phrase it, ~~re~~create it, answer it, question it.

Endnotes

[1] I will capitalise Me, You and Us throughout this text. After all, We matters/matter – donate/donates materiality.

[2] I repeatedly use ellipsis in this text to indicate that lists that seem exhaustive might in arte-/fact very often not be finite and to invite You to amend/elaborate them.

[3] There are uncountable other authors whom I could have cited to bolster this statement. However, Resch is a translation scholaroq and Bakhtin a dead, white, often and popularly cited manoq, thereby lending me oqs' authority/authorship: what would a text, especially an academic one, be if it didn't have / weren't conceded authority/authorship?

[4] Kalkreuth is the translatoq.

[5] All translations of German passages are Mine/Ours.

[6] We have called these cultures 'collective identities' above.

[7] Additionally, the notion of recognising implies that there is something for the readoqs to recognise that exists outside of their influence. However, by recognising an allusion, readers re-

create them in their own image/-ination.

[8] 'Power tetrahedron' might be a more suitable term as it acknowledges that every partoq influences every other partoq

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