

# Kapitel 16

## Translation Policy and the Politics of Translation—The Translation of Power Relationships: An Afterword



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### 16.1 Politics and Power

At the conference upon which this edited volume is based, the binomial ‘policy’/‘politics’ was favoured over the term ‘power’—or at least much more clearly delineated. A number of contributions to this volume that draw implicitly on Michel Foucault’s distinction between the two dimensions of ‘power’<sup>1</sup> as outlined in his work on ‘the genealogy of power’ (“Généalogie du pouvoir”) show how fruitful the notion of ‘power’ can be for analysing translation processes and strategies. Foucault differentiated on the one hand between institutional power as exercised above all by the state, the Church, the judiciary, and institutional instances such as censorship authorities and publishers, and power in a relational sense, which he calls “Relations de pouvoir” (‘power relationships’).<sup>2</sup> Power in the latter sense pervades all social, cultural, economic, and political relationships and hence translation processes in all their different manifestations and forms as well. According to

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translated by Nicola Morris and Melanie Newton (Tradukas GbR).

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the articles by Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann and Ekaterina Simonova-Gudzenko (see Chap. 12) and Katja Triplett (see Chap. 9) in this volume

<sup>2</sup> See Foucault (2007).

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Foucault, these ‘power relationships’ are connected with ‘technologies of power’,<sup>3</sup> which—in the sphere of translation, for instance—influenced translators’ identity patterns just as they had an impact on the strategies they adopted for texts and marketing. Power relationships meant, for instance, that until the late eighteenth century many female translators did not want their real names to be officially or publicly used—for example on the title pages of translated books—and even famous translators familiar to the public such as Isabelle de Charrière, the woman who translated Isaac Newton’s works into French, and Therese Huber, the wife of the German ethnologist and natural historian Georg Forster, published their translations not under their own names but under those of their husbands or else anonymously. This is connected with the lack of prestige accorded to translators in the Early Modern period, but also—and indeed primarily—with gender relationships and role models that were specific to particular cultures and epochs. Both are linked with institutional and relational power as defined by Foucault.<sup>4</sup>

Power relationships—in this case including those that are asymmetrical—can be found not only at the micro-level of translators and their texts, but also on the macro-level of fluctuations in the popularity of translation and the associated processes of cultural transfer. The dominant source language for translations in the Early Modern period was initially Latin, followed by Italian and Spanish, and from the late seventeenth century onwards, French. But it was not until the early decades of the eighteenth century that French replaced Latin as the most important source language for translations in Europe, subsequently followed by English and in the final decades of the eighteenth century by German, with the latter two languages successively gaining an ever stronger position on the European translation market.<sup>5</sup> Cervantes’ *Don Quijote*, for example, was translated into English in 1612, almost directly after its publication in Spain, whereas in the other direction, Shakespeare’s play *Hamlet*, which appeared in England at roughly the same time, was not translated into Spanish until 1798.<sup>6</sup> This situation would change fundamentally as England rose to become a global colonial power and a centre of literature and science from the 1750s onwards. The dominance of certain translation languages and the power relationships underlying them can be attributed not only to forms of cultural and political hegemony—although the connection is direct only in some instances—but also to phenomena such as social prestige and the transcultural kudos of a cultural space and its language and academic institutions. The cultural geography that Franco Moretti maps in his *Atlas of the European*

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<sup>3</sup>Foucault (2007), p. 158: “[t]hese mechanisms of power, these procedures of power, must be considered as techniques, which is to say procedures that have been invented, perfected and which are endlessly developed.”

<sup>4</sup>See the article by Regina Toepfer in this volume (see Chap. 6).

<sup>5</sup>On French as a target language for translations from other languages in the Early Modern period, see, for example, Nies (2009) especially the illustration on p. 20.

<sup>6</sup>See Chartier (2021), p. 14.

*Novel* (1997/1998) notably uses the example of novel production, circulation, and reception to show how cultural transfers and translation flows reflect cultural “power relations”,<sup>7</sup> i.e. the hegemony of certain models and authors. Whereas in Great Britain and France, the dominant centres of novel production in Europe between 1750 and 1850, only between 16 and 25 % of the book market for novels consisted of translations, the share in Germany and Italy rose to 45 % and in Poland, Denmark, and Russia to 70–85 %.<sup>8</sup> The latter were excellent target countries for translations from other countries, especially from France and Great Britain, whose exemplary novel production shaped literary tastes throughout Europe. The boom in the asymmetrical dissemination of translations was thus accompanied by the transfer of aesthetic models that were adopted and imitated on the cultural ‘peripheries’ but at the same time adapted to local tastes and conditions—a phenomenon known as domestication, which can be observed in many different cultural fields in the Early Modern period and which we will discuss in more detail below.

