

Gender, Tourism and Travelling Translation

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1. Introduction

ESP is a well-established field of study nowadays, and a large number of studies have been addressing issues concerning the specialized languages of economics, law, medicine, advertising, arts, etc. Yet, a gender perspective has not been adopted so far. Tourism is a case in point, especially because the tourist experience is very common nowadays. And if we spoke of a 'tourism' experience, rather than a 'tourist' one, both guests (i.e. visitors) and hosts (i.e. locals) would be included. In that case, the experience would be an all-embracing, almost 'universal' one, as it would probably include a large part of the population all over the world. As a consequence, a question immediately arises: what space do gender considerations have when we describe tourism as a global experience, open to the participation of gendered individuals?

At the beginning of our journey we shall embark on route number one in order to deal with tourists and locals, that is the protagonists of the tourist activity, because people are the first concern of this analysis. The focus will be on the body, or the concept of 'embodiment' as defined in a feminist and post-modern perspective. Not only will the material aspects of the body – including sense perceptions and emotional responses – come under scrutiny, but also power relations and their effects on people's lives. Tourism is a very productive field of inquiry in this respect because it consists of:

- a material activity involving millions of individuals all over the world a symbolic activity establishing

- a series of power relations between a subject and an Other.

These topics will be discussed in Section 2.

Route number two, to be found in Section 3, will concentrate instead on the 'object' of tourism activities, an object which is not to be identified with the Other, meaning a person or a group perceived as the opposite of the perceiving Self, but rather refers to the inanimate objects of tourism practices, i.e. the destination and its landscape, monuments, sites and traditions.

Finally, a concern with the language used both in tourism representation and communication – as well as in its translation as we shall see later – is going to be the final, but no less important, stage of this journey, route number three, and will be discussed in Section 4.

These three routes, representing themes such as language, embodiment and the natural and cultural environment, occupy a central position in Tourism as well as in Gender Studies: they do not run parallel, but, rather, have many points in common, as we shall see in the course of this article. Eventually they will take us to a junction with another path, that of translation, an activity that brings together men and women, their languages and cultural environments in real-life communicative exchanges.

2. Route number one: tourism, gender and the body

Tourism has been defined as “the largest industry in the world” (Dann 1996: 1) and materialist analyses of tourism have flourished in Tourism Studies, particularly in the period from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. Research based on social materialist approaches in tourism management has long interpreted tourism as a site of economic transaction, which

both relies on and recreates the system of global capitalism through the positioning of multi-nationals and the low-paid and often seasonal and casual labour force relations upon which the industry so depends (Carmichael Aitchison 2005: 213).

A binary opposition in economic terms is always displayed in this type of research, and the weak party is represented by low-paid and seasonal work involving the most vulnerable parts of the population: low-income families, migrants, and women. Women in fact play a fundamental role in the tourism industry. Although it is extremely difficult to determine the exact number of women employed in this sector, data have continuously been collected and published. For example, according to the *Global Report on Women in Tourism* published in 2011 by UNWTO (United Nation World Tourism Organization):

one in twelve of the world's workforce is employed in tourism and two-thirds are women, attracted in part by the industry's low entry barriers and flexible working hours. (in Pritchard 2014: 394).

Tourism's flexibility – in terms of working time and arrangements that allow women to combine work and family duties – its large-scale diffusion, and the fact that this field is constantly expanding, make it into the most viable opportunity for women to advance, both from an economic and social point of view. Hence, women's contribution to the tourism industry is very high. And yet, they still account only “for a fifth of all tourism ministers and tourist board chairs” (Pritchard 2014: 394). As in many other professional fields, in tourism women appear to be overrepresented in marginal, low-salary occupations and underrepresented as far as managerial and decision-making roles are concerned. Although tourism does indeed offer women a considerable potential for social and financial improvement, gender discrimination is still at work, not only in a gender pay gap that is conspicuous, but also in less apparent, but no less damaging, symbolic terms. This is especially evident in the massive stereotyping in tourism advertising, for example.

