Gender identities and the American dream in *A Streetcar Named Desire*
GENDER IDENTITIES AND THE AMERICAN DREAM
IN A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

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Abstract
During the past decades there has been a growing interest in questions of cultural representation and gender identity in translation research. The paper aims at exploring textual representation of gender identities and the American dream in two Greek translations of Tennessee Williams’ A Streetcar Named Desire (1947). The research framework is the feminist translation paradigm (von Flotow’s 1991, 2011, Simon1996). Findings suggest that the ‘broken world’ of post-war US is given different representations in the two versions: TT1 (1998) exhibits stronger domesticking effects, while TT2 (2008) is more interested in constructing a deeply rooted patriarchal structure and a clearer intention for reconstructing the representation of the American dream. The study indicates how the practice of translation can challenge a dominant discourse.

Key words
Translation, gender, sexuality, American dream, feminist translation, post-structuralism

1. The play
The main characters of the play are Blanche, a teacher from Southern States, her sister, Stella and her partner, Stanley. After the auction of her family’s property, Blanche pays a short visit to Stella and her partner’s house. She ends up staying for long in this house in a context of intense conflicts between Blanche and Stanley, the flirt between Blanche and Mitch, revelations about Blanche’s past, as well
as moments of crises in Stella and Stanley’s relation. The climax comes with Blanche’s rape by Stanley, in the second-to-last scene, and her nervous breakdown in the last scene, after which she presumably enters some asylum. Oklopčić (2008) claims that Blanche is reminiscent of the stereotype of the ‘Southern belle’, who is attributed femininity, sensitivity, naivety, passivity, vanity and gentle manners:

Williams portrays Blanche as the last representative of the old aristocracy who tries to survive in the modern world by escaping to alcohol, madness, promiscuity and whose memories are bitter since they are burdened by racial and sexual sins of her ancestors (Oklopčić 2008 online).

Stanley is an uneducated Polish of manual labour who embodies the stereotype of masculinity, physical power, dominance, brutish instincts. On the one hand, there is Blanche who lost her family property and thus her financial and social status, and on the other hand, there is Stanley who has managed everything with hard personal work. What is more, having been born in the USA, he identifies himself as an American recognizing and honouring his Polish origins at the same time. This character realizes the American identity and culture as shaped by the combination of various ethnicities and cultures.

Each one of the three basic characters represents a different aspect of what is called ‘the American dream’. The American dream “is grounded in the widely shared belief that American society offers equal and unlimited opportunities for upward mobility for those who embrace a strong work ethic, regardless of class origins.” (Perucci and Wysong, 2008: 45-46). Stanley attempts to fulfill the American dream, not only through his individual labour, but relying on Stella’s selling family property. Furthermore, he thinks of the US as the land of multiple opportunities and represents multiculturalism and industrialization of American society. As far as Blanche is concerned, her only means to succeed, i.e. attain the American dream, is the social status attributed to her by her education and her origins, which are invoked whenever she is intimidated (Schwecke 2005).

The play was written and opened on Broadway in 1947, directed by Elia Kazan who also directed a film adaptation of the play in
1951. The study examines two Greek performance translations of Tennessee Williams’ play *A Streetcar Named Desire*. TT1 is by translator Marios Ploritis written in 1998 for a theatrical performance directed by Stamatis Fasoulis, and TT2 is by Angela Brouskou and Olia Lazaridou, written ten years later (2008) for a performance directed by Angela Brouskou¹.


TT1  Τέννεση Ουίλιαμς. 1998. Λεωφορείον ο Πόθος. Αθήνα: Καστανιώτης (translation by Μάριος Πλωρίτης)


In the play, Tennessee Williams seems to be “constantly speak[ing] of gender, and almost as constantly of sexuality and sexual orientation” (Guibert 2004: 85). The study examines (a) representation in the two versions of gender-motivated social segregation and (b) reflection of cultural elements which allude to characters’ pursuing the American dream.

2. **Gender performativity and the feminist translation paradigm**

Butler, in her book *Gender Trouble*, introduces the theory of gender performativity. She claims 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: 34).

