

Translating Berlin #8

Berlin Psychoanalytical Institute

1. **Starter activity: What do you know about Berlin?**
 - a) Name five facts about Berlin.
 - b) Name one cultural connection between Germany and the UK.
 - c) Name three English writers in the 1920s.

2. **Read the English text below about the Berlin Psychoanalytical Institute.**
 - a) Where was the Institute located?
 - b) Which role did the Institute play in the 1920s in Berlin?
 - c) Who used to meet there, and why?

3. **Present the Berlin Psychoanalytical Institute to your neighbour or group. Your presentation should contain the answers to 2a), b), and c).**



The Berlin Psychoanalytical Institute,
on the left-hand side of Potsdamer Straße.
Photograph by Hans G. Casparius, 1930s.
Deutsche Kinemathek - Hans Casparius Archiv

Next to Vienna, in the 1920s Berlin became an up-and-coming hub for psychoanalysts from all over Europe, who flocked to the newly opened Berlin Psychoanalytical Institute and its Poliklinik on Potsdamer Straße. Lectures, meetings, joint trips to the psychoanalytical congresses held in Würzburg, Salzburg, and Weimar, training analysis, as well as seeing regular patients, all went on under the guidance of Karl Abraham and his colleagues.

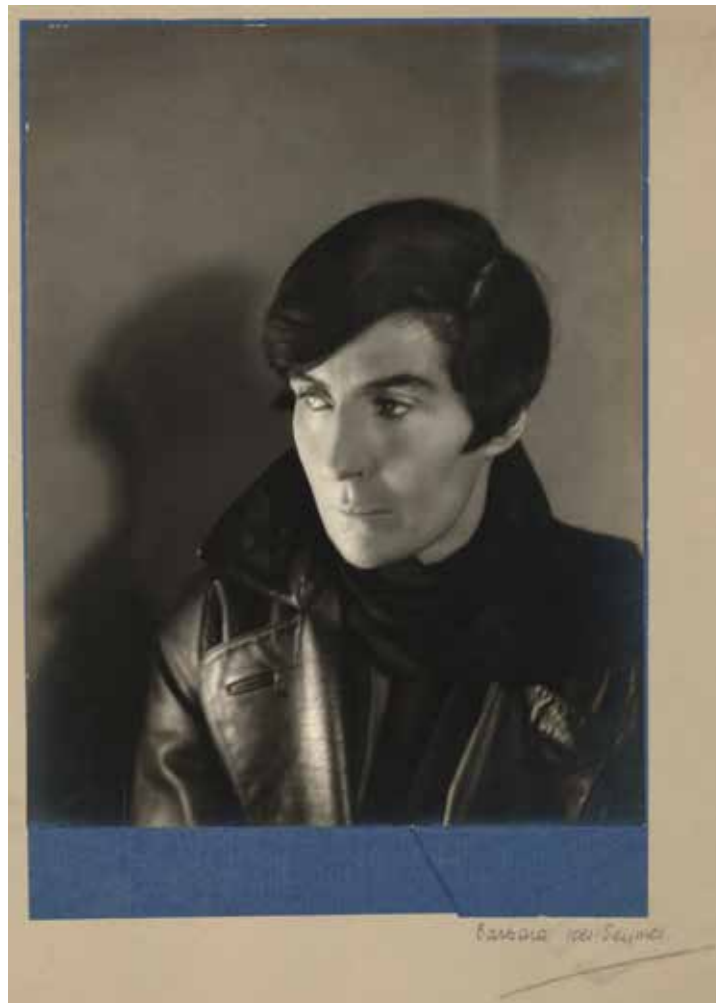
The majority of them had to go into exile once the Nazi Party came into power, but in the 1920s the Institute was a meeting place that attracted numerous Britons, some of whom became famous psychoanalysts themselves. The English translator of Freud's work, Alix Strachey, frequented it, and there met the Austrian analyst Melanie Klein who later established herself in London with the Stracheys' help. The modernist writer and film pioneer Bryher, having encountered the Berlin analyst Hanns Sachs by chance, returned to Berlin regularly for her analysis with him. One of the leading female British analysts, Sylvia Payne, was trained here, as well as Ernest and James Glover. Not all of them became famous writers, but all of them found the institute a modern and inspiring place without which their careers would have taken a very different course. It is one of many Berlin places whose energy and impact was cut off brutally by Nazi intervention and enforced exile. Gesa Stedman.



