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Translating Women

Different Voices and New Horizons

Edited by
Luise von Flotow and
Farzaneh Farahzad

ROUTLEDGE

Translating Women

This book's value lies in its effort at internationalising women and gender issues in/through translation beyond the North American and European contexts. A must-read for those interested in women as translators and women as translated across a variety of languages and cultures.

—José Santaemilia, University of Valencia, Spain

This book focuses on women and translation in cultures "across other horizons" well beyond the European or Anglo-American centres. Drawing on transnational feminist connections, its editors have assembled work from four continents and included work from Morocco, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Turkey, China, Saudi Arabia, Columbia, and beyond. Thirteen different chapters explore questions around women's roles in translation: as authors or translators or theoreticians. In doing so, they open new territories for studies in the area of "gender and translation" and stimulate academic work on questions in this field around the world. The chapters examine the impact of "Western" feminism when translated to other cultures; they describe translation projects devised to import and make meaningful feminist texts from other places; they engage with the politics of publishing translations by women authors in other cultures and the role women translators play in developing new ideas. The diverse approaches to questions around women and translation developed in this collection speak to the volume of unexplored material that has yet to be addressed in this field.

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2017
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Names: von Flotow, Luise, 1951– editor. | Farahzad, Farzaneh, editor.
Title: Translating women : different voices and new horizons / edited by Luise von Flotow and Farzaneh Farahzad.
Description: New York, NY : Routledge, [2016] | Series: Routledge Advances in Translation and Interpreting studies; 16 | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2016015730 | ISBN 9781138651562 (alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Translating and interpreting. | Feminism and literature. | Women translators.
Classification: LCC P306.2 .T73585 2016 | DDC 418/.02082—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2016015730

ISBN: 978-1-138-65156-2 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-62473-0 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

Dedicated to our children Leonore, Lewis, Nicholas, Charlotte, Javad, Jayran, and Quinn.

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Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Nancy Tsai for her research, translation, and editing. Her work and support throughout this project have been invaluable. Thanks also to Arianne Des Rochers and Mwamba Chibamba for their research support, as well as to Maryam Mohammadi Dehcheshmeh for the long hours she contributed to the compilation of this work. Many thanks to Charlotte Evans, Trish Van Bolderen, and Saeda Daraghme Masson for their work in the final editing process.

Special thanks to the School of Translation and Interpretation at the University of Ottawa for fostering an environment of dialogue and inquiry that makes translation studies projects like ours possible—and finally, a special mention to Christopher Larkosh for his 'Eurocentrism' comment to which this book is a response.

Introduction

As a sequel to *Translating Women* (2011), which, in one critic's comment was deemed "Eurocentric," this collection brings in a series of different voices and new horizons—social, cultural, and political—for the purpose of internationalizing translation studies, which, by definition, must be international, but which has long been dominated by Anglo-American and European perspectives. Its agenda is transnational and feminist, deliberately reaching beyond European and Anglo-American narratives on womanhood and translation, and bringing in research from countries including Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Colombia, Morocco, Sri Lanka, China, Japan, and even Eastern Europe, the part of the continent that is very much in transformation, but has long lived under the shadow of its Western counterpart.

One of our most important goals is to raise awareness of this research, which is so valuable in offering an alternative take on the experience of translating, or being translated, specifically as a woman. How are women's experiences and women's ideas being translated across cultures? What contextual influences—religious, cultural, political, commercial—come into play in the production of those translations? These are the kinds of questions we explore in this book, and this focus on women is, of course, a feminist approach, which has over the years been possible and remarkably effective in certain parts of the West, but has come under attack as essentialist. We are not essentialist. We are, however, determined to expose how women experience this very essentialist world and how they experience womanhood in an essentialist context as researchers, writers, translators, and their subjects by navigating a world in which the binary of women and men is maintained via legal and civil systems, bureaucracies, and institutions, as well as popular culture, fashion, and traditions. We believe that this is the first step in countering essentialism, so, yes, we are looking at "people referred to as women" (Malabou, (2009) 2011). A "woman" perspective, in this case, is pragmatic.

The goal is straightforward and simple; however, the compilation of this collection has not been. Devised in a spirit of egalitarian and transnational feminism—where difference is a valued phenomenon in political and cultural projects for and among women across borders—our project encountered a number of theoretical, ethical, and political concerns. First

and foremost, there is the ubiquitous presence of Western feminisms that seem to have impacted many cultures in some shape or form over the past fifty years and whose influence is felt in almost every chapter in this volume. It is quite impossible to avoid mentioning the West when working on the so-called category of women. A second major challenge arose in editing and preparing these essays for publication by a large academic press, located in the West and functioning in English. Editing has meant adapting the words and the work of authors from cultures as far apart as Morocco, Mexico, and Sri Lanka, many of whom use English as their second or third language, to the standards of academic writing and other conventions of *English*, which, in a sense, is the very Anglo-European structure of thought we seek to broaden, if not escape. The results of such editing could well earn the label "worlding" (Spivak 1999), as a writer's work is made to conform to the expectations of academic English publishers and readers. To counter this effect, the editors have proceeded with considerable caution and constant feedback from the authors. Third, given that the purpose of this collection is precisely to bring the work of others, those who have not yet had a chance to be heard or read in recent translation studies in English, into public academic view, "othering"—the undue exoticization of others—has been another concern of this collection's editors. This has been addressed by carefully framing the texts in order to present the broader political and cultural situations within which these other authors or translators are working and to de-emphasize exotic differences in their work by locating it in a specific place and time. We would also like to suggest, as we have done with applying the category of women as our main focus, that othering can also be perceived as a positive process, an inclusionary one, where we are offered the chance "to utilize power within relationships for transformation and coalition building" (Canales 2000). We must first see otherness before we can affect change in the treatment of others. We are progressing here toward transnational coalition building, a poignant moment of which involves highly politicized questions around the translation of the Quran in this time of terrorist sectarian violence. We thank Rim Hassen for her gracious willingness to make changes in her chapter in this regard.

National cultures are never hermetically sealed or closed off to difference; difference attracts, fascinates, triggers curiosity and interest, and always manages to penetrate borders. It can also be frightening and instrumentalized for political purposes. In most cases, engagement with difference requires translation, and the chapters we have collected show, in four sections, how difference travels and transforms across cultures via translators and the translations they produce.

The first section looks at women translators at work. Farzaneh Farahzad tells the story of women becoming translators in Iran over the course of the last one hundred years, moving from 90 percent illiteracy to highly educated, multilingual mediators of a diverse array of texts. She links the changing interests of these translators to the complex social and political

changes that have swept Iran in this past century. In the second essay, Rim Hassen studies three English translations of the Quran, carried out by Western female converts to Islam, and examines to what extent their formerly Western feminine identities influence their work.

The second section of the book engages with the influence Western feminisms have had on other cultures as a result of translation. Emek Ergun presents the important role played by Western texts in mobilizing feminist movements in Turkey, but also notes how translation has been downplayed in order to present the Turkish movement's originality. Anna Bogic studies the translations of the American feminist women's health classic *Our Bodies, Ourselves* into East Central Europe since 1989 and examines how shifting political structures of the target context contribute to different adaptations of the text. In Hiroko Furukawa's chapter on women's voices in Japanese translation, the Western feminist paradigm of "making women's voices heard" through translation is reversed to argue for a change in conventions of Japanese translation that assign women characters romantic and flowery language that has no foundation in reality. María Tipiani Lopera's essay follows the fluctuating uses of Western feminist texts in 1930s Colombia as the educated elite began to publish for women and promote women's suffrage, but often needed to backpedal in order to stay in line with social and religious requirements.

The translation of women writers is the focus of the next section—from Saudi Arabia and Cuba into Western languages, and from French and English into Chinese. Marilyn Booth and Arianne Des Rochers study and react to the practices of Western publishers in adapting foreign texts to make them palatable for Western readers. Booth criticizes this homogenizing approach as a deliberate strategy in the case of the Arabic text, while Des Rochers notes that in the case of Cuban Ena Lucía Portela, the translations conform to target literary norms and expectations, presenting her merely as a Cuban woman writer, thus erasing her experimentalist, feminist, anti-Revolution stance, which is precisely what makes her a "different" Cuban woman writer. The analyses of the Chinese translations of Doris Lessing and Simone de Beauvoir show that the instrumentalization of translation for political purposes is not restricted to the West. Given the tumultuous sociopolitical history of China's last sixty years, one might expect that certain authors would be favoured or censored at certain periods and in certain parts of the Chinese-speaking world. In their chapters, Li Hongyu and Liu Haiping document how this has impacted the treatment of these two important Western authors.

The communicative powers of translation—specifically for projects involving women and feminism—are harnessed and strategically put to work in the last three essays. Kanchuka Dharmasiri discusses preparing an anthology of Western feminist texts for academic use in Sinhala and using the translation of ancient Buddhist texts to frame this anthology in the face of anti-Western sentiment. She includes excerpts from the Therigatha, writing by Buddhist

nuns that shows how parallel (and locally applicable) feminist thinking can be. Similarly, Claudia Lucotti and María Antonieta Rosas deploy translation in developing fruitful exchanges between indigenous women poets in Mexico and Canada. The last chapter by Bouchra Laghzali reports on an international Moroccan project that uses translation to promote and explain Islamic feminism and describes the numerous linguistic and ideological challenges that a translator in her particular context faces.

Our collection engages with issues that academics in translation studies have long identified: peripheries and centres, for instance, and questions about how translation moves text into and out of such categories; political questions that always impinge on translation, whether in regard to the rise of conservative and religious forces in post-Communist East Central Europe or the problems of nationalist Buddhist propaganda among the Sinhalese student population in Sri Lanka; the question of voice, idiolect, sociolect, and dialect in translation, in this case in Japan; and economic issues, as publishers seek to disseminate and sell translations. However, in its focus on women, this book adds a further dimension to these ongoing topics: sexual difference. It is a fact that in most societies, sexual difference is managed by requiring people to identify or be identified as female or male, as women or men (Flotow and Scott 2016). It is sexual difference in the most bureaucratic and banal sense of the term—for example, in how one fills out passport applications and entry visas and the underlying meaningfulness of such actions—that continues to have an impact on women's lives and work, in translation as much as in other fields. In regard to the many cultures beyond the Anglo-American Eurozone that this book taps into, the binary aspect of this difference, as dépassé as it may seem to some, still holds enormous sway. And, in conclusion, we cannot stress enough how important it is to see and understand how those outside our own context are being affected and influenced by this binarism. The first step towards solidarity, after all, is understanding that there is difference.

Luise von Flotow and Farzaneh Farahzad

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Part I

The Role of Women Translators

1 Women Translators in Contemporary Iran

Farzaneh Farahzad

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A major indicator of the degree and nature of women's social presence is their rate of publication, comprising not only their writings but also their translations. In contemporary Iran, women's presence as translators, which seems to have both preceded and facilitated their later work as writers, can be traced back to the late Qajar period from the mid-nineteenth century to the early 1900s.

The contemporary history of women's translation in Iran, as covered in the present study, is roughly divided into three periods. The first dates from 1900 to the late 1920s and marks the end of the Qajar period,[1] the Constitutional Revolution in Iran, and the beginning of the reign of the Pahlavis. The second runs from the 1940s, which is when women writers and translators started to be recognized and published, to 1979 and the Islamic Revolution. The third covers the post-revolution period up to 2010.

1. Hidden Presence (1900–1930s)

In the late Qajar period, women were encouraged to attend informal religious schools, but by the 1900s, there already existed some in-house private education for girls and a limited number of modern elementary schools for girls throughout the country. Bibi Khanum Estarabadi founded the first girls' school in 1906 in Tehran. Her father was a military colonel and her mother was a literate woman teaching at the private religious girls' school in the Qajar court. Bibi Khanum is seen as one of the first Iranian feminists because of her efforts in establishing the school, which she had to turn into a kindergarten for girls, and in convincing the government and the public that girls had to be educated for modern life. European missionaries had already started their bilingual schools and some religious/ethnic minorities who wished to educate their girls[2] had their own schools. But all of these were out of the reach of ordinary middle-class people. The rate of literacy was very low throughout the country, and especially among women. The women who had access to private schooling came from upper classes and families of the elite courtiers, and some of them gradually turned to translation, which became a passage to their future literary activities.

The first reported translational presence of women in Iran is in a collaborative work in mid-nineteenth century. Kolsoom Khanum, the wife of a Qajar courtier, co-translated a long version of *The Thousand and One Nights* from Arabic into Persian with her husband, Abdul Latif Tasuji, around 1845 under the patronage of the imperial court. This work is known for its excellent quality and fluency, verse-to-verse translation, and illustrations by well-known graphic artists of the time. According to Mahjoob (2003, 361, cited in Mirabedini 2006),[3] Kolsoom Khanum translated at a time when "out of every one thousand men, not even one could read and write, and when teaching women to write was an unforgiveable sin." The translation of this work is reported to have taken a few years. But according to Mirabedini (2006), the first woman who worked as an independent literary translator in Iran is Tajmah Afagh Dowleh. She translated and published the play *Nader Shah*, by Narimanov,[4] from Turkish into Persian in 1906 around the time of the Constitutional Movement in Iran when literacy was still a luxury for all. Women's invisibility and their lack of social presence at that time doubtless forced her to introduce herself in the preface of the translation as ". . . sister of Colonel Ebrahim Khan (who has translated the play *Zahak*, written by Sami Beik), the wife of Fatullah Khan . . ." (Mirabedini 2006). The choice of this work was particularly important, not only for its source language, Turkish, but also for its theme and genre. The language of the Qajar court was Turkish, whereas the official language of the country was Persian. The translator Tajmah Afagh Dowleh, working from Turkish into Persian, thus had a non-Turkish speaking readership in mind and was extending her presence beyond the walls of the royal court. Her choice of the text might well have been due to the theme of the work; the late Qajar court encouraged the translation of historical works of literature rather than other types, because they were thought to elevate moral values and to teach lessons of life (Mirabedini 1999, 37). What adds to the significance of her choice is the genre. Drama, in its European sense, was mediated into Persian literature through translation, and this work is perhaps one of the very first plays that contributed to the introduction and development of the genre in Persian. The translator is also known for her poems and personal letters (see Golbon 1988, 223).

The production of these two early translations reveals something of the presence of women in the publication market in Iran, a market that seems to have its roots in the Constitutional Movement starting around 1906. The Movement formed in opposition to the presence of foreign forces in the Qajar court and throughout the country and as an attempt to gain independence from the great forces, i.e. Britain and Russia.[5] Many women gradually joined the Movement and came out of the house to support it, thus taking their first steps toward visibility. The first public girls' school was formally established in 1906, and the first women's weekly magazine, *Danesh* (Knowledge) was published in 1910 by literate elite women addressing domestic issues. The name of the editor of the magazine is not given anywhere in

its thirty issues. All we know is that she was the wife of Dr. Hossayn Khan Kahal (Mirabedini 1999), which is another sign of the hidden presence of women. A large production of women's periodicals followed, which focused on "women-related" issues, such as cooking, housework, family, personal hygiene, and fashion. But they also published translations from Arabic, English, and French, and included Iranian women's poetry and prose pieces. The themes covered women's roles as mothers and caretakers and over time extended to political and social discussions. The establishment of women's organizations in later years, the women's literacy movement which followed, together with the changes resulting from modernization policies and socio-economic changes in the 1920s provided further ground for women's visibility. Their social presence gradually came to light in literature, and their rising rate of literacy and level of education turned them first into readers of literature and later into producers of literature (Mirabedini 1999) preoccupied with exploring their traditional identities and at the same time modifying them to suit the changing conditions.

The social and political changes that derived from Reza Shah taking power in 1926 and introducing his modernization project gradually changed the status of women. In 1925, there were sixty-three girls' schools in Tehran, and the American Women's College was already educating the upper-class women and girls, but only 3 percent of women throughout the country were literate. Among them, only those who came from upper classes found a chance to write and perhaps to translate. So there is little trace of woman translators in Iran before the 1930s. The main reasons are their low rate of literacy and their limited social presence. But the 1930s were significant in making changes. In 1936, a law mandating unveiling was issued by the government, which encouraged women's presence in public and was part of the modernization project initiated by Reza Shah. Women's magazines grew in number and elite women started to write and translate for them. According to Mirabedini (2006), Jamileh Farrokh translated stories for *Afsaneh*, a major women's periodical, which inspired her work as a literary translator over the next decades. Parvin Etesami, the first woman poet to be published in Iran with a collection entitled *Divan e Parvin Etesami* (Etesami 1935), graduated from the American Women's College and had in her early works versified some of her father's translations. These appeared in women's journals of the 1930s. This was the time "when modernization encouraged a discourse of women's liberation" (Vatanabadi 2000, 1273), whereas the traditional expectations of the society tended to resist women's social presence. Etesami's poetry is largely didactic, confirming the traditional role of women as mothers and teachers, and the same line is followed in her selection of works for translation. However, one of her poems, which appeared in the initial print of her volume entitled *Zan e Irani* (The Iranian Woman), is in favour of Reza Shah's unveiling project.

Of the two books translated and published by women in the late 1930s, one was the biography of Marie Curie by Eve Curie, published in London

by William Heinemann in 1936. It was translated by Monir Jazani Asfia and published in 1939 by Afshari Publication in Tehran. The other was *The Soul of Woman*, an anti-feminist work by Gina Lombroso Ferrero, which legitimized the traditional role of women in society. It was translated by Pari Hesam Shahraisi and published by Danesh Publishing House in 1939 in Tehran. Interestingly, this translation was reprinted five times after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran.

2. Contested Presence (1940s–1979)

In the 1940s, several changes took place in the country. Reza Shah's son replaced him when the Anglo-Soviet forces invaded Iran in 1941, and these forces settled in various parts of the country. Despite the turbulence, more women entered schools, women's literacy rate rose to 4 percent, and learning a foreign language was encouraged among the elite, who now had limited access to bilingual education, partly because of the foreign military presence in the country. According to Amin (2006),[6] women translated eighteen books in this decade. Literature ranked first with nine volumes, of which five were British, two were German, and two were Russian. The choice of literature from these three languages relates to the socio-historical settings of the time, which seem to have affected women's translational choices in later decades as well. To counterbalance the strong British and Soviet influence, which the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 had already strengthened, Reza Shah established commercial ties with Germany, which provided grounds for the introduction of German literature alongside British and Russian literature. Child-related books[7] (children's literature and childcare) ranked second with three volumes translated from English and French. The third ranking category of priorities concerned philosophy with two titles and religion with two. Other translated themes were varied, with one title in each, such as social sciences and applied sciences. Women translators did not tackle themes such as arts and geography in this decade (see Table 1.1).

The translators came from upper classes and were mostly educated in French or English bilingual schools in Iran, which were limited in number. One of the most famous of these translators was Simin Daneshvar, the celebrated Iranian writer and literary translator. She came from an educated

Table 1.1 Priorities of Translated Themes in the 1940s[1]

Rankings & Priorities	*Themes*	*No. of Translated Books*
1	Literature	9
2	Child-Related Books	3
3	Philosophy + Religion	2 + 2

1 The table shows the top three thematic priorities among woman translators, not the whole range and number of themes covered in their translations.

family, went to a bilingual English school, and later received her PhD in Persian literature. She published her first collection of short stories entitled *Aatashe Khamoosh* (Dead Fire), the first by an Iranian woman writer, in 1948, published by Elmi Publishing House in Tehran. In 1949, she published translations of two works, the play *The Chocolate Soldier*, by George Bernard Shaw and the novel *The Duel* by Anton Chekhov. These were followed by more literary translations in the following decades.

The 1950s witnessed a huge increase in the number of literary translations in general. The pressure and censorship exercised in the years around the 1953 coup d'état in the country so discouraged many writers that a great number of them resorted to translation instead. Remembering her own experience at that time, Simin Daneshvar says, "Many of us, writers my age, were in fact victimized by translation . . . Because our works did not sell . . . we started translating Western literature instead, and turned out to be translators instead of writers" (Mirabedini 1999, 37). Daneshvar translated about eight novels and a few collections of short stories by famous writers of the time, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s. Later, of course, she pursued her writing career and wrote five novels, of which *Suvashun*, also spelled *Savushun*, published in 1969, turned out to be a best seller for several years, went through huge numbers of reprints for about four decades, and was translated into many languages. Mohammad Reza Ghanoonparvar translated it into English, and Mage Publishers published it in 1990 under the title *Savushun: A Novel about Modern Iran*.

Despite the unrest in the 1950s, women continued to struggle for their presence in society. Their literacy rate rose to 7.3 percent, and more women published their work. In 1955, Forugh Farrokhzad, the controversial modernist and feminist poet, published her first collection of poems entitled *Asir* (Captive), published by Farsi Publication. In this decade, women translated seventy-two titles covering a wide range of themes. Of these, thirty-three were novels and volumes of short stories, with British literature ranking first again, as in the previous decade. Child-related books ranked second as well as history and biography. Natural and applied sciences ranked third (see Table 1.2).

Of the thirty-three works of literature, Simin Daneshvar, the writer who had now turned to translation instead, translated three classic novels. Other prolific woman translators of the 1950s were Maimanat Dana, who had

Table 1.2 Priorities of Translated Themes in the 1950s

Ranking & Priorities	*Themes*	*No. of Translated Books*
1	Literature	33
2	a. Child-Related Books	10
	b. History & Biography	10
3	Natural & Applied Sciences	5

learned English in a British school in Isfahan and studied nursing in Beirut, with four translated novels, and Habibe Foyuzat with three. An interesting point is that Ashraf Pahlavi, a princess who was one of the Shah's sisters, joined in by publishing her first translation, a volume on nursing, in 1958, entitled *Fan e Parastari* (Nursing Skill). This was a translation of *Basic Nursing* by Helen Z. Gill published in 1955 by Macmillan. Her second translation was on childcare published in 1959. It was entitled *Maadar va Bacheh* (Mother and Child), a translation of Benjamin Spock's *Baby and Child Care*. These efforts seem to have been a gesture in line with the so-called modernization project initiated by her father, which encouraged women's social presence. However, both of her choices verify the controversial situation of women by implying that while the modernized woman might contribute to the cultural capital of the society, she must adhere to her conventional role at the same time.

The next decade started with eleven volumes translated by women, all published in 1960. This, of course, seems to be the continuation of the translational activity triggered in the previous decades and in line with the sociohistorical changes. In 1963, Iranian women gained the right to vote. Leftist debates became heated in the 1960s and undertones of social unrest were detectable in the literature of the time. The changing conditions of the country now allowed women greater social presence. But this presence still had to conform to their traditional image. Many of the working women of the time were forced into contradictory roles: that of a modern woman who had an income and helped the family budget and that of the traditional mother and wife. The good woman was now defined as modern, but modest and traditional.

Nevertheless, 17.9 percent of Iranian women were literate in 1966, and women translated a total of 173 books in the 1960s. Of this number, fifty-four (about 31percent of what women translated in this period) belonged to the category of literature, again making it the first and the favorite theme for women translators. British literature still ranked first in this category, perhaps because of the long period of British influence discussed earlier in this chapter, and French and North American literatures ranked second. The second favorable category for women translators was child-related books with forty-five volumes (thirty-nine of children's literature and six volumes on childcare). This genre began to gain momentum among woman translators and strongly maintained its position in the decades that followed. One reason was doubtless the eagerness of the middle-class and newly literate women to gain presence and become visible. Literacy was no longer a luxury for the elite; more middle-class women could now read and write and many were going to universities. Translation gave them the chance to use what they were learning. They could participate in literary activities by working at home and at the same time attending to the domestic family life. Another reason may have been that they could use what they translated in their immediate environment, for their own children. This legitimated their

activity and at the same time linked it to their traditional role as wives and mothers. And yet another reason was that translating children's literature did not require a high level of foreign-language proficiency, which was a luxury the middle-class woman could not necessarily afford. All this encouraged women's tendency to translate for children as a continuation of their role as storytelling mothers and caretakers in the family.

The third favorite category was social sciences with fifteen volumes in total. Other themes such as history and biography as well as natural and applied sciences gradually gained more frequency (see Table 1.3).

What is interesting in the 1960s is that most women translators translated and published one title only, thus not pursuing their translational activity in the same or the following decades. They seem not to have identified as translators and did not take up translation as a profession. It seems that translation may sometimes have been a convenient option for women who wanted to contribute to their modernized social presence, but were at the same time confined to domestic life and obligations. One of the few exceptions is Zahra Natel Khanlari, who came from an educated family, had a PhD in literature, and later became a known translator and writer. Another is Lili Golestan, again from an educated family, who continued to translate in the next decades and turned out to be a prolific literary translator with about twenty-five volumes of published works altogether. She also worked as a journalist in the next decades.

In the 1970s, the rate of women's literacy rose to around 47 percent. In regard to translated work, the statistics show that there was a drastic shift in interest. Literature ranked second for the first time in three decades, whereas child-related books (children's literature and childcare) ranked first. Of the 359 volumes translated by women in this decade, only sixty-nine (about 19 percent of what they translated) belonged to the category of literature. But the number of child-related books rose from 45 (consisting of thirty-nine works of children's literature and six of childcare) in the 1960s to 104 in the 1970s (ninety-five volumes on children's literature and nine volumes on childcare). One of the prolific translators of children's literature was Farzaneh Ebrahimi, with about sixteen volumes of children's stories in this decade.

The third favorite category for woman translators was social sciences, which grew from fifteen volumes in the 1960s to forty-one in the 1970s. This may be related to women's interest in social issues and their growing social awareness in the pre-revolution context of the country (see Table 1.4).

Table 1.3 Priorities of Translated Themes in the 1960s

Ranking & Priorities	*Themes*	*No. of Translated Books*
1	Literature	54
2	Child-Related Books	45
3	Social Sciences	15

Table 1.4 Priorities of Translated Themes in the 1970s

Ranking & Priorities	*Themes*	*No. of Translated Books*
1	Child-Related Books	104
2	Literature	69
3	Social Sciences	41

One interesting point is that Farah Diba, the Queen of Iran, who founded a children's intellectual development center in this decade, joined in by translating and illustrating *The Little Mermaid* by Hans Christian Andersen, in 1973, to show her support for children and her presence as a caring intellectual mother. The translation was entitled *Dokhtarak e Darya* (The Little Sea Girl) and was published in Tehran. This was indeed the second time in the Pahlavi reign that the tokenized translational presence of a woman from the royal family reinforced the maternal discourse of the modernization trend which had started in the 1920s.

Another interesting point was that more women were now graduating from universities, and some joined the translation market by working in their areas of specialization. So the number of volumes translated in natural and applied sciences rose from nine in the 1960s to thirty-six in the 1970s. However, these women were not professional translators. Most of them translated one or two volumes and then left the translation market to work in their areas of expertise.