The notion of gender performativity draws on J.L. Austin’s linguistic theory of performative utterances (Austin 1961). Austin regards as performative those utterances that function in a performa-

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tive rather than referential way, which means that they rather perform acts than describe or refer to acts. In a similar manner, Culler (2000) explains Butler’s theory of gender performativity: “we consider gender as performative, in the sense that it is not what one is but what one does [...] a condition one enacts.” (ibid: 103). It is assumed that gendered subjectivities do not simply reflect a ‘female’ or ‘male’ essence; they are rather constructed being performed through (linguistic) acts. For instance, masculinity is not a ‘natural’ trait of male characters; it is rather performed through aggressive linguistic behavior manifested through relevant options.

This post-structuralist notion of gender identity construction through discourse is a central point in translation studies as well. As mentioned by von Flotow in her article “Feminist Translation: Contexts, Practices and Theories” (1991), second wave feminism and post-structuralist thought, the work of intellectuals such as Derrida, as well as postcolonial theory are ways in which cultural and sociological reflection has joined translation studies.

Feminist (or patriarchal) standpoints of the translators are assumed to affect rendition of identity in translation. Von Flotow delineates the feminist translation’s strategies and practices:

The feminist translator, following the lead of the feminist writers she translates, has given herself permission to make her work visible, discuss the creative process she is engaged in, collude with and challenge the writers she translates (1991: 7).

So, “feminist translation has to do with issues of authority (gender authority and authority on the text) and includes extending and developing the intention of the original text” (Simon 2005 [1996]: 12). An idea brought forward by post-structuralist thinkers (Derrida and Venuti 2001) is that translators may challenge the ‘superiority’ of the source text and author with claims relevant to gender, sexual and cultural identities. Approaches such as that of feminist translation are ways of affirming, deconstructing, posing a critique or even reinforcing the structures that define those identities.

Conversely, Komissarov’s article “Language and Culture in Translation: Competitors or Collaborators?” highlights the potential of
target versions to broaden the cultural perception of receptors, perhaps assuming some superior or inferior status of the source text.

Translation is an important vehicle for intercultural contacts. Translating from culture to culture means, first and foremost, to bring to the receptors new facts and ideas inherent in the source language culture, to broaden their cultural horizons, to make them aware that other people may have different customs, symbols and beliefs (Komissarov 1991: 15).

One question is how these two competing views may affect the representation of gender identities and the American dream.

3. **Identity construction and translation shifts**

On the assumption that “the cultural bias of the translator inevitably shapes his or her perception of the materials being translated, often in ways that he or she is unaware of” (Allen 1986: 2110), the paper shows standpoints of the translators affecting representations of gender identity and the American dream in various ways.

3.1. **Gendered representations**

Examples in this section come from the third, the sixth and the tenth scene of the play and indicate that the two versions construct gender identities differently, emphasizing women’s subordination, masculinity2 (reflected in discourse through lack of affectivity and a tendency for domination over interlocutors), gender-motivated social segregation, women’s subjectivity etc.

Example 1 provides an instance of identical representation of gender identity (in TT1 and TT2). For instance, Blanche’s subordination as a woman (and visitor) towards Stanley (the host) and his friends is visible in example 1, through the tentative modal verb *could I kibitz?* conventionally conveying a tone of politeness. Both target versions

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2 As far as the notion of masculinity is concerned, I follow Jack Sattel’s definition as cited by Kiesling: “the starting point for understanding masculinity lies, not in its contrast with femininity, but in the asymmetric dominance and prestige which accrues to males in this society” (Kiesling 1998: 65).
register Blanches’ subordination intention through her discourse (TT1 Επιτρέπεται να [May I]/TT2 θα σας γίνω βάρος; [will I be a burden?]).

Example 1
TT1 Μπλανς: Το πόκερ είναι τόσο συναρπαστικό! Επιτρέπεται να παρακολουθήσω; (scene 3, p. 68)
Blanche: Poker is so fascinating! May I kibitz?
TT2 Μπλανς: Το πόκερ είναι τόσο συναρπαστικό παιχνίδι… θα σας γίνω βάρος αν παρακολουθήσω; (scene 3, p. 2)
Blanche: Poker is such a fascinating game… will I be a burden for you if I kibitz?

The following sections focus on translation shifts, rather than similarities, shaping the representation of gender identities and the American dream.

3.1.1 Women’s subordination
Instances of shifts in Stella’s reflection of subordination have been highlighted in Pavlos Matessis’ translation of the play (Sidiropoulou 2012). Paradoxical as it may seem, if we take into account the fact that it is in the tenth scene when Stanley rapes Blanche imposing his physical domination on her, subordination seems more intense in the third and the sixth scene. We are therefore led to observe that sexism is not present only at moments when physical violence prevails but is constantly reproduced, even during trivial social encounters in social contexts, where gender identities are most rigid.