Feminist criticism has embarked on a fundamental critique of tourism discriminating practices by taking into account not only gender issues, but also other forms of social stratifications, such as class, race, age and sexual orientation. Tourism is in fact a social activity practiced by people – women, men and children – who negotiate amongst the variety of subject positions available for them. Moreover, in this activity tourists relate with each other and with the Other, i.e. the locals, the inhabitants of the tourist destinations, who are very often marginalized by a power system regulated by global capitalism strategies. Yet,

although the locals can be more or less distant from the tourists from a linguistic, social and economic point of view, the two parties are bound to enter into some kind of 'lived' relationship with each other. In the actual travel experience the tourist encounter is far from virtual: in fact, it consists in real-life, 'corporeal' encounters. As Swain Byrne (1995:247) has put it:

tourism, as leisured travel and the industry that supports it, is built of human relations, and thus impacts and is impacted by global and local gender relations.

A 'critical turn' in Tourism Studies signalling a marked theoretical and methodological shift has taken place around 2000 (Ateljevic *et al.* 2005, 2007), and one of the key concepts emerging from it has been the notion of 'embodiment'. Today it is no longer possible to see the body as a natural, biological object detached from an incorporeal mind. Feminist criticism in particular has helped to conceive it instead as discursively and socially produced (Butler 1993, Grosz 1994, Birke 2000). Hence, a focus on the body does not mean just bringing the importance of either biology or sense experience to the fore. Rather, such a focus makes us aware of the social and cultural constructedness of the tourist encounter, as well as any other human phenomenon. Gender participates in a definition of embodiment which involves

the values, perceptions and gestures that are inscribed in and through the body and how we live these experiences through our bodies as men and women. Thus the body is engendered – inscribed with gender specific meanings that reflect the social, cultural, economic and political milieu of its experience (Wearing 1996: 80).

Bourdieu (1984) was amongst the first to call attention to the importance of the body in the identity formation process of the 'new' middle class. A specific type of clothing and style associated with the 'right' taste were used as markers of one's social class standing and cultural capital. Yet, Duret and Roussel (2003) have noticed that today this type of concern with the body has spread across class divisions to become a characteristic trait of Western consumer society taken as a whole.

However, the notion of embodiment is not to be equated only with a perception of the body as a sort of social or cultural code. For example, in the case of the

tourism experience this notion highlights both the symbolic and material constraints of human interactions. The spaces in which tourists move, and the encounters that take place in the course of this activity “reflect an ‘embodied’ dimension where people have real emotions, perceptions and feelings linked to their physically ‘being there’” (Pritchard *et al.* 2007).

The body is necessarily the means by which all tourists experience the world (Ateljevic *et al.* 2007), but the myth of an incorporeal, disembodied kind of perception has been introduced in Tourism Studies by Urry’s seminal work on the tourist gaze (1990, 2002). For a long period the body has been completely absent in Tourism Studies, owing to the predominance of a conceptual framework largely based on visual perception of sites and objects. Tourists were supposed to gaze upon prescribed places, which had often been already consumed virtually in form of images or pictures before their actual visits (Urry 1995).

However, as early as 2002 Urry acknowledged Veijola and Jokinen’s (1994) fundamental criticism about the absence of the body in the tourist gaze framework. As a consequence, he began to conceive the tourist experience as a multisensory encounter between “mobile tourist bodies”, on the one hand, and places on the other. Along this line he introduced the notion of “corporeal proximity”, highlighting the fact that the reason why tourists travel long distance is precisely because they want to experience places in person, engaging all their senses: “To be there oneself is what is crucial in most tourism. [...] Co-presence then involves seeing or touching or hearing or smelling or tasting a particular place” (Urry 2002: 154).

Not only tourists, but also places did begin to be presented as being always ‘on the move’ (Sheller and Urry 2004, 2006). This was the result of the introduction of the new ‘performance’ paradigm in Tourism Studies: Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical theory, a sociological approach to interpersonal communication based on theatre performance, was at the basis of this development in Tourism Studies. According to this model, groups or individuals are supposed to interact with each other as if they were on a stage, and periodically exchange their roles becoming in turn each others’ audiences and performers.