With regard to processes of cultural transfer in the field of translation, cultural asymmetries determined by power are likewise manifested in the role played by certain languages as prominent ‘relay languages’. In the eighteenth century, for example, French, as the dominant language of culture and communication among social elites, often served as a ‘relay language’ for translations from Spanish and Portuguese into German, English, and Russian as well as into the Scandinavian languages. German began to assume this role from the final decades of the eighteenth century onwards, especially for translations from the Slavic languages. In the late seventeenth and eighteenth century all translations of Baltasar Gracián’s work *Oraculo manual y Arte de Prudencia* (1647, ‘The Pocket Oracle and Art of Prudence’)—which was read throughout Europe—into other European languages (German, Italian, English, Dutch, Latin) were based exclusively on the French translation. Significantly, it was not the original Spanish title but the French one, *L’Homme de Cour* (‘The Man of the Court’) that was used for translations into other languages, endowing the work with a whole new dimension of meaning.<sup>9</sup>

Various aspects of the second dimension of the notion of ‘power’ as defined by Foucault and its implementation as concrete politics and in the exercise of power must likewise be taken into account as factors influencing translation processes. But how should we comprehend the term politics here? The modern history of culture has replaced the simple definitions of power as understood by Max Weber with a more complex and more dialectic concept,<sup>10</sup> often interpreting it as

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<sup>7</sup> Moretti (1998), p. 187.

<sup>8</sup> See Moretti (1998), p. 152, illustration showing “Percentage of foreign novels in European literatures (1750–1850)”.

<sup>9</sup> For more detail on this example see Chartier (2021), pp. 76–80.

<sup>10</sup> Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, for example, defined the political sphere as the ‘negotiation space in which collectively binding decisions are produced and implemented’ [Transl. Tradukas], Stollberg-Rilinger (2005), pp. 9–24, here pp. 13–14.

processes of negotiation or conflicts about interpretation.<sup>11</sup> In the broadest sense, governance and political processes can likewise be understood as translation; after all, decisions taken by the authorities have to be translated for the population, and subjects themselves then translate the laws made by the authorities and in the process appropriate them. But these forms of politics and policy also had a direct impact on translations, perhaps regimenting them in a specific way, or at least trying to do so.<sup>12</sup> This topic was addressed in many contributions to our conference as well as in the articles published here.<sup>13</sup> Obvious forms of influence, such as censorship and lists of books that were frowned upon, are easier to identify than the role that politics played in the economic aspect of any translation. The interrelationships between policymakers/politicians and publishers need to be examined in more detail.<sup>14</sup>

## 16.2 Materialities and Types of Text

Translations, which are analysed in this volume in terms of power structures and cultural filters, manifest themselves in a wide variety of materialities of communication and in highly diverse medialities and text types. As can be observed in the articles presented here, the terms ‘text’ and ‘translation’ are understood in a semiotic sense, in other words, they include all potential kinds of signs and codes. The spectrum of texts and processes embraced by this ranges, on the one hand, from translations as a phenomenon of everyday oral communication<sup>15</sup> to the translation of highly codified and ritualized diplomatic negotiations and receptions,<sup>16</sup> and on the other, translations as cultural artefacts in the semiotic sense, as illustrated by the contributions to this collection. These may include printed texts as well

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<sup>11</sup> Models of interactive and dialectical rule and state-building were discussed by historians above all around the turn of the millennium, see Landwehr (2000), pp. 47–70; Brakensiek and Wunder (2005).

<sup>12</sup> Peter Burke speaks in this manner of a translation policy of the post-Reformation Catholic Church, “Übersetzungspolitik der gegenreformatorischen Kirche”, Burke (2007), pp. 7–38, here p. 16; Avraham Siluk followed a similar line of argument in his commentary on Katja Triplett (see Chap. 9).

<sup>13</sup> See also the explanations in the introduction to this volume; Spain as a colonial power likewise influenced translation practices in jurisprudence and evangelization, just as the Japanese authorities sought to completely outlaw Jesuit missionizing and hence translations as well. Elena Parina examines important aspects of this with respect to confessional translation policies in England and Wales (see Chap. 7).

<sup>14</sup> Helge Perplies undertakes some important approaches to this topic in this volume (see Chap. 3).