In the third scene, where Stanley and his friends play poker, and the sisters came back from an outing, he asks Stella where they had been: in TT2 he addresses her using a singular verb form (Πού ήσουνα; [where were you]) assuming direct imposition, whereas in TT1 he uses a plural verb ending (Πού πήγατε; [where did you go]), which rather blurs intention of imposition and the macho identity.
Example 2

ST  Stanley: Where you been?
    Stella: Blanche and I took in a show. Blanche, this is Mr. Gonzales and Mr. Hubbel.
    Blanche: Please don't get up.
    Stanley: Nobody's going to get up, so don't be worried. (scene 3, p. 1996)

TT1  Στάνλεϋ: Πού πήγατε;
     Στέλλα: Σε μια ταινία. Μπλανς, ο κύριος Γκονζάλες και κύριος Χάμπελ.
     Μπλανς: Παρακαλώ, μη σηκώνετε.
     Στάνλεϋ: Έννοια σου και κανένας δε θα σηκωθεί! (scene 3, p.67)
     Stanley: Where did you go?
     Stella: At a movie. Blanche, Mr. Gonzales and Mr. Hubbel
     Blanche: Please, don’t stand up.
     Stanley: Don’t worry nobody will stand up.

TT2  Στάνλεϋ: Πού ήσουνα;
     Στέλλα: Σινεμά με τη Μπλανς. Μπλανς, από δω ο κύριος Γκονζάλες και ο κύριος Χάμπελ.
     Μπλανς: Παρακαλώ μη σηκώσετε.
     Στάνλεϋ: Μην ανησυχείς, δεν πρόκειται να σηκωθεί κανείς.
     (scene 3, p. 2)
     Stanley: Where were you?
     Stella: At the cinema with Blanche. Blanche, here is Mr. Gonzales and Mr. Hubbel.
     Blanche: Please don’t stand up.
     Stanley: Don’t worry, nobody will stand up.

Moreover, in the sixth scene (example 3), after Blanche’s date with Mitch and the moment before they enter the house, Blanche makes a more indirect request to Mitch, in TT2, to trace her key in her purse, through Μήπως μπορείς να βρεις το κλειδί… [Could you possibly find], which may assume a stronger exhaustion on her part, vs. TT1 rendering Κοιτάς, σε παρακαλώ …(Can you please look…).
Example 3

ST  Blanche: See if you can locate my door-key in this purse. When I’m so tired my fingers are all thumbs.
    Mitch: This it?  (scene 6, p. 2013)

TT1  Μπλανς: Κοιτάς, σε παρακαλώ, στην τσάντα μου, να βρεις το κλειδί της πόρτας; Όταν είμαι τόσο κουρασμένη, τα δάχτυλά μου πετρώνουν!
    Μιτς: Αυτό είναι; (scene 6, p. 124)
    Blanche: Can you please, look, in my purse, to find the key of the door? When I am so tired my fingers turn into stones.
    Mitch: This it?

TT2  Μπλανς: Μήπως μπορείς να βρεις το κλειδί μέσα απ’ την τσάντα μου; Όταν είμαι κουρασμένη, κοκαλώνουν τα δάχτυλά μου.
    Μιτς: Αυτό είναι; (σκηνή 6, σελ. 1)
    Blanche: Could you possibly find the key in my purse? When I am tired, my fingers are stunned.
    Mitch: This it?

TT2 version seems to register a weaker version of Stella (example 2) and Blanche (example 3) realizing a different approach to reflecting female subordination. The next section further elaborates on gender identity construction.

3.1.2 Gender-motivated social segregation

Rendition of example 4 registers a stronger awareness of gender motivated segregation, on the part of Stanley, in TT2, through added item οι γυναίκες (you women), which does not appear in TT1.

Example 4

ST  Stanley: […] Why don't you women go up and sit with Eunice?  (scene 3, p. 1996)

TT1  Στάνλεϋ: […] Γιατί δεν ανεβάινετε απάνω, να κάνετε παρέα στη Γιούνις; (scene 3, p. 68)
    Stanley: No! why don’t you go upstairs to keep company to Eunice?
Likewise, in the sixth scene, example 5, during Mitch’s date with Blanche, Mitch refers to himself in TT2 by referring to his gender identity (Ένας άντρας) exploiting the opportunity ST offers (A man with a heavy build), whereas TT1 does not seem to need an explicit reference to the gender identity of Mitch.