Women's increased presence as translators of child-related books and works of science foregrounds the unresolved dilemma of Iranian women's new identity, split between traditional and modern.

3. Professional Presence (1980–2010)[8]

The two major events of the next decade in Iran were the establishment of the Islamic Republic in early 1979 and the eight-year Iran-Iraq War between 1980 and 1989. This was a transitional period for everyone in the country. Despite the huge changes created by the revolution and the unrest of the war, the rate of women's literacy, which was about 47 percent by the late 1970s, went up to 75 percent in the 1980s. Of the total number of 1,199 volumes translated by women in this decade, 212 were in the area of children's literature and sixty-three dealt with childcare for a total of 275. This shows a growing tendency toward the maternal discourse which was now gaining prominence in women's translational choices. One of the many reasons could be the unrest created throughout the country by the war, which confined more women to domestic life, of which childcare was a serious part. This conjecture is confirmed by the birthrate of those years, which

went up from 2.7 in the 1970s to 3.9 in the 1980s[9] (see Shakouri Ganjavi and Taheri 2009), the highest ever in the post-revolution years, and which led to nationwide planning for the next decades.

According to the figures given by Amin (2006), 236 volumes of what women translated in the 1980s were in the category of literature, again with British literature ranking first and North American literature ranking second. But what this figure does not show is that most of these works were retranslations or reprints of previously published translations (see Farahzad 2012). So despite the apparent increase in numbers, women's activity in literary translation was indeed not as significant as in the previous decades.

The third favorite category for women to work in in this decade was social sciences, with the number of translations growing from forty-one volumes in the 1970s to 159 in the 1980s, showing women's growing interest and involvement in what was going on around them. But, interestingly, the fourth was medical sciences,[10] which showed a huge increase from 10 volumes in the 1970s to 113 in the 1980s. In fact, this category had the highest growth among all others, thus attesting to women's elevated level of education and their increasing level of professionalization (see Table 1.5).

The 1980s constitute a milestone in the contemporary history of translation in Iran because this period also witnessed a translation movement in academia. One of the consequences of the revolution was the closing down of universities in 1980 for the so-called cultural revolution to redesign higher education curricula. In the four years when the universities were closed, all faculty members were required to either write new textbooks or translate university textbooks into Persian to suit the new demands of the new society. Since it was next to impossible to write for absent students, almost all university faculty members started translating in their areas of academic education and expertise. Translation of academic material suddenly gained momentum, but was done by many who did not have specific training or experience in translating and in many cases had no experience in writing. This proliferation of translated works initiated a further movement with an intense focus on editing and improving translations (see Farahzad 2013). Many of the women who were engaged in this translation movement in some way took editing courses, were hired as translation editors

Table 1.5 Priorities of Translated Themes in the 1980s

Ranking & Priorities	*Themes*	*No. of Translated Books*
1	Child-Related Books	275
2	Literature	236
3	Social Sciences	159
4	Medical Sciences	113

by publishers and journals, and began to develop a stronger presence in the publishing industry. Editing, therefore, became a favorite area for women as an extension of their translational activity.

In the 1990s, which started with nationwide post-war reconstruction projects, women's literacy rate went up to 90.5 percent. Of the 1,895 volumes translated by women, 489 were in the category of literature, with North American literature slightly higher than the literature of other nations. By this point, natural and applied sciences ranked second with 405 volumes and medical science and social sciences ranked third, each with 176 texts. This increasing interest in science demonstrates women's greater presence as specialists. Child-related books (109 volumes on children's literature and 17 on childcare) ranked fourth, showing a distinct decrease as compared to the previous decade (see Table 1.6).

The figures would seem to imply that the maternal discourse started to change as women became more educated.

The scene again changed drastically in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The rate of women's literacy went up to 96 percent. At the same time, women outnumbered men in terms of university admission, i.e. about 60 percent of those who passed the nationwide university entrance exam in Iran were women. Of the 13,614 volumes translated by women between 2000 and 2010, the largest number was in the category of literature. North American literature ranked first with 1,203 volumes and British literature ranked second with 890 titles. Social sciences came in second, increasing from 176 titles in the 1990s to 1,863 in this decade. The number of translated volumes in natural and applied sciences also increased massively from 405 in the previous decade to 1,859, and the number of translated volumes in medical sciences grew from 176 in the 1990s to 1,831. An interesting point in this decade is that women translators began to turn to new subjects: psychology and religion in particular. In this decade, as the figures show, women translated more books in more diverse areas, ranging from literature and science to religion. The rise in women's literacy rate and level of higher education led to their higher level of professionalization and active presence (See Table 1.7).

Table 1.6 Priorities of Translated Themes in the 1990s

Ranking & Priorities	*Themes*	*No. of Translated Books*
1	Literature	489
2	Natural & Applied Sciences	405
3	a. Medical Sciences	176
	b. Social Sciences	176
4	Child-Related Books	126

Table 1.7 Priorities of Translated Themes in the 2000s

Ranking & Priorities	*Themes*	*No. of Translated Books*
1	Literature	2887
2	Social Sciences	1863
3	Natural & Applied Sciences	1859
4	Medical Sciences	1831
5	Psychology	1411

4. Conclusion

Women's presence in the translation market of Iran, the nature and variety of the themes, and the quantity of their published translations can serve to reveal, at least in part, their growing social presence over the course of more than a century of recent history in Iran (Farahzad, forthcoming). Clearly, as women's level of literacy and education grew, they became more involved in translation. Table 1.8 shows the relation between their rate of literacy and the number of books they translated in each decade from 1900 to 2010.

The interesting thing is that the increase in the women's literacy rate gradually led to a change in their translational preferences. Figure 1.1 shows this trend from the 1940s, which is the beginning of women's contested presence.

The figure does not reflect women's translational activity in the years 1900 to 1940, the period of their hidden presence, because the number of women's book translations was quite limited then, although their translational activities were not insignificant. In fact, part of the hidden presence of women in general, and of the very few woman translators related to the late Qajar court in the 1900s, was challenged by the immense political changes, such as the overthrow of the Qajar dynasty, the Constitutional Revolution in Iran, and the coming to power of the Pahlavi dynasty with its modernization project of the early twentieth century. Many of the literate and later educated elite women started to translate for women's magazines, which were gradually appearing in the early twentieth century, paving the way for women's stronger presence in the next decades. But the modernization attitude, which was quite promising for women at the beginning, encouraged a maternal discourse in the long run, which required women to adhere to their traditional role while at the same time opting for greater social presence. Many women started working outside the home and increasing the family budget, but without any reduction of their domestic duties. This meant double work for women. The best professional work for women was thought to be teaching in schools, which allowed them short absences from home, giving them time to simultaneously attend to family life, and could be viewed as

Table 1.8 Women's Rate of Literacy and Their Number of Translated Books

Decade	*Women's Rate of Literacy*	*No. of Translated Books*
1900s	Not Recorded	2
1910s	Not Recorded	Not Recorded
1920s	3%	2
1930s	Not Recorded	2
1940s	4%	17
1950s	7.3%	72
1960s	17.9%	173
1970s	47%	359
1980s	75%	1199
1990s	90.5%	1895
2000s	96%	13614

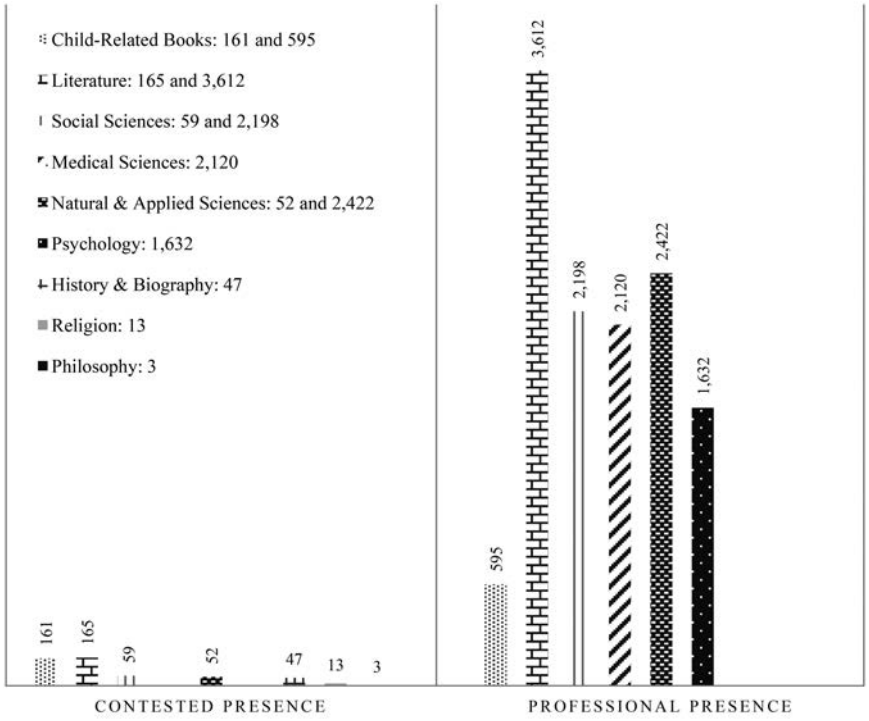

Figure 1.1 Priorities of translated themes in the "contested" and "professional" eras.

an extension of their maternal role. The dilemma led to women's contested presence, revealed in part in their translational choices. Women gradually became visible through translating, but at the same time their preference for literary translation in almost all decades and for translation of child-related books in most decades of the twentieth century shows this tendency (or obligation) to preserve their traditional role as storytellers and caretakers, indeed, as mothers. As they became more educated, their presence was redefined, i.e. they developed a greater consciousness of their status and started to move away slightly from storytelling and toward professionalism in the areas in which they were gaining expertise. Iranian women's translational choices in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries thus strongly relate to the socio-historical setting and conditions of the country and then to their level of education and professionalization.

Notes

Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Persian (including quotations and book titles) have been done by the author, Farzaneh Farahzad.

1. The Qajar dynasty ruled over Iran from 1785 to 1925. The late Qajar period, in this chapter, covers the years 1900 to 1925.
2. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/education-xxv-womens-education-in-the-qajar-period. Accessed October 23, 2015.
3. http://sarapoem.persiangig.com/link7/mirabedinizanan. Accessed January 20, 2014.
4. Narimanov was a Russian revolutionary writer, politician, and statesman of Azerbaijan, which was then a part of Russia.
5. The so-called Anglo-Russian Agreement, in which Britain and Russia agreed to divide Iran into areas of influence, was signed in 1907.
6. Amin's study covers the statistics from 1930 to 1980. The rest of the figures covering 1980 to 2010 come from an ongoing study by Farahzad.
7. The term child-related books is used here as a general category, including children's literature and childcare.
8. This study covers women's translational activity up to 2010.
9. This created severe conditions for the country later. When these children started going to school in the 1990s, more school buildings and educational spaces were needed. So schools worked two shifts. Moreover, when these children grew up and started to attend higher education, they had to pass highly competitive entrance exams to attend the limited number of state universities. This led to an increase in the number of higher education institutes in the next years. However, the trend has drastically changed since then.
10. In this study, medical sciences form an independent category and are not classified under applied sciences.

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2 Negotiating Western and Muslim Feminine Identities through Translation

Western Female Converts Translating the Quran

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1. Introduction

In the last two decades, nine Muslim women have translated or collaborated in the translation of the Quran into English. Interestingly, two-thirds of these women are Western converts to Islam. Even though conversion is often perceived as a spiritual journey, the decision to become a "Muslim woman" could present various challenges for the individuals involved. The choice to wear the veil, in particular, could be one of the most challenging steps of the transformative process, especially given that Western society has made the veil into a symbol of the "Otherness" of Islam (Van Nieuwkerk 2006, 1). The aim of this chapter is to discuss how "Western women" who chose to become "Muslim women" define their role as translators and negotiate their new gendered identities through their translations of the Quran. The main focus will be given to the three non-collaborative translations[1]—namely, *The Quran, Arabic Text with Corresponding English Meaning* by Umm Muhammad, *The Light of Dawn: Daily Readings from the Holy Quran* (1999) by Camille Adams Helminski, and *The Sublime Quran* (2007) by Laleh Bakhtiar.

The first translator, Umm Muhammad or Aminah Assami, is an American who converted to Islam while following an intensive study of Arabic in Syria. Later she moved to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where she continues to teach religious subjects. Her translation, published by Dar Abul-Qasim[2] under the pseudonym of Saheeh International, is probably the first English translation of the Quran by a woman. There is little information available on Umm Muhammad's life and works before she converted to Islam. But according to her website,[3] she has authored and revised more than seventy Islamic books in English, mostly for Dar Abul-Qasim.[4] According to the same website, the pseudonym "Saheeh International," used to refer to Umm Muhammad, is also the name of a group of three American female converts to Islam who joined together in 1989 to edit Islamic literature in English submitted by authors to Dar Abul-Qasim. They later began to produce their

own works. This group includes Umm Muhammad (translator and author), Amatullah J. Bantley[5] (director), and Mary M. Kennedy[6] (English editor). The second translator, Camille Adams Helminski, is also an American convert to Islam. She holds an honorary doctorate in Arabic from the University of Damascus and the World Union of Writers (Paris). She is the co-founder and co-director of the Threshold Society in Aptos, California, which is an educational foundation in the Mevlevi Tradition[7] based on the teachings of the famous Sufi poet Jallaluddin Rumi. As a translator, Helminski has rendered several volumes of Sufi literature into English. Her partial translation of the Quran contains 365 selected verses for daily meditation. The final and most recent woman translator of the Quran is Laleh Bakhtiar, who is an American author and translator. She converted to Islam during her stay in Iran while taking classes on Islamic culture and civilization taught in English at Tehran University. She is the author of many books on Islamic unity, architecture, and moral healing. She has also translated over thirty books on Islam and Islamic beliefs into English.

Despite their different trajectories and backgrounds, the three translators could be said to occupy privileged positions characterized by hybridization of language, culture, and religious systems on the one hand and by conflicts, contrasts, and tensions on the other. The main conflicts lie in Western representations of Muslim women and in the differences in gender paradigm between conservative Islam and the West. This suggests that the three women translators could be actively and constantly negotiating these conflicts/differences as they translate and as they decide which aspects of their feminine identity is most suitable to their new position as Muslim women. This prompts various questions, such as which Muslim gender paradigm will they adopt: conservative, moderate, or feminist? To what extent have Western representations of Muslim women influenced their translations? And how are these choices, contrasts, and conflicts reflected in their translations?

In order to address these questions, I will look at their translation strategies, linguistic choices, and interpretations of a key gender-related verse in the Quran. I will argue that in addition to the tensions created by the conversion process, the fact that two translators are based in the United States and one in Saudi Arabia may have had a major impact on their works. Helminski and Bakhtiar, who live in the West, seem to have adopted innovative techniques and Islamic feminist interpretations in order to challenge Orientalist assumptions about Muslim women and to assert their visibility as women translators. In contrast, Umm Muhammad's choices and interpretations of gender-related verses suggest that she seeks to conform to the dominant conservative Islamic discourse by de-emphasizing her feminine identity and her position as one of the first Western women to translate the Quran into English. To illustrate these differences, I will also compare their choices with *The Holy Quran: Translation with Commentary* (2006) undertaken by Taheereh Saffarzadeh,[8] an Iranian poet, writer, university lecturer,

and translator, as well as the only non-convert Muslim woman to have ever individually translated the Quran into English.

2. Conflicting Identities

Conversion to Islam could place Western women in a delicate if not fragile position; on one hand, they have to defend themselves against criticism from various "sides"—both from a society that views them as traitors and from family members who fail to understand their choice to convert to a religion perceived as oppressive for women. For instance, in her study of Western converts in Holland, van Nieuwkerk discusses how Western converts' communities of origin regularly treat them with hostility. One Dutch convert describes her experience by explaining,

> People stare at you because they see that you are white. Maybe that is the cause of the aggression; you are a *traitor* to the race.
>
> (cited in Van Nieuwkerk 2006, 1; my emphasis)

In addition to facing the society's reaction, Western female converts have also to face the personal challenges of dealing with the perceived contrasts between Western and Muslim expectations of femininity. Womanhood, as Suzanne Romaine (1999) argues, takes varying forms in different societies and historical periods; what is considered "feminine" in one culture or period may be understood as "masculine" or have no special gendered significance in another. Simone de Beauvoir has also famously pointed out that, one is not born but rather becomes a woman (1972, 18). This suggests that womanhood is not biologically determined. Rather, it is culturally learned, acquired, and influenced by means of external factors. Even though it is difficult to determine what it means to be a "Muslim woman," representations produced by the Orientalist discourse seem to be imposing specific images of the Muslim woman. Such images as Mohja Kahf discusses in her book *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman: From Termagant to Odalisque* (1999) have evolved from the bold queens of mediaeval literature to colonial images of the veiled, secluded, and oppressed women. Kahf maintains that Western representations of the Muslim woman and the imagined harem in which she is enclosed serve as a negative counter-image for the ideal Western and Christian woman. This leads her to argue that there is a deep complicity between Western imagination of the Muslim woman and the institution of power between the West and the Muslim world.

Similarly, Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978) discusses how the images of the Muslim woman in the West are linked and influenced by the European imperialist project. In his study of images of the Muslim woman in the works of nineteenth-century French writers such as Gustave Flaubert, Gérard de Nerval, François René de Chateaubriand, and Charles Baudelaire, Said identifies two sets of images. In the first set, the Muslim woman appears to

have excessive sexuality. She is depicted as a licentious sexual centre often working as a prostitute or a courtesan like Flaubert's Kuchuk Hanem (Said 1978, 187). In the second type, the Muslim woman is presented as a symbol of the mysterious Orient. She epitomizes the exotic essence of the Orient, which the European male traveller tries to possess (180). For Said, these two sets of imagery associated with the Muslim woman are constitutive of the discourse of Orientalism, which uses the backwardness and effeminacy of the Oriental as an excuse to invade the Middle East under the cloak of the French civilizing mission. In these texts, the Muslim woman, like the "Orient," is an "invention"[9] created to present the "Other" as weak and degenerate. A very good example of Western representations of the Muslim woman can also be found in an advertisement by the perfume company Bijan.

In this advertisement, printed in *New York Magazine*, on 14 September 1992 (page 12), there are three side-by-side photos of the same woman. The first picture features the woman draped in black, looking seriously miserable and unhappy. A message written below her reads, "Women should be quiet, composed, obedient, grateful, modest, respectful, submissive and very, very serious." On the next picture we find the same woman (probably representing a European woman) looking much happier and relaxed, holding a cigar and wearing a revealing outfit. The message written below her is different: "Women should be . . . sophisticated, exotic, intriguing, snobby, chic, alluring, intelligent and very, very sexy." The last picture features the same woman transformed into the "quintessential all-American girl, smiling with a baseball bat in hand, looking feisty and vivacious" (Zine 2004, 14). The message below her reads: "Women should be bright, wild, flirty, fun, eccentric, tough, bold, and very, very Bijan." The three images featured in this advertisement reveal how sophistication, beauty, fun, and brightness are associated with Western (European and American) constructions of femininity, while obedience, submission, and silence are associated with Islam's vision of womanhood.

It is, however, worth pointing out that there are other discourses contributing to the creation of stereotypical images of the veiled, passive, and submissive Muslim woman—namely, the discourse of conservative Islam, which seeks to define Muslim femininity in contrast to the Western perception of womanhood. In order to challenge Western representations of Muslim women, a number of Muslim media production companies that produce materials ranging from newsletters and magazines to audiotapes, videos, CDs, and DVDs have been created with the purpose of constructing an Islamic model of the Muslim woman. Yvonne Haddad, for instance, gives the example of many journals designed for American Muslim audiences, which seem to project the same Orientalist images of the veiled and submissive Muslim woman. In periodicals such as the *Muslim Magazine*, the *American Journal, al-Jumuah*, and *Islamic Horizons*, Muslim women who are working outside the domestic sphere are rarely discussed or represented. In these journals, women are mainly depicted in relation to men within the context of the family, as

sisters, daughters, wives, and mothers. Most significantly, unveiled Muslim women or women choosing not to wear some form of Islamic dress are generally not pictured or given attention. Equally important is that in the more conservative Muslim magazines, women are frequently advised about appropriate feminine behaviour:

> Obedience, sacrifice, and being unobtrusive by keeping one's voice soft and low are typical virtues extolled in these articles. A woman's primary responsibility, according to the conservative publications, is as a wife and mother. A good Muslim woman is expected to set aside any personal aspirations until her husband's and children's needs are met. Further, mothers are to be exemplary in their piety and a foundation of Islamic education for their children.
>
> (Haddad 2006, 35)

Even though Muslim and Western representations of the Muslim woman stem from different ideological perspectives, they seem to share a similar fascination with the stereotypical images of the "veiled," "obedient," and "invisible" Muslim woman. They both present the veil as the symbol of Muslim woman's identity and therefore under-represent the great number of Muslim women who are not veiled.

Depending on the form of Islam they choose, many Western women who convert to Islam may have to face these representations as they negotiate a new gendered identity. The issue of identity is a complex one, since the contrasts between the Western and Muslim gender paradigm and the transition between the "old" and the "new" self could lead to a state of confusion, loss, and even despair. For instance, this is how Naima Robert, a Western convert to Islam, describes her own experience of adopting a new identity:

> The 'old me' was secure, a known entity, I had been comfortable with her. Now I was changing and part of me resisted that change. I battled with myself torn between what I knew was right and what my desires were calling me to.
>
> (2005, 102)

In one of her poems, Robert coined the term "empti-mess" to describe her displacement and confusion (102). Even though she is not physically displaced to a new fixed territory, Robert seems to share the same feeling experienced by immigrants or people living in diaspora. Like them, she has to face an alien culture, which could change her conception of the world and the people surrounding her. This moment of transition between the "old" and "new" self is what leads to the creation of hybrid identities. As Homi Bhabha explains, hybridity is the product of a cultural encounter, which results in the transformation of all subjects involved. It is achieved at the moment of transition between borderlines or "contact zones" (1990, 211).

This "Third Space," a sort of "in-between space," is located between existing cultural, religious, and social systems and it is in this "Third Space" that new hybrid identities are negotiated and constructed (Bhabha 1994, 38). Robert's hybridity is mostly visible in her language and how she mixes English and Arabic words in her book.

A similar pattern can be found in the works of women translators of the Quran. Many of them seem to insert Arabic terms into the English text, even when there is an English equivalent. Laleh Bakhtiar is the only translator who has discussed her conversion to Islam in the introduction to her work. She briefly mentions that she converted to Islam while living in Iran. In a personal communication, I wrote her asking for more details on the main reasons for her conversion. She replied,

> My case was unusual in the sense that my father was Muslim, but I grew up in America and he lived in Iran. I did not get to know him until I was an adult when I moved to Iran with my husband and two children. I enrolled at Tehran University and was taking classes with Seyyed Hossein Nasr. He asked me what religion I was. I said that I had been brought up as a Christian. He said: Well, now you are in Iran and your father is Muslim so everyone will expect you to be Muslim. I said: I don't know anything about Islam. He said: Well, learn. *Alhamdullah* my learning culminated in the translation of the Sublime Quran.
>
> (my emphasis)

In describing her experience of the conversion process, she wrote that:

> Believing in Islam was not difficult for me because I did not lose Jesus. I gained Muhammad.

In this brief reply, there are few indicators of Bakhtiar's hybrid identity. Apart from the fact that she is "hybrid" by birth as the daughter of an American Christian mother and an Iranian Muslim father, Bakhtiar's hybrid position is visible in her language when she inserts the Arabic expression *Alhamdullah* meaning "thanks to God." Equally interesting is how she sums up her experience of conversion, where her belief in Jesus is not lost, but a new one is gained. This suggests that her former religion, culture, and identity seem to merge rather than to conflict, with the new one. There is no information about Camille Adams Helminski's experience or motives for converting to Islam. Umm Muhammad, on the other hand, converted to Islam while studying in Syria. But her case is slightly different from that of the other two translators. Unlike Bakhtiar and Helminski, Umm Muhammad left her country of origin to live in a Muslim country, which suggests that she did not have to face the hostility of her society of origin. Umm Muhammad also gave up her "Western" name and took a new one. The custom of converts taking a new name is common also to Judaism and

Christianity and signifies "a new birth, a new life and an erasing of former identity within the adopted religion" (Ricci 2011, 190). This gives an indication of Umm Muhammad's position towards her culture of origin and raises various questions about the impact this could have on her position as a woman translator living in a conservative Muslim country. It also prompts questions about the differences and similarities she shares with Helminski and Bakhtiar, who continue to live in the West.

3. Taking Sides and Declaring Positions

Before discussing Umm Muhammad's, Helminski's, and Bakhtiar's translation strategies and linguistic choices, it is worth pointing out some of the key differences in their introductions and prefaces. As Genette explains, prefaces, introductions, and forewords have a strategic importance of guidance and explanation. They "can communicate a piece of sheer information" and can "make known an intention, or an interpretation by the author and/or the publisher" (Genette 1997, 11). They can also give valuable insights into the translators' choices and positions towards specific subjects. In the case of the three women translators of the Quran, the introductions and prefaces reveal some interesting differences between Umm Muhammad, on the one hand, who lives in Saudi Arabia, and Helminski and Bakhtiar on the other, who live in the United States.