<sup>15</sup> “Translation as a normal form of communication”, as Sonja Brentjens formulated it during a discussion at the conference.

<sup>16</sup> Burschel and Vogel (2014).

as manuscripts, images, sculptures, musical compositions, architecture, and geographical maps.<sup>17</sup> Only some of these artefacts—mainly texts—explicitly carry the paratextual designation “translation”, “Übersetzung”, or “traduction”, sometimes followed by the name of the translator and in many cases supplemented by additions such as “frei übersetzt nach”, “adapté de”, or “revised, corrected and enlarged”.<sup>18</sup>

A semiotic notion of translation hence directs our attention to theoretical concepts and associated processes that the contributions in this volume—no doubt owing to very different scholarly traditions, among other things—scarcely touch on, if at all: in particular, the theoretical notions and concepts of transposition, reception, adaptation, (cultural) transfer, intertextuality, paratextuality, ‘rewriting’, and heterolinguisms, which concern processes of textual transformation and in many cases translation too. Depending on the design of the study, these theoretical concepts, each of which is associated with methodological processes of analysis, are assigned a different status. They suggest systematically linking at least some of the translation processes mentioned in the spectrum above with types of text that are not translations in the true sense of the word, but are structurally connected with translation: reviews, for example, are a category of text that also generally embrace translation sequences in the narrower sense when applied to artefacts from foreign cultures, alongside elucidations and forms of annotated cultural appropriation (domestication). The quite different semantic content of the notion of ‘translation’ in the Early Modern period suggests that with regard to translation processes in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries it is appropriate to systematically link the textual processes of transmission (into a foreign language), annotation, and elucidation. According to Roger Chartier, the Spanish word “trasladar”, for example, (as defined in *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* from 1611) means not only ‘to bring from one place to another’ but also ‘to transmit linguistically’, ‘to interpret’, and ‘to copy’.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, intertextual and intermedial references, i.e. explicit or implicit references to other texts and media, which are often in a foreign language, frequently include translation processes that are in many cases embedded in annotations and explanations.<sup>20</sup> Numerous translations in the semiotic sense of the term link different sorts of texts and materialities of communication: text and

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<sup>17</sup>In this volume, see Alberto Tiburcio and Víctor de Castro León (see Chap. 10), Katja Triplett (see Chap. 9), Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann and Ekaterina Simonova-Gudzenko (see Chap. 12), and Christina Strunck (see Chap. 14).

<sup>18</sup>This was the subheading of the English translation of the *Grand Dictionnaire historique* (1674) by Louis Moréri, first published in English translation in London in 1688 under the title *The Great Historical, Geographical, Genealogical and Poetical Dictionary*.

<sup>19</sup>Chartier (2021), p. 50.

<sup>20</sup>On the relationship between translation, cultural transfer, and intertextuality see the contributions in Jørgensen and Lüsebrink (2021), pp. 1–20; also Lüsebrink (2016), Chap. 4 (“Kulturtransfer”).

image,<sup>21</sup> printed texts and song sheets, orality and textuality, cartographic representation, and printed commentaries. In order to analyse them, over the past few decades researchers into intermediality have developed a highly differentiated set of methodological instruments, but one that has been little used outside the field of cultural studies.<sup>22</sup> Materialities of communication play an important but frequently neglected role in translation processes. They include phenomena such as the format, font, paper quality, typography, cover, illustrations, vignettes, and graphic design of texts, and their significance has been impressively demonstrated in pioneering publications by the book historians Donald McKenzie and Roger Chartier.<sup>23</sup> The decision taken by state and Church authorities but also by publishers about whether a translated work should be circulated only as a manuscript or as a printed book, whether it should be published in folio volumes or in a handy duodecimal format, whether it should include copperplate engravings, or whether it should bear a dedication to the authorities changed its reception as well as its potential circulation and in many respects its fundamentally semantic content.

### 16.3 Translation as a Contact Zone

Translations often constitute cultural—or more precisely, intercultural—processes of negotiation involving actors of different languages and cultures. Not only translators with their personal and professional networks but also state and religious institutions as clients and initiators seek to steer and shape the form, content, structure, and reception of translations in order to achieve their successful dissemination and reception. Translations of religious texts in missionary contexts provide excellent examples of this.<sup>24</sup> Alongside successful translations, which are often characterized by forms of cultural ‘accommodation’ or rather the intercultural adaptation of linguistic registers, religious images, and patterns of thinking (which even went as far as omitting important religious elements such as references to the suffering and death of Christ in the Japanese translations of Jesuit missionary texts<sup>25</sup>), phenomena and processes of intercultural failure can be equally revealing. These can be caused by non-reception, cultural resistance, misunderstandings and the act of misunderstanding, errors of judgement, and the inability to adequately negotiate translations with respect to the expectations of the target culture. Phenomena of failed translations are often explained using the term ‘un-translatability’, which Barbara Cassin fundamentally calls into question in her

<sup>21</sup> See the contribution by Helge Perplies in this volume (Chap. 3).