The interpretation of tourism in terms of performance highlights the active, physical involvement of the participants in the tourist encounter as well as the

living, corporeal aspects of human experience. Hence, it is precisely by incorporating Goffman's performance perspective that the tourist gaze acquires a more concrete dimension, and the visual framework is eventually complemented by the "intersection of the senses" (Larsen and Urry 2011: 1114). Indeed, as Larsen and Urry (2011:1115) put it:

gazing is embodied, multimodal, and involves other sensescapes. It is a set of performative practices. Gazing is not merely seeing, but involves physical movement through landscapes, cities and sights, aesthetic sensibility, connecting signs and their referents, daydreaming and mind travelling and embodied practices capturing places and social relations [...] Tourists touch, stroke, walk or climb upon, and even collect the buildings and objects that they lay their eyes upon.

Another fundamental effect of the performance turn is the fact that gazing has begun to be seen as a social activity. The relational aspects of tourism practices do not seem to have attracted the attention of scholars up to the appearance of this model, and this is all the more surprising since the activity of tourism is never practiced in a vacuum: most tourists gather together with other tourists, travel with friends, partners and family, mix with the locals, or are accompanied by guides and other professionals of the tourism industry. Furthermore, most tourist attractions are crowded public places.

It has eventually been recognized that visitors and hosts are in fact likely to meet at several stages in the course of the tourist experience, in a variety of ways. Research has demonstrated that the tourist gaze can make the locals feel watched and objectified (Chhabra 2010). Yet hosts are not always passive and helpless. Maoz (2006) has demonstrated that gazes can, and do strike back, for example by simply being unwelcoming. Thus, the tourist gaze has begun to be considered as a complex, reciprocal act of recognition, "where both the tourist and local gazes exist, affecting and feeding each other, resulting in what is termed 'the mutual gaze'" (Maoz 2006: 222).

However significant and far-reaching the evolution of the gaze model has been since its appearance in Urry 1990, and particularly after its connection with the performance framework, a fundamental element has not yet been paid due attention in my opinion. Tourists, as people in general, are not just unsexed bodies. Gender seems to be the missing ingredient even in the revised

frameworks of the tourist gaze, as mainstream research in Tourism Studies does not seem to be alert to gender issues. However, this does not mean that research on tourism informed by feminist criticism has not been published in the last thirty years or so. Indeed, this type of research does occupy quite a considerable space in academic publishing, but it seems to be still stigmatized as ‘feminist’, or ‘women’s’ research. As Pritchard (2018:145) has argued:

for many tourism scholars, gender itself remains a minority and marginal research interest - only impinging on the collective conscience of the majority when voices are raised in the academy over the gender imbalance of editorial boards, conference panels, etc.

Yet, the association of tourism and performance ultimately helps visualise the complexity of human interactions within contemporary tourism phenomena. In this perspective, power is conceived as a pervasive and shared force – at least to a certain extent. Guests and hosts, tourists and locals, service providers and tourist customers gaze at each other, but can also exchange their roles, and perform different parts, with the subordinates exercising power under certain circumstances (Germann Molz and Gibson 2007). Tourists themselves are passive targets of tourism advertising and at the same time they may become active producers of tourism promotion when they relate with other tourists, and produce new discourses, opinions, or review hotels etc. (Larsen and Widtfeldt Megeed 2013; Campos *et al.* 2018). Today, most tourists are effectively acting as their own travel agents when for example they book online on specialized websites, for examples (Dann 2012). As a consequence, tourists are both actors and are acted upon and this highlights the fluidity of power relations regulating contemporary tourism practices. All this eventually raises a question: could new openings and developments in the direction of a more gender-balanced tourism practice be envisaged in the near future?

3. Route number two: space, place and landscape

Route number three deals with the landscape, since place - in the sense of geographical space - is the main object of the tourist’s gaze, that is the traveller’s destination.