When reading Umm Muhammad's introduction, it is almost impossible to understand that the translator is a woman; first, because the introduction is written in plural form, perhaps to include the other female members of Saheeh International and possibly as a strategy to hide the translator's feminine identity. Second, the introduction does not contain any information about Umm Muhammad or her female collaborators, which is remarkable, especially as they could be the first group of Western women to work together on translating Islamic texts into English. Interestingly, while the feminine identity of Umm Muhammad is suppressed, other key elements are emphasized—namely, the centrality of classical religious sources in the form of *ḥadith* or *tafsir*.[10] Umm Muhammad, for instance, points out the three main objectives, which have served as guidelines for the translation:

- To present correct meanings, as far as possible, in accordance with the '*aqeedah of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama ah*
- To simplify and clarify the language for the benefit of all readers
- To let the Quran speak for itself, adding footnotes only where deemed necessary for explanation of points not readily understood or when more than one meaning is acceptable

(Saheeh International 1997, ii; my emphasis)

The three objectives illustrate Umm Muhammad's reliance on classical Islamic religious sources and suggest that she seeks to deliver a traditionally

based translation. Similarly, in her introduction, Saffarzadeh, the Iranian translator of the Quran, places classical Islamic sources at the centre of her work (Saffarzadeh 2006, 1210). The importance of classical religious texts clearly stressed in Umm Muhammad's translation is, however, noticeably diminished in Helminski's and Bakhtiar's prefaces and introductions. Helminski, for instance, starts her preface by discussing the supporting material she used in her work (Helminski 2000, xiv). She admits that she has relied on different sources, including previous translations of the Quran by two popular translators, Yusuf Ali[11] and Asad Muhammad, a Western convert to Islam. She does not, however, mention any specific classical Islamic religious source. Helminski then quickly moves to the issue of Muslim women's position in Islam. She starts by pointing out the feminine elements embedded in the Quranic message by stating,

> As the Quran, the Holy Book of Islam, proclaims over and over again at the commencement of each chapter or surah, *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem* . . . in the Name of God, the infinitely passionate and Most Merciful . . . this message is coming to us from the compassionate womb of Creation. The root to the words *Rahman* and *Raheem* is the word for womb.
>
> (2000, x)

Helminski's reference to the terms *Rahman* and *Raheem* is of significant importance. These particular expressions, occurring at the start of all Quranic chapters except one, are closely linked to the Arabic term for "womb," *Rahm*. Some scholars have interpreted this link between a female organ and the key attributes of God as an indication of the gender-egalitarian message of the Quranic text. Amina Wadud, a Western convert to Islam who became one of the most influential scholars on Islamic feminism and gender in Islam, refers to the same expressions in her 1994 sermon[12] to build similarities between God's relationship to human beings and a mother's relationship to her nursing infant. Other scholars such as Nancy Roberts have explored the meanings of the terms *Rahman* and *Raheem* in order to redefine the dominant perception of God as the father figure. In her article "God as Father-Mother, and More," she argues that these expressions reflect the father-mother image of God.[13] In her introduction, Helminski seems to stress these ideas and to highlight women's equal position in the Quran by stating,

> The Quran is one of the few Holy Books with which I am familiar which speaks directly to both "men who have faith" and "women who have faith" in numerous passages. In God's sight men and women are equal, what matters is not gender, wealth or power, but that we bring to our Sustainer a sound heart.
>
> (2000, xiv)

The idea that the Quran addresses both men and women in various passages has also been used by a number of Islamic feminists, such as Asma Barlas to argue for gender equality in Islam. Following a similar line of thought, Bakhtiar's introduction pays particular attention to the translator's position as a woman and to gender issues in Islam. First, Bakhtiar begins by discussing some personal aspects of her life such as her upbringing as a Catholic, her stay in Iran, and her conversion to Islam. She then presents the strategies and techniques she used to translate the Quran. Regarding her supporting material, she states,

> I relied upon my many years of tutoring in classical Quranic Arabic Grammar. It was at that time that I had become familiar with *al-Mu jim al mufahris: al-lafad al-quran al-karim*. The *Mu jim* lists every Arabic root and its derivative(s) found in the Quran as verbs, nouns and some particles (adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions or interjections).
>
> (2007, xvii)

In listing the various supporting materials she used in her work, Bakhtiar does not show great reliance on classical religious Islamic sources, as Umm Muhammad and Saffarzadeh do. After briefly discussing her translation strategies, Bakhtiar devotes a major part of the introduction to the discussion of women's position in Islam. She starts by making her work stand out from other English translations of the Holy Text:

> Another distinction between this translation and other present English translations arises from the fact that this is the first English translation of the Quran by an American woman.[14] Just as I found a lack of internal consistency in previous English translations, I also found that little had been given to the woman's point of view.
>
> (2007, xvii)

The translator then points out that women's point of view has been suppressed for over 1,440 years since the revelation began and goes on to highlight the problem of male bias in the interpretation and translation of the Quran. She stresses the need to reevaluate gender relations in Islam by focusing on one of the most controversial and debated verses in the Quran—namely, verse 4:34. Bakhtiar then announces the purpose and the original contribution of her work:

> Let it also be said that this translation was undertaken by a woman to bring both men and women to equity so that the message of fairness and justice between the sexes can be accepted in Truth by both genders.
>
> (2007, xviii)

Like Helminski, Bakhtiar uses the introduction to draw attention to the issue of Muslim women's position in Islam and to argue for gender equality.

They both avoid all references to classical religious texts or any traditionalist religious institutions, which clearly contrasts with Umm Muhammad's approach. Another key difference lies in their approaches to the Quran's poetic form.

4. Verse versus Prose

The Quran is believed to have been revealed in Arabic, the language of the people who lived in the Arabian Peninsula. However, its literary form does not adhere to any of the rules known to Arabic poetry and prose, as it combines both metrical and non-metrical composition. Furthermore, Muslims consider the Quranic language as the most perfect of Arabic speech; it is viewed as a divine, eternal, and inimitable linguistic miracle (Abdul-Raof 2001, 37). This inimitability or *e'jaz* is supported by verses in the Holy Book itself, such as verses 2:23 and 17:88 in which a challenge is issued to humankind to attempt to bring forth a text that can match its majestic and eloquent style. While Umm Muhammad, like Saffarzadeh, opts to render the Quran in prose, Helminski and Bakhtiar choose a poetic form. Although translators do not always provide explanations for their choices, it is particularly interesting that the two women translators in Muslim countries render the text in prose while those in the United States opt for a poetic style. This may be a coincidence, but a closer look at the significance of these choices could reveal interesting insights into the translators' positions and their "communicative priorities" (Hatim and Mason 1990, 15). As Basil Hatim and Ian Mason point out, in the process of translation, translators are constantly faced with difficult choices, as they decide on how to transfer the linguistic and cultural elements of the source text. They also assert that "since total re-creation of any language transaction is impossible, translators will always be subject to a conflict of interest as to what their communicative priorities will be" (1990, 15). Given that the Quran's unique language is an essential quality of the Sacred Text, deciding in which form it should be rendered constitutes one of the conflicts that can help not only determine the translator's "communicative priorities" but also his/her position as translator. Moreover, as John Sturrock (1990) points out, prose and verse translation fulfil different functions and introduce different types of translators. He explains that "translations of verse into prose aim at literalism," while translation of verse into verse, even though it does not provide complete correspondence with their original, is "a less self-effacing activity" (1990, 993). This means that the choice to render the poetic discourse into verse or prose cannot be perceived as a random choice but rather as a manifestation of the translator's understanding of translation as well as his/her ideological position.

In her introduction, Umm Muhammad does not provide any explanation as to why she opts for prose translation. Saffarzadeh, however, explains that she chose to give meaning priority over style, which is similar to the view adopted by many other translators of religious texts, including Eugene

Nida (1964, 15). This means that Umm Muhammad's and Saffarzadeh's communicative priority is the literal and faithful transfer of the source text's meaning. However, the immediate impact of this strategy is that the source and the target text are presented in different styles: one in poetic form, while the other in prose. This, as many would argue, is a form of unfaithfulness to the source text. In the context of poetry translation, for instance, Robert Browning has pointed out that poetry translation "ought to be absolutely literal, with the exact rendering of [the] words and the words placed in the order of the original. Only a rendering of this sort gives any real insight to the original" (cited in Selver 1966, 26).

Moreover, the strategy of translating poetry into prose overlooks an essential quality of the source text, which inevitably creates a hierarchy and a distance between the original and its translation. It could, therefore, be argued that Umm Muhammad's choice for prose presents an attempt to highlight the inferior, secondary, and unequal status of the translation and to stress the untranslatable and inconvertible qualities of the Quranic text. This strategy, which ensures a continuous presence of difference, is consistent with Umm Muhammad's use of a bilingual edition and a parallel format in which the Arabic text faces the English translation. This strategy is, interestingly, one of Islamic religious authorities' requirements. In fact, Abu Hanifa, the Iraqi scholar and theologian (c.700–67), declared that it "was not lawful to put the whole [translated text] together in one volume unless the Arabic text was placed opposite to the translation throughout" (cited in Pickthall 1931, 422). Similarly, in 1936, Al-Azhar University announced a *Fatwa* stipulating, "Translations of the meanings of the Quran . . . should be printed next to the text concerned" (Mehanna 1978, 22). The same *Fatwa* was supported by the Executive Council for the Ministers of Religious Endowment and Islamic Affairs (Saudi Arabia) who declared that every translation "should have the Arabic text of the Quran with it" (Rafiabadi 2007, 297).

The parallel format employed by Umm Muhammad fulfils various other functions, such as "allowing readers to compare between the original and the translation and to have an immediate and direct means of cross referencing and verifications" (Mustapha 2001, 203). Most significantly, it serves to confirm the secondary role of the translation while ensuring and highlighting the supremacy of the original (203). This further supports the view that Umm Muhammad's choice of a bilingual prose edition is aimed at emphasising "hierarchical relations" and reminding readers that the source text is universal, unchangeable, and stable, while the target text/language is inferior and inadequate, as she clearly states:

> Arabic is richer not only in vocabulary but also in grammatical possibilities. Again English is hardly comparable in this respect. Although precise and logical, Arabic grammar is free from any limitations found in that of other languages, allowing for much wider expression.
>
> (Saheeh International 1997, v)

By stressing hierarchies among languages, Umm Muhammad exposes her philosophy of translation, which as Venuti points out "can never simply be [a] communication between equals because it is fundamentally ethnocentric" (1998, 11). The power relations governing languages as well as source and target texts become significantly important when translation is perceived in gendered terms. As Lori Chamberlain argues in her article "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation," the traditional distinction between the original and the translation could be a reflection of the gender hierarchies that define the relationships between the sexes. In this article, Chamberlain exposes the politics embedded in the differentiation between binary oppositions, and argues that this hierarchisation symbolises the privileging of primary over secondary, original over translation, and, more importantly, man over woman. The "sexualisation of translation" appears, for instance, in the well-known tag les belles infidèles (1988, 455–56). Similarly, in his essay entitled "Traduire, dit-elle" (1982), Albert Bensoussan conceives the relationship between the original and the translation in gendered terms. He argues that these distinctions present the original as the powerful male, while the translation is presented as the subservient and subjugated female (cited in Levine 1992, 183). This suggests that Umm Muhammad could be consciously or subconsciously reproducing gender hierarchies through her choice for prose and parallel format, which serves to stress the "distance" between the original (male) and its translation (female).

In stark contrast, Helminski's and Bakhtiar's choice of a poetic form could be viewed as an attempt to challenge these hierarchies. Mary Phil Korsak, who employed the same strategy in her English translation of Hebrew text, explains that the poetic layout recalls the structure and style of the source text, which inevitably brings the source text closer to the readers and allows them to discover its qualities through their own language (Korsak 1999, n.p.). This suggests that Helminski and Bakhtiar may have opted for a poetic form in order to bring the text closer to their target readers and to minimize the hierarchy between primary and secondary and therefore between males and females. Furthermore, Helminski's and Bakhtiar's choice of poetic style could be interpreted as an attempt to stress their visibility as women translators, for as Sturrock points out, translating poetry into verse is "a less-effacing activity." This illustrates further the differences between Helminski's and Bakhtiar's positions as translators on the one hand, and Umm Muhammad's on the other. Interestingly, these differences are also noticeable in their linguistic choices.

5. Linguistic Choices

With regard to the translation of masculine exclusive nouns such as "man," "mankind," "father," and "son," Umm Muhammad, like Saffarzadeh, seems to overlook the problem of male-centered language. Helminski and Bakhtiar, on the other hand, consistently avoid exclusionary terms and tend to use terms such as "human" and "human beings." Regarding the use of masculine

pronouns in the generic sense, Umm Muhammad makes no attempt to reduce the patriarchal language and uses predominantly the masculine singular pronouns as inclusive of women. Helminski, however, uses the combination "he/she" to soften the patriarchal tone of the translated text and to highlight the inclusionary intention of the source text. In the introduction she explains,

> Regarding the use of pronouns . . . in some cases I have used the feminine pronoun rather than the masculine for both the human being and occasionally in reference to God so that those reading these selections may have a reminder that within the Universe and understanding of the Quran, God is without gender. . . . In God's sight men and women are equal.
>
> (2000, xiv)

Helminski also introduces a new pronoun to refer to God. In a footnote, she explains her choice of the pronoun Hu by stating,

> Hu: the pronoun of Divine Presence. All words in Arabic have a gender grammatically ascribed to them as they do in French and Spanish, etc. Although *Allah* is referred to with the third person masculine pronoun Hu (Huwa), it is universally understood that *Allah*'s essence is beyond gender or indeed any qualification.
>
> (2000, 5)

Helminski's use of inclusive pronouns and the pronoun Hu supports the idea that the Supreme Being should transcend sexuality or, alternately, incorporate both masculinity and femininity. This idea is becoming increasingly important because of the role it could play in re-evaluating women's position in society. For instance this is how she translated verses 102–104 from Chapter 6 (Al-Anaam, the Cattle):

> Such is God, your Sustainer: there is no god but **Hu**,
> the Creator of everything: then worship **Him/Her** alone—
> for it is **He/She** who has everything in **His/Her** care.
>
> (2000, 27; my emphasis)

Bakhtiar does not use inclusive language in her translation, but introduces an innovative solution to make up for the linguistic losses between the gender-marked Arabic and the English language and to highlight the gender of feminine words in the texts. This solution consists of adding the letter (f) after words that are meant to be feminine in the original text, as illustrated in the following example:

> And when you divorce wives
> and they (f) are about to reach their (f) term,
> then hold them (f) back honorably

> or set them (f) free honorably
> but hold them (f) not back by injuring them
> so you commit aggression.
>
> (2007, 41)

This strategy demonstrates Bakhtiar's focus on asserting her feminine voice and making her role as a woman translator more visible. It also highlights the difference between Bakhtiar's woman-focused approach and Umm Muhammad's traditionalist and conservative stance. Their contrasting positions are also noticeable in their translations of verse 4:34.[15]

6. One Word: Different Meanings

Also known as the "wife beating verse," verse 4:34 occurs in chapter *Annisa* on women. It is one of the most controversial and contested verses in the Quran with regard to gender roles in Islam. Traditional commentators infer from it that men are superior to women. For instance, Maududi, a highly respected traditional commentator explains that this verse affirms that "man is governor, director, protector, and manager of the affairs of women" (1967, 333). There are several key gender-related words in this verse, but the most controversial word is *idhribuhunna*, which is a verb from the root word *daraba*. This word has numerous meanings, including "to travel," "to get out," "to strike," "to beat," "to set up," and "to give examples." However, conservative commentators interpret it as "to beat," which gives husbands the right to beat their wives. Islamic feminists, on the other hand, have argued that the word *daraba* has various meanings. Barlas, for instance, points out that "this is not the only way to read the word *daraba*". In her view it is questionable whether the term *daraba* even refers to beating, hitting or striking a wife, even if symbolically (2002, 188). Following a similar line of thought, Riffat Hassan maintains that the root word *daraba*, which has been generally translated as "beating," is one of the commonest root words in the Arabic language with a large number of possible meanings (1999, 354).

Before discussing Umm Muhammad's and Bakhtiar's translations of this verse (Helminski did not include it in her selection, which focuses mainly on verses used for prayers and meditation), it is worth giving an example of a blatantly male-biased reading of verse 4:34 from Colin Turner's translation titled *The Quran: A New Interpretation* (1997):

> Men are *the protectors of their women*, for they surpass them in strength, intellectual acumen and social skills. A male doctor is better than a female doctor, a male laborer is better than a female laborer, and so on. Furthermore, men are the *protectors and maintainers* of their women, for it is the men who provide dowries and support their women financially throughout their married life. Therefore it is incumbent on

> righteous women that they obey their husbands. And when their husbands are absent they must, with God as their aid, strive to protect their reputations and do nothing to shame them. As for those women whose righteousness is open to question, and whose *obedience and loyalty you doubt*—whether their husbands are present or not—admonish them in the first instance; if their *disobedience* continues, refuse to sleep with them; if their *disobedience* continues further, *beat* them. If they see reason and obey, do not chastise them any further.
>
> (1997, 46)

This translation is based on a Persian exegesis of, or commentary on, the Quran produced by Mohammad Baqir Behbudi, who figures on the cover of the book as the Quran's interpreter. Regardless of whose hand—Turner's or Behbudi's—was behind each and every word of this published translation, it is difficult to ignore its implication that men are superior to women. What is also interesting is that it shifts the centre of attention to husbands by repeating the word "husbands" three times, when in the original Quranic verse the term does not occur even once. Perhaps unwittingly, a strange situation is thereby created, telling the male "you" of the text to refuse to sleep with the wives "whether their husbands are present or not." The key word *daraba* is translated as "to beat," which seems to assign any male family member the right to discipline and beat the husband's wives, which is not the intended meaning of the Quran. This highlights how verse 4:34 can be manipulated in order to justify gender inequality and to give men control over women's lives.

In her translation of verse 4:34, Umm Muhammad does not divert from this implied inequality. Her translation reads as follows:

> Men are in charge of women by [right of]* what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [in the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard.* But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance—[first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], **strike them.*** But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them.
>
> (my emphasis)
>
> * This applies primarily to the husband-wife relationship
> * i.e. their husband's property and their own chastity
> * As a last resort. It is unlawful to strike the face or to cause any bodily injury.
>
> (Saheeh International 1995, 105)

Umm Muhammad translates the key word *daraba* as to "strike them," which conforms to traditional and conservative readings. Saffarzadeh renders the same word as "to beat lightly," (2001, 142–43), which also

conforms to traditionalist interpretations. Bakhtiar, however, introduces a different reading:

> Men are *supporters* of wives
> Because God has given some of them an advantage
> Over others
> And because they spend of their wealth
> So the ones (f) who are in accord with morality
> *Are* the ones (f) who are morally obligated,
> The ones (f) who guard the unseen
> Of what God has kept safe.
> But those (f) whose resistance you fear,
> Then admonish them (f)
> And abandon them (f) in their sleeping place
> Then *go away from* them (f) [my emphasis].
> And if they (f) obey you
> Surely look not for any way against them (f).
>
> (2007, 94)

Bakhtiar opts to translate the word *daraba* as "to go away," which allows her to remove any references to beating from this verse and to challenge the patriarchal view that men have the right to discipline their wives. This illustrates further Bakhtiar's focus on gender equality and demonstrates the contrasts between her perceptions of femininity and those of Umm Muhammad.

As a Western convert living in a majority conservative Muslim country, Umm Muhammad seems to have adopted a conservative form of Islam. Her silence about her female identity in the introduction, the use of patriarchal language, and the male-biased translation of verse 4:34 seem to be reflections of the conservative environment in which she lives. Moreover, most of her choices, particularly her emphasis on using classical religious texts, seem to conform to specific norms and regulations set by Islamic religious authorities.[16] This indicates that Umm Muhammad may have been subjected to a variety of internal and external pressures in her work, which have led to various forms of self-censorship. Indeed, despite the fact that Umm Muhammad is probably the first American female convert to translate the Quran into English, this information is not provided in the paratexts. This is also the case with Saffarzadeh, who is the first and only Iranian woman to this date to have translated the Quran into English. The silence about the translators' female gender seems to undermine their female voices and make them invisible. Probably one of the most apparent signs of this invisibility is Umm Muhammad's use of the pseudonym "Saheeh International."[17] The use of a pseudonym is quite a rare practice. Most significantly, as María del Carmen Camus (2008) argues, one of the key purposes of using pseudonyms is to conceal information and to influence the reader's reception and perception of the translated text. She argues that the use of pseudonyms is a

form of self-censorship, which blocks the reader's access to the translator's real identity. This suggests that, by refusing to reveal her real name in the translation, Umm Muhammad is not only hiding her female identity from the reader, but is also censoring any reference to the issue of women's position in Islam.

Helminski's and Bakhtiar's approaches to the Quran may not be influenced by the same factors as Umm Muhammad's, but their choices may be determined by other systems of power. First, it is worth pointing out that Helminski and Bakhtiar share a number of similarities with Islamic feminists. One of the main points of convergence is that they both question the authority of traditional religious texts such as the *Sunnah* and *Tafsir*, which have been viewed as male biased. Second, like other Islamic feminists, Helminski and Bakhtiar have paid a lot of attention to the language of the Sacred Text, and one of them attempts to reflect the Deity's genderlessness in her translation. Third, by insisting on highlighting the gender-egalitarian meanings of the Sacred Text, Helminski and Bakhtiar, like Islamic feminists, share the view that the Quran is essentially a non-patriarchal text that has been manipulated by the dominant male voice in order to serve the interests of men and to deny women their rights. Mernissi, for instance, argues that there is no reason to blame the Quran for the unequal Islamic gender positions because

> if women's rights are a problem for some modern Muslim men, it is neither because of the Quran nor the Prophet, nor Islamic tradition, but because simply those rights conflict with the interests of the male elite. . . . Not only have the Sacred Texts always been manipulated, but their manipulation is a structural characteristic of the practice of power in Muslim societies.
>
> (1987, 8–9)

Lastly, Bakhtiar and Helminski, like a number of Islamic feminists, are based in the United States where the pressure and control of Islamic religious authorities is less powerful. This means that they have had the freedom to challenge religious authorities' regulations and to openly discuss questions around Muslim women. Moreover, given the content of Helminski's and Bakhtiar's works, it is impossible not to establish a link between their focus on Muslim women's position in Islam and Western representations of the Muslim woman. For instance, in the introduction to her work, Bakhtiar makes an interesting statement:

> I address a main criticism of Islam made in regard to the inferiority of women . . .
>
> (2007, xlviii)

Even though the translator does not point out who has voiced this criticism, or where or in what form, it is clear that it involves images of Muslim

women's oppression propagated by Western media and literary productions. Helminski is more direct in her views on the same issue when she writes,

> Within Sufism, the language of the Beloved and the recognition of the feminine help to balance some of the *old cultural stereotypes that were sometimes used in expository writing and which the Western media have chosen to highlight*. Rumi often speaks beautifully of the feminine, presenting woman as the most perfect example of God's creative power on earth. As he says in the Mathnawi, "Woman is a ray of God. She is not just the earthly beloved; she is creative, not created."
>
> (Helminski 1994; my emphasis)

Challenging Western representations of Muslim women and writing back to the Orientalist discourse could therefore explain why Helminski and Bakhtiar place so much emphasis on their position as women translators and on gender equality in Islam. As Western converts to Islam, Helminski and Bakhtiar are involved in processes of change and transformation where they may need to redefine and dispute their identities in relation to their new status as Muslim women. They also need to negotiate the conflicts and contrasts between two cultural, social, and religious systems, which could involve embracing or rejecting new gender codes. Their woman-sensitive approaches to the translation of the Quran could therefore be viewed as part of the process of negotiating new gendered identities. The construction of these identities is an ongoing process, since women converts negotiate their identities according to their own different circumstances and through their own individual voices. This means that these gendered identities are not fixed or defined but rather fluid and complex.

7. Conclusion

While recognizing that there are nine women translators of the Quran, in this chapter, I have focused on the three works exclusively translated by Western women who through their conversion to Islam become the "Other." I have deliberately avoided collaborative translations in order to eliminate any obvious male influence on gender-related decisions and to focus on the three women's position as converts and translators of the Quran. Even though Umm Muhammad, Helminski, and Bakhtiar originate from the same country, they seem to negotiate their new gendered identities according to their own circumstances and the different systems of powers they are subject to.

Umm Muhammad, who lives in a majority Muslim country, seems to have adopted a conservative form of Islam. In the introduction to her work, she remains invisible by concealing her personal views, suppressing her feminine gender, and remaining silent on questions around Muslim women. Moreover, like Saffarzadeh, Umm Muhammad opts to render the Quran in prose, which indicates that her communicative priority is to stress the difference between

the source and the target text/language. This distinction between the original and its translation could be viewed as a metaphor for the unequal gender relations between the superior male and inferior female. Probably to challenge this perception and to assert their visibility as women translators, Helminski and Bakhtiar choose to render the text in poetic form. This indicates that their communicative priority is to bring the original text closer to the reader and to negotiate these differences and therefore challenge gender hierarchies. Helminski's and Bakhtiar's use of innovative techniques and attempts to reduce the patriarchal language indicates that they seek to challenge rather than to conform to the conservative Islamic discourse. As Western converts to Islam living in the West, they seem to be stressing their roles as women translators in order to negotiate between the differences and to write back to Western representations of the Muslim. However, given the powerful influence exerted by the Orientalist discourse, Helminski's and Bakhtiar's visibility could have the negative effect of "exoticizing" their position as women translators of the Quran. Finally, even though women's participation in the translation of the Quran is a relatively recent phenomenon, their increasing involvement could help subvert the image of the subdued, silent, and oppressed Muslim woman and illustrate the diversity and complexities of Muslim women's perspectives, readings, and positions as translators.

Notes

1. In addition to the four individual translations, there are five English translations of the Quran by women with the collaboration of male translators. They are *The Glorious Quran: Text and Translation* (1991) Ahmad Abdul Munim Zidan and Dina Al Zahraa Zidan, *The Koran, Complete Dictionary and Literal Translation* (1994) by father and daughter Muhamed Ahmed and Samira Ahmed, *The Holy Quran: Arabic Text and English Translation* (1997) by husband and wife Abdul Mannan Omar and Amatul Rahman Omar, *The Noble Quran: A New Rendering of Its Meaning in English* (1999) by husband and wife team Hajj Abdalhaqq Bewley and Aisha Bewley, and *The Quran: A Reformist Translation* (2007), which was undertaken by a group of scholars, including one woman, Martha Shulte-Nafeh, and two men Layth Saleh al-Shaiban and Edip Yuksel.
2. The place of publication is not given, but the publisher, Dar Abul-Qasim, is based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
3. http://www.saheehinternational.com/
4. Umm Muhammad's books mainly focus on Islamic topics. They include *The Path to Prayer* (1993), *Realities of Fait* (1994), *A Brief Introduction to Tajweed* (1997), and *The Global Messenger* (2008).
5. Amatullah J. Bantley converted to Islam and moved to Jeddah in her early twenties. In 1995, she founded the Path to Knowledge, which held exclusive distributorship for Dar Abul-Qasim publications in the United States for five years.
6. Mary M. Kennedy converted to Islam and moved to Jeddah in early 1987. In 2009, after a leave of several years, she returned to continue her work with Saheeh International.
7. The Mevlevi Tradition traces back to Mevlâna Jalâluddîn Rumi (d. 1273) one of the greatest Sufi mystics and poets. Historically, it has been Rumi, more than any other Sufi, who has issued the invitation to people of all backgrounds to the

mystical garden that is Sufism. This tradition, based on the principles of Sufism, consists of a rigorous path of initiation and service continually adapting itself to changing circumstances and times.