<sup>22</sup> See *inter alia* the fundamental work by Rajewski (2002).

<sup>23</sup> See Chartier (2021); McKenzie (1986); McDonald and McKenzie (2002).

<sup>24</sup> See the contributions by Martina Schrader-Kniffki, Yannic Klamp, and Malte Kneifel (Chap. 4), and Giulia Nardini (Chap. 8) in this volume.

<sup>25</sup> See the contribution by Katja Triplett (Chap. 9).

*Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles*. In terms of the philosophy of language, the question of ‘untranslatability’ is situated between the position of logical universalism—represented in the seventeenth century by the grammarians of the Port-Royal school, in the eighteenth century by the philologist and encyclopaedist Nicolas Beauzée among others, and in the twentieth century by Noam Chomsky’s theory of transformational grammar and by the linguistic philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein—and an ‘ontological nationalism’ based on the radical singularity of language and semiotic systems, which references the ideas of philosophers such as Johann Gottfried Herder. Barbara Cassin and the contributors to her *Vocabulaire européen des intraduisibles* represent a position that goes beyond these two antagonistic poles. It is discussed in several contributions to this volume and is certainly worthy of systematic further exploration on the theoretical level. It is perhaps best captured by the terms ‘negotiation’ and ‘de-territorialization’. Negotiation refers to the negotiation of meanings and semantic content in the process of translation, which includes both hermeneutic understanding and the intercultural learning of linguistic and semiotic systems from other cultures. Barbara Cassin understands ‘de-territorialization’ as breaking open and transcending geographical as well as—and indeed primarily—linguistic and epistemological boundaries. When translating she advocates focusing not only on individual phenomena (such as terms and words), but also on networks and systems (such as conceptual networks or systems of philosophical or religious thought), and rather than proceeding from the limitations and cohesion of linguistic and semiotic worlds, one should start with their unrestricted dynamic creativity which enables new elements to constantly be adopted, appropriated, translated, transmitted, transformed, and newly created by means of contact between cultures.<sup>26</sup>

Transculturality research allows a different but similar perspective on these phenomena and processes.<sup>27</sup> Instead of understanding accommodation and other outcomes and products of intercultural negotiation processes as failures, this perspective is interested in transcultural phenomena (texts, concepts, but also artefacts) which are newly generated by transcending cultural boundaries and negotiating cultural difference. This then allows a clear focus on the transformation processes themselves, which are initiated by transcending cultural boundaries. The interest of transculturality research in the “dialectic between the dissolution of certain boundaries and the reaffirmation of other kinds of difference, of how de-territorialization is invariably followed by re-territorialization”, makes it

<sup>26</sup> See Cassin (2004), pp. XXX, XVII–XXIV, here especially p. XX (on networks and on the notion of ‘Déterritorialisation’) and p. XXI (on hermeneutics).

<sup>27</sup> Transcultural is a product of such negotiation processes. On the concept of transculturality see Abu-Er-Rub et al. (2018); Juneja and Kravagna (2013), pp. 22–33. Transculturality research, as it has recently been developed in the Heidelberg excellence cluster ‘Asia and Europe in a Global Context’, is inspired by postcolonial criticism of Western master narratives and methodological nationalism, but its focus is broader since its perspective is not limited to colonial and postcolonial phases and situations but instead investigates traces of transculturalization everywhere and across all epochs. See Flüchter (2015), pp. 1–23.

compatible both with Barbara Cassin's ideas and with those of important thinkers in translation studies.<sup>28</sup> Both Homi Bhabha and Edward Said emphasized that all cultural phenomena are transcultural in one form or other.<sup>29</sup> While this assertion seems eminently plausible, it does raise several questions: When and how does something become transcultural? Which factors, which policies and power formations have an impact on transculturation processes? Translations are a highly promising object of study when it comes to addressing these questions. At the same time, more recent concepts in translation studies supply an important set of conceptual tools for investigating transcultural issues.<sup>30</sup> The central focus of the umbrella term 'cultural translation' is more about the negotiation of cultural differences than the question of right or wrong translation; instead of asking how faithful a translation is to the original, the translation itself is understood as a creative product in its own right.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, postcolonial and postmodern influences on translation studies mean that questions of power receive more attention than they did previously. Colonial rulers specifically used translations to implement and stabilize their power and their pretensions to power, as has already been discussed.<sup>32</sup> But beyond specific forms of governance, politics and power relationships also have a much more subtle and at least as potent effect on translation processes.