Alix Strachey

4. Who was Alix Strachey? Scan the QR code to find out.

Alix Strachey (1892–1973), translator of Freud, lived in Berlin from late 1924 to 1925 during her analysis with Karl Abraham. Nearly every day, she exchanged lively, informative, and ironic letters with her husband James during this period. Gesa Stedman.



Alix Strachey,
Photograph by Barbara Ker-Seymer, 1930s
© Max Ker-Seymer

Translation Theory

5. Answer the following questions in pairs or in your group:

- a) Can you think of a German or English word or phrase that you cannot translate verbatim (exactly word for word) into the other language? What strategy would you use to translate it?
- b) Would you like to become a professional translator? Why or why not? What do you think would be the most interesting aspects of being a translator?

6. Read and discuss the text on translation theory.

- a) What is the difference between micro- and macro-level translation?
 - b) What is the difference between domestication and foreignisation?
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Translation theory often distinguishes between micro- and macro-level translation. The micro level refers mainly to the accurate translation of single words, terms, or shorter segments of a text from the source language into the target language. In this context, the emphasis is placed on linguistic accuracy. For the sake of precision, decisions on the micro level are often made independently.

The macro level, on the other hand, rather looks at a text in its entirety and takes into account not only linguistic accuracy, but also social and cultural aspects. For the sake of consistency, decisions on a macro level are often made for the entire text. How can local dialects be translated from one language into another? Should personal names be translated in such a way that their meaning can be understood in the target language? And how should certain cultural references be approached, especially those that foreign readers may not understand? All of these questions belong to macro-level translation.

Translation decisions, whether on the micro or macro level, can always be located between the poles of domestication and foreignisation. Domestication means not only translating a text, but also adapting its content to the culture of the target language. Foreignisation, on the other hand, means keeping a translation as close to the original as possible, both in terms of content and style.

Die wunderbare Freiheit der Flaneurin

7. Read the German text 'Die wunderbare Freiheit der Flaneurin'.

- a) Whose translator was Alix Strachey?
- b) What did she do in her free time?

8. Translate the text into English. Choose:

- a) Translate the text directly.
- b) Rewrite the text in simpler German.

Next, translate your simpler version into English.

Glossary

eindrucksvoll	impressive
womöglich	possibly, maybe
sich etwas unterziehen	to undergo something
Milieu (n.)	milieu, environment

Eine besonders eindrucksvolle Vertreterin dieser Gruppe der Flaneurinnen ist womöglich die Psychoanalytikerin und Angehörige der Bloomsbury Group Alix Strachey. Alix war mit James Strachey verheiratet, mit dem sie gemeinsam die Werke Sigmund Freuds übersetzte. Sie kam 1924 nach Berlin, um sich im neu gegründeten und ausgesprochen einflussreichen Berliner Psychoanalytischen Institut einer Analyse bei Karl Abraham zu unterziehen. [...]. Mit großer Freude nahm sie an Tanzveranstaltungen und Bällen teil und bewegte sich in jenem für emanzipierte Frauen offenen gesellschaftlichen Milieus [...]. Gesa Stedman.

Letter to James Strachey

9. Read the excerpt from Strachey's letter to James Strachey (1925) and highlight all the words you know how to translate already.

10. Translate the text into German. Choose:

- a) Translate the text directly.
- b) Rewrite the text in simpler English.

Next, translate your simpler version into German.

I have a terrible week before me, as I find I've let myself in for a Ball on Tuesday, tomorrow (Fast-Nacht) as well as Saturday. On Saturday, I'm again in Cleopatra's tow [Melanie Klein], who's got a rage for 'em. It is a Kunst Akademie dance, very large & official. Tomorrow's affair is connected with the Romanisches Café & altogether cheap, Communistic & perhaps low. It is in the "Schall u. Rauch" & preceded by a Cabaret Show.

Alix Strachey to James Strachey, 25 February 1925, in: Bloomsbury/Freud, p. 215.

Glossary

in tow	im Schlepptau (n.)
rage	here: Begeisterung (f.)
affair	here: Angelegenheit (f.)
low	here: schlecht

Plenary

11. Talk about your translation process.

- a) Did any difficulties or problems arise?
- b) Which translation strategies did you use ...
 - I. ... to translate from German into English?
 - II. ... to translate from English into German?