8. Saffarzadeh (1936–2008) was an Iranian poet, writer, university lecturer, and translator. She authored ten books on the principles of translation regarding literary, scientific, and Quranic text and presented several translation theories of which include the "Scientific Progression via Translation."
9. In his introduction to *Orientalism*, Edward Said describes the Orient as a "European invention," which had been "since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes" (1978, 1).
10. The *hadith* and *tafsir* are supporting texts, which were developed after the Prophet's death in order to set up guidelines on how to interpret the Quran. The *hadith* consists of various narratives of the Prophet Mohammad, which were transmitted orally through many Muslim figures before being finally written down by male Muslim scholars. The *tafsir* or exegesis deals with different aspects of studying the Quran, including the grammar, syntactic analysis, and rhetoric of the Quran.
11. Abdullah Yusuf Ali was an Indian scholar who lived in England where he died in 1952. His English translation of the Quran is one of most widely distributed in English-speaking countries.
12. In August 1994, Amina Wadud delivered a Friday *khutbah* (sermon) on "Islam as Engaged Surrender" at the Claremont Main Road Mosque in Cape Town, South Africa.
13. For further discussion on Helminski's use of pronouns, see Hassen (2010).
14. Because many translations of the Quran by women have remained unknown, many women claim to be the first to translate the Quran. Bakhtiar's claim is a good example.
15. Arabic transliteration: Alrijalu qawwamoona ala alnnisai bima faddala Allahu badahum ala badin wabima anfaqoo min amwalihim faalssalihatu qanitatun hafi*th*atun lilghaybi bima hafitha Allahu waallatee takhafoona nushoozahunna faithoohunna waohjuroohunna fee almadajii wa idriboohunna fain atanakum fala tabghoo alayhinna sabeelan inna Allaha kana aliyyan kabeeran.
16. In 1925, Sheikh Hasanayn Makhluf, former Mufti of Egypt, wrote a treatise entitled *Risala fi Hukm Tarjamat al-Qur'an al-Karim wa-Qira'atihi wa-Kitabatihi bi-ghayr al-Lughati al-'Arabiyya* (A Letter on the Verdict of Translating and Transliterating the Holy Quran into Other Languages than Arabic) where he announced that Quran translation is only legitimate if the commentaries are provided by authoritative Quranic interpreters and based on the *hadith* and *tafsir*, which is precisely the point highlighted in Umm Muhammad's and Saffarzadeh's introductions.
17. The first word *saheeh*, is an Arabic term and literally means "correct," "authentic," and "reliable." This word is particularly used in religious contexts to refer to the accuracy of orally transmitted traditions, *hadith*, which are checked extensively by Muslim scholars against any mistakes or manipulations. The word *saheeh* could therefore symbolise the translator's objective, rigorous, and accurate approach, which is based on sound traditional Islamic methods.

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Part II

Applying Feminism in Translation

3 Translational Beginnings and Origin/izing Stories

(Re)Writing the History of the Contemporary Feminist Movement in Turkey

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> I do not think we should quit the archives or abandon the study of the past, but we do have to change some of the ways we have gone about working, some of the questions we have asked. We need to scrutinize our methods of analysis, clarify our operative assumptions, and explain how we think change occurs. Instead of a search for single origins, we have to conceive of processes so interconnected that they cannot be disentangled. Of course, we identify problems to study, and these constitute beginnings or points of entry into complex processes. But it is the processes we must continually keep in mind. We must ask more often how things happened in order to find out why they happened.
>
> Joan Scott (1986), 1066–1067

Following Joan Scott's proposition, expressed in the epigraph, to question the underlying epistemes and analytic schemes of our historical narratives of women's pasts, this chapter explores the common representations and symbolic functions of translation in the feminist historiography of today's feminist movement in Turkey. The chapter specifically focuses on the history of the Women's Circle, a feminist translation collective whose establishment in 1983 is often accredited as the first and most decisive step in the emergence of Turkey's contemporary feminist politics. I examine the strategic ways in which this *translation* group is deployed tactfully in the dominant "origin story" of local feminism to claim an "authentic" identity for the movement. I argue that since this story is constructed within the discursive confines of the hegemonic binary of "original versus translation," the authenticity of the local feminist movement can only be acknowledged by downplaying the momentous translational work performed by the collective in the beginning stages of an organized feminist movement.

In Hemmings' words, then, my work seeks "to identify the repeated narrative forms that underwrite" Turkey's prevailing feminist genealogy "by analyzing the textual mechanisms that generate coherent meaning" (2011, 17).

I take on this explorative research by analyzing various types of texts that tell the history of the feminist movement in the country and institute a particular trajectory for it. In addition to a comprehensive literature review of printed and visual sources on the movement's history—books, scholarly articles, essays, interviews, open letters, and films in Turkish and English—I also examine a panel discussion that took place in Istanbul on May 28, 2011, and included some of the members of the Women's Circle as keynote speakers. The discussion was centered on *İsyan-ı Nisvan* (Women's Rebellion) (2008), a popular documentary that my analysis draws upon heavily and that tells the story of the Women's Circle as well as the political movement it initiated in the 1980s. By studying the ways in which all of these different texts similarly signify (or fail to signify) translation, I reveal one of the "collective repetition" processes behind the injurious configuration of the "origin" tale of Turkey's "original" feminist movement (Hemmings 2011, 22). In this tale, translation, conceived in the hegemonic sense as an "uncreative copy," is offensively exploited as a recurrent trope to secure the originality—hence identity—of the Turkish feminist movement.

I start by providing a historical background on the formation of the contemporary women's movement in Turkey. I introduce the Women's Circle as a feminist translation collective and discuss the historical significance of their translations for the materialization of the movement, particularly on the fronts of building a local feminist language, discourse, and consciousness. Following this historical framework, I move on to the central analysis of the chapter. Here I examine the ways in which translation is (mis)represented in the most prevalent "birth" narratives of Turkey's feminist history in order to enable the movement to claim an "original" identity and carve an independent space for itself. In this section, which draws heavily on my discursive analysis of the documentary *İsyan-ı Nisvan* (2008), I substantiate the main argument of my chapter and demonstrate the eliminatory and exclusionary narrative trends in the "Women's Circle saga." In other words, I illustrate how limited, invested, and regulated the epistemological and ontological attention directed to the Women's Circle's translational work is in the country's feminist historiography. I end the article by noting the implications of recentering the origin story of Turkey's contemporary feminist movement around an affirmative non-binary understanding of translation and rewriting the history of the Women's Circle in a way that empowers both translators and feminists.

1. Situating the Women's Circle in a Historical Framework

The Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923 by a group of nationalist revolutionaries led by Kemal Atatürk (the last name literally meaning "the fore/father Turk") as a successor state to the six-hundred-year-old Ottoman Empire, which had been economically and politically deteriorating and territorially dissolving, particularly after the First World War. The new nation-state came into being by defeating the Allied Powers (positioned against

the Central Powers in World War I) and overthrowing the Ottoman state, whose sovereignty was already questionable as the country was under Allied occupation. For the next ten years, the state undertook many reforms in pursuit of its ideology of secular modernization and westernization blended with Turkish nationalism. During these early years, the state repressed women's collective activism,[1] which had continued on from the Ottoman era. Hence the first "wave"[2] of Turkey's women's movement was quite short-lived (1923–1935). The second "wave," which I elaborate on in this section, has been going on since the 1980s.[3] Tekeli (1998, 337) refers to the period between the two waves as "barren years."[4]

Until the late 1940s, the Turkish state was governed by a single-party system that solidified the status of Atatürk as the nation's "father." After the multi-party system was launched in 1945, the country experienced three military coups (1960, 1971, and 1980), all of which resulted in temporary periods of direct military rule. The aftermath of the 1980 coup is often regarded as one of the most repressive periods in the history of Turkey. The new constitution was designed to build a centralized and authoritative state (backed up by the military, now endowed with extensive powers to guard the nation's secularism and assumed unity) and to create an extremely depoliticized society by imposing severe restrictions on political and civil rights in an atmosphere of fear and intimidation.

It was in the 1980s that an independent feminist movement began to emerge in Turkey, which is often regarded as paradoxical, for this is the highly restrictive aftermath of the coup during which the military-state suppressed all political action, especially that of political parties and labor unions, and sought to depoliticize all aspects of life. Nevertheless, during this time, a feminist language, discourse, and consciousness started to develop among women, many of whom had been involved, yet largely in secondary positions, in leftist (and male-dominated) political organizations prior to the coup. These women began forming "consciousness-raising groups" to discuss their experiences of discontent with the existing regime of male domination and to express their opposition to its multiple configurations of oppression. At the time, they did not seem to pose a serious threat to the military-state (as women were not taken seriously in the masculinist imaginary of the patriarchal state) and thus were ignored until a substantial, organized feminist movement grew out of these small groups. It is considered "the first democratic movement to emerge after the coup" (Kardam and Ertürk 1999, 187; Tekeli 1989).

One key event of this period was the emergence of the Women's Circle (*Kadın Çevresi*). Founded by a group of feminist scholars and activists as a joint stock company to circumvent the restrictive martial law, the Women's Circle is known to be the first legitimate feminist group in the recent history of Turkey (Kayır 2011; Kısmet 2003; Tekeli 1995). It played a central role in the post-1980s feminist movement by translating feminist classics into Turkish and facilitating the growth of a local epistemological and theoretical repertoire of feminism. In Timisi and Gevrek's words (2009, 38), who attribute the emergence of academic feminism in 1990s Turkey to the translation of

feminist literature in the 1980s, "with the support of the translations carried out in the 1980s, a substantive feminist literature began to develop in the academia." Among books translated and published by the Women's Circle are Comer (1974), Michel (1979), Mitchell (1971), and Schwarzer and Beauvoir (1984). Although the Women's Circle's translations are briefly glimpsed in most writing on feminist history in Turkey, which attests to their significance for the evolution of the movement, their reworking of foreign feminist texts in the locality of Turkey and specific contributions to the formation of a feminist language and literature are not studied in depth (Gülendam 2001, 99; Işık 1990, 44; Koçak 2007; Sirman 1989, 17; Tekeli 1989 and 1998; Zihnioğlu 2003, 9).

The Women's Circle in fact contributed greatly to the construction of a Turkish feminist discourse that would enable women to articulate their experiences from a gender-political perspective (İnal et al. 1985; Işık 1990, 44–5). As noted by Koray, commenting on the historical significance of the Women's Circle and their feminist page in the periodical *Somut*,[5] these were the years when feminists in Turkey "found their tongue": "We were so excited, as if we had found a new voice to articulate ourselves" (2013, 37). Yet, despite these invaluable contributions, none of the writings that chart the genealogy of feminisms in Turkey provides in-depth, comprehensive analyses of the Women's Circle's (or other feminist translators') translations and their constructive effects on local feminist discourses (e.g. the "new voice" they provided to women). One text that pays some attention to translation is an article by Şirin Tekeli[6] that presents a short chronological list of the major developments in women's history in the Ottoman and republican eras (1998, 340–43). The list has several entries related to translation in general. Tekeli does not bring up and elaborate on these book translations in the body of the main article, however, they are only named in the chronology. For example, the entry, "1978, Kate Millet, Shulamith Firestone and Simone de Beauvoir's books are translated into Turkish" could have been discussed at length in the article to highlight the localized translations of these feminist works, whose impact on the formation of a feminist consciousness and literature in Turkey cannot be underestimated (Tekeli 1998, 342).

Perhaps the most important entry in Tekeli's chronology is, "the Women's Circle is founded as a company; feminist books are translated and published; a book club is formed and discussion meetings are organized" (343). Yet, like the other entries on translation, this one is not elaborated on in the main article and thus, the vital role of the Women's Circle's translation work in the formation of a feminist discourse in the country remains to be brought to light. The significance of this role is hinted at by Aytaç, one of the members of the Women's Circle and translator of *Woman's Estate* (Mitchell 1971):

> We noted that there was no "language of feminism" in Turkish to begin with. So if we literally translated some of the terms used by Mitchell

> or Millett, feminism could not be understood in Turkey, and a feminist movement could not develop. Thus, we decided to use Mitchell's work to create the [feminist] concepts. . . . So we decided not to hurry to translate the text right away because we would create a feminist language from it.
>
> (Kum et al. 2005, 43)

Following these remarks, Aytaç mentions the literal translation of "male domination" as *erkek egemenliği* as an example of the translational making of a feminist language in Turkish. Altınay (2006, 324–25) discusses another example, the Turkish appropriation of "sexual harassment" as *cinsel taciz* (literally, "sexual harassment") in the 1990s, which itself was a relatively new term in English coined in 1970s United States (Mansbridge and Flaster 2005, 268–69).[7] Her words illustrate the contested process of importing "foreign" terminology via translation: "After the name of the campaign [against sexual harassment] was debated at length and "sexual harassment" was decided on, it was criticized a lot for being an incomprehensible, unfamiliar translation of a foreign phrase." She continues, "I don't know how many women today would say that "sexual harassment" is a translation from another language. Obviously we have already made it 'ours.' "[8] Today, both of these terms, as well as many "borrowed" others, are so firmly entrenched in both feminist and mainstream language that it is hard to see them as products of translation and grasp their roots in acts of creative importation and population with local intentions, particularly when no detailed historical accounts of their transplantation is told.

The introduction of such concepts into Turkish should not be underrated since these naming practices have paved the way for the creation and legitimization of new critical discourses and alternative political spaces to deconstruct and reconstruct women's lives in Turkey. As Tekeli says about the Women's Circle (*İsyan-ı Nisvan* 2008), "When we got together in our translation group, the breaking point was this: we all in fact had experienced sexism but had not given it a name." It was as a result of such translational operations of naming and conceptualizing women's experiences of gender oppression, all facilitated by translation, that a feminist language and consciousness began to develop in Turkey. As Smith rightly argues, cultivating a feminist language has always been an essential part of the growth of feminist movements. And if feminist language is indeed such a vital component of feminist politics, how can translation not be?

> In the women's movement, we began to discover that we lived in a world put together in ways in which we had had very little say. . . . We discovered that we had been in various ways silenced, deprived of the authority to speak, and that our experience therefore did not have a voice, lacked indeed a language, for we had taken from the cultural and intellectual world created largely by men the terms, themes, conceptions

> of the subject and subjectivity, of feeling, emotion, goals, relations, and an object world assembled in textually mediated discourses and from the standpoint of men occupying the apparatuses of ruling.
>
> (Smith 1990, 1–2)

Translations of feminist texts (particularly groundbreaking ones that blaze a trail by forging new epistemological, theoretical, and political paths) bring us into contact with feminist discourses and agendas produced in different localities. They help us recognize and face the fact that we lack the critical language and discursive repertoires necessary to express our situated gendered experiences and worldviews. In doing so, feminist translation accelerates the political discovery process underlined by Smith as a key component of feminist politics. Translation, then, pushes us to create a corresponding (hybrid) alternative language and to fill the gaps in the local discursive fields through our own makes and remakes. Therefore, every act of feminist translation is an intervention in local feminist movements, for they help us detect and replace the male-centric "terms, themes, conceptions of the subject and subjectivity, of feeling, emotion, goals, relations" by facilitating our confrontations with numerous faces and interfaces of patriarchy with other systems of domination. It is in this sense that I claim that the translations produced by the Women's Circle have played a fundamental, trans/formative role in the rise of Turkey's contemporary feminist politics. Then, why is translation disregarded or disparaged in the feminist historiography, even in narratives provided by members of the Women's Circle themselves? In the next section, I answer this question.

2. The Dilemma of the Origin Story: Translating the Other or Making the Self?

Given that a feminist *translation* group, the Women's Circle, took one of the first concrete steps of the current feminist movement in Turkey in the 1980s, the significant role that translation has played in the growth of feminist politics in Turkey is quite clear. As Işık (1990, 44) notes,

> a series of translated books published by the Women's Circle carried the intellectual and practical products of the second wave feminist boom of the west into the new local feminist movement and made some decisive impacts on the agenda of consciousness raising groups.

Yet the translational work of the Women's Circle, which is accorded the leading role in the "origin story" of the current feminist movement in Turkey, has not received the affirmative attention it deserves. The historical construction of this origin story, which is best exemplified by the documentary *İsyan-ı Nisvan* (Women's Rebellion) (2008),[9] far from articulating a celebratory stance toward translation, completely ignores the question of how the

Women's Circle's specific translations generatively informed the emergence of the new political movement. This documentary, a classic now, is by far the most widely shown and discussed film on the history of feminist politics in Turkey and has thus been the most influential source validating and reinforcing the centrality of the Women's Circle's in the movement's origin story. However, it is precisely this popularity that makes the film's not-so-favorable treatment of translation troubling, if not injurious.

While the word "translation" is frequently heard at the beginning of the film, these remarks do not recognize the complex politics of translation and fail to go beyond paying lip service to its appearance in the history of feminisms in the country. The blurb of the film even portrays translation as some sort of distraction from feminist politics, almost as if it is antithetical to the formation of the local feminist movement:

> . . . YAZKO (Authors and Translators Cooperative), again with the recommendation of women, decides to translate a series of books on women into Turkish. The women, who come together to undertake this translation project but whose paths have crossed before that while looking for alternatives and remedies to the state of women, after a while give up doing translations because soon their goal becomes to create a "feminist movement."

In the narrative construction of this origin story, translation is presented as a necessary but temporary panacea that *had to be* used since, as Tekeli asserts in the film, "We began with translation because we had no other materials. At the time, we didn't know about the Ottoman women's movement; that history was lost." In other words, because these feminists did not have (or did not know that they had) an "original" discursive heritage of local feminist knowledges, histories, and politics, they had to turn to feminists abroad to translationally in/form their own local buildup.[10] As Aytaç, one of the group members, noted in the panel discussion held in 2011 in Amargi Women's Academy (a renowned feminist organization in Istanbul), "We benefited from the experiences and knowledges of our western sisters. They had already produced a feminist literature." In these and other similar comments, translation is granted a certain importance as the source of the newly emerging feminist discourse of Turkey. Yet this acknowledgment of "external discursive nourishment" is often presented in an apologetic tone with defensive explanations being offered for the group resorting to translation. Why do the members of the Women's Circle as well as the feminist scholars and activists formulating the origin story need to justify the translational beginnings of the feminist movement? What is the perceived risk in admitting the key role that translation played in the formation of the local feminism? I argue that the answer lies in the hegemonic regime of truth on textuality within which the origin story is orchestrated and narrated, a Manichean regulatory discourse where translation is discredited as secondhand

reproduction as opposed to the celebrated creativity and assumed singularity of the original. The leading origin story of Turkey's feminist history and its strategic repudiation of translation become meaningful only when situated in this dichotomous discursive field.

Faced with the identity threat that comes with the hazardous territory of translation conceived as "copy" against the precedence of "original," the origin tale of the feminist movement, as told in *İsyan-ı Nisvan* (2008), opts for erasing the political value of discursive importation (read: imitation) from "outside" and instead, focuses on the "creative" productions at "home." This gesture of effacement is perhaps best illustrated by a letter written by one of the members of the group to Stella Ovadia, another founding member, shortly after the Women's Circle was founded. As reported in the documentary, the letter raised an objection to Ovadia, who was hesitant to claim prematurely a "political movement" identity for the newly emerging feminist consciousness in Turkey: "Stella, don't call us a translation group; we are starting a women's liberation movement. It's as simple as that." These remarks clearly show that, far from being recognized for its activist power, translation, in Turkey's dominant cultural ethos within which the origin story is told and retold, is viewed as an impediment to the construction of a locally defined and practiced movement. That is, translation (of and from the Other) is positioned against the formation of an original Self. Here the underlying assumption of the priority and superiority of "indigenous" productions is based on an either/or logic that positions translation not only outside the existing local politico-discursive spaces but also against them. That is, the guiding principle of the origin story's approach to (or should I say "reproach of?") translation is based on the "us versus them" binary. Instead of emphasizing interconnectivity and interdependence among cultures and women's movements (and selves and others), the origin story pursues the modernist logic of independence and individuality defined in exclusionary and oppositional territorial terms. This assumption denies the power of translation to inspire, sustain, and renovate feminist politics across borders. And when we fail to contemplate translation as a generative, transformative, and connective form of activism, it becomes easy to see it as stealing our time and energy that could otherwise be spent on "creating" "indigenous" epistemologies and political activities rooted in and geared towards local needs.[11]

Moreover, when such an adverse vision of translation is accompanied in the origin story by numerous examples of successful "homegrown" practices of feminism, the idea of translation being an obstacle to local politics becomes more firmly embedded in the collective memory of the movement. Indeed, *İsyan-ı Nisvan* is inundated with stories of the Women's Circle's achievements that are not translational (on the surface) but rather seem to be "authentic" and "original." For example, consciousness-raising groups, a key preliminary practice of the 1980s feminist movement, are discussed as spontaneous, "underived" acts of organizing whose label, *not substance*,

is borrowed (translated) from the West. As noted in the documentary, "We had not named what we were doing but when we read [foreign works] we saw that the term "consciousness raising" defined it very well." This comment implies that translation provided the feminist terminology, but not the experiential or theoretical substance of the movement, which was already in place before the Western feminist literature was brought in. In Tekeli's words, "Women's solidarity was not a conceptual thing for us, it was an actually lived thing." Following this emphasis on consciousness raising, which is positioned *against* translation, other local feminist events are enumerated in the documentary with great enthusiasm. The Women's Circle's decision to quit translation is introduced as "it's now time to hit the streets" and followed first by the story of the Women's March Against Battering—the first political march after the 1980 coup—and then by stories of other local campaigns, publications, protests and marches, festivals, etc. (*İsyan-ı Nisvan*). That is, the documentary begins as a tale of ephemeral "translationality" (read: defeat), but ends as a story of perpetual "originality" (read: victory). Why does this mistreatment of translation occur? What is the purpose of such an injurious erasure of translational creation?

The almost hostile attitude that the origin story assumes towards translation seems to stem from the fact that the translational citationality and intertextuality of the new movement had to be explained away so that it would not threaten the "authenticity" of either the origin story or the feminist movement itself because "translation is but an absence of the original and has no reality in itself" (Pham 2011, 115). Or in Butler's words,

> To be called a copy, to be called unreal, is thus one way in which one can be oppressed. . . . But to be unreal is something else again. For to be oppressed one must first become intelligible. To find that one is fundamentally unintelligible (indeed, that the laws of culture and of language find one to be an impossibility) is to find that one has not yet achieved access to the human. . . . It is to find that one's language is hollow, and that no recognition is forthcoming because the norms by which recognition takes place are not in one's favor.
>
> (Butler 2004, 218)

In this case, the exclusionary Women's-Circle-based origin story becomes useful to claim a real subjecthood for the new feminist movement, since it posits translation as its other—a less-than-real entity against which "Turkish" feminism can now ground its national authenticity. In other words, in its effort to carve out a "possible and potential" subjectivity for the movement, which requires being "real" and not a "copy," the origin story exploits the hegemonic trope of translation to achieve its "original" fictive genealogy (218). Then, translation is not completely written *out* of this history, but written *in* strategically in a way that serves to solidify the "authenticity" of the feminist movement.

In the creation of the origin myth, the pervasive trope of translation as an inauthentic copy is deployed at the expense of the creative labor of feminist translators and the political impact of "foreign" feminist writers, which become almost invisible in the course of rewriting the history of contemporary feminism in Turkey. Interestingly, the translators of the Women's Circle not only participate in this problematic rhetoric but also encourage it through their own statements. In doing so, they engage in a form of self-inflicted invisibility and injury that is by implication extended to other feminist translators who are similarly annihilated in the process of this history writing. For instance, in *İsyan-ı Nisvan*, Zihnioğlu describes the "a-ha" moment that led to their decision to give up translation to pursue the project of forging an independent feminist movement by saying, "Oh wait a minute, what are we doing? Why don't we speak [about] ourselves? We said, we should speak [about] ourselves, and we gave up translation. And after that things got out of hand and the rebellion began." This statement not only problematically positions translation as an impediment to exploring one's self but also situates the beginning of the "rebellion" that marks the foundation of the women's movement after the translation work. First, by situating translation outside (or against) the realm of feminist politics, it once again functions to solidify the "authenticity" of the emerging movement. Second, the statement erases all the political potentiality of translation for facilitating explorations of the self through the voice of the other, citational reflections on the self and the other, and dialogical engagements with the other within and across borders. It, in fact, perpetuates the notion that translation is exclusively of and about the other and has nothing to say to or about the self. This chapter contests this idea and claims that translation in fact offers a potential contact zone where the self can encounter the other, which is an encounter that has the capacity to help us face ourselves (and the other) in ways that we never have before and to see differently.

3. Conclusion: Reconceiving Translation as an Act of Self-Making

Translation, as a form of cross-cultural contact, has always played a major role in the configurating, rejuvenating, and expanding of the feminist movements in Turkey by providing feminists with ideational tools and resources that have been productive and proven politically effective in different geohistorical localities. By relocating such resources within the discursive fields of Turkey, translators, including the members of the legendary Women's Circle, have enabled the cultural crossover of numerous subversive theories, knowledges, and concepts that have helped expand the epistemological, political, and historical repositories of feminism in the country. Yet these contributive and corroborative effects of translation in its relation to local feminist politics not only remain understudied in both translation studies and feminist studies in Turkey, but are denied or left unrecognized in the

dominant origin story of the feminist movement. I have argued that this symbolic discrediting is done to claim an "authentic" identity for the movement. Since translation is often understood as a copy, the feminist movement of Turkey, which begins (and continues) in and through translation, strategically writes its own history in a way that minimizes that "copiedness" (mostly of/from the hegemonic West) and maximizes its "originality" (thus its subjectivity and independent existence).