Gender participates in the definition of space in Tourism Studies, as well as in its presentation and consumption. Yet, the study of landscape and the way in which it relates to gender has been insufficiently investigated (Pritchard and Morgan 2000a: 889). This is mainly due to the fact that gender appears to be distinctively different from other social classifications in terms of the less visible marks it leaves onto the landscape, as Monk (1992:123) has made clear:

It is not difficult to recognize the more obvious expression of class, race or ethnicity in the material landscape. The quality of residences and their decoration, the signs on shop windows, the graffiti on walls, the manicured lawns or the jumble of weeds and rubble convey to us impressions of affluence or poverty, diversity or homogeneity, and feeling of familiarity or strangeness, comfort or anxiety. But gender?

Yet, a few studies inspired by feminist approaches have pointed to a gendered mapping of the landscape in the fields of tourism, geography and leisure studies (Pritchard and Morgan 2000a, 2000b, Pritchard *et al.* 1998, Duncan 1996). Most of these works have highlighted the presence of a traditional gendered distinction corresponding to the dichotomy of public/masculine vs. domestic/feminine spheres, which has been historically applied to space representations. This distinction has been instrumental in confining women's access to knowledge (Carubia *et al.* 2005). As a matter of fact, travel and exploration have customarily been considered as one of the principal means to acquire cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984) and hence, as activities belonging to the public sphere, women were traditionally excluded from them. Thus, on the one hand, imagery linked to ideas of adventure, risks, conquests and penetration of new territories has usually been portrayed as masculine. On the other, a more domesticated representation of travel, characterised by attributes such as leisure, comfort, and a special attention to human relationships, has been identified as feminine. Pritchard and Morgan (2000b: 126-31) have noticed how 'feminine landscapes' have been often illustrated as luxurious, exotic destinations such as paradise islands and seaside resorts, particularly in South East Asia, whereas 'masculine landscapes' have been associated with the type of adventure tourism practiced in the northern, most inhospitable territories, such as Alaska or Norway.

The feminization of nature as the Other to be penetrated and conquered – a characteristic mark of the colonial experience – runs parallel with the feminization

of landscape, conceived as an open space subject to scientific investigation since the seventeenth century. The rise of the scientific method of observation in the early modern period in Europe created a gendered divide which is still alive in the dichotomy between the masculine, scientific/technological rationality of the knowing subject and the feminine, seductive and irrational representation of nature as its object (Salazar 2012). Hence, the binary structure of knowledge, which is still at work today in Western thought, places the realm of emotions on the side of the feminine, as Anderson and Smith (2001: 7) have convincingly argued:

The gendered basis of knowledge production is probably a key reason why the emotions have been banished from social science and most other critical commentary for so long

Here we can link back to the idea of embodiment discussed in the previous section in order to consider the complex problem of the researcher's subjectivity. In their seminal work Veijola and Jokinen (1994) have argued that tourism analysts lack both 'body and emotions' as they are used to engage in tourism research from the distance provided by a supposed scientific objectivity. According to Veijola and Jokinen, research in the field of tourism is dominated by social models of enquiry privileging a scientific method of observation, which distances researchers physically and psychologically from their objects of study. By contrast, scholars who adopt an 'embodied' approach acknowledge the impossibility of separating themselves from the context informing their analysis. Pritchard *et al.* (2007: 7) concur with Veijola and Jokinen's analysis and consider a researcher's positionality (in terms of race, gender, age, class and sexuality) as a resource rather than a problem. Hence, these feminist approaches aim at an embodied tourism research practice, which participates in the material dimension of place and landscape, enabling people – including researchers – to experience real emotions.

While contemporary tourism methodology informed by feminist criticism is moving towards self-reflective practices, foregrounding the material, gendered body of the researcher, place appears to be driven in the opposite direction, and seems to become more and more immaterial. Urry (2005: 25) has defined this development in tourism practices as the "de-substantialisation of place": distinct

tourism destinations and attractions are increasingly perceived as a mere combination of abstract characteristics. This makes them into inanimate, aesthetic objects to be simply collected and compared with other places. The singularity of the place, a mixture of all those characteristics that make places into unique instances of space, is irremediably lost in this perspective. Hence, meaningful associations with a certain destination in terms of emotions or memories are ruled out in a development that denies the emotional and affective dimensions of tourism.