Example 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Mitch: A man with a heavy build… (scene 6, p. 2015)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TT1</td>
<td>Μιτς: Όταν είσαι χοντροκαμωμένος…(scene 6, p. 129)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT2</td>
<td>Μιτς: Ένας άντρας μεγαλόσωμος…(scene 6, p. 3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This gender-related segregation reflects a binary perception of gender and a hierarchical intention. Donald Hall’s (2001) introduction to deconstruction and post-structuralist thought highlights Derrida’s idea that “binaries are almost always hierarchical in value, with the first term being the preferred, privileged one” (Hall 2001: 162). Female identity is thus presented as rather inferior and subordinate. Gender-motivated segregation is also reflected in TT2, example 6, through Stella’s reference to addressees’ gender identity (Τ’ αγόρια παίζουν ακόμα [The boys are still playing]). TT1 does not show any explicit reference to gender.

Example 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Stella: Well, well, well I see you boys are still at it (scene 3, p. 1996)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TT1</td>
<td>Στέλλα: Μπράβο! Ακόμα παίζετε; (scene 3, p. 67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT2</td>
<td>Στέλλα: Μπα μπα μπα, τι βλέπω; Τ’ αγόρια παίζουν ακόμα. (scene 3, p. 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1.3 Representation of masculinity

Another aspect of identity represented differently in the two Greek translations is observed in the representation of male characters’ masculinity, which is realized through less affective discourse. In example 7, we see that Mitch, on announcing his intention to leave his friends soon, says *I oughta go home pretty soon*, which is rendered almost literally in TT1, but enforced through the low tenor idiomatic expression *να του δίνω* (*I gotta hit the road*) in TT2; his discourse in TT2 becomes more direct, sharp and colloquial.

**Example 7**

**ST**  
*Mitch*: I’m out again. I oughta go home pretty soon.  
*Stanley*: Shut Up.  
*Mitch*: I gotta sick mother. She don’t go to sleep and I come in at night. (scene 3, p. 1995)

**TT1**  
*Mίτς*: Εγώ, πάσο. Πρέπει να γυρίσω νωρίς σπίτι.  
*Στάνλεϋ*: Σκασμός!  
*Mίτς*: Έχω άρρωστη τη μάνα μου. Δεν κλείνει μάτι αν δεν γυρίσω. (scene 3, p. 66)

**TT2**  
*Mίτς*: Και πάλι πάσο. Πρέπει να τον δίνω σε λίγο.  
*Στάνλεϋ*: Κόφτο.  
*Mίτς*: Έχω άρρωστη μάνα. Δεν κοιμάται μέχρι να γυρίσω.  
(scene 3, p. 1)

Stanley informs Blanche about her sister’s childbirth saying *the baby won’t come before morning* in example 8. TT2 registers Stanley’s non-involvement in the childbirth incident through TT2 item *Το μωρό το*
περιμένονα αύριο το πρωί (They’re expecting the baby…), whereas in TT1 a non-involvement attitude does not arise, especially through the idiomatic expression θα σκάσει μύτη (will pop out). Bonino (1995) refers to the non-involvement intention as an instance of ‘micromachismo’.

Example 8

ST  Stanley: The baby won’t come before morning. (scene 10, p. 2031)
TT1  Στάνλεϋ: Το μωρό δε θα σκάσει μύτη ως το πρωί… (scene 10, p. 131)
       Stanley: The baby won’t pop out until the morning.
TT2  Στάνλεϋ: Το μωρό το περιμένονα αύριο το πρωί. (scene 10, p. 1)
       Stanley: They’re expecting the baby to come tomorrow morning.

In example 9, male domination is stronger in TT2, through Stanley’s direct suggestion Να μένεις σπίτι σου (Stay at your home) vs. TT1 indirect suggestion, γιατί δεν έμενες μαζί της; (why didn’t you stay with her?). Directness is assumed to shape a different construction of masculinity.