In order to investigate the mechanisms of influence, the conceptual pair of domestication and foreignization coined by Lawrence Venuti is particularly promising.<sup>33</sup> Venuti starts by addressing the old problem of whether a translation should make the translated material more accessible and adapt it to the target culture (domestication) or whether the reference to foreignness should be preserved and form part of the reading experience (foreignization). Venuti argues that the decision to follow one or the other translation strategy is not simply a question of better translation practice, but also a question of power relationships. Domestication can more or less force the translated material into a new cultural and literary context. But in normative terms, foreignization is not really any better. The 'diversity of meaning' and openness to interpretation of an 'original' is always reduced by a translation, as Walter Benjamin asserted, illustrating his point with the metaphor of translation as a tangent that touches a circle at only one point.<sup>34</sup> A translation that follows the foreignization strategy preserves that which is alien or 'other' about the

<sup>28</sup> See Juneja and Kravagna (2013), pp. 22–33, here p. 26; see Flüchter (2018), pp. 199–214.

<sup>29</sup> See Michaels (2018), pp. 3–14.

<sup>30</sup> See Flüchter (2018) for further references, pp. 199–214.

<sup>31</sup> This understanding of translation also carries and shapes SPP 2130's 'Übersetzungskulturen der Frühen Neuzeit', see Toepfer et al. (2021); as an introduction to translation studies: see Bassnett (2002); Bassnett and Lefevere (1998).

<sup>32</sup> Here Cheyfitz (1991) continues to be relevant, but also the article in this volume by Martina Schrader-Kniffki, Yannic Klamp, and Malte Kneifel (see Chap. 4).

<sup>33</sup> See Venuti (2008); Yang (2010). On the practical application of these terms, see above all the article by Giulia Nardini (see Chap. 8) in this volume as well as more tangentially the contributions of Alberto Tiburcio and Víctor de Castro León (see Chap. 10).

<sup>34</sup> See Benjamin (1972), pp. 9–21, here pp. 19–20.



original material for the target culture, but at the same time enshrines a foreign frame of reference and codifies it in the same way that inherent judgement does.<sup>35</sup> In both cases cultural power relationships are at work, but they work in different respects and with different consequences. The conceptual pair coined by Venuti thus helps us to go beyond questions of untranslatability or wrong translation in order to reveal and investigate power relationships in the contact zone and to examine how cultural filters are chosen and where the original is changed by the translation. Venuti developed his notions from a postcolonial perspective, taking a critical view of Western “overpowering” or Othering of non-Western texts. But particularly in the pre-modern age this perspective is too simple, for the Europeans were not always the more powerful force, and power relationships were not always unambiguous. Venuti’s apparatus thus helps us to uncover and characterize contrary and diverse power relationships in a differentiated manner. The conceptual pair foreignization and domestication do not provide easy answers. Rather they help to generate questions about power relationships and enable us to understand the significance, complexity, and in some cases contrary nature of power and politics in translation processes.

What does it mean, for example, if Jesuits retain the Latin or Portuguese word for God—*Dios/Deus*—instead of using the word from the target culture?<sup>36</sup> What light does the term foreignization throw on the question of power relationships? Borrowed European words were used both in South America with the colonial support of missionaries and in Japan or in Southern India, where missionaries were often left to their own devices far away from colonial centres of power.<sup>37</sup> Is this a question of power structures, and if so, which ones? And what about the heroine of Homer’s texts being translated into a housewife, and the sacrificial victim of a god into a frivolous girl?<sup>38</sup> Are these examples likewise to be understood as domestication? Are they about power structures in the sense of hegemonial patriarchal gender constructs? In the process of translation the influence of these cultural values trumped the dominance of Antiquity, which at that time had scarcely been questioned. Adapting technical terminology in German-language texts about metallurgy to the superior French style can also be regarded as a form of domestication and as such attests at the very least to France’s claim to cultural

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<sup>35</sup>Venuti (2008), p. 15.

<sup>36</sup>See the contributions by Katja Triplett (Chap. 9), Martina Schrader-Kniffki, Yannic Klamp, and Malte Kneifel (Chap. 4), and Giulia Nardini (Chap. 8).