In this view places lose contextual 'substance' in order to acquire a purely semiotic character: they stand for 'something else' in a conventional way, their meaning deriving from a network of abstract relationships with other places. Furthermore, in this semiotic light, places, just like signs, become mobile. As Urry (2005: 22) himself has put it:

places are in a way themselves mobile, in a set of relationships with other places and this makes them move, nearer and further in a system of difference. Places are only contingently fixed and stable destinations.

Hence, places and landscapes are no longer fixed and stable entities: rather, they move, in combination or comparison with other places, and play different roles according to the performance approach described in the previous section. Thus, they "are constantly enacted through planners, designers, stage managers, *and* tourists and locals" (Larsen and Urry 2011: 1113). So, places are themselves performed, and they travel within networks of human and non-human agents. Not only do tourists visit, consume and collect them, but they also activate them with their presence, and move them around in a semiotic network that includes both verbal and non-verbal representations, that is language as well as photographs and pictures. As a consequence, the concept of place is not an innocent topographic criterion, but rather a semiotic system ceaselessly negotiated according to the social and cultural dynamics at work at a given time.

Tourists are themselves *mobile* but this is not to state the obvious. It is rather to be understood in terms of the mobile activity they all practice. Tourists' mobility has to be understood also in terms of the roles they play and the possibility they have to perform change. Change may involve the making and unmaking of

destinations, the way in which different types of tourism experiences are performed – passively or actively, for example – as well as the way in which tourism practices are studied. But change concerns also the ways in which tourists perceive themselves and are perceived by others. One of the principal effects of the new conceptual frameworks developed by feminist research in Tourism Studies is that today tourists are no longer conceived as a fixed and uncontested community of practice composed by generic individuals. As a matter of fact, their identities are increasingly defined in terms of fluid and open classifications, that include differences in terms of gender, race, class and sexuality (Xu 2018).

4. Route number three: the language of tourism communication and its translation

After travelling on the two previous theoretical routes, and having come to terms with embodied visitors and mobile destinations, in this section we shall deal with a more applied aspect of tourism, concerning language and communication. The material and symbolic features of tourism practices have been thoroughly discussed, but the fact that these practices, like most human activities, are necessarily mediated by language has not been explored yet.

Tourism negotiates the encounter with the Other, and in doing so identities have to be mediated and often re-fashioned across linguistic and cultural borders. The language of tourism has been defined as a specialised kind of discourse, and this is especially clear in the context of intercultural communication. Today the language of tourism has been amply recognized as a specialized type of discourse (Agorni 2012, 2016, Calvi 2000, Cappelli 2016, Castello 2002, Federici 2018, Francesconi 2012, Maci 2013, Manca 2004, 2012, Nigro 2006), but the vast literature produced on a variety of specialised discourses has hardly ever adopted a gender perspective.

Similarly, studies that have addressed tourism discourse as a specialized communicative practice seem to have failed to notice gender as a fundamental conceptual framework. For example, a seminal work such as Calvi's *Il linguaggio*

spagnolo del turismo (2000), which has produced one of the earliest taxonomies of the linguistic components of tourism discourse, does not take gender configurations into account.

It is even more disappointing if we look at research on LSP focusing on the communicative nature of the language of tourism. Communication, and tourism communication in particular, cannot ignore the importance of relational aspects, as well as the already mentioned centrality of body conceptualizations, which are paramount in feminist studies on tourism. Yet, researchers seem to have neglected gender considerations even in their formulation of the characteristic features of this specialised language – and I am referring to myself in particular, when I described the specificity of tourism discourse in terms of a series of communicative and discursive practices, such as:

1. the production of functional, vocative texts (cf. Nord 1997, Reiss and Vermeer 1984, Newmark 1981) addressing the distinctive needs and expectations of their receivers (for example, by adopting involvement strategies, persuasive techniques, strategies of reader inclusion, etc.)
2. the selection of specific genres (such as the guidebook, brochure or flier), characterised by the appearance of a strong persuasive function in a text type which is predominantly informative or descriptive (Calvi 2000)
3. a strong presence of culture-specific elements, which metonymically represent foreign destinations (Agorni 2016: 14)

The first of these practices aims to address the needs and expectations of *generic* tourists by adopting a series of persuasive techniques. Tourism promotional language is very similar to advertising in this respect, and should therefore be committed to identifying its target customer profile. Hence, classifications in terms of gender, age and social class are fundamental marketing criteria that cannot be undervalued in the production of functional tourist texts. Yet, none of these criteria have been mentioned in my research on tourism discourse so far. To my knowledge, however, questions of gender (as well as age and social class) have hardly ever been addressed in studies examining the language of tourism as specialized discourse and its specific text structure.