Example 9

ST  Stanley: Then why don’t you stay home with her?
   Mitch: She says to go out, so I go, but I don’t enjoy it. All the while I keep wondering how she is. (scene 3, p. 1995)
TT1  Στάνλεϋ: Τότε, γιατί δεν έμενες μαζί της;
       Μιτς: Εκείνη μου λέει να βγαίνω και βγαίνω, αλλά δεν το φχα-ριστιέμαι. Όλη την ώρα, σκέφτομαι τι να κάνει… (scene 3, p. 66)
       Stanley: Then, why didn’t you stay with her?
       Mitch: She tells me to go out and I go out, but I don’t enjoy it. All the while I’m wondering what she’s doing…
TT2  Στάνλεϋ: Να μένεις σπίτι σου τότε, μαζί της.
       Μιτς: Αφού μου λέει να βγαίνω, βγαίνω, αλλά δεν το φχα-ριστιέμαι. Όλη την ώρα αυτήν σκέφτομαι (scene 3, p. 1)
       Stanley: Stay at your home then, with her.
Mitch: since she tells me to go out, I go out, but I don’t enjoy it. All the while I’m thinking of her.

Likewise, a male domination intention is registered in TT2 through the lower tenor expressive item γουστάρουμε (want, like) emphasizing Stanley’s non-cooperative attitude and reflecting gender superiority. Conversely, TT1 rendition Όσο κρατήσει [As much as it will (last)] does not carry any explicit implications of non-cooperation.

**Example 10**

ST    Stella: How much longer is this game going to continue?  
      Stanley: Till we get ready to quit. (scene 3, p. 1996)

TT1   Στέλλα: Πόσο θα κρατήσει αυτό το παιχνίδι;  
      Στάνλεϋ: Όσο κρατήσει! (scene 3, p. 67)  
      Stella: How much will this game continue?  
      Stanley: As much as it will!

TT2   Στέλλα: Θα παίζετε για πολύ ακόμα;  
      Στάνλεϋ: Για όσο γουστάρουμε. (scene 3, p. 2)  
      Stella: Will you be playing for long?  
      Stanley: For as much as we want to.

Later on, in the tenth scene, Blanche talks to Stanley about the invitation for a cruise she has supposedly received (example 11). The two versions reflect different approaches to Blanche’s subjectivity that holds an illusionary perception of reality and her position in it. TT2 represents her subjectivity in an active way through the item θα ζήσω (I will experience). She is attributed the power and assertiveness that she is constantly seeking to confirm for herself. By contrast, TT1 item θα με ψυχαγωγήσουν (they will entertain me) assumes a passive attitude on her part in the ‘entertainment’ incident, implying a weaker female subject position and a stronger assumption of masculine superiority.

**Example 11**

ST    Blanche: Well, anyhow, I shall be entertained in style.  
      Stanley: Uh-huh. It goes to show, you never know what is
coming. (scene 10, p. 2032)

TT1  Μπλανς: Μια φορά, θα με ψυχαγωγήσουν με όλα τα μεγαλεία. 
Στάνλευ: Όχι, θα κάτσουνε! Που θα πει ότι, ποτέ δεν ξέρεις τι σου μέλλεται! (scene 10, p. 183)
Blanche: Once, they will entertain me in all splendors. 
Stanley: As if they wouldn’t! Which goes to show, you never know what is meant for you.

TT2  Μπλανς: Τέλος πάντων, εγώ θα ζήσω μεγαλεία τώρα… 
Στάνλευ: Μάλιστα… είδες που ποτέ δεν ξέρεις τι σου ξημερώνει; (scene 10, p. 2)
Blanche: Anyway, I will experience splendors now…
Stanley: Right… Can you see that you never know what comes for you the next day?

The play is abundant in representations of male and female sexuality, which the target versions seem to register sometimes identically and sometimes differently. Varying patterns of sexuality appear in examples 12 and 13 with TT1 honorific χρυσέ μου (honey, dear) vs. TT2 honorific μωρό μου (baby): in TT2 the sexual connotation is clearer, while the intimacy carried by TT2 expression may assume a stronger awareness of the masculine ‘other’.

Example 12

ST  Blanche: No, honey, that's the key to my trunk which I must soon be packing. (scene 6, p. 2013)

TT1  Μπλανς: Όχι, χρυσέ μου, αυτό είναι το κλειδί του μπαούλου μου- που πρέπει να το ετοιμάσω, όπου να’ ναι. (scene 6, p. 125)
Blanche: No, honey, this is my trunk’s key- which I must soon be packing.