<sup>37</sup>It is also interesting that in a first phase the translator does in fact often choose Indigenous words for God; we know, for example, of instances where the Japanese word *Dainch* is used. However, this form of domestication was soon discontinued in most areas where missionaries were active, probably because the borrowed Indigenous words transported too many associations that did not fit in with the Christian/Catholic image of God. This was the reason why the missionaries switched to a translation strategy of foreignization and instead used borrowed Latin or Portuguese words.

<sup>38</sup>See the contribution by Regina Toepfer in this volume (Chap. 6).

superiority.<sup>39</sup> The Christian God, the Greek heroine, metallurgy—these examples do not provide us with a methodological compass, but they do demonstrate the complexity of the factors affecting power and influence. Were it to be investigated more systematically, the empirical diversity evident here could eventually contribute to a theoretical and transcultural modification of Venuti's concepts.

## 16.4 Historicity and Anachronism: Translations and the Problem of Eurocentrism

However, we need to look at the actors and translation processes under investigation here not only in terms of power relationships but also in terms of what can be said and hence of translatability structures. Both in terms of the materiality of the object of translation and the globally dispersed geographical localization, the complex composition of our priority programme repeatedly led to discussions about Eurocentric and anachronistic terminology. We can discern the ideological restrictions to which some translators and scholars were subject in pre-modern gender roles, in models for religious interpretation, and in modern nationalist or racist prototypes of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In our own time and even in our own system for interpreting the world this is much more difficult. We as researchers are also subject to power structures, especially discursive and cultural ones, and we have grown up with specific narrative structures and value systems. In the future we should perhaps pay more attention to the influence they have on our work, for in a broader sense our texts are likewise a translation of the phenomena being investigated for our readers and a translation of the past into the present.

Being embedded in the here and now in this manner can lead to Eurocentric reductionism. Western notions can easily come to be seen as a universal *tertium comparationis* or as an 'original' with which other cultures can be compared.<sup>40</sup> But this requires not just familiarity with foreign contexts, for our 'own' European Early Modern period often feels alien enough. Here, certain anachronisms spring to mind that so easily creep into our analysis from today's canon of values. Historians sometimes wish for an even more consistent historicization and contextualization. In religious contexts, for instance, where can we speak of faith and where of superstition? What does "enlightened" mean above and beyond that specific historical epoch and the social group of enlighteners? How should we approach

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<sup>39</sup> See the contribution by Caroline Mannweiler in this volume (Chap. 5).

<sup>40</sup> There was an interesting discussion on this point at the conference on which this volume is based between Irena Fliter and Sonja Brentjes. It revolved around the use of the term "subject" (or *Untertan* in German) in the Ottoman Empire. In the broadest sense the question of the untranslatability of maps, as postulated in the article by Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann and Ekaterina Simonova-Gudzenko (see Chap. 12), also fits in here.

the Early Modern gender roles already mentioned? There is a great temptation to interpret pre-modern translations of Homer and the choice of terminology for female figures as a wrong translation of the Antique original—even if we have in fact discarded the question of whether a translation is faithful to the original. Equality is not a trans-epochal value. The degree of inequality and inhumanity in colonial contexts is often shocking for modern readers, yet for those who lived in Europe in the hierarchical order of the Early Modern period it was a core value. Texts of this period often construe this sense of superiority as clerical or aristocratic rather than European.<sup>41</sup>

And we can take this further: however much we advocate the use of the ‘gender star’ in German (signalling that all genders are equally visible) as a form of inclusive language by our researchers, authors, and readers, we must always consider whether it is appropriate for describing the social and cultural phenomena of past epochs and other cultural contexts. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, ideas about both sex and gender fundamentally shifted in the European and Western context; first nature and then the evolving discipline of biology acquired a previously unknown defining power. Thus it seems inappropriate to us to use the gender star when referring to the European/Christian pre-modern age. While medical and ethnographic phenomena that went beyond the dichotomy of two sexes were certainly familiar in the pre-modern age (e.g. ‘hermaphrodites’), in practice we can assume that heterosexuality was the fundamental cultural norm in everyday life.<sup>42</sup> We therefore decided not to use the star for our historical research objects. For a publication like the present volume, the question of whether to use the star needs to be discussed on the basis of scientific arguments, not moral ones.

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<sup>41</sup> On the phenomenon of inequality in Early Modern cultural contact, see Flüchter (2022).

<sup>42</sup> See Rolker (2013).

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