The third feature of tourism discourse, concerning a strong presence of culture-specific elements, needs to be carefully taken into consideration in a cross-cultural perspective. Culture-specific references represent elements typical of a certain culture, such as specific traditions, plants, food, but also references to unique historical events and figures or cultural phenomena. Therefore, these references are tokens of the culture they stand for, and as such they are subject to the ideological pressures dominating their own environment. It would be especially interesting to analyse them in terms of gender, so as to reveal the culture-specific ideological attitudes attached to these elements. Yet, once again I must say that I haven't been able to find any linguistic research on this topic to date.

And yet gender permeates tourism discourse and shapes the experience of gendered tourists: it allows us to talk about tourist practices, tourist attractions, visitors, hosts and other tourists. Discourses of tourism confirm or contest existing power relations, as has been illustrated in the previous sections. As Foucault (1992) has taught us, we need to study discourse, and in this case tourism discourse, in order to understand the way in which meanings have been socially and historically constructed. In fact, it is precisely this focus on the cultural construction of meaning that admits the possibility of social change. Tourism is a fundamental agent of social and cultural change, as Pritchard and Jaworski (2005: 2) have claimed by aptly referring to its dynamic nature, literally on-the-move:

tourism is a literal embodiment of travelling theory; being both an agent and channel of globalisation, and the site and subject of various competing discourses effecting change and transition.

The very activity of tourism is made possible by policies of globalisation, and the tourist industry is deeply involved in practices that have been often labelled as 'neo-colonialist' (O'Reilly 2005: 154). Yet, at the same time, this field hosts alternative practices, such as eco-tourism, rural tourism, or other forms of tourism and hospitality aimed at improving the well-being of local communities, or at empowering marginalized social groups, particularly women. As we all know, discourse allows ideology to be produced, reinforced as well as subverted (van Dijk 1998). Hence, dominant discourses of femininity (and masculinity) may be

increasingly opposed and resisted in a society that recognizes the presence of plural identities. Could we therefore envisage a more inclusive conceptualization of tourism practices as a result of new, gender-oriented theoretical frameworks applied to the linguistic analysis of tourism discourse?

Personally I believe that there is still a lot of work to be done in order to achieve this goal in the near future. What we, as linguists and translation researchers, can do at the moment is analyse our own work and see whether or not gender has been included into our research on LSP. As I have pointed out earlier, my own work is lagging behind in this respect, although I have adopted a gender perspective in language and cultural analyses since the mid-1990s.

New routes are open to exploration in this brave new field, and I'd like to point to a few of them. First of all the definition of the tourist identity needs to be further investigated. Who can be said to be a tourist in our globalised world? Virtually anybody, regardless of gender, age, class, and even economic situation and degree of literacy and knowledge (Agorni 2016: 15). And yet, a number of feminist studies agree on the fact that tourism promotional communication and the imagery produced by it are more or less explicitly addressed to a male, white, middle-class potential customer (Pritchard and Morgan 2000b: 116). Research on women's experience as producers and consumers of tourism services is already under way, but should be incremented, in order to challenge prevailing norms that make gender-consumer specificity still go unnoticed.

Furthermore, a redefinition of the tourist identity should not fail to take into consideration the issues of accessibility and inclusion, which have a strong bearing on the two disciplines of Tourism and Translation Studies. Research should focus on the measures to be applied in the field of tourism to enable all category of visitors – classified in terms of gender, race, class, age and dis-ability – to benefit from this activity. Such interventions necessarily include linguistic and intercultural mediation activities, which, in an inclusive perspective, could be developed to assist people with a variety of disabilities (the blind, or visually impaired, the Deaf or hard of hearing, people with cognitive impairment or learning-related difficulties). Both Translation and Tourism Studies have already made some headway in these areas but the importance of cultural, social and

financial interventions in the field of disability, particularly when communication is involved, needs to be emphasized (Agorni 2019).