These critiques directed towards *İsyan-ı Nisvan* and the origin story are not meant to belittle the symbolic work these texts do for the movement in Turkey. Indeed, their role in building a feminist history and memory that highlight the political struggles and historical continuities in the feminist politics of the country is key for keeping the feminist spirit alive as well as informing and inspiring upcoming generations of feminists. Moreover, these products foster a sense of belonging and an imagined local feminist community across time. Thus I agree with Stella Ovadia, who writes in 1984 (after the Women's Circle was founded) a letter to the other members and says, "We are experiencing historical moments but nobody is aware of it" (*İsyan-ı Nisvan* 2008). Indeed, these women were making history. Yet while celebrating the documentary's and the origin tale's narratives of local feminist achievements as valuable undertakings against the risk of historical erasure and collective amnesia, we should also recognize that these narratives are constructed in and through existing discourses, some of which inscribe other forms of symbolic erasures and injuries. Therefore, it is critical to ask before we take the story at face value and get caught up in its enthusiastic enunciations who and what the origin tale leaves out and why and to what effect. In this regard, consider my critique as a cautionary tale and a situated brief rewriting attempt not to dethrone the origin story per se, but to make it more inclusive and less injurious. The history of feminisms can be told, and indeed needs to be told without relegating the generative mechanisms of translation and contributive labor of translators to the margins and without reiterating the hegemonic discourse of "originality," which only conceals the epistemologically and politically rich and telling processes of local creative appropriations, hybrid formations, and cross-cultural dialogues that constantly take place via translation among feminists around the globe.[12]

Although it criticizes existing historical narratives, this chapter does not simply claim to deliver a complete and final corrective to an "inaccurate" historical narration either. In fact, "since fullness in representations of the past can never be reached, a corrective approach will always be likely to erase the conditions of its own construction, particularly if it purports to give us the final word" (Hemmings 2011, 13–14). Rather, by pointing out the non-innocent absences and injurious silences or "distortions" in the dominant version of the origin story, it hopes to function as an invitation to feminist scholars, particularly in history, translation studies, and cultural studies, to explore (perhaps collaboratively across disciplines) the details of the translational contingencies of Turkey's feminist movements

and experiment with different historical narratives of the country's feminist past-narratives that acknowledge the indispensable and indisputable political functions of translation and make up for the symbolic damage done by the origin story dominating the movement at this point in time. We owe this recognition to all the feminist translators whose creative labor has cultivated and sustained, if not enabled, the powerful voice that the feminist movement has in contemporary Turkey.

Notes

1. So that it could use the official promotion of women's rights (particularly in education, employment, and governance) as leverage for Turkey's inter/national performance of its claimed Western/modern identity.
2. The waves metaphor, which is the dominant periodization tool in conceptualizing US feminisms, is also used to describe the genealogy of the feminist movements in Turkey. However, the metaphor has been criticized by feminists in the United States for privileging the political experiences of white upper-class women, reinscribing hierarchies and omissions in women's history, obscuring plurality among feminist activists and activisms, failing to capture the historical complexities of feminist politics, misrepresenting feminisms as a homogeneous movement, and, finally, fostering generational divisions among feminists. For an overview of the debate, see Laughlin et al. (2010) and Thompson (2002). Also see Rowley (2013) on the problematics of using the US waves metaphor transatlantically to describe other local feminist genealogies.
3. Another genealogy that is more closely modeled after the US wave scheme classifies the feminist movements in Turkey under three waves on the basis of political agenda: the first wave of the early republican era with its focus on civic and political rights, the second wave of the 1980s with its focus on violence against women, and the ongoing third wave of the 1990s with its focus on diversity, intersectionality, and identity politics (a change mainly resulting from critiques by Kurdish and Islamist feminists towards the secularist *Turkish* feminist movement). See Diner and Toktaş (2010) for details.
4. Unless otherwise stated, all the translations from Turkish into English are mine.
5. "Somut" was a feminist page printed in the periodical *Yazko Somut* in the early '80s. In 2013, all the feminist pages of *Somut* as well as contemporary feminist reflections on them were collected by Stella Ovadia and Evin Doğu in the book, *Somut 4. Sayfa: İlk Feminist Yazılar* [Somut Page 4: First Feminist Writings].
6. Tekeli is one of the founders of the Women's Circle and one of the translators of Juliet Mitchell's *Woman's Estate*. Thus it is not surprising to see her devote several entries in her chronology to translation.
7. I am thankful to Carole McCann for drawing my attention to this historical insight about the term.
8. These contestations around importing foreign concepts, particularly from the West, also reflected some geopolitical anxieties. For instance, Ovadia (2005, 63), one of the founding figures of the recent feminist movement, notes how their "feminist page" in the periodical *Somut* was criticized by a literary woman writer, Tomris Uyar. Uyar's apparently leftist-oriented, anti-imperialist critique that the language of the feminist writings published in *Somut* "reeks of west" was wittily countered by Ovadia as "some languages reek of west, others reek of male."
9. The documentary was produced by the Filmmor Women's Cooperative, a feminist organization located in Istanbul and founded in 2003 "to make movies, to raise objections, to produce, to dream, and to act with women for women." Accessed on March 6, 2012. http://www.filmmor.org/?sayfa=2.

10. Interestingly, after feminist historians' discovery, in the 1990s and 2000s, of the Ottoman and early republican women's movements, feminists in Turkey eagerly incorporated this "lost" or "erased" history into their origin story. In fact, even the title of the documentary, *İsyan-ı Nisvan*, highlights this reclaimed symbolic continuity between the current and early movements, for while *isyan* (rebellion) is part of the contemporary Turkish lexicon (though it is an Arabic originated word), *nisvan* (women) is an Ottoman-Arabic word that is no longer used in Turkish. The syntactical structure of the title also draws on Ottoman-Arabic since instead of the contemporary Turkish version of "*kadınların isyanı*," the Arabic-based noun phrase construction is preferred. Another important note here is that while the Ottoman women's movement is deployed in this discourse to assume a geographically defined "originality" and "authenticity" for Turkey's current feminist movement, its historical recovery actually required translation since most of the materials by and about Ottoman women activists were written in languages other than Turkish (for instance, the Ottoman language with Arabic script). Yet this translational component in the movement's acclaimed "originality" is once again ignored in the construction of the origin myth.
11. For more on translation conceived as political activism, see Ergun (2013).
12. Of course, this is just one version of the origin story in which I intervene from my own situatedness. Other versions could be told to highlight other ignored aspects of the feminist genealogy, for instance in regard to different activists (from various geographical regions, ethnic backgrounds, and/or classes), forms of activisms, or political agendas. In fact, such alternative rewritings of the origin story would take the origins of the movement outside the "monopoly" of a small group of women and help craft a more geographically, politically, and constituently diverse and comprehensive narrative on the evolution of the movement.

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4 Translating into Democracy

The Politics of Translation, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, and the "Other Europe"

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1. Introduction and the Political Context

In the early 2000s, five Eastern European[1] non-governmental organizations (NGOs)[2] published the Serbian (2001), Bulgarian (2001), Romanian (2002), Polish (2004), and Russian (2007) translations of the American feminist classic *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (*OBOS*).[3] Since 1989, these five post-communist[4] countries have undergone major socioeconomic, political, and ideological shake-ups. With the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the subsequent unification of West Germany and East Germany came the disintegration of almost everything else: the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia,[5] Czechoslovakia, but also the disintegration of the structures that held communist societies together during the Cold War (1945–1989) as well as cultural points of reference. The year 1989, therefore, symbolizes the end of the communist and socialist organization of life and the beginning of the post-communist period with the so-called transition[6] to democracy and market capitalist economy.

While the citizens of these countries welcomed the opening up of borders, possibilities of travel, and access to information and cultural and other products long desired but kept out of reach by the Iron Curtain for decades, women's position in society started to deteriorate (Einhorn 1993; Funk and Mueller 1993; Gal and Kligman 2000a and 2000b; Johnson and Robinson 2007; Renne 1997; Watson 2000). Although both men's and women's quality of life plunged due to harsh economic conditions and privatization of most services previously provided by the government, women's rights in particular experienced retrenchment. The deterioration of women's reproductive rights[7] due to more restrictive abortion laws that followed shortly after the elections of democratic governments raises serious concerns regarding women's status in Eastern European societies. Specifically, Polish women are confronted with one of the strictest abortion bans in Europe; Serbian women face serious restrictions past the tenth week, and their information is now collected into a national register of abortions; in 2003, Russian women faced the first restrictions in decades when abortion access was limited to within 12 weeks of gestation; in Moldova, women are confronted with

serious stigmatization of abortion, discriminatory attitudes, and unjustified prison sentences; and Bulgarian women are required to pay out of pocket for abortion, previously covered by the state-sponsored health system (Center for Reproductive Rights 2012; Drezgić 2009; Gal and Kligman 2000a and 2000b; Kishkovsky 2011; Kramer 2009; Nowicka 1994; Papić 1999; Renne 1997).

Gender studies scholarship has shown that the transition has given rise to unemployment, the relegation of women to the private sphere, and a return to values based on the ideals of home, nation, and Catholic and Orthodox Christianity. The overwhelming presence of men in formal governmental institutions such as parliaments and the equally overwhelming presence of women in more informal, non-governmental bodies have led scholars to name the phenomenon the "feminization" of the civil society sector (Lang 1997; Sloat 2005). In the post-1989 democratic systems, where parliaments exert concrete power, women's numbers have decreased significantly (Einhorn 1993; LaFont 2001). Moreover, restrictive abortion laws introduced immediately upon the election of mostly male-dominated parliaments, in combination with the loss of government services in the area of reproductive health due to privatization of health care, have had a direct impact on women's quality of life (Einhorn 1993; Funk and Mueller 1993; Johnson and Robinson 2007; Renne 1997; Watson 2000).[8] Such sweeping changes since the communist era place the spotlight on the work of the parliaments as well as on the response of the NGOs to these changes.

Given the current trend of assault on women's access to abortion, the Polish, Serbian, Bulgarian, Moldovan, and Russian NGOs' choice to translate the American feminist classic *Our Bodies, Ourselves* a decade, or more, into the transition to democracy reflects the chilling effect the transition has had on women's rights. Taking into consideration the past success of the feminist, pro-choice *OBOS* in the United States in raising consciousness and mobilizing women's movements in the 1970s, the decision to translate the book is in line with women's groups' efforts to address the current challenges to women's reproductive rights. The coordinator for the Polish translation, Malgorzata Tarasiewicz, writes that the Polish *OBOS* "attempts to raise awareness within society about health, sexuality and reproductive rights, distributes practical and usable knowledge, gives individual advice, and makes recommendations for change" (Tarasiewicz 2006, 150). The choice of text, however, also brings attention to the relentless attacks on reproductive rights that the American women themselves are facing, effectively reminding us that what was gained can also be lost. As the American media, politicians, and scholars fiercely debate a phenomenon termed the "War on Women," the backlash (Faludi 1992) against American women's gains made in the 1960s and 1970s seems as strong as ever.[9] Therefore, while the American *OBOS* may serve as a source of inspiration for Eastern European NGOs, it is at the same time a reminder that the fight for reproductive rights is still an uphill battle for American women.

The *OBOS* translation project is a rich illustration of the ways in which translations are not only importers of Western feminist models but are also capable of complicating the postcolonial concepts of *centre* and *periphery*. In what follows, I introduce *Our Bodies, Ourselves* as a unique grassroots feminist project. I examine the centre-periphery dynamic and the politics of translation in the "Other Europe," and I discuss some of the more salient features and adaptation strategies of the five Eastern European *OBOS* translations. Moreover, I investigate the ways in which feminist discourse needs to be negotiated before it can cross the geopolitical East-West divide. While this divide is steeped in Cold War terminology of Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and the "West" and is constructed through the artificiality of borders, I suggest that the decades of ideological and socioeconomic separation have left an indelible mark on the imaginaries of the citizens, regardless of their location. I highlight the political dimensions of translation and the ways in which uneven power relations at the geopolitical level are reflected in the translation process at the local level. Lastly, I conclude that while the *OBOS* translation projects in Eastern Europe are a model of transnational feminist solidarity building operating through feminist translation, these projects are embedded in uneven translation flows and power differentials.

2. *Our Bodies, Ourselves* in the United States

Published in 1971 in the United States, *Our Bodies, Ourselves* was written by an American grassroots feminist collective and was intended to contribute to consciousness raising about women's health. *OBOS* contains both medical information about women's bodies and health issues and excerpts of women's personal accounts as expressions of consciousness raising. *OBOS* has since revolutionized American women's health care by questioning conventional medical ideas about women's bodies and by providing women with vital sexual and reproductive health information (Davis 2007). Part of the success of *OBOS* is due to the fact that the book came out of a period of great upheaval in the late 1960s that included the movements for civil rights and women's rights, as well as anti-war protests in the United States. This turbulent political period provided the needed impetus for the project, as American society was experiencing major changes on the cultural, social, and political fronts (Gitlin 1987).

The collection of texts about women's bodies, health, and sexuality emerged out of an interactive workshop on "Women and Their Bodies" held at Boston's Emmanuel College in 1969. The following year, twelve women involved in the workshop put together a course booklet entitled *Women and Their Bodies*. In 1971, they published the first edition, renamed *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. It was a great "underground success," as it sold more than 200,000 copies in the first few months, mostly through women's studies centres and by word of mouth (Sanford 1979, 85). It has since sold more than four million copies. Its early beginnings as a collective effort by twelve

women and its subsequent popularity among American women make *OBOS* an excellent example of a grassroots project. Although the *OBOS* group has evolved over the past four decades, it maintains its financial independence, and its decision-making processes remain largely in the hands of the collective's founding members and staff (hereinafter referred to as the Boston collective). Moreover, the Boston collective has undertaken a number of other book projects, such as specialized editions on pregnancy and birth, and it has continued its very successful practice of "listening" to its readers. All the subsequent editions of *OBOS* and related projects are shaped by the readers' feedback that includes criticism, suggestions, and requests for particular information (Bonilla 2005; Davis 2007). Over the years, *OBOS* has become known as the "bible of women's health" (Davis 2007, 2) and has not only shaped how women view their bodies but also how they deal with medical practitioners. One of the more direct results has been the role of *OBOS* as "a catalyst for myriad consumer and patient advocate organizations and campaigns for women's reproductive rights" (Davis 2007, 2), including the fight for abortion legalization in 1973.

Since 1971, nine editions of *OBOS* have been published and more than thirty translations and cultural adaptations have been completed, such as the Spanish, Chinese,[10] Japanese, Dutch, German, and Greek versions, among others. More recently, the 1992 and the 1998 editions have been translated into five Eastern European languages: Serbian (2001), Bulgarian (2001), Romanian (2002), Polish (2004), and Russian (2007).[11] The availability of *OBOS* in these transitioning countries makes accessible much-needed health information on topics often considered taboo, such as abortion, contraception, and women's sexuality.

While much is known about the grassroots movement behind the American *OBOS* and its beginnings (Davis 2007; Kline 2010; Morgen 2002; Wells 2010), information on the trajectories of its translations still remains scarce (with the exception of Kathy Davis's groundbreaking work). Set against this background, the five translation projects raise a host of questions regarding the choice of text for translation, centre-periphery dynamics, power differentials, translation flows, and potential political dimensions of the translated discourse, among others.

3. The Politics of Translation and the "Other" Europe

By bringing together feminism, politics, and translation, the case of the five *OBOS* translations calls for a more thorough exploration of the ways in which feminist models of consciousness raising are imported through translation. The conceptual framework of the politics of translation highlights the agents involved in the translation process, funding, dissemination, and availability of other similar texts. Theorizing the politics of translation must also involve an examination of the political forces that assert themselves at different levels such as "textual, intertextual and extratextual and/or

individual, collective, national, and international levels" (Guo 2009, 256). The politics of translation further underscores sociocultural and political norms and constraints (Schaffner 2007), as well as the possibility of collaboration through the act of translation (Spivak 2004). Translation can be seen "as a social practice that is historically located, has political consequences and is imbued with power relations" (Slavova and Phoenix 2011, 333).

Furthermore, the politics of translation allows us to interrogate the power differentials between languages—a dimension closely tied to the geopolitical status of the countries in question. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak writes, "The status of a language in the world is what one must consider when teasing out the politics of translation" (2004, 378). Spivak further insists that in order to understand solidarity, and specifically solidarity among women, one must learn the other woman's mother tongue (379). Such propositions link language, texts, and the asymmetrical power relations that accompany text circulation.

The case of the *OBOS* translations underscores not only the feminist critique of gender inequality but also the asymmetry inherent in knowledge production and transmission in the geopolitical environment of the East-West divide, arguably still in existence. Scholarship in both gender studies and translation studies reminds us that translation is "imbued with power relations" (Slavova and Phoenix 2011, 333) and that "far from being a horizontal exchange or a peaceful transfer it is often described to be, translation can rather only be understood as an 'unequal exchange' occurring in a strongly hierarchical environment" (Casanova 2002, 7; my translation).[12]

The case of post-communist Eastern Europe complicates our understanding of power relations and the oft-used postcolonial terms *centre/periphery*. The divisions between Eastern and Western Europe—whether economic, social, political, or historical—still linger[13] in the imaginary of the populations in the region, even after the inclusion of a number of Eastern European states in the European Union.[14] The ever-present trope of "the other Europe" places Eastern Europe on the periphery while Western Europe (and the elusive "West"[15]) still assumes the "subjective position" (Hall 2003, 56) of the *centre* in the constructed discourses. However, using the world-systems theory, Marina Blagojević argues that Eastern Europe is a *semi-periphery*, which she describes as "positioned between the centre and the periphery and contain[ing] the characteristic of both" and never different or same enough (2009, 33). Blagojević's theorizing is useful here as it breaks down the centre-periphery binarism by bringing in the third element, the semi-periphery that is always in transition.

The most striking illustration of the "flooding" of the (semi)periphery with not only texts but also values and cultural points of reference of the West is seen in the post-1989 period. The removal of the overarching communist and socialist ideology allowed for the entry of the "winning" capitalist and Western culture. Just as the transition to democracy and market economy was being celebrated, Eastern European societies turned to their

neighbours to the west and thereby became some of the largest recipients or importers of Western culture (Gasior 2010, 149). As the European Union began its neocolonial project of civilizing and modernizing Eastern Europe, "Europe's wild East," it set off the process of becoming-the-same as the West (Kovačević 2008).

While these flows have generally included knowledge production from the West about the West, they have also brought with them writings by Western authors, journalists, scholars, among others, about Eastern Europe. The differentiated "subjective positions" assumed by Western Europe and Eastern Europe in this rather skewed exchange have been the object of criticism (Cerwonka 2008; Todorova 1997). Writing about the "Other" (the "Other" being Eastern Europe) has the potential of erasing or silencing those Other voices. Referring to Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?," Gordana Crnković acknowledges the dangers of writing about the "Other":

> Being written about by the "author" located in the center of power and knowledge regarding one or the other of the many aspects in question (global power structure, economic system, race, gender, or something else), "the Other" of power gets falsified, co-opted, silenced and erased.
>
> (Crnković 1992, 22)

Nevertheless, Crnković argues that writing about "the Other" does not have to be oppressive, even though this kind of writing usually involves the constructions of "the Other" that are entangled in the political and cultural relations of domination and subordination (22). Crnković posits that given the exaggerated authority and influence of Western writing in Eastern Europe, Western texts, which are critical, but most importantly *self*-critical, in regard to political, social, and economic dimensions of the post-communist transition and democracy, could potentially have "liberating" effects by destroying the "'myth of the West' in the eyes of Eastern Europeans":

> The most important thing to have in mind is that Western writing, given the fact that it is being widely read and considered in the East, can constitute—even when or precisely when self-critical towards its own authority—not only negative and oppressive agency within the Eastern European crises, but a positive and liberating one as well.
>
> (27)

Dismantling the *centre* in the Eastern European imaginary could then have liberating effects and would ideally be reflected in a change of translation flows, which have tended to originate mostly in Western Europe and North America (Gal 2003, 102; Gasior 2010, 143). However, as Biljana Kašić suggests, the theoretical work by so-called Eastern feminists would then need to be placed on equal footing with the work of the feminists from

the "West" and not simply used as a source of raw material for theorizing by others (Kašić 2004, 83).

The question of the choice of translations in the post-1989 context is significant since it involves examining funding and circulation and, therefore, the presence of NGOs in the nascent civil society. In this regard, Susan Gal issues two warnings: "in the postsocialist period the market and foundations have come to play crucial roles," and "foundations support books that correspond in some ways with their political, ethical or social 'mission' " (Gal 2003, 106). Recognizing the influence of intermediaries is an important task when tracing the decision-making process, where choice is entangled with "frankly political considerations" (106). The role of translators as well as publishers' translation ideologies also need to be examined in addition to profit-making motivations that characterize new postsocialist, capitalist book markets. While the institutional agents involved in the choices of translation have changed from before 1989, they still impose constraints on the selection of texts for translation. Although more overt mechanisms of censorship prevalent in varying degrees in some communist countries have disappeared (such as censorship implemented by state officials), funding provided by foreign and domestic foundations and profit motivations steer text selections in specific, constrained directions. In her examination of circulation of texts in Hungary, Gal acknowledges the considerable influence of NGOs working in the region, such as "the fabulously wealthy Soros Foundation," as well as "religious groups that missionize with conservative agendas," but also other foundations with progressive feminist agendas (2003, 113).

Explaining the circumstances surrounding the choice to translate *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, Kathy Davis writes that the Soros Foundation's Open Society began supporting feminist projects, including *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, in Eastern European countries after the fall of communism. The selection of books was based on a system where feminist scholars and intellectuals from the United States would make a list of recommendations, and local Eastern European women's groups would make their own list of books to be translated (Davis 2007, 61). However, Davis does not clarify whether this was the case for all Eastern European countries involved or not. For example, the choice to translate *Our Bodies, Ourselves* into Serbian came from the inspiration of one of the veteran feminist activists, Lepa Mladjenović, who had long known about the book (Mladjenović 2001, viii). In this case, the impetus came from the Serbian women's group, showing that the patterns of selection were not uniform in all cases.[16]

This example highlights the ways in which questions of choice, translation flows, East-West divide, foreign funding in transition countries, and, finally, the authority of Western knowledge production converge to underscore the political dimensions of (feminist) knowledge production. Or rather, they show that translation flows are not accidental. Translation flows are closely linked with what Marina Blagojević calls "transmitters" of Western knowledge. Blagojević argues that rather than being creators of new

knowledge, Central and Eastern European scholars often act as transmitters of the knowledge produced at the core through processes of contextualization, which include a great deal of translation (Blagojević 2009, 92). Given the very high level of dependency on foreign, mostly Western funding, the transition set a clear direction of knowledge production and dissemination:

> New conditions [transition] made it even clearer that "creators" of the knowledge come from the core, that the semiperiphery is complied to "translation" of that knowledge, or even simpler, to "transmission," and that the final users, "local societies" will be further objectified through exercise of policies based on that kind of distorted knowledge.
>
> (89)

Crnković's suggestion that Eastern Europeans assign exaggerated influence and authority to Western writings invites us to take a closer look into the ways theories are transmitted, circulated, and assigned value—or recommended and funded. The politics of translation then raises a host of questions, such as can resistance that occurred in one particular historical context (1970s) and in one particular (dominating) geopolitical location be translated into a new (dominated) language, context, and region? Or, can a new generation of women discursively and geopolitically located elsewhere translate or reproduce the transformative effect of one book?

4. *Our Bodies, Ourselves* in Eastern Europe: Framing and Adapting Feminist Discourse

Kornelia Slavova and Ann Phoenix open their essay by quoting from Adrienne Rich's poem ("Our Whole Life a Translation"). "If 'our whole life is a translation,' we cannot help wondering: what then is the original? Is it another text, another experience or another reality?" (Slavova and Phoenix 2011, 331). Translations of Western texts into Eastern European languages are, therefore, not just a movement from one language to another but also, "a movement of selves in/through language to other places, cultures, selves, and positions—a signal of dynamic processes of continuation, change, and transformation" (331). Translating *Our Bodies, Ourselves* into Eastern European languages post-1989 also constitutes a movement from the 1970s American feminist struggles to a post-communist Eastern Europe, from a kind of geopolitical cultural centre to a (semi)periphery ("the Other" Europe). Through the politics of translation then we can ask whether the translation can carry forward the struggle begun by the American feminist movement.

The main concern of translators of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* was not so much the "faithfulness" to the original but accessibility and political empowerment or oppositionality (Davis 2007, 173). Oppositionality can be defined as the capacity to "generat[e] agency and a critical and politically engaged subjectivity among readers" (Davis 2007, 192). What provided the political

empowerment was the knowledge of women's own bodies, their own rights when dealing with medical institutions, and a window into "real" women's experiences. In a post-communist context of insufficient health information, often male-dominated medical institutions, and culturally taboo topics, the *OBOS* translations were meant to "politicize readers in such a way that they could say, 'I read the book, and it changed my life' " (173). Set against discourses of religious traditionalism, de-secularization, conservatism, pro-natalist policies, nationalism, and a call for return to the home, pro-choice, feminist discourse of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* is then capable of politicizing its readers and functioning as an oppositional discourse.

The prefaces[17] to the Polish, Bulgarian, Moldovan, Russian, and Serbian translations take up the pro-choice, feminist discourse, by women for women, and introduce it into the local discursive space. The Serbian project coordinator and translator, Stanislava Otašević, writes, "This book should enable us to get to know ourselves, as well as to start exploring ourselves, to discover the possible choices and opportunities for protecting our health" (Otašević 2001, 1). The Bulgarian translators express hope that their version will invite Bulgarian readers to respond to "the political messages in this book, seen in the critical pathos towards the American health care system, which limits the access of many social groups to quality medical help, mainly the poor and disabled" (Todorova and Kotzeva 2001, 4). Moreover, they hope that it will serve as a warning of the kind of inequality current economic and health reforms can bring to post-communist Bulgaria. The Polish translators refer to the difficult post-communist post-1989 reality and call for a greater movement and consciousness raising:

> This book is capable of being a true support for all of us in our tough times. It can inspire changes in some particular cases, but hopefully it can also initiate a broader movement for improvement of health care for women.
>
> (Tarasiewicz 2004, 3)

All prefaces reference the original American version and re-tell the story of its inspirational 1970s feminist beginnings. By doing so, they create links between the source text and the translation in an attempt to generate a continuity between the American discourse and its adapted and transposed versions in a new country and a new historical era.

The five Eastern European translations are cultural adaptations to varying degrees. The Polish translation includes sections entirely adapted to the Polish context. The translation coordinator for the Polish translation writes, "American women wrote their book from their perspective including the social and economic contexts in the US and the human rights situation there. In our version we refer to our Polish reality" (Tarasiewicz 2004, 3). The Serbian translation contains sections that are completely adapted to the Serbian context. For example, the section on abortion omits the history of abortion

in the United States and includes instead the newly written text on the legal situation in Serbia. And lastly, the Bulgarian translation avoids the ubiquitous use of "we" and "our" found in the American original and opts for adaptation strategies in order to avoid communist propagandist jargon or "false call to collectivity" (Slavova 2001, 25; author's translation). As Bulgarian translator Kornelia Slavova explains,

> This brought about some changes in the Bulgarian translation mainly on the stylistic level—a partial toning down of the more extreme collective calls for global sisterhood or the universal glossing over of the diversity of voices (women of different race, age, class, profession, region, religion, sexual orientation etc.) combined into the non-hierarchical 'we.' " (25; author's translation)

The Russian translation, completed in 2007, is based on the 2005 edition of the American *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and is only available online. The NGO behind the translation, Women's Health in St. Petersburg, directly translated most of the source text while resorting to adaptation strategies only occasionally. The translation contains information about the American context, statistics, procedures, and products, among others, with some interventions related to the specific Russian context. Women's Health in St. Petersburg has been very active on the women's reproductive rights front, including establishing the first Family Planning Center in Russia. Given the increasingly difficult political climate, growing influence of the Russian Orthodox Church, tighter restrictions on abortion, and open pro-natalist policies in Russia, the work of the organization represents an important effort to provide women and girls with evidence-based information regarding reproductive and sexual health. The current highly conservative social climate makes the availability and the reading of the Russian online *OBOS* a political act. In contrast to the Russian translation, the Romanian version for Moldova is available only in paper copies. The translators underscore the limited access to a personal computer for a large number of women, especially for women in rural areas. Instead of opting for an online version, the Moldovan translators distributed a copy of their translation to every women's NGO in the country. As they note, this was possible due to the George Soros Foundation's offer to fund that initiative.

