

Baer, Brian James. 2020. QUEER THEORY AND TRANSLATION STUDIES; LANGUAGE, POLITICS, DESIRE. London and New York: Routledge.

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Queer Theory and Translation Studies; Language, Politics, Desire explores the relationship between Queer Theory and Translation Studies on numerous aspects, in relation to Global Sexuality Studies. The book attempts to produce a comprehensive overview and framing for each aspects of the junction between both area of studies. As such, *Queer Theory and Translation Studies; Language, Politics, Desire* overwhelms the reader with complex and specialized subjects and notions that might not be accessible to any interested scholar.

The book consists of six chapters, an introduction and a conclusion. While the introduction and first two chapters provide an insight into the parallels between queer theory and translation studies, as well as a short history of their relationships and cultural implication, the next five parts explore the depths of specific events or subjects, such as the "Gay Anthology" (chapters three and four) or "the Queer Life of Charlotte Von Mahlsdorf" (chapter six).

The main themes of discussion are the issues encountered when trying to define the *queer*, and thus the distinct translation problems that result from such difficulties. The ideas of norms, framing and binarity are also a focus point for most chapters, and a interlacing link between all major arguments. The last major theme of the book is the relationship between art and skill in translation (translation as a *techke*) and its impact on queer translation, identity, and construction. The cultural and language-related aspects of queer and translation (and links occurring between them) is a very interesting and common subject for all previously mentioned themes.

This book addresses a reader that is already acquainted with both Queer Studies and Translation Studies. The basics of the subject are quickly evoked in the first chapters. Some chapters do lack a framing that would orientate or explain the depth of the inquiry. For example, the sixth chapter entitled "From sexual dissidence to sexual dissonance; Translating the queer life of Charlotte von Mahlsdorf", while being one of the most interesting part of the book, does lack clear explanation at least at the beginning. Though there is a complete analysis of the distribution and influence of the translation of Charlotte von Mahlsdorf's memoirs, it seems to lack at least a few paragraphs to discuss in which ways exactly this life is queer.

What is "queer"? Is "queer" a particular idea, theme or reality, or something more obscurely defined? A major issue throughout all chapters is the lack of comprehensive definition. Most attempts gravitate around the

idea of opposition against, or lack thereof, something, usually the norm. A queer identity would be an identity that is not in the current norms. The construction and understanding of queer identities is then a changing and fluid item that might be complex to understand: what is in the norm nowadays is not the same as what was in the norm in the past. In relation to translation, this kind of definition is also a problematic issue, as norms are often culturally dependent. These cultural aspects, such as western-orientated cultural hegemony (or ableist norms) seem to be only glanced over, even though they are major points regarding translation studies.

The major shortcoming is then a seemingly lack of discussion about translation, in a book about Queer Theory and Translation Studies. At least half of the chapters only evoke translation studies and parallels between their subject (anthology, biography, etc.) and the supposed main subject of the book. While being thoroughly interesting, these chapters seem a bit off-hand and disconnected from the argument. There is a paradox between the overwhelmingly fascinating and depth-dwelling content, and the fact that it is not really in touch with what was expected and announced in the introduction. On the other hand, the book contains numerous in-depth studies of specific points and arguments which could have an entire book dedicated to them in order to be exhaustive.

Overall, *Queer Theory and Translation Studies; Language, Politics, Desire* is a comprehensive and soon-to-be essential in dealing with queer and translation subjects. However, there is an imbalance between the core subjects and the specific themed chapters. Some ideas or subjects, such as cultural asymmetry or the psychological aspects of queerness, are mentioned but not discussed and this absence is extremely noticeable. Aside from this point, this remains a remarkable work of research that can complement easily any research collection that wish to deal with queer studies and/or translation studies, as long as the reader possess the theoretical basics for such domains.