Another potentially promising area of investigation concerns in the high presence of binary oppositions which characterises most of the promotional communication in the field of tourism. The fact that the language of tourism is articulated on the dichotomy of Self vs. Other has been acknowledged by Dann as early as 1996, when he pointed to a series of polarisations, such as new vs. familiar, tourists vs. locals etc. The women vs. men opposition was not openly mentioned, in spite of the conflation of the feminine as the Other, amply recognized by most tourism critical literature. This raises a fundamental question: are these dichotomies so deeply ingrained in the conceptualisation of tourism to be considered an essential part of it, or could we find alternative, mediating or mediatory frameworks, to enable us to adopt a new attitude, going beyond an either/or perspective?

This question brings me to a central element in tourism communication, whose importance has not always been recognized in Tourism Studies, that is the fundamental role of translation in producing an effective intercultural form of communication (Agorni 2018b). Translation is in fact that kind of activity that mediates between gendered individuals, their languages and their cultures. Not only does translation enable cross-cultural communication, but also tourism discourse itself can be conceived as a form of intercultural mediation because it “translates” cultural values by promoting the identity of specific destinations, together with their communities (Agorni 2016: 19). Yet, this cultural capital cannot be simply carried across, or transferred, from one culture to another. Rather, it has to be made explicit and accessible: in other words, it has to be interpreted by means of an act of mediation.

Mediation here is meant as an intercultural process, a practice that has been investigated in depth by Katan in a series of seminal works (1999, 2009, 2013). Liddicoat (2016: 355) has recently described Katan’s definition of mediation as a relational and interpretative activity and has expanded it in the following terms:

intercultural mediation is “an active engagement in diversity as a meaning making activity” [...] that involves interpreting the meaning of diverse others for oneself and for others. This means that intercultural mediation is not

solely the resolution of communication problems but also the development of shared understandings between participants in communication.

The first type of mediation 'for self' consists in an act of interpretation which is basically source-oriented: it means that translators should be highly proficient in both source and target languages and cultures, so as to be able to grasp the cultural subtleties of any linguistic and cultural communicative component. Mediating 'for others', however, is a different activity because of its going beyond language and cultural proficiency. Liddicoat defines this second act of mediation as a performative or interpretative act, because it implies a translator's intervention "designed to assist interpretation by target text readers" (Liddicoat 2016: 362, note). Hence it can be considered as an act of textual manipulation or rewriting (Lefevere 1992). This kind of active intervention is very frequent in tourism translation, where translating is very often a creative act of cultural mediation, and translators are bound to exercise a high degree of linguistic and cultural manipulation (Agorni 2018a: 97).

Drawing upon my previous works, I would like to conceive of a type of mediation applied to tourism discourse as "an approximate negotiation of meaning" (Agorni 2016: 20). Here the word 'approximate' should not be read in its negative connotation, but rather in its positive capacity, denoting a type of negotiation open to new, creative possibilities. An approximate negotiation of meaning goes beyond an either/or perspective and overcomes the obstacle represented by binary oppositions – which, in the process of translating, are mainly represented by a source vs. target orientation. This type of mediation is in fact productive, rather than reproductive or mimetic, because it creates new meanings that are the results of flexible negotiations, no longer based on fixed equivalence notions. No losers or winners emerge from this type of negotiation, the result being instead a collaborative effort in meaning creation, so as to produce interpretations meant to facilitate successful communication.

But how can gender considerations be accommodated into this framework? Several possibilities appear to be already at hand. For instance, some of the issues emerged in the course of this article could pave the way to the development of a gender perspective to be applied to the translation of tourism discourse. Themes such as performance, embodiment, contextualization,

constructiveness and mobility have already a high resonance either in Gender, Tourism or Translation Studies. These terms are also starting to be accommodated at theoretical level, as theoretical approaches like ‘hopeful tourism’ demonstrate. The aim of this approach is in fact to create socially inclusive tourism research and practice, committing itself with issues of race, sexuality, class, disability, as well as with gender (cf. Pritchard *et al.* 2011: 958, Atelejevic *et al.* 2011). Translation Studies, a discipline which has paid special attention to human agency – particularly translators’ agency – since the 1990s, should provide a fertile ground for further development (cf. Lefevere 1992; Pym 1998).