TT2  Μπλανς: Όχι μωρό μου, αυτό είναι το κλειδί της βαλίτσας μου, την οποία θα πρέπει σύντομα ν’ αρχίσω να ετοιμάζω… (scene 6, p. 1)
Blanche: No baby, this is my trunk’s key, which I must soon start packing.
In example 13, Blanche addresses Mitch in French: *Voulez-vous cou-
cher avec moi ce soir? Vous ne comprenez pas? Ah, quell dommage!*, which
Mitch does not understand. TT2 translates the rest of the exchange, *I
mean it’s a damned good thing* almost literally, preserving the reference
to sexual intercourse (through *Κι είναι τόσο ωραίο πράγμα… [And it’s
such a nice thing…]*)], whereas TT1 blurs explicit reference to sexual
intercourse (through TT item *νπέροχα [wonderfully]*)]. Blanche’s empow-
ered behaviour in TT2 assumes a weaker awareness of addressee’s
masculine identity.

**Example 13**

**ST**  
Blanche: *Voulez-vous coucher avec moi ce soir? Vous ne compre-
nez pas? Ah, quell dommage! – I mean it’s a damned good thing.* (scene 6, p. 2015)

**TT1**  
Μπλανς: *Voulez-vous coucher avec moi ce soir? Vous ne com-
prenez pas? Ah, quell dommage! Θέλω να πω, νπέροχα!*  
(scene 6, p. 128)

*Blanche: Would you like to sleep with me tonight? You don’t un-
derstand? Oh, it’s a pity! I want to say, wonderfully!*

**TT2**  
Μπλανς: *Voulez-vous coucher avec moi ce soir? Vous ne com-
prenez pas? Ah, quell dommage! Κι είναι τόσο ωραίο πράγμα…* (scene 6, p. 2-3)

*Blanche: Blanche: Would you like to sleep with me tonight? You
don’t understand? Oh, it’s a pity! And it’s such a nice thing…*

Blanche is represented as a person who dares to express her intense
sexuality even with the discretion and ambiguity imposed on her by
the social context within which she finds herself.

Female subordination, gender-motivated social segregation male
masculinity and sexuality are underlined in TT2 to foreground a
representation which more explicitly highlights gender inequality.

**3.2 Cultural identity and the American dream**

The American culture of middle 20th century is vividly present in
Tennessee Williams’ play. It is manifested through references to
food, music, place names, shops’ names and typical American tradi-
tions. The characters are people of post-war USA, who come from different social classes and bear different nationalities, each of them struggling for success using the resources they have. They struggle, dream of, get close to and lose the American dream. TT2 tends to preserve ST cultural references producing a ‘very American’ result and allowing connotations of the American dream. In example 14, the ST chop suey reference is rendered in terms of a TT1 lower tenor option for food/grub (μάσα), whereas TT2 simply transliterates the item preserving the cultural reference. In the same vein, in example 15, the Xavier Cugati reference is omitted in TT1 as irrelevant, but preserved in TT2.

Example 14

ST Pablo: Why don't somebody go to the Chinaman's and bring back a load of chop suey? (scene 3, p. 1995)

TT1 Πάμπλο: Δεν πετιέται κάποιος στον Κινέζο να φέρει λίγη μάσα; (scene 3, p. 65)

Pablo: Won’t anybody go quickly to the Chinese’s to bring some grub?

TT2 Πάμπλο: Πάει κάποιος μέχρι τον κινέζο να φέρει κάνα τσοπ οου; (scene 3, p. 1)

Pablo: Will somebody go to the Chinese’s to bring some chop suey?

Example 15

ST Steve: Sounds like Xavier Cugati (scene 3, p. 1997)

TT1 -

TT2 Στιβ: Τι είναι; Ξαβιέ Κούγκατ; (scene 3, p. 5)

Steve: What’s this? Xavier Cugati?

In example 16, Blanche’s thank you reply and honorific (sir) are transliterated in TT2, but translated in TT1. Likewise, in example 17, Blanche in observing that the street is deserted says: Even the hot tamale\(^3\) man has deserted the street. TT2 exploits the cultural reference

\(^3\) Tamale: Mexican dish with chopped meat, red peppers etc.
to raise awareness of multiculturalism (manifested by the Mexican selling tacos), whereas TT1 blurs the multi-cultural perspective.

