

# Forschung von Prof. Dr. phil. Monika Krein-Kühle

## Research Projects

### Ongoing Research Projects

#### *Project I*

#### *The Translator's Eye – On the Relevance of Seeing in Art Translation: An Artistic, Art-Historical and Phenomenological Perspective*

The aspect of seeing has not yet been given much attention in the field of art translation, although the relevance of seeing in creating, understanding, appreciating and assessing works of art has been highlighted both by artists (e.g., Klee (1920) and Albers (1963)), and by amateurs, philosophers and historians of art alike (most notably by Fiedler (1876, 1887, 1913–14/1991) and Imdahl (1980); Merleau-Ponty (1961; 1964); Elkins (1996); Mitchell (2002); von Falkenhausen (2015); Weidtmann (2018)).

Drawing on Fiedler's (1876, 1887) seminal approach to artistic creation and his principle of visibility (*Sichtbarkeit*), Imdahl's (1980: 92ff.) methodology of "the Iconic" (*Ikönik*) and his concepts of seeing, i.e., the "seeing view" (*sehendes Sehen*), the "recognizing view" (*wiedererkennendes Sehen*) and the "comprehending view" (*erkennendes Sehen*), and Weidtmann's (2018) phenomenological concept of the "participating view" (*teilhabendes Sehen*), this research will argue that (re-)learning how to see works of art in the light of these theoretical approaches may be considered a relevant first step for understanding that first act of translation, i.e., translating an artistic consciousness into a work of art. Understanding this first act is vital for a critical examination of the second act of translation, i.e., translating visual representation into verbal representation, which is to be subsequently translated by the viewer-translator into another language in the third act of intermedial and/or multimodal translation. This research argues that only an understanding of the first act of translation will enable the translator to take due account of the complex, multimodal, visual-verbal relationships and of any potentially problematic translation-relevant discrepancies between works of art, exhibitions and texts.

On the basis of a contextualized translation corpus of exhibition catalogue essays, our research will demonstrate that felicitous art translation crucially hinges on an understanding of the picture as a phenomenon and on an impartial translator's eye which is receptive to the power of visual phenomena, allows itself to be shown something and to be touched by the experience of that which becomes visible in seeing, and, furthermore, which ultimately is able to grasp the artistic impulse as "an impulse of cognition" (Fiedler [1876] 1949/1978: 76).

Keywords: Art Translation, Seeing, Art Theory, Phenomenology, Exhibition Catalogue Essays

## *Project II*

### *Translating Contemporary Art: Challenges and Implications*

Over the last decade, museum translation has become an object of translational research (e.g. Neather 2008, 2012; Sturge 2007), but there is a paucity of detailed investigations into the multi-faceted modes of art discourse in general, and into the exhibition catalogue in particular. This highly complex, hybrid, multimodal and ekphrastic genre has not so far attracted much research in the translation arena, although this genre is highly relevant from an applied point of view.

This project, therefore, will present the results of research into the contextual and textual aspects and constraints involved in the translation of exhibition catalogues containing essays on contemporary art and published in connection with exhibitions of works of internationally renowned or upcoming artists in museums and galleries in the German-speaking countries. It will investigate the conditions surrounding art translation on the basis of questionnaires and individual interviews with art translators and museum/gallery staff, and will explore the potentially ideological implications of the fact that English has become the *lingua franca* of the international art sphere. On an essay corpus-in-context basis, it will also discuss specific textual features and relevant trends in translation solutions. The research carried out so far suggests that the translation of art discourse exists in a 'parallel world' that is more or less uninfluenced by translation studies, yet certainly constitutes a market with a considerable need for high-quality work. Thus, this interdisciplinary field deserves further translation-gear research, didactization and inclusion in translation curriculum design.

## **Completed Research Projects**

### *Project I*

#### *Researching the interaction between domain knowledge and translational knowledge in scientific and technical translation (STT)*

Sound translational knowledge combined with sound domain knowledge has always been of prime importance for felicitous scientific and technical translation. This research will start by defining scientific and technical translation, and will look at the specific translation-relevant constraints of this discourse genre, such as register and genre considerations, source text defectiveness, expert-reader expectations, etc. It will then investigate the aspect of domain knowledge, which goes beyond the aspects of world or encyclopaedic knowledge, cultural knowledge and other knowledge types. In the case of STT, the writers of STs can safely take for granted an advanced degree of domain knowledge on the part of their specialist recipients. Therefore, the question arises as to what degree of specialization the translators must have if they are to meet the expectations of domain experts when conveying the ST sense into a TL text that is appropriate to domain experts. On the basis of the Cologne Specialized Translation Corpus (Krein-Kühle 2007, 2011, 2013), this research will investigate how domain knowledge and translational knowledge interact, how domain knowledge is reflected in the linguistic-translational make-up of the TT (particularly in the form of register and genre conventions) and how and under what circumstances translational choices give priority to domain knowledge over purely linguistic considerations. The research results will be relevant to translation research and to the applied branches of TS, i.e. translation teaching, professional translation and translation quality assessment.

## *Project II*

### *Towards a Clarification of the Foreignizing Concept in Literary Translation*

Foreignization challenges domestic literary canons by allowing the translated text to deviate from the familiar in the target culture. Most felicitous translations will operate between the two extremes of foreignization and domestication, but may deviate slightly in one direction or the other. Translation is an activity subject to severe constraints, since it operates in a field of tension between, on the one hand, loyalty or fidelity to the source text, which is embedded in its source language culture, and, on the other, its reproductive and creative transformation in accordance with the target text requirements pertaining to the target language culture. But how can foreignization be defined and how much foreignization is acceptable to the target language reader? This research will investigate Japanese (Krein-Kühle 2012) and Russian cultural references in translated texts (EN/FR/DE) and show how the Other is dealt with in translation. This study will try to answer the question of how foreignization may work and may well suggest that in the field of literary translation an enrichment of culture can only take place if the foreign is allowed to shine through in translation without alienating the reader.

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## *Project III*

### *Equivalence in translation*

Equivalence is a fundamental, but also controversial issue in translation studies (TS). A theoretical contextualized account of the nature, conditions and constraints defining translation and equivalence remains a central task of the discipline of TS. This research provides and tests redefinitions of the concept which take account of all the constraints involved, such as grammatical-syntactic, lexical-semantic, terminological-phraseological, genre/register-related, pragmatic, domain-related, contextual and situational aspects that govern the choice of specific translation solutions and the rejection of others, in order to deal with specific text types and genres in specific contexts and situations. More empirical research into carefully selected, theoretically well-framed, contextualized, and optimally, high-quality translation corpora as 'best practice' events, is a promising route toward unearthing the conditions underlying translation and equivalence, establishing relevant translation phenomena and robust patterns/regularities and shedding more light on the nature of translation. The results of such research can feed directly into the applied areas of translation studies, that is, translation teaching, professional translation and translation quality assessment/translation criticism.