5. Towards a Gender Approach in Tourism Translation

In order to open the space for an analysis of the relationships amongst concepts such as gender, tourism and translation, issues have been explored only at theoretical level. The risk of an approach of this kind, however, is that the argument may appear detached from its context of application, and this is particularly dangerous when translation activities are involved, given the fundamental link between theory and practice in this field. Therefore, by way of conclusion, I would like to propose a short sample of the way in which some of the abstract issues discussed in this article can be practiced in real-life translation. For the sake of convenience, I shall go back to an example of a translation assignment realized by a student, that has already appeared in another work of mine (Agorni 2016), but which has never been considered in a gender perspective. The original text is an extract from an article published by the popular travel periodical *Condé Nast Traveller*, which described an English tourist experience in Munich. Central theme of the article was the revival of traditional cuisine in the Bavarian capital observed through the eyes of a foreigner. The extracts from the original text and the student’s translation are reproduced below:

Source Text

The dumplings in Bavaria are bigger than anywhere else in Germany. In Rhineland the *Semmelknödeln* (made with stale morning rolls) are the size of billiard balls. The ones in Zum Franziskaner in Munich, by contrast, are so

large you could play petanque with them. Zum Franziskaner is one of the city's best traditional places to eat in. Hop wreaths and horse furniture adorn the walls, and the staff wears dirndls and collarless white smocks.

Target Text

I canederli bavaresi sono i più grandi di tutta la Germania: talmente grandi che, se i *Semmelknödeln* della Renania, preparati tritando le *Semmel* (tipiche pagnottelle bianche) hanno le dimensioni di una palla da biliardo, con quelli del Zum Franziskaner di Monaco si può giocare a bocce. Il Zum Franziskaner è uno dei migliori ristoranti di cucina tipica di tutta la città: il locale è arredato con ghirlande di luppolo e mobili in stile equestre, e i camerieri indossano abiti tradizionali: *Dirndl* per le Kellnerine, camiciotti bianchi senza colletto per i loro colleghi uomini.

In the last lines of this passage, the translator draws attention to the waiters' traditional costumes. She explains that *Dirndl* are traditional costumes ("abiti tradizionali"), and highlights the word in italics using the German spelling. Besides, she takes her intervention one step further when she makes up a new word ("*Kellnerine*"), drawing on the German word for waitress ("*Kellnerin*") and adding the Italian plural feminine inflection *-e*. As I have pointed out elsewhere (Agorni 2016: 22), this word has been considered comprehensible enough for an Italian readership, but it has been made even more accessible by introducing a comparison in the clause following it, in which the other traditional costume ("camiciotti bianchi senza colletti", i.e. white shirts with no collar) is explicitly referred to the *Kellnerine*'s male colleagues ("i loro colleghi uomini", i.e. their male colleagues).

Thus, the generic meaning of the word "staff" of the source text has been "embodied" by providing waitresses and waiters with gendered bodies. The locals, or hosts, properly described as men and women, have acquired a concrete, real-life dimension that has made them less distant from the visitors, or guests. By setting the performers of this tourism act into a concrete and corporeal context, the translator appears to have set the scene for a potentially constructive interaction.

6. Conclusion

Translation moves around, travels and leaves none of its interlocutors untouched – i.e. texts, as well as individuals, topics, disciplines, etc. The metaphor of a travelling translation is not new, because it was used by Cronin in 2000. But before him, as early as 1992, James Clifford had defined travel itself as a ‘translation’ term in the sense of a word to be used constructively in relation with other words, a mediatory term “used for comparison in a strategic and contingent way” (1992: 110). This conflation of travel and translation into comparative terms, to be used in a contingent, i.e. context-based or “embodied” way, seems to be especially useful for the development of a gender-aware approach to the translation of tourism discourse.

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