Example 16
ST  Blanche: Thank you, sir! I appreciate your gallantry (scene 3, p. 1999)
TT1 Μπλανς: Ευχαριστώ, κύριε, για την αβρότητά σας! (scene 3, p. 79)
Blanche: Thank you, sir, for your courtesy!
KY2 Μπλανς: Θενκ γιον σερ. Εκτιμώ πολύ την ευγένεια σας. (scene 3, p. 7)
Blanche: Thank you sir. I appreciate your politeness much.

Example 17
ST  Blanche: Even the hot tamale man has deserted the street (scene 6, p. 2013)
TT1 Μπλανς: Ακόμα κι ο γυρολόγος χάθηκε απ’ τον δρόμο. (scene 6, p. 123)
Blanche: Even the peddler has disappeared from the street.
TT2 Μπλανς: Ακόμα κι ο μεξικάνος που φτιάχνει τα τάκος έφυγε (scene 6, p. 1)
Blanche: Even the Mexican that makes the tacos is gone.

Wealth is given an American gloss in example 18 through TT2 literal rendition of ST Tiffany diamonds. By contrast, TT1 tones down reflection of the American dream through the option αληθινά διαμάντια (real diamonds).

Example 18
ST  Stanley: I thought it was Tiffany diamonds. (scene 10, p. 2032)
TT1 Στάνλεϋ: Κι εγώ τα νόμιζα αληθινά διαμάντια. (scene 10, p. 183)
Stanley: And I took them for real diamonds.
TT2 Στάνλεϋ: Κι εγώ νόμιζα πως είναι διαμάντια απ’ το Τίφανυς. (scene 10, p. 2)
Stanley: And I thought they are diamonds from Tiffany’s.
The two target versions seem to be instances of what Pieterse (1995, in Cronin 2011) has called ‘centripetal’ vs. ‘centrifugal’ globalization. Centripetal globalization implies “imperialism, subjection, hegemony, Westernization or Americanization” (ibid:127) and is realized through TT2, which favours a representation reflecting gender inequality by exposing and deconstructing extremely masculine or feminine gender identities and hegemonic American values. TT1, by contrast, may be assumed to be an instance of a centrifugal type of globalization, which results in “interdependence, interpretation, hybridity, syncretism” (ibid).

4. Broken worlds and the American dream

And so it was I entered the broken world
To trace the visionary company of love, its voice
An instant in the wind (I know not whither hurled)
But not for long to hold each desperate choice.
(Hart Crane, The Broken Tower).

The stanza of the poem The Broken Tower is the epigraph to the text of A Streetcar Named Desire (Londré 2003). Its lines address issues discussed in the play. The ‘broken world’ seems to allude to post-war America, where values and social conventions were reconstructed. It is also the broken world of target social reality, gendered identity, sexuality. The ‘visionary company of love’ alludes to the American dream, and the dreams of target societies. Target versions may be assumed to be ‘instants in the wind’ of globalization, reconstructing representations in agreement with or challenging the conditions of reception of a socio-cultural system through translation (Sanderson 2005).

Translators put forward their own critique of gender structures and representations using, handling and exposing stereotypical gender identities and sexual roles that have been deeply entrenched in western culture. Von Flotow highlights the revisionist nature of gender politics and its effects which translation practice inscribes in texts:

Gender as a category informing macro-analyses of translated texts is largely revisionist, exposing the fact that women and
other gender minorities have essentially been excluded from or presented negatively in the linguistic and literary histories of the world’s cultures (2011: 123).

Variation in gender politics in the two target societies ended up in translators’ reconstructing varied representations of gender-motivated social exclusion practices, with the target versions exposing and critiquing the dominant patriarchal rhetoric. Blanche, a ‘symbol’ of professional and social failure, is gradually excluded as she descends social scale, and this is also done discursively, and differently reflected in the two versions. Even when women’s subjectivity is represented as intensely assertive, aggressive or somewhat dominating, it signals an eventually unsuccessful attempt of women to transcend men’s domination; in fact they ‘hit the wall’ of gender hierarchy in social and family relations receiving degrading or aggressive responses, and target versions seem to register variation in representations of gender identities eloquently.

The American dream and ideology (the one that sustains and perpetuates it, as “a ‘Representation’ of the Imaginary Relationship of Individuals to Their Real Conditions of Existence” Althusser, 1969: 1498) is also reflected differently in target discourses. That holds true since American cultural elements – which most often appear in Blanche’s discourse – are those which constitute the American dream and ideology in the text. The two versions construct varied representations of Blanche, who is led to collapsing and defeated in her attempt to fulfill the American dream.

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