For all five translations, different adaptation strategies include omissions of certain parts of the source text, reorganization of chapters, addition of completely new text written by the translators (at times in consultation with experts in specific fields), introduction of neologisms, and replacement of photographs of American women with photographs of local women. The last strategy, however, creates a kind of dissonance between the voices and the pictures in those translations, such as the Russian one, where the photographs are replaced with pictures of local women but the text still heavily speaks of the American situation and includes personal accounts

of American women. In the Russian translation, the chapter on abortion includes a personal account where a woman relates the difficult experience of having an illegal abortion.[18] It becomes clear that the woman speaking in this personal account is not a Russian woman but an American woman since the voluntary termination of pregnancy is legal in Russia and has been since 1955. In addition to this instance, the translations abound in examples of American women's voices in personal accounts (which are available together with medical information in the book). While the replacement of American images with the photographs of local women can be seen as an attempt to adapt the book and make it more familiar to the local women readers, cultural references and references to particular situations or products, such as contraceptives (still relatively scarce and not as readily available in the five countries in question), make the voices of the women "speaking" in the book palpably foreign.

The decision made by the translators to omit certain parts of the source text is another adaptation strategy. Serbian translation coordinator Stanislava Otašević comments on their decision to omit the chapter on nutrition: "[It] seemed terrible to speak of food when people were starving" (Davis 2007, 68). The Bulgarian translator Kornelia Slavova notes that cuts were made on the topic of over-medicalization since most basic health needs were not being met, and therefore, it seemed irrelevant and inappropriate to write about over-medicalization (Slavova 2001, 23; author's translation). Likewise, she puts forth the argument that abortion is not a moral issue in Bulgaria the way it is in the United States, and so the presentation of the abortion section takes on a different tone and emphasis (23; author's translation). The Moldovan translators also note that they omitted paragraphs that describe "problems, diseases, solutions proposed and realities that are not characteristic to our society, which is very different from the American one" (National Women's Studies and Information Center 2002, 2). This adaptation strategy brings a great deal of editorial freedom to the translators and allows them to create a cultural adaptation that gathers what the translators deem is relevant information while maintaining the so-called formula or writing approach which made the American *OBOS* quite popular with the American women. It is precisely this editorial freedom that characterizes the special relationship between the Boston collective and the NGOs involved in the translation projects. However, as much as the Boston collective strove to secure editorial freedom for the local feminist NGOs, the collective still established guidelines that required certain chapters to be translated:

> Mindful of its own experiences with censorship in the United States, the Boston collective was also concerned that the "problem" chapters on controversial subjects such as abortion, lesbian relationships, or masturbation would not be deleted by conservative, male-dominated publishing houses.
>
> (Davis 2007, 59)

The *OBOS* translations are, therefore, an illustration of a political approach to translation, where the source text authors intervene to ensure the political message is passed on in the translation. By stipulating in the contracts for foreign editions that only local feminist groups can translate *OBOS* (59), the Boston collective set a model of collaboration and transnational feminist solidarity building by means of feminist translation.

The political dimension of the *OBOS* translations cannot be ignored. The translators make it clear in their prefaces. The Polish translation coordinator Malgorzata Tarasiewicz writes,

> There is no social movement in Poland working to improve health care and probably it will not get started any time soon. You can easily count organizations or support groups for women, and fingers of one hand will suffice for that. *Our Bodies, Ourselves* can fill the gap and inspire changes.
>
> (2004, 2)

The Serbian preface also links the act of reading with activism: "We want to generate further reflection and change of attitude, so that the activities and the activism of women may influence and alter the current state of affairs" (Otašević 2001, 3). However, in contrast to the other Eastern European translations, the Moldovan translators state in their text that their preference was to focus more on the medical information in the source text and not on the political themes. For this reason, they omitted two chapters ("The Politics of Women and Health," and "Organizing for Change: USA"). Although this adaptation strategy may appear to limit or eliminate the political aspects of the translation, it can be argued that the very choice to translate (and to read) a pro-choice feminist classic is a political act in itself. In a still largely rural and traditional Moldovan society, as the Moldovan translators point out themselves, any writing and subsequent discussion of women's sexuality, lesbian relationships, masturbation, contraception, and abortion are bound to arouse opposition and reprobation and even harsh penalty.[19]

5. "Can Feminism Speak a Slavic Language?": The Politics of Translation and Feminist Discourse

The framework of the politics of translation raises the question of whether key terms or "carriers" of a particular discourse can even be translated. During some of the first contacts at conferences and gatherings between Western feminists and Eastern European scholars in the early 1990s, following the opening up of borders, dilemmas arose as to how to render fundamental terms such as "gender," "women's studies," or "sexual harassment" in Slavic languages. Laura Busheikin reports that at a major gathering in Liblice, the Czech Republic, in 1994, a Bulgarian feminist asked, "Can feminism speak a

Slavic language?" (Busheikin 1995, 124). With this opening question, a host of other questions were raised. Busheikin shows that it is not the case of a mere "linguistic query" but about "asking how, why and whether or not to translate feminist concepts and practices, developed mainly in Western conditions, into Slavic conditions" (125). Davis notes that the Bulgarian version of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* introduced a neologism "sociosex" (combining biological sex and social gender) in order to deal with the translation of *gender* (Davis 2007, 188). Together with these discussions came questions about identity and national labelling. For example, who exactly were Eastern Europeans, or should this term be changed to East Central Europeans, or Central Europeans (Busheikin 1995, 125)?

Translating key feminist terms—which appeared to be "arriving late" onto the feminist scene (highlighting a Eurocentric vision of some scholars)—required clear "subjective positions" in order for the discourse to be understood. While the Serbian language already has words for *sex* ("pol") and *gender* ("rod"), some Russian and Czech feminists adopted the foreign term *gender*, pronouncing it with either soft or hard "g." Lidia Simbirtseva (2007), the translation coordinator for the Russian translation of *OBOS*, comments that the word *gender* is still not well-defined in Russian society and is interpreted differently than in the American context. The American usage of the word *gender* that comes through in the Russian translation of *OBOS* can therefore "teach" Russian readers about the different interpretations of the concept (2007, 3). The challenges of using English, and thus foreign terms, should not be underestimated. Words such as "feminism" and "feminist" are easily rejected by local women due to the decades-old practices of discrediting these allegedly "bourgeois" terms by communist governments. Women's rights activists in the region tend to use the word in English (when speaking to foreign audiences) but avoid it in local languages (Jung 1994, 199).

The question remains as to how discourses travel, and in particular, feminist discourses of power and bodily autonomy. Moreover, how does the translated content permeate the imaginary of the target reader and create desires, as it did even—or perhaps, especially—in the period of geopolitical walls and the Iron Curtain? But, contrary to the official rhetoric, borders were not impermeable before 1989: "[. . .] cultural products, people, political and financial interests, and such like, constantly seeped through, ensuring the continued presence of the other bloc on each of their soils" (Penezic 1995 quoted in Cerwonka 2008, 820). In this particular geopolitical theatre, the desire for American music, movies, products, and lifestyle has certainly facilitated the travelling of the American feminist cultural products such as *OBOS*. Those located on the cultural borders who acted as intermediaries and translated both the culture and the texts further supported the crossover. As Kornelia Slavova aptly explains,

> Similarly, the scholars and activists who are engaged in gender politics in the region also live "in translation": on the one hand, they try to

> "translate" the established diverse feminist ideas and practices (mainly coming from the West) into the local idiom, while on the other hand, they try to "translate" the East-European experience and reality to the international community.
>
> (Slavova 2001, 17; author's translation)

Referring to power differentials, Douglas Robinson writes about the ways in which texts from dominant cultures flow into dominated discursive spaces through translation. Robinson posits that a hegemonic culture is represented in other cultures through translations that are viewed as important for the broad reading public (1997, 32). Furthermore, a much greater number of texts from the hegemonic culture are translated into other languages than vice versa; these foreign texts are chosen specifically because they come from a culture that represents the *centre* and are therefore prized; and, finally, these foreign texts (later translated for further dissemination) "are written in utter ignorance of the dominated culture" (32). Unraveling the complex ways in which Western scholars or "Western supremacists" impose the Western gaze or the "Western eye" on scholarship on Eastern European women, Jung warns critically, "Given the alternatives open to women in Eastern Europe we can anticipate that there will be a continuing pressure to accept the hegemony of Western feminist discourse" (Jung 1994, 208). Referring to the Eastern European context of Romania, Iulia Mihalache argues that translation is the vehicle of dominant representations: "Translation carries representations and renders them dominant. By using specific discursive strategies, it constructs *privileged mental models which can be analysed in the discourse*" (Mihalache 2010, 2; emphasis in the original; my translation).[20] Translation, therefore, is an important factor in the dissemination not simply of the dominant culture but also of the dominant culture that gives privileged status to its own models—status justified through its discourse of advancement and the authority assigned to it by the Other.

6. Conclusion

The Eastern European context of transition to democracy in the last twenty-five years and its major ideological shifts are a rich ground for exploring translation practices and theories. The concept of the "Other Europe" transforms the centre-periphery dynamic, as Eastern Europe emerges as both the contemporary and historical (semi)periphery of Europe—a periphery that is constantly on the verge of becoming the centre, or "the same," in a perpetual state of transition.

Paying attention to the politics of translation brings new perspectives on the ways in which ideas circulate across different spaces and time periods. The oppositionality of a feminist text can be used to measure the gap between what is written in the translation and what is being said and written about women's health in a particular society. The specific context of the

deterioration of women's reproductive rights in Eastern Europe calls for a study of the existing and dominant discourses, as well as of the dialogue created with the introduction of a pro-choice American feminist discourse in translation through *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. However, it remains unclear whether the source text's political dimensions and transformative effects on its readers can be translated into a new transformative effect for the readers of the translation. Whether one is able to translate feminism into a new political era and location, or otherwise spark a new movement, remains to be seen.

Notes

1. Eastern Europe is defined as the group of countries which were politically organized under communism (single-party rule), espoused state socialism as the economic model, and were members of the Eastern Bloc (with the exception of former Yugoslavia, which was a non-aligned country). It can also be said that Eastern Europe is a geopolitical term that refers to "historically specific political and economic differences" and "historically specific division between capitalist and formerly socialist countries" (Jung 1994, 195–96). Since 1989, research on the former Eastern Europe has gradually begun to identify the region as "Central and East Europe" or "Southeastern Europe" using seemingly more neutral, geographical terminology. However, given the region's history and the decades-long division between the two Europes, for the purposes of this chapter, I will refer to the five countries in question (Poland, Serbia, Moldova, Russia, and Bulgaria) as Eastern European countries. See also Larry Wolff (1994).
2. The five NGOs and the years of publication of the translations are the *Women's Health Initiative in Bulgaria* (2001), the *Autonomous Women's Center* in Serbia (2001), the *Center for Partnership and Development* (formerly known as the National Women's Studies and Information Center) in Moldova (2002), *Network of East-West Women* in Poland (2004), and *Women's Health in St. Petersburg* in Russia (2007).
3. The Romanian-language translation was prepared and distributed in Moldova.
4. Although the terms "post-communist" and "post-socialist" are often interchangeably used in the literature, communism here refers to the political system (single-party rule) that was in place and socialism (or state socialism) to the economic model of distribution of wealth.
5. The war in Yugoslavia began in 1991. Historically, Tito's policies, the country's position as a non-aligned member, and Yugoslav workers' self-managing socialism set the country considerably apart from the Eastern Bloc.
6. Some scholars challenge the use of the term "transition" and suggest "transformation" or "transition from communism" are more suitable terms. Watson explains, "Political scientists, sociologists and anthropologists have argued that the term should be discarded on the grounds that the word implies an unproblematic trajectory and a destination that is known. Words such as 'transformation' have been seen as more non-committal and have been recommended instead" (Watson 2000, 186).
7. Reproductive rights are defined as the extension of basic human rights and include the freedom of individuals and couples to make informed choices about reproduction: the right "to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health" (World Health Organization 1994, Article 7.3). In this chapter, I will focus on women's right and access to abortion services.

8. Romania after Nicolae Ceauşescu's dictatorship and Bulgaria have followed a different path. Following Ceauşescu's draconian restrictions, abortion was liberalized in 1989. However, as Adriana Băban reports, "nationalists and demographers blame the declining birthrate on unrestricted access to abortion" (2000, 239), resulting in the resurgence of public debates on limiting women's abortion access. See the text by Krassimira Daskalova on Bulgaria and in particular on the treatment of women's reproductive role in nationalist discourses (2000, 350–51).
9. Also referred to as the "Republican war on women." See texts by American Civil Liberties Union and an editorial in the *New York Times*. Accessed December 14, 2015. https://www.aclu.org/blog/tag/war-women and http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/20/opinion/sunday/the-attack-on-women-is-real.html?_r=0.
10. Published in simplified Chinese in China. See the following link. Accessed December 14, 2015. http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/global-projects/china-chinese-womens-health-network-educate-women-in-china/.
11. This Russian translation is based on the 2005 edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. The first Russian translation, currently out of print, was completed in 1995 by a publishing house, Progress, under the title *You and Your Body* and was criticized for being an "insensitive translation" (Posadskaya-Vanderbeck 1997, 381).
12. The original in French states: "[. . .] loin d'être l'échange horizontal ou le transfert pacifié souvent décrit, la traduction ne peut être comprise, au contraire, que comme un « échange inégal » se produisant dans un univers fortement hiérarchisé."
13. See the writing of Francisca de Haan (2010) and Barbara Einhorn (2006) on the notion of the "Iron Curtain" as the barrier or the wall in our minds.
14. Countries such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, and Romania, among others.
15. I rely on Chandra Mohanty's description of the "West" as the "affluent, privileged nations and communities" (2002, 505) to define "Western" and to argue that "Western feminism" originates from countries shaped by capitalist—as opposed to communist—systems. These countries would include English-speaking countries such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, but also non-English-speaking countries such as France, Germany, and Sweden. Although my aforementioned definition of Western feminism emphasizes capitalist dimensions of society, it is important to note that American feminism is greatly indebted to and was significantly influenced by Marxism and socialist intellectual forces (see, for example, Horowitz (1996) on Betty Friedan's involvement in labour unions and protest movements in the 1940s and 1950s).
16. For a history of feminist citizenship in Yugoslavia (in English), see Adriana Zaharijević's working paper. Accessed December 14, 2015. http://www.citsee.ed.ac.uk/working_papers/files/CITSEE_WORKING_PAPER_2013–28.pdf.

    For the history of the women's movement in Yugoslavia in Serbian language, visit the Women's Autonomous Centre. Accessed December 14, 2015. http://www.womenngo.org.rs/zenski-pokret/istorija-zenskog-pokreta.
17. The prefaces are available in English translation on the website of the OBOS group. Accessed December 14, 2015. http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/global-projects/.
18. Chapter 20 on abortion. Accessed December 14, 2015. http://www.womenhealth-spb.ru/book/part4.php.
19. The Case of Z illustrates the harsh realities for women and their reproductive rights in Moldova. The Center for Reproductive Rights writes about the case: "In May 2006, Z, an unmarried, pregnant and poor young woman from rural Moldova, induced an abortion at a late stage of her pregnancy at her home. When she was taken to the hospital for hemorrhagic shock, doctors reported

her to the police. She was then charged with intentional murder, even though medical records show that she had an abortion and there is no criminal penalty for women who illegally terminate their pregnancy. In December 2006, Z was found guilty of murder and sentenced to 20 years in prison. On January 31, 2012, the Moldovan Pardoning Commission granted pardon to Z, after she had spent over five years in prison" (Center for Reproductive Rights 2012).

20. The original in French states, "La traduction véhicule et rend dominantes certaines représentations et, par utilisation de stratégies discursives spécifiques, elle construit des modèles mentaux privilégiés, analysables dans le discours" (Mihalache 2010, 2).

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5 De-feminizing Translation

To Make Women Visible in Japanese Translation

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1. Introduction

In Flotow's view (1997, 8–12 and 14), the radical approach to feminist translation aims to make the feminine visible through the experimental use of language in such a way that both the narrator's voice and, often, the voice of individual characters, are feminized. Radical feminist writing and translating thus aim to undermine conventional language, which women are forced to use by male-dominant authorities. Therefore, to make women visible in language is the way to give them their own voice instead of their being resigned to a subordinate position in society, whether Western or otherwise (Flotow 1997, 28; Godard 1990, 90). In this sense, Western feminist translation is feminizing translation.

In Japanese translation, however, feminizing translation connotes women's underprivileged position in society. This is because Japanese is a gender-marking language and characters' speech in translation is inevitably and explicitly constructed with detailed femininity or masculinity. A number of studies suggest that female characters are overly feminized in their language use in Japanese literature, whether original or translated (see Inoue 2003 and 2004; Nakamura 2007b). That is, there is a significant gap between female characters' language use in literature and real Japanese women's discourse; as a result, there is potential for a significant gap in terms of the perceived level of femininity of a character in the original novel and in its Japanese translation.

Some empirical analyses demonstrate the over-feminizing translation convention. For example, the Japanese translation of Margaret Atwood's novel *The Edible Woman* (1969) shows a clear dissonance between the female protagonist's speech in the original and in its translation (Furukawa 2012). Although the protagonist, Marian is a contemporary working woman, described as independent and with feminist ideas, in the Japanese translation, she sometimes speaks with the kind of perfectly feminine language used by young Japanese women from good families between the late nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth century. In fact, the language that Marian uses in the translation very closely resembles the speaking style of Mrs Dalloway in the Japanese translations of Virginia

Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925). Indeed, Marian seems to willingly use ideally feminine language in the Japanese translation. Another example is seen in the Japanese translation of Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1998). Bridget, in Japanese, never swears and often uses very feminine language, even though she is depicted as a foul-mouthed character in the original. The gap between her language use in the original and its Japanese translation makes for a remarkable inconsistency in style (Furukawa 2009). Indeed, other research work on the Japanese translations of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* (Austen 1813 and 1816) has shown that male translators are more prone to over-feminize female characters' speech than a female translator (Furukawa 2010).

This convention of over-feminizing female characters' language has been established in the Japanese literary world since the late nineteenth century (Inoue 2003 and 2004; Nakamura 2007a and 2007b). I argue here that it has played an important role in reinforcing gender ideology of what women should be like in Japanese society. Therefore, this chapter proposes de-feminizing translation as a form of feminist translation in the Japanese context. My purpose is to argue that a feminist approach to translation in Japan is one that removes over-feminized representations of women in language. Traditionally, in Japanese work, the process of translation transforms a female character's speech in a foreign novel to adapt it to an ideal feminine speech style as indicated earlier. This transformation reflects social norms of how women are supposed to speak. Hence it could be said that the over-feminized representation has functioned as a shaper of gender ideology in the Japanese literary world. Thus de-feminizing is crucial to change not only the representations of women in Japanese literature, translated and original, but also social expectations of women in society. To develop this argument, this chapter proceeds in four parts; first, it explores the tendency to over-feminize in Japanese literature; second, it offers further evidence to suggest that gender identities influence the overly represented feminine in the speech of female characters in translation; third, it offers a theoretical explanation for the relationship between gender ideology and over-feminizing; and fourth, contrary to Western feminist translation, it argues for de-feminizing translation in the Japanese context.

2. Over-Feminizing in Japanese Literature

This section explores the history of Japanese women's language in order to offer a short explanation of the gendered ways of speaking for those who are not familiar with the Japanese language. A modern use of women's language was promoted politically during the Meiji period (1868–1912), which saw the establishment of its typical forms such as the series of sentence-final particles, important for gender-marked language, as will be described in this section (Kindaichi (1957) 1988, 39; Tanaka 2004, 26). This was also the period in which standard Japanese was established by adopting the language of educated middle-class males in Tokyo (Nakamura 2007b, 43–45).

Inoue (2006, 2) indicates that some prominent scholars of the Japanese language reinforced the ideological aspect of women's language. One of the founders of modern Japanese linguistics, Kyosuke Kindaichi writes, for example, "Japanese women's language is so fine that it seems to me that it is, along with Japanese womanhood, unique in the world" (1942, cited in Inoue 2006, 2). One of the first modern Japanese linguists, Sueo Kikuzawa also states, "[w]omen's speech is characterized by elegance, that is, gentleness and beauty. Moreover, such characteristics correspond with our unique national language" (1929, cited in Inoue 2006, 2). This gendered authorization was efficiently exploited for the establishment of the government's national language policy, which supported the "genderization" (Tanaka 2004, 26) of the Japanese language. Consequently, the idea of how women should speak became widespread.

The series of sentence-final particles as indicated earlier is one of the most distinguishing features of modern spoken Japanese. For instance, the English utterance "it's hot today" has more than five options for Japanese translation with different femininity or masculinity levels—*kyo ha atsui wa* (it's hot + particle "wa," very feminine), *kyo ha atsui ne* (it's hot + particle "ne," moderately feminine), *kyo ha atsui* (it's hot, neutral), *kyo ha atsui yo* (it's hot + particle "yo," moderately masculine), or *kyo ha atsui zo* (it's hot + particle "zo," very masculine). The series of feminine sentence-final particles are representative of so-called women's language, which is no longer commonly used by contemporary Japanese women (Okamoto 2010). However, this "women's language" is still easily found in literature and other cultural materials, including newspapers, magazines, TV dramas, films, comics, or anime. The clear dissonance between the Japanese women's real language and the language used in those materials implies that the ideological function of "women's language" is to instruct women how to speak (Chinami 2010; Inoue 2003 and 2004; Mizumoto 2005 and 2010; Nakamura 2007a and 2007b).

The question, therefore, is what is "women's language?" In this sense, it is neither simply a linguistic construct, nor a real Japanese women's language, but a type of "culturally salient category and knowledge" (Inoue 2006, 13) that women are supposed to possess. To characterize feminine language as women's language is therefore not realistic. Rather, "women's language" is constructed culturally and ideologically from a belief about how women should speak and shaped politically and socially through history (Inoue 2006, 15; Okamoto 1995, 317).

As Nakamura (2012, 10) points out, the most feminized speech is found in translated texts nowadays. As indicated in the introduction, foreign female characters are reconstructed with perfectly feminine language in the Japanese translations. This is because ideological knowledge instructs translators in the choice of characters' language use in the process of translation (Nakamura 2012, 10–11). Translation is not only a linguistic matter but also a cultural issue. In the case of Japanese translation from other languages that

do not have gender-marking aspects, this particular cultural issue is clearly of importance.

Considering over-feminizing as ideologically encouraged translation, it is interesting to see gender differences in interpretations of female speech in novels. From the analysis of the Japanese translations of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* (Furukawa 2010, 188–90), it would be possible to argue that male translators are likely to use feminine forms more than female translators. Although female translators are also affected by the socially expected image, it can be said that male translators conform more rigidly to expectations of how women should speak. It could be argued that because woman's language is alien to men, they have to rely on a certain image of feminine speech. Further studies of translated texts are needed to provide enough support for these arguments. Hence the next section offers an additional investigation regarding gender influence on over-feminizing in translated texts.

3. Gender Influence on Over-Feminizing

This analysis was conducted on the three latest Japanese translations of *Wuthering Heights* (Emily Brontë 1847, *WH1–WH3*) and a Japanese translation of *Jane Eyre* (Charlotte Brontë 1847, *JE*). The texts were translated by one male and three female translators between 2003 and 2010: Yukiko Konosu (2003, female, *WH1*), Hiromi Kawashima (2004, female, *WH2*), Fusa Obi (2006, female, *JE*), and Takeshi Onodera (2010, male, *WH3*). The following methodology was used for the analysis: the sentence-final particles of the protagonists Catherine and Jane were collected manually, identified by their levels of femininity or masculinity according to Okamoto and Sato's classification (1992, 480–82), and then compared to those in other translations. The data from these translations are shown in Table 5.1.

The percentage of feminine forms in Table 5.1 illustrates that *WH3* is the most feminized version of the three: 56.63 percent in *WH1*, 60.15 percent in *WH2*, 68.71 per cent in *WH3*, and 58.40 percent in *JE*. It should especially be noted that there is a high frequency of strong feminine forms in *WH3* to compare with others: 33.47 percent in *WH1*, 44.09 percent in *WH2*, 52.28 percent in *WH3*, and 30.66 percent in *JE*. The male preference for women's language becomes clearer when the data in Table 5.1 are compared to the results of the previous analysis of the influence of male/female interpretation (see Table 5.2). The subjects of the analysis are Koji Nakano's translation of *Pride and Prejudice* (2003, male, *PP*), which is the least feminized version of the three Japanese translations currently on the market, and the following three translations of *Emma*: Shoko Harding's version (1997, female, *EM1*), Masashi Kudo's version (2000, male, *EM2*), and Koji Nakano's version (2005, male, *EM3*). The analysis was conducted under the same condition. The underlined data represent the percentage of feminine forms in the texts translated by males. Overall, the study shows that the male interpretations

Table 5.1 Use of Gendered Sentence-Final Forms (WH1, WH2, WH3, and JE)

Sentence-Final Forms	*Total Instances Used (%)*			
	WH1 (F 2003)	*WH2 (F 2004)*	*WH3 (M 2010)*	*JE (F 2006)*
Feminine forms	**56.63%**	**60.15%**	**68.71%**	**58.40%**
Strongly feminine forms	33.47%	44.09%	52.28%	30.66%
Moderately feminine forms	23.16%	16.06%	16.43%	27.74%
Masculine forms	**0.13%**	**0.30%**	**0.26%**	**0.00%**
Strongly masculine forms	0.13%	0.15%	0.00%	0.00%
Moderately masculine forms	0.00%	0.15%	0.26%	0.00%
Neutral forms	**43.24%**	**39.56%**	**31.03%**	**41.61%**

Notes:

1. Total number of instances = 747 (*WH1*), 685 (*WH2*), 767 (*WH3*), and 137 (*JE*).
2. The year of publication employed is the date that the novel was translated for the first time.
3. M and F in brackets indicate the gender of the translator: M = male and F = female.
4. The subjects are all of Catherine's conversations in *WH1*–*WH3* and Jane's conversation with Helen, Diana, and Mary in *JE* to exclude polite forms because sentence-final particles are mostly used in informal conversations.
5. As all figures are rounded off to two decimal places, there is a systematic error when they are totalled.

are more likely to be feminized than those of females. This result exemplifies that male translators tend to be more affected by a stereotypical image of women's speech style than their female counterparts.

To explore how far female speech is feminized in the translated texts, a linguistic analysis of real Japanese women's discourse (Okamoto 2010, 133) is displayed with the data of *WH1*, *WH2*, and *WH3* in Table 5.3. This survey is based on five tape-recorded informal two-person conversations between ten university students aged eighteen to twenty and five conversations between ten married middle-aged women aged forty-three to fifty-seven. The sentence-final particles of 150 sentences each are collected and classified into feminine, masculine, and neutral forms. From the data of Table 5.3, it is obvious that all the female protagonists' speech in the texts *WH1*, *WH2*, and *WH3* is far more feminized than the real Japanese women's language use; the highest percentage of feminine forms in the texts, 68.71 percent is actually more than 5.5 times as much as the percentage of women aged eighteen to twenty, 12.3 percent. Another distinctive point is that the female characters hardly use masculine forms in the texts though real Japanese women use them sometimes: 18.9 percent of women aged eighteen to twenty and 12.3 percent aged forty-three to fifty-seven. Surprisingly, women aged eighteen to twenty are more likely to use masculine forms

Table 5.2 Use of Gendered Sentence-Final Forms (WH1, WH2, WH3, JE, PP, EM1, EM2, and EM3)

Sentence-Final Forms	*Total Instances Used (%)*							
	WH1 (F 2003)	*WH2 (F 2004)*	*WH3 (M 2010)*	*JE (F 2006)*	*PP (M 2003)*	*EM1 (F 1997)*	*EM2 (M 2000)*	*EM3 (M 2005)*
FF	**56.63%**	**60.15%**	**68.71%**	**58.40%**	**75.52%**	**60.68%**	**79.28%**	**64.29%**
SFF	33.47%	44.09%	52.28%	30.66%	52.70%	46.07%	62.14%	43.41%
MFF	23.16%	16.06%	16.43%	27.74%	22.82%	14.61%	17.14%	20.88%
MF	**0.13%**	**0.30%**	**0.26%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**
SMF	0.13%	0.15%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
MMF	0.00%	0.15%	0.26%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
NF	**43.24%**	**39.56%**	**31.03%**	**41.61%**	**28.48%**	**39.33%**	**20.71%**	**35.71%**

Notes:

1. Total number of instances = 747 (*WH1*), 685 (*WH2*), 767 (*WH3*), 137 (*JE*), 241 (*PP*), 178 (*EM1*), 140 (*EM2*), and 182 (*EM3*).
2. The year of publication employed is the date that the novel was translated for the first time.
3. M and F in brackets indicate the gender of the translator: M = male and F = female.
4. FF = feminine forms, SFF = strong feminine forms, MFF = moderately feminine forms, MF = masculine forms, SMF = strongly masculine forms, MMF = moderately masculine forms, NF = neutral forms.
5. As all figures are rounded off to two decimal places, there is a systematic error when they are totalled.

Table 5.3 Use of Gendered Sentence-Final Forms (WH1, WH2, WH3, and Real Japanese Women)

Sentence-Final Forms	*Total Instances Used (%)*				
	WH1	*WH2*	*WH3*	*Okamoto (2010) Age group: 18–20*	*Okamoto (2010) Age group: 43–57*
Feminine forms	**56.63%**	**60.15%**	**68.71%**	**12.3%**	**36.3%**
Strongly feminine forms	33.47%	44.09%	44.09%		
Moderately feminine forms	23.16%	16.06%	16.43%		
Masculine forms	**0.13%**	**0.30%**	**0.26%**	**18.9%**	**12.3%**
Strongly masculine forms	0.13%	0.15%	0.00%		
Moderately masculine forms	0.00%	0.15%	0.26%		
Neutral forms	**43.24%**	**39.56%**	**31.03%**	**68.8%**	**51.4%**

Notes:

1. Total number of instances = 747 (WH1), 685 (WH2), 767 (WH3), and 750 (Okamoto 18–20, 43–57).
2. The year of publication employed is the date that the novel was translated for the first time.
3. M and F in brackets indicate the gender of the translator: M = male and F = female.
4. As all figures are rounded off to two decimal places, there is a systematic error when they are totalled.

than feminine forms: 18.9 percent and 12.3 percent, respectively. Thus it is now clearer that female speech in translated texts is artificially constructed without any correlation with real Japanese women's discourse.

With respect to male preference for female language use, the well-known Japanese female poet Hiromi Ito provides an interesting anecdote in a magazine dialogue with a Japanese female sociologist (Ito 1990, 31). When the male translator Minami Aoyama translated Saki's *The Reticence of Lady Anne* for a magazine project by mimicking Ito's writing style, the parody translation was far more feminized than Ito's own style, which hardly uses women's language. This fact may offer further support for the male preference for over-feminizing.

Interestingly, however, female translators are also perpetrators of this violence and use typical female forms for characters in their translations as the analyses of the Japanese translations of *Bridget Jones's Diary, The Devil Wears Prada* (Weisberger 2003), and *Chasing Harry Winston* (Weisberger 2008), as well as the Japanese subtitles of the films *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *The Devil Wears Prada*, demonstrate (Furukawa 2009, 2010 and 2013). The female translator Kaori Oshima (1990, 43) writes that a good translation is adjusted to the feminine ideal in Japanese society and that female translators restrict themselves to using softer, more indirect and feminine language subconsciously. This oppression makes female translators obey the convention of over-feminizing translation.

4. Over-Feminizing and Gender Ideology

The long-standing over-feminizing in literature is strongly related to gender ideology in Japan. Perceptions about how women should speak have not shifted significantly since the post-war period as demonstrated in the nationwide questionnaires issued in 1955, 1986, and 1995 (Endo 1997, 173–77). From the 1995 questionnaire, the following two factors emerged: (1) older people tend to think that men and women should speak differently, and (2) men are more likely to hope to keep this difference in place.

Mizumoto's survey (2005) on women's language in Japanese TV dramas also reinforces men's clear preference for a "women's language." Conducted with thirty female subjects (ten in their twenties, ten in their thirties, and ten in their forties) and eighteen males (six in their twenties, nine in their thirties, and three in their forties), the survey showed that 61 percent of the men regarded women's language as feminine, romantic, and sexy. By contrast, only 15 percent of women wanted to use women's language to give men a feminine impression. Rather, they regarded women's language as a tool to help establish good relations with other (mainly older) people in society, and 47 percent of the women considered women's language simply a polite form of language.

In general, men seem to have a stereotypical image of women's language, whereas women use it as a tool to develop a better response from people. In the Japanese language, women are considered to be underprivileged. Therefore, women are supposed to use polite forms when addressing men, and since the opposite does not apply, it seems only women are constrained to the use of polite forms. This linguistic superiority-inferiority relationship is related to women's social powerlessness in society (Smith 1992a, 540 and 1992b, 59). This is reinforced by the use of indirect expressions in "women's language" to avoid indicating the object in a straightforward manner—a usage that is partly due to politeness but also to non-assertiveness and hesitation (Inoue 2006, 2; Okamoto 1995, 307). Some women try to fit into the socially mandated mould of the ideal feminine speaking style because they understand that this is what society expects. They are careful about others' expectations and how they are seen in society: "Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at" (Berger (1972) 1977, 47). In other words, women do not perform for themselves but for others (Butler 2004, 1).

Butler (1990) 1999) opposes the essentialist view and emphasizes the importance of gender performativity as, from the constructionist viewpoint, gender is an acquisition that is dependent upon social circumstances. We learn how to perform through nurture and thus "do gender" (West and Zimmerman 1987, 125) in our daily lives. Even though performances are carried out by individuals, how to perform is largely influenced by social situations. This social regulation can explain why even a female translator cannot break out of literary conventions and why she uses feminine forms extensively for female characters' speech in her translations. From the constructionist point of view, we create our gender identities through a "*stylized*

repetition of acts" (Butler 1999, 179, italics in original) such as gestures, behaviours, and clothing. Butler (1999) clearly states that performability is the key to gender acquisition, while according to West and Zimmerman, gender is "a routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment" (1987, 126), i.e. something developed through nurture.

Translation is an activity involving not only two languages but also two cultural traditions or norm-systems. Translators, therefore, transform the text from one norm-system to another. Norms can be defined as "performance instructions" (Toury 1995, 55) which constrain how an individual behaves in society (Hermans 1999, 75). Members of a society learn the norms through socialization, with the process involving sanctions, whether actual or potential, negative or positive. For translators, the choice of language is made in accordance with social norms and expectations, and the translation process inevitably works through and reflects the translators' ideology (Simon 1996, 8). In this sense, the translator's ideology affects how female characters express themselves, or how women's language is used in translation.

As indicated in the tables presented in this chapter, even the female translators' language use is controlled by social expectations to a considerable extent. This can be regarded as a result of the lack of a critical view of women's language in the sphere of Japanese literature. When people are unaware of the ideological aspect of women's language, and women's language is a production of the subordinate position of women in society, the ideology prevails most effectively because ideologies reinforce most efficiently when they work invisibly (Fairclough (1989) 2001, 71). As a result, it is possible to say that invisible ideology works as a shaper of gender ideology and of gender inequality. Female representations constructed by their language use are a reflection of the gender ideology of what women should be like. As indicated earlier, a translator is subconsciously restricted by norms but the influence of these norms is neglected.

5. Towards De-Feminizing Translation

Gender in Translation: Culture, Identity and the Politics of Transmission (Simon 1996) and *Translation and Gender. Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'* (Flotow 1997) are the first attempts to clearly link feminist politics and translation. In *Gender in Translation*, Simon makes it clear that translation, which embodies gender ideology, can be used to object to that ideology: "they [feminist translators] can use language as cultural intervention, as part of an effort to alter expressions of domination, whether at the level of concepts, of syntax or of terminology" (Simon 1996, 9). In *Translation and Gender*, Flotow (1997, 8–12) identifies two ways to approach the issue of women and language: the reformist approach and the radical approach. The reformist approach deems conventional language a "*symptom*" (Flotow 1997, 8, italics in original) of society, with those subscribing

to this approach regarding conventional language as reformable "if good intentions prevailed." This view is grounded in linguistic relativity (Whorf (1956) 2001, 377–79), which considers that language to a certain extent affects perceptions of individuals. On the other hand, the radical approach regards conventional language as an essential "*cause*" (Flotow 1997, 8, italics in original) of the imbalanced power relationship between genders in society. This is based on linguistic determinism (Sapir 1949, 162), which contends that users of a language or of a certain type of language inevitably have a certain perspective of the world. Thus reformists aim to liberate women from the conventional sexist language by producing handbooks of non-sexist use and other social reforms, including education, while in the radical approach, feminists think that using conventional language means reinforcing the subordinate status of women in society. Hence, by making the feminine visible in language, the radical linguist aims to make the social subordination of women visible and also make women resident in society (Flotow 1997, 28; Godard 1990, 90): in the oft-cited words of de Lotbinière-Harwood, "making the feminine visible in language means making women seen and heard in the real world. Which is what feminism is all about" (de Lotbinière-Harwood (1997) cited in Flotow 1997, 29).

In the Japanese context, however, because over-feminizing is an embedded convention in Japanese literature, and through the process of translation, gender ideology is further reproduced in society. That is, "making the feminine visible in language" means making women *unseen* and *unheard* in the real world. Therefore, although this chapter follows the concept of radical feminist translation, it proposes de-feminizing translation rather than feminizing translation in the Western sense.

My approach is influenced by feminist theory; however, it is not my intention simply to apply feminist theory to my arguments. There are three reasons for this. First, radical feminist translation tends to be a highly intellectual experiment, and consequently, the target audience for such a product is likely to be small. Second, Japanese society is arguably not yet ready to accept such radical translations as those published in North America or Europe, where feminist movements are firmly established. There is a danger that my approach would not be accepted by Japanese society without consideration of the recipient culture. Third, even though a translator operates according to the norms in the recipient culture, there is sometimes a clash between the norms of authorities and non-authorities, even in the same recipient culture. Readers are subject to "the expectations of readers of a translation (of a given type) concerning what a translation (of this type) should be like" (Chesterman 1997, 64). Thus translators should find the best balance that meets the criteria of the recipient culture and make the text acceptable or appropriate to the society in general (65–66).

Despite the improvement in the status of women in society, it is very rare that people see the link between using "men's language" and the liberation of women. If Japanese women speak "men's language" to demonstrate

gender equality, they are likely to be criticized for an improper upbringing and lack of education (Okamoto 1995, 297). The response would be similar if men used "women's language" (Tanaka 2004, 26)—indeed, the men would even be considered homosexual. Women are aware of the social expectations and tend to use women's language in certain contexts, such as an office, or to establish good relationships with people in society (Mizumoto 2005). Female speech style is instilled deeply in women's minds, and, more importantly, women themselves play a part in constructing "a soft and gentle image of the female" when it is needed (Tanaka 2004, 26).

However, real Japanese women's language use has seen some gradual progress over the century. Contemporary Japanese women do not use the feminine language found in Japanese translation and original novels, and the language use of both women and men has been shifting to become more neutral. Consequently, women's speech has become more masculinized while that of men more feminized. In fact, a growing number of young Japanese women do not even recognize certain moderately masculine forms as being in a masculine category and often use them in their conversations (Okamoto 1995, 318–19; Usami 2010, 172–73). Therefore, the strategy I propose here intends to neutralize excessive femininity and to make female characters relevant to the original character in the translation. Because the feminist strategy in the Japanese context seeks the best balance between an academic translation, in other words, a radical or experimental translation, and a marketable one, I would rather propose a more modest approach and promote neutralizing the ideologically fabricated figure of female speech in Japanese translation.

6. Conclusion

This chapter has explored Japanese translation from an ideological point of view. Through the investigation of "women's language" and the over-feminizing convention in Japanese literature, I conclude that the over-feminizing convention has functioned to promote, maintain, and reinforce gendered linguistic norms in Japanese society. Moreover, Japanese literature has worked as a vehicle for gendered linguistic norms and as a mediator of gender ideology. The analysis has demonstrated the fact that male translators tend to over-feminize female speech more than female translators. This means, in other words, that male translators are likely to be influenced by stereotypes of women's speech. Also, even female translators obey the convention of over-feminizing translation. Therefore, this chapter proposes de-feminizing translation to mitigate the over-feminizing convention prevalent in the Japanese literary world. This is also an experiment in how Western feminist theory can be applied in Japanese translation. Although feminist translation tends to propose a feminizing translation strategy to give women their own voice and make them visible, I have become aware that when Western feminist theory is used in the Japanese context, we should adjust the idea to the recipient culture to a certain extent.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by a Grant-in-Aid for Young Scientists (B) from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (Research Project No. 25760015).

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6 Translation with Fluctuating Feminist Intention: *Letras y Encajes*

A Colombian Women's Magazine of the 1930s

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1. Introduction

As South America seeks to write its own history, research has been helping us recognize ourselves as a hybrid, as translation (see Vieira 2000). In this regard, the study of the broad intercultural exchanges that occurred between Latin America and the continents of Europe and North America is useful in understanding what South American culture and society have become. Since most intercultural exchange requires translation, recovering the role played by translation in the feminist history of our country contributes to the work of understanding our hybrid identities while also recovering the history of women, which, so far, so-called universal history has denied or simply ignored.

"Universal" history has occasionally acknowledged a set of women who may be viewed as exceptions and whose intellectual activity was often made possible by a man's permission and support. But a review of women's collective actions will broaden our understanding of women's history and of women's aspirations. Recent work in gender studies where women are viewed and studied as active individuals who have a political consciousness and make autonomous decisions (Serrano 2012) underlies this interest in unearthing and revealing women's political engagement and the role of translation within it.

The movements for women's rights in Colombia—with all of their internal political and ideological divisions—began in a period of political advantage: the 1930s and 1940s benefitted from a more liberal political context which provided women's movements with opportunities to develop and achieve certain civil rights (Luna 1987, 48). This chapter will consider the use of translated texts published in women's magazines in this process. By focusing on translation activity, we highlight the internationalism of the feminist movement at the time and demonstrate the political force that women could wield once they united in the struggle for their rights. As Sandra Harding points out, women have not only been oppressed by patriarchy through thousands of years, but they have also developed ways to resist this oppression (5).

2. The Case of *Letras y Encajes*

The magazine *Letras y Encajes, Revista femenina al servicio de la cultura* (1926–1959), one of the most long-lived magazines of its kind in Colombia and directed mainly by educator and cultural promoter Teresa Santamaría (1897–1985), was founded by a group of women who were part of the upper class of Medellin. Other women involved were Sofía Ospina de Navarro, renowned writer from the region of Antioquia and daughter of conservative politicians; Ángela Villa de Toro, who studied in the United States from a very young age and obtained a major in art at Columbia University in New York; and Alicia Merizalde de Echavarría, a promoter of charity (Restrepo 2011, 43). Most of these women were members of a women's association, the *Centro Femenino de Estudios* (Center of Studies for Women) that developed cultural encounters, similar to those of other women's cultural groups worldwide such as the Blue Stockings Society in eighteenth-century England.

The magazine was founded in 1926 and its last issue was distributed in 1959. It spanned two different political eras that had different meanings for women: first, a liberal era that stretched from 1930 to 1946, during which women won some rights, and then the return to power of the conservative party in 1946 and the coup d'état of 1953 that brought in a dictatorship, which lasted until 1958. It marked the era that has been termed *La Violencia* (The Violence), which is known for the bloody and cruel encounters between forces with either liberal, conservative, or communist ideologies and massacres carried out by their guerillas.

3. Political and Social Contexts

In the early twentieth century, Colombia was undergoing modernization processes that led to population movements from the country to the city and to the growth of the economy. While disputes for power remained strong in this period, conservative forces along with the Catholic Church maintained a political hegemony from 1903 to 1930.

In the late 1920s, the country experienced unprecedented economic growth, which did not, however, benefit all sectors of society; this growth increased the cost of living and negatively affected conditions for labourers and lower classes (Archila 1995, 347). These conditions led to the eruption of diverse social protests against the government (347), mainly by labour. These protests also eventually uncovered the especially denigrating conditions in which women and young people worked. As a result of internal conflicts and lack of popular support, the conservative forces' hold on politics disintegrated, and in the 1930s, liberal factions took power. While the 1930s saw support for various demands made by popular sectors, including demands by workers and their union spokespersons, women's demands were generally not heeded within the labour force because of the "masculinization" of such organizations (354). Nevertheless, a group of women within this class of

labourers, who might be called proto-feminist, rose up for their rights as they began to recognize conditions of oppression that were particular to them. They demanded fewer working hours, better wages, and better working conditions, and they even denounced the sexual harassment by their supervisors at the factories (Jaramillo 1995, 406). However, this movement wavered as the female workforce started to decline in the early 1930s, and the main sphere of social interaction for women became that promoted by the Catholic Church, where largely women from the elite participated (412). The social duties of these upper-class women were often related to charity, for instance, setting up patronages or councils for poor women, but they also involved other kinds of cultural activities, such as the foundation of art academies and museums. It is through these activities that women of the elite started to develop their own voices, which led them to later take the lead in demanding women's rights in the educational and political fields.

4. Social Class and Education

In the 1930s, at the outset of Colombian feminism, Colombian society was beginning to overcome the caste system of the colonial period where specific divisions between race and ethnicity had marked society, dividing it into at least four racial/ethnic groups: white people, indigenous people, black people, and mestizos, though there were nuances within these divisions (Bermúdez and Valencia 2009). This caste system had been reinforced by the education system, which was established and managed during the entire colonial period by the Catholic Church. The Church followed hierarchical rules on racial divisions (31) and on education, not allowing education for women until the end of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, despite the dictates of the Catholic Church, the need for subsistence had often driven Colombian women to break out of the restrictive roles assigned to them, and those trends continued in the country's modernization era. The industrialization of Colombia offered lower- and middle-class women work in factories and had an important impact on their political awareness (Jaramillo 1995, 392). Indeed, the emergence of the "proto-feminist" groups was directly related to these changes in the Colombian society, which slowly caused new working and middle classes to develop and women's situations to change as well.

This occurred in a contradictory environment, however, where the majority of the population shared conservative customs and views, and power was long concentrated in the hands of a very conservative force. Moreover, with growing industrialization, which required greater qualifications, the female workforce declined abruptly between the 1930s and 1950s when such qualification was made available to men. With education still being restricted, women had no access to higher learning. By this time, too, ideas were circulating about a new family model in which men were the exclusive head of the family and women stayed home (402).

It was in this context that women from the upper class started to demand some rights. They proceeded very carefully, however, as they were fearful of being too radical given the still very conservative and religious environments. It was women from these upper classes who founded *Letras y Encajes*.

5. The Press and Women's Education for the New Era

Women's magazines addressed interests that had started with the development of women's education in the nineteenth century. Girls' schools were finally set up in 1872 under the country's liberal party, the *Radicals*, following the example of countries such as France and Germany. The press began to play an important role in education, as women's magazines, managed by men, began to emerge. They addressed topics such as the need for women's education, but maintained the limits prescribed by women's feminine role. The press "made it possible to get to know ideas and customs different from the local ones, particularly those coming from Paris, London and the U.S" (Bejarano 2003, 37; my translation). Another concern of these magazines was to educate women "to cultivate the 'belles lettres,' with the final aim of raising them to the level of their husbands" (37; my translation). Some of the late nineteenth-century magazines had female writers who became highly notorious for the ideas they expressed on the topic of women's rights and education. The most prominent woman journalist at the time may have been Soledad Acosta de Samper, who was also the first woman to direct a magazine on her own, *La Mujer* (The Woman, 1878–1881).

The modern magazine *Letras y Encajes* followed and became the first to be directed and produced mainly by women, which, in turn, prompted the emergence of more women's magazines throughout the country. While it is true that these publications were not revolutionary and played their part in maintaining traditional ideas about women's gender identity, they also made women's voices audible and challenged some aspects of their traditional gender roles.

The modernization of Colombian society confronted women with sudden economic growth, social conflicts, the political struggle between the two traditional parties, and the transnational interchange of knowledge and experiences of women from other countries, particularly from North America and Europe. The new modern paradigm required that women be educated in order to fulfill the requirements of the working sphere, yet not lose sight of their "feminine duties." Home economics, imported from the United States and fostered in the magazine *Letras y Encajes*, became an important component of women's education. It promoted consumerism through the purchase and use of household appliances, but also through a focus on women's roles as mothers who were expected to learn how to feed their children "scientifically" (Rojas 1927, 162) in order to raise them in a healthy manner.

6. Women Speak Up as Journalists

In order to approach *Letras y Encajes*, we have referred mainly to the master's thesis of Juliana Restrepo, *Mujeres, prensa escrita y representaciones sociales de género en Medellín entre 1926 y 1962* (2011), in which the author relates the emergence of the magazine to both the changes in women's conditions and the evolution of the press as we know it today. The press took on modern characteristics from the 1930s, thus accompanying the modernization processes in Colombian society. Restrepo notes that the magazine *Letras y Encajes* benefitted from the participation of important women writers, at both the local and the Latin American level; among them was Sofía Ospina de Navarro (1892–1974), from Medellin, who stood out in the national literary sphere as a renowned chronicler and storywriter. Texts by Gabriela Mistral among other Latin American women writers were also published.

The magazine reflected new realities for women, some of them "imported," as they were based on the experiences of women in other parts of the world. And it had its own dynamics, which can be divided into three periods (Restrepo 2011, 47): the first period, from 1926 to 1945, in which the magazine was highly productive and won recognition in the Colombian as well as broader Latin American environments. A second period from 1946 to 1953 was characterized by the introduction of the magazine to many young women who were studying journalism at Colegio Mayor Femenino de Antioquia, a college in Medellin that was directed by the magazine's editor-in-chief, Santamaría. The third period, from 1954 to 1959 was marked by rich debates on women's suffrage, which was finally established in 1954, but not exercised until 1957 because of the dictatorship. Restrepo claims that the magazine closed because it lost those readers who viewed it as misrepresenting the middle and lower classes, which no longer agreed with the ideal of a "feminine" education and were more interested in the higher education traditionally reserved for men (62).

7. Feminist Thinking in Women's Magazines

The approaches developed around the history of feminist movements in Colombia have been treated broadly by scholar Luna G. Luna, who recovers the political value of such movements and their legacy today. She describes them as being based on a very specific gendered construction: that of *maternalism*, which was used both for and against the suffrage movement, and according to which women only have rights as long as they fulfill their roles as mothers (Luna 2001). Thus, on the one hand, modernity found a way to keep women attached to their reproductive roles in society, while on the other, the new conditions and needs of the economic system offered women a loophole through which they would demand rights. As part of the workforce, middle- and lower-class women saw no reason to earn or deserve less

than men while doing the same work, and the movement was marked by a debate around "feminism" and "femaleness" well before the question of *maternalism* came to the fore. Luna (2003) sees the conservative development around "maternalism" as the opening that allowed women to finally enter the political sphere from which they had hitherto been excluded. She writes,

> The question we formulate is, which forms and mechanisms for women's exclusion and inclusion in politics have been produced from sexual difference . . . Exclusion appears as the driving force of feminism (in its first suffragist wave), and as a great contradiction of the democratic liberal system, while inclusion in that same system depends on the *maternalist* ideology, which offers social recognition and domestic power to women, and at the same time assigns multiple reproductive responsibilities to them.
>
> (27; my translation)

In other words, the maternalist discourse was the only possible means by which women could enter into the political agenda, as they had to demonstrate that their interests benefitted the society as a whole and fulfilled patriotic goals. In short, they needed to demonstrate that their gaining of rights implied a better future for the generations that women were going to raise and the economic system these next generations would maintain.

8. The Translation Trace through *Letras y Encajes*

The many translations that appeared in *Letras y Encajes* cover subjects such as fashion, cooking, children's education, home economics, and, most importantly, literature and essays on political issues, feminism among them. For our purposes, we have reviewed mainly translations that deal with issues of feminism and femaleness in order to understand how foreign materials were deployed to influence Colombian women readers' ideas about themselves and their place in society. To this end, we have analyzed a selection of texts from 1926 to 1942 covering almost the whole first period of the magazine, and the first period of feminist struggles described by Luna (1987).

The review of translations about feminist issues helps explain how outside influences or echoes from feminist movements in other parts of the globe worked to shape Colombian ideas. In *Letras y Encajes*, translations of texts on feminist issues began in 1929, in a particularly radical approach for the time, with "Estados generales del feminismo" (General States of Feminism). First published in French by Yvonne Sarcey (1929), it was followed in the next number by an essay written by the translator herself, Amalia Vélez de Mesa Nicholls. Yvonne Sarcey (1869–1950), pseudonym of Madeleine Brisson, was a French journalist who founded L'Université des Annales and the review *Conférence*, as well as published in the review *Les*

Annales politiques et littéraires. "Estados generales del feminismo," which came out in this journal, is a reflection on the contemporary activities of feminist women in France, whose *Conseil national des femmes françaises* (National Council of French Women) had met in 1929 for its *États généraux du féminisme*. Sarcey notes that as in other countries they were struggling to obtain the right to vote in France.

The text offers an introduction to some of the concepts guiding the feminist movement at the time, particularly the ideas about a given nature of "woman." Sarcey presents women as apt to have the same rights as men, especially the right to vote, but also promulgates ideas around women's natural affinity for pacifism, for roles in charity, and, most importantly, for breeding and maternity. She claims women refer to these traditional notions when they demand new roles in public spheres, thus carrying out collective actions and founding organizations that help develop and display these "skills" in order to "achieve the applause and the approval of men" (Sarcey 1929; my translation). It is interesting to note the differences between France and Colombia in regard to some of the issues raised in the text. For instance, the incorporation of women into the labour force as a result of war was more prevalent in France. Although Colombia had been afflicted by continuous civil wars, women had not necessarily entered the labour force as a result; when they did, it was due to the industrialization of the country. Still, in the magazine's view, the feminism developed in France was one of the most influential.

In the next issue of the magazine, the translator Amalia Vélez de Mesa Nicholls expresses her observations on this subject, drawing parallels between the French situation and the conditions of local Colombian women. In her text entitled "De actualidad" [Current Issues] and published in August 1929, she emphasizes the validity of Sarcey's text for Colombia and makes a radical statement demanding women's right to higher education. She does not mention the right to vote, but rather explains that, because of the lack of education, Colombian women are not prepared to take up leading positions like English women such as Miss Margaret Bonfield, who had just become the minister of labour in her country. She also maintains that these rights need not undermine women's "principle objective," which is maternity. Both authors (Sarcey and Vélez) use the word feminism without fear, but insist that this concept does not change women's main role in society. Vélez goes even further, describing feminism as the "union of women in order to work for the sake of infancy, of women's active work and their intellectual development" (Vélez 1929, 601; my translation).

The two texts are representative of the early days of the magazine and signal its general approach to feminism and the ideas that were to guide Colombian women's struggles in the next three decades. The reflection on the part of the translator Vélez provides a particularly rich source of information about the decisions she made in selecting and preparing texts for translation.

This initial period saw other translations appear in the magazine, although not as constantly as might be expected. In the same issue of September 1929, another translation entitled "El reinado de la mujer" (The Reign of Women) appeared. It was translated by Aura Gutiérrez and published as the editor's note on the first page of the magazine. However, the source of the translation is not clear. Since it was vaguely signed by one "Martine," we can perhaps assume that it was translated from a French magazine. And although it does not express a position regarding feminism, it expresses opinions in regard to women's influence in the workplace: the female author is optimistic about the roles women will play in the coming years in administrative positions well beyond those of secretarial staff.

Unfortunately, few translations provide information about their source text, its date, or author. That is the case of a short text found in an issue from May 1933. Entitled "Influencia de la mujer" (Women's Influence), this text of no more than two paragraphs, written in the voice of a man, as is evident in the masculine grammatical forms, contradicts the idea that women are malicious in what they do and argues instead that patience and sweetness are traits natural to them. The next five years saw many translations published, but they mainly treated such subjects as fashion, Christian beliefs, short stories, overall hygiene, and childcare. However, local articles (not translations) addressed women's suffrage, home economics, and remarkable women in the local and international sphere. They also emphasized women's education since access to universities had now become legal but the means to benefit from these rights were not available. Charitable activities and discussions around the sensitive topic of proposed civilian divorce were also discussed and came to reinforce the magazine's Christian viewpoint during this period. Over the course of the mid-1930s then, the authors and publishers were more focused on local events than in finding support for struggles in texts from abroad.

Translations about feminist issues were resumed in June 1938, with a remarkable text written by Nobel laureate Selma Lagerlöf. Translated as "Hogar y Estado" (Home and State), the publication of this text may be ascribed to the increasing upper-class Christian influences in the magazine. Lagerlöf, a Swedish woman who played an active role in the movement for women's suffrage in Europe, had presented this text as a speech at the International Suffrage Congress in Stockholm in 1911, many years before the magazine's founding. It reinforces the idea that women need to be attached to their homes and their roles as "men's partners," and it issues a call to men to take women as their "assistants" for the duties they must carry out beyond the home, duties such as establishing and managing the State. The text calls upon women to "love the Nation" the way they love their homes. The subject of suffrage is not addressed.

The magazine's strategy of referring to renowned conservative women such as Lagerlöf who participated in the struggle for women's rights is particularly evident here. And the tone of this text is far more conservative

than Sarcey's (from the 1929 issue of *Letras y Encajes*). Its translation and publication in 1938 indicate the magazine's conservative position in the face of more progressive struggles, especially those that were in conflict with Catholic dogma (Restrepo 2011, 55). For instance, Catholic forces strongly opposed the right to divorce, a project that had been in discussion in the congress for over three years. And even when the Catholic Church supported women in their demands for suffrage, this was largely to garner their support against the worldwide threat of communism and call upon them to defend their families (56).

Other remarkable texts from this late 1930s period of *Letras y Encajes* also come from the French. "Unión familiar" (Family Union), dated October 1939 and signed by the translator Isidora D. de Acevedo, is taken from a book entitled *Franceses* (The French) published by the Catholic Social Action in Paris. It reports on the work of the Family Union, a charity project developed to take care of the daughters of labourers and to give them an appropriate education—that is, an education in home economics and household labour: "Household labour is women's work in any case, even if the woman is an artist" (my translation). Another by Jean Martet, a French novelist, entitled "La libertad es mujer" (Freedom is a Woman) was written in November 1941. Translated by Tulia Restrepo, Martet argues that women have a natural inclination toward freedom because of their unstable character and are therefore superior to men in the sense that they can adapt rapidly to changes. In short, across history, women have driven freedom.

Such texts reinforce the ideas that the authors of the magazine themselves were starting to formulate. They served as important resources, coming from Europe, and were increasingly written by men, which gave them considerable authority.

9. Women Readers, Male Writers

As the magazine became more conservative in tone, it published more texts by men regarding the place of women in society. One particular text entitled "Condición de la mujer en Turquía" (Women's Condition in Turkey) from March 1938 reflects this strategy. Written by Louis Reville, a reporter for the French newspaper *Le Monde* at the time, and translated by Maruja Santamaría, another prolific female translator of the magazine, it treats several aspects of Atatürk's modernization of Turkey. This modernization included "the evolution of customs," particularly in regard to the traditional role of women, who were now forced to behave like Western women. Various changes were implemented, such as the prohibition of the Muslim veil and the establishment of women's right to work, to higher education, to vote, to participate in politics, and to civil rights within marriage. The article attributes these to Atatürk's regime and the process of secularization he engaged in. The author notes that a number of different women's movements existed in Turkey, which claimed such rights through a Women's Union they established

and describes Turkey as being "at the forefront of the feminist movement in Islam" (my translation). His report ends with the remark that the Women's Union was finally dissolved because their demands had been met and it no longer had a purpose, thanks to Atatürk and men's goodwill.

The usefulness of this text for the Colombian women's movements is not obvious. However, since Colombian women were still required to fulfill their maternal role in society, it may be an example of how they tried to use other men's voices, particularly from Europe and North America, to gain Colombian men's support for their demands at home.

10. Cosmopolitan Women: A Biographical View

In recognizing the human face of the translators, we understand more about why translation is carried out and the discourses that surrounds it (Pym 2009, 33). This is also true for *Letras y Encajes*, since the translations published in the magazine were not paid for but were the results of personal decisions that reflect the translators' historical and social positions as educated and affluent women. The translators seem to have been working in the public interest. They saw the lifestyle of women in other countries as examples to be followed in Colombia; their efforts reflect Pym's remark, "Cultural change is increasingly the prerogative of those who move information" (1998, 18).

In the case of *Letras y Encajes*, it is evident that the translators used different strategies to express their personal interests and beliefs in regard to women's rights: on the one hand, they selected texts by women such as Sarcey/Brisson who were renowned within the traditional male sphere and who demanded women's rights, but on the other, they also chose texts by male writers who supported these demands and thus provided male authority. In this sense, we can trace a parallel to other works about recovering women translators (Flotow 1997, 66), which study them as active individuals who, in spite of being silenced in the literary world, deploy translation as a means with which to express their own opinions. In the translations we present here, women translators' choices indeed serve to express strong opinions and thus subvert a certain status quo in a context of women's struggles.

But it is also evident that these translators benefitted from affluent backgrounds, higher levels of education, and a certain cosmopolitanism. Amalia Vélez de Mesa, for example, lived in Los Angeles from November 1941; as a member of the upper class, she could afford to do so. She translated chronicles and political essays from both French and English, especially from US reviews, and also wrote a number of articles. She was the most prolific and interesting translator of the magazine, politically committed, and with a great interest in intellectual issues.

Indeed, aspects of class, race, and political views were important for this question of cosmopolitanism. Some of the journalists and translators who

published in *Letras y Encajes* were the daughters, sisters, or wives of important men in society, such as writers and politicians. Most of them were married, in accordance with their Christian beliefs, and strongly opposed to divorce. They subscribed to the goals of this layer of Colombian society, to a lifestyle that, however, lost favour with the rising middle class, which was more interested in economic advancement (Restrepo 2011, 62).

11. Conclusion

Although the Colombian feminist movements of the period we reviewed are often criticized for their narrow-minded approaches to women's empowerment, their work played into later movements with broader perspectives, specifically those of the 1960s and 1970s. Yet even in the 1930s, and despite their narrow aims, these movements worked to unite women as a political force (Luna 1987, 33).

Some of the actions carried out by the group of women who produced *Letras y Encajes* clearly consisted of an increasingly conservative response to more radical feminist views, as we see in the inclusion of the outdated text by Lagerlöf. Their quest for men's approval can perhaps also be seen as a lack of political consciousness. Nonetheless, their work is part of the feminist history of Colombia, and their use of translation shows an openness to foreign influences as a way to help mitigate conservative Catholic class-based ideas.

Translation served as a political vehicle here, helping certain women with economic advantages devise strategies to use the voices of others to express their own ideas. It echoed their political interests in voices from abroad and allowed them to use their cosmopolitan skills and experiences to import these ideas, which though conservative from today's feminist perspectives, surreptitiously challenged traditional assumptions about female gender roles.

The translations published in *Letras y Encajes* can be called "feminist" for the translator's political intentions and aims (Flotow 1997, 24). Moreover, operating in the area of history and language, two fields rife with the "covert sexism" called androcentrism, they represented those who had been denied their equal rights. And so the study of translation as a historical and political activity unveils what has been hidden and shows how it works to import new ideas. In borrowing another's voice through translation, it becomes possible to formulate and express ideas hitherto unspeakable.

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Part III

Translating Women Authors in Context

7 Three's a Crowd

The Translator-Author-Publisher and the Engineering of *Girls of Riyadh* for an Anglophone Readership*[1]

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A frequent theme in postcolonial translation studies is the notion that it is the "first-world translator" who wields the power to shape the "third-world text." Rajaa Alsanea's *Girls of Riyadh*, an ostensibly "third-world text" published by Penguin, however, differs in thoroughly consistent ways from the translation that I, the sole and ostensibly "first-world translator" submitted for publication. The fact that the "author-publisher" has been able to dismiss my reading of the text and replace it with theirs challenges this oft taken-for-granted notion and problematizes the process of translation in which my role in the production of the English text was not only rejected by author and publisher but also minimized by the author's public statements. Between the presence of my name as "co-translator" on the title page, its absence in the acknowledgments, and Alsanea's invocation of me as a desultory editor of her English lies a story of text circulation and commodification that, I argue, is best understood when one considers the apparatus of publicity and public image-making along with the less visible process of actually producing the text of a translation. In this story, what is "lost" happens less in the process of translation than it does in the process of publishing.

Banat al-Riyadh, from which *Girls of Riyadh* is translated, is rare if not alone among recent Arabic novels to capture large regional Arabophone audiences. Published in Beirut and London in 2005, it was an immediate sensation throughout the Arab world and generated anger and protest among some. Thus for Western publishers, it possesses a credibility (and profit potential) based not narrowly on marketability in Euro/American circuits but more broadly on popularity (and controversy) among its first, Arabophone, readers. If a novel has been phenomenally successful in Dubai, Egypt, and Tunisia, does it not beckon to a wider readership, one that can enjoy the novel and a sense of belonging to a global audience that includes Arabophone readers? Yet moving into different reception areas, the best-seller novel is inevitably subject to editorial pressures speculating on how to guarantee similarly broad popularity (and sales) in the new host cultures. In this case, both globally marketed Anglophone popular youth literature,

especially "chick lit," and the Muslim feminine memoir not only presented a receptive potential readership for the novel but also put contextual pressure on the very style of the translated work.

In producing *Girls of Riyadh* from *Banat al-Riyadh*, I attempted a maximum amount of "literalist surrender" on the levels of semantic correspondence, register, juxtaposition, and stylistic play, though not on that of syntax. The result was not well received by the publisher and the author. Through the publisher's editorial staff, the author objected and requested that she be permitted to revise my translation without consulting me. The publisher concurred. What followed was a revised and published version of *Girls of Riyadh* that emphasizes immediate accessibility over "surrender to the text," similarity over difference, transparent equivalence over markedness of locality. Put simply, this version favors the "high readability" of chick lit over the punning satire, local embeddedness, and intertextual play important to the power and novelty of this novel in Arabic.[2] The author-publisher's version assimilates to cultural usages and clichés of North American and "mid-Atlantic" manners while minimizing a stylistic design that would privilege informal usage and local (Saudi) linguistic practices. It favors "a translation that produces the illusion of originality by effacing its translated status. . . . The sheer familiarity of the translation, of its language and style, allows it to appear transparent and thereby pass for the original" (Venuti 2004, 17). This translation mutes the suggestive ambiguity of chick lit as a genre that highlights romance, yet in doing so, it addresses "many of the issues facing contemporary women . . . issues of identity, of race and class, of femininity and feminism, of consumerism and self-image," as Suzanne Ferriss and Mallory Young have noted (2006, 2–3). It removes local cultural references to pop and commodity culture; it also removes word play and even some trenchant narratorial asides. It is a neutralization of language and narrative voice that ungenders, homogenizes, and depoliticizes the text—precisely the opposite of my translatorial intentions.

1. Ungendering

On page one, the narrator—whose personality in the original engages the reader through her teasingly self-referential e-mail introductions and who highlights young women's modes of communication and experiences through her voice—launches her e-serial thus (in my translation):

> Ladies, Girls, and Gentlemen: Get ready, because you are about to rendezvous with some of the most explosive scandals and noisiest, wildest all-night parties around. Your correspondent—and that's moi—is going to lead you into a world that's closer to you than any of your minds can imagine. It really exists. We all inhabit it but we are not really living it. After all, we all tend to believe in whatever we find easy to swallow and refuse to accept the rest.[3]

This opening passage introduces her irreverent style and very colloquial voice. The changed version reads as follows:

> Ladies and Gentlemen: You are invited to join me in one of the most explosive scandals and noisiest, wildest all-night parties around. Your personal tour guide—and that's moi—will reveal to you a new world, a world closer to you than you might imagine. We all live in this world but do not really experience it, seeing only what we can tolerate and ignoring the rest.
>
> (Alsanea and Booth 2007, 1)

This version sounds smoother. It constructs a more neutral narrator, one who does not play with the terminology of news media (as the novel does throughout), and who does not play on the edges of language(s). This narrator is not as bold a challenger to the language system or the gender system as the narrator of the original is. Omitting "girls" (literally, "my young misses," *anisati*) from the list of addressees effaces a preeminent thematic focus and desired audience; it substitutes the disruptive, quirky "Ladies, *Girls*, and Gentlemen" with the clichéd "Ladies and Gentlemen."[4] "Girls" or "young misses" (the Arabic usage indicates unmarried status but implies near-adulthood) are in fact the narrator's and novel's true concern. Girls on the cusp of adult responsibility and privilege, girls at a liminal stage in their lives, are its subjects and its world. At this theatrical opening moment, "[g]irls" offers a beautiful contrast to what will become a dominant structural component of the novel and a highly entertaining conduit of critique: these e-mails are dually addressed. In almost every case, the narrator begins the chapter/e-mail with a direct and defiant address to those who have written in during the week to challenge her portrayal of gender politics among young Saudis. These interlocutors, often addressed by their first names or Internet aliases, are exclusively male until late in the novel, when the narrator mockingly celebrates the fact that a lone female has written to her. That her vocal critics are male is crucial; they become implicitly aligned with the story's male characters, who are mostly and willfully blind to local power dynamics of gendered relations, holding on to the meager privileges such dynamics offer, even as these young men are also victims of a system where power is based on generational as much as gender hierarchies. Those voicing anger or discomfort to the narrator are thus also implicitly victims who do not, or do not want to, recognize their victimhood (unlike the female characters, including the narrator). Yet they are the ones who "have voice." The point is made more painfully here by the address to "girls"—left out of the final English version—who remain mostly silent throughout but are represented forcefully by the narrator. Omitting "girls" in the edited translation and neutralizing the narrator's voice reduces the force of the narrator's act, her attempt to voice sassily the concerns of the silent. Indeed, this omission silences the very subjectivities that the book purports to highlight.

The published English version lessens the text's thoroughgoing emphasis on female experience and feminine perspectives. Arabic nouns are gender-specific, and so this emphasis is an obligatory one grammatically; here grammatical gender markers underline the text's focus on feminine Saudi society, which is so often hidden away in discourse. I felt that specifying femaleness was most often appropriate to this thematic focus on society's, albeit economically privileged, female margins. The e-mail subject heading of the first chapter, for example, is taken from the first line of a poem by the popular Syrian poet Nizar Qabbani (1923–98), whose lyrical poems celebrate love and explore eroticism while attacking male privilege in Arab societies as detrimental to personal and public relations. I translated this line/heading, *sa-aktubu 'an sadiqati* ("I will write of/about my friends"; here, "friends" is grammatically marked as feminine and plural), as "I shall write of my friends who are female." The published version deletes "who are female" and thereby removes the gender particularity. When the poem is quoted later in the chapter, the published version changes my translation to "I shall write of my girlfriends," thus losing the metrical and rhyme patterns I set up and deemphasizing the poem's political emphasis on the kinds of oppression visited solely on females. It instead highlights the personal and limited "my girlfriends" rather than the generalizing possibilities of "female," also emphasized in my translation by its placement at the end of the poetic line, a repeated refrain. In the case of this gender-marked word, grammatical gender, though obligatory, is not meaning-free. The content of the embedded poem and its context—the novel—mark the term strongly with femaleness.

The daring playfulness of the narrator's voice, which I accented, sometimes compensating in one place for a necessary reduction of that tone in another, fades in the published version to a more circumspect voice, particularly concerning gendered behavior. For example, in chapter two:

بعد السوق و كمية مناسبة من المغازلات البريئة وغير البريئة، اتجهت الفتيات نحو أحد المطاعم الراقية لتناول العشاء.

> [After the mall/market and an appropriate amount of innocent and not-innocent flirtatious exchanges, the girls directed themselves toward one of the elegant restaurants for the taking/eating of dinner.]
>
> (al-Sani' 2005, 25)

I translated the sentence as "After the mall, and a pretty satisfying number of innocent flirtatious exchanges, plus a few (a very few) that were not so innocent, the girls set their sights on the smart restaurant they had picked out for dinner." In the published version, this has become simply, "The girls made their way toward the elegant Italian restaurant they had picked out for dinner" (Alsanea and Booth 2007, 17). The narrator's teasing reference to "not-so-innocent" exchanges, which plays up the space for romantic and sensual negotiations, challenging the boundaries of social power, is deleted.

The force of the listserv name that graces every chapter is similarly minimized in the published version. *Seereh wenfadha7et* exemplifies the use of Latin characters to represent Arabic on the Internet. It is an emerging language among wired Arab youth, spreading now from the Internet to other forms of writing. The literal meaning of this cyber-transliteration is "[a] life story and it has been exposed"; the verb implies exposure of something disgraceful or shameful.[5] The noun *sira*, or seereh in Internetspeak, is commonly used for "auto/biography," as opposed to *mudhakkirat* for "memoirs." But *sira* also signifies "conduct" or "way of life" and connotes the ultimate model of good conduct, the life of the Prophet Muhammad as narrated by later Muslim scholars in his *sira* (life story). What this novel "exposes" is not so much "shameful conduct" but the (scandal of) the rigors of comportment to which young people are held in Saudi society; what it also "exposes"—perhaps the bigger scandal—is that such rules of conduct have less to do with the guidance provided by Islam or the Prophet's life than with preserving a patriarchal, class-defined social hierarchy that buttresses the national status quo.

I translated *Seereh wenfadha7et* as "A Life Story . . . Laid Bare," to capture resonances of exposure and scandal, while hoping that "life story" might echo for some Anglophone Muslim readers the ultimate "life story" of the Prophet. To use the phrase "laid bare" also signals the narrator's consistently daring use of phrases that are just on the edge of appropriateness. The English Penguin version opts for "Memoirs Disclosed," which forecloses recognition of the intertextual Islamic echo and the socially disruptive intervention of the narrator, where "scandal" hovers between exposure of what is known but not said, and the very act of the young female narrator's public speech. The author's/publisher's choice to minimize these critical thematic effects of the Arabic at the very beginning of the text suggests a preference for a story and style that are conventional and easy to digest. The negative reviews, however, that greeted *Girls of Riyadh* may hint that muting the sly and skeptical gender politics of the Arabic original by substituting a bland and neutral language was a miscalculation on the part of the author and the editor.[6]

2. Homogenization

The Arabic text's explosive idiom arises in part from the juxtaposition of different languages that circulate and intertwine in today's Arabophone world. To the extent possible, I worked with the text's varying registers: from very colloquial to formal and "authoritative," and from Arabic to Saudi bourgeois English, represented hilariously when English loanwords and phrases suddenly pop up, spelled phonetically in Arabic script according to prevailing urban Saudi bourgeois pronunciation. The novel's politics of language recognizes the heterogeneity of communication modes and their class specificities. Above all, it acknowledges and exploits the use of

English by a young, savvy, globalized generation of Saudis. In the original, English words and phrases transliterated into Arabic convey how worldly these young characters are while also having the effect of localizing English, making it part of an Arabic elite globalized vernacular. Furthermore, these eruptive English phrases often highlight female appearance, physicality, and consumption patterns, embedded in and arising from the globalization effects of transnational capitalism.

Thus translation *is* part and parcel of this Arabic novel, as English words spill into local dialects, challenging any notion of a pure or boundaried language, which has long been and remains a politically sensitive topic among Arab and Muslim elites. The novel's linguistic weave reminds us that all texts are implicated in the politics of translation; this text represents within its languages a notion of the subject as necessarily a product of translations. Alsanea's Arabic style neatly conveys the spoken Arabization of English. I mimicked this feature through a resistant translation practice that would not smooth out the text but rather force the reader to consider (a local) English to be another language of and within the text. I italicized the novel's Arabenglish and spelled it phonetically according to the Arabic script. But in the revised version, my representation of Arabenglish is gone. Examples from a single page of the published translation follow: my transliteration *ewww—soo falguur* becomes "Eww . . . so vulgar"; *tuu matsh* is "too much"; and *sheez soo kiyirvy* ("she's so curvy") is deleted altogether (Alsanea and Booth 2007, 7; al-Sani' 2005, 16–17). One character speaks a line in Standard English, which I conveyed as such, and that makes sense, for she has spent long periods in North America. But the interlingual flavor of the other girls' dialogue is "lost in translation"—or rather in editing.

This "translated" Arabenglish is particularly the province of a young, with-it, feminine, privileged Saudi identity—an insight to which the Anglophone audience does not have access in the smooth monolingual language of the published translation. In *Banat al-Riyadh*, Arabenglish is an *indigenous* language, although (and importantly) one that by its presence highlights the invasion and saturation of consumption of North American and European cultural goods and concepts in Saudi Arabia and the cross-continental coming and going of Saudi subjects, in particular elite young women, who are cosmopolitan in their consumption habits, including the consumption-in-use of language, but are not free to enter or leave their locales of residence without the permission of men. The use of language points out this rupture but disappears in the translation authorized by Penguin. The language of the translation has become disconnected from the social fabric that the text draws upon and critiques through its satirical deployments of language as markers of character.

There is a danger that mimicking Arabenglish could buttress the Arab stereotyping so prevalent in North America, and I worried about this. Yet I decided that because the novel's Arabenglish was specific to younger characters whose personalities are drawn sympathetically, this feature would

not stereotype; rather, it would enrich their portraits as conversant across cultures and might even bring them closer to young Anglophone readers. It would also suggest that Saudi girls (of this particular socio-economic background) are not shut away linguistically, just as they are not uniformly shut away in their social lives. Indeed, they traverse the university campus, the mall, and, for three of the characters, the streets of San Francisco, London, and Chicago. Neutralizing the novel's multilingual cast flattens the text linguistically and thematically. If readers cannot tell that characters are using certain English phrases seamlessly and locally, embedded in their Arabic conversation, the globalized context is muted if not altogether lost. What the tactics of highlighting language mixing and a local English might achieve outweigh the possible dangers of exoticism in translation.

I tried also to convey the use of colloquial Arabic by maintaining a highly informal tone, though I was not able to capture the local politics of language represented by different regional Saudi dialects—a linguistic competition that would expose differences within the Saudi nation and internal stereotypes about different communities. In the published version, different registers are collapsed into each other far more than in my version. My colloquial English wordings are neutralized into a more Standard English.[7] My retention of Arabic idioms, literally translated, were often deleted. The result does not convey the different strata of discourse which exist in meaningful tension in the Arabic novel and strongly shape the characterization of various personae. The novel's polyphony of languages poses a critique of traditional fiction writing in Arabic by ignoring the usual constraints that push writers to adhere to a homogenized, non-vernacular language. (Even when writers use colloquial Arabics, these are often dominant, homogenized versions of local heteroglossia.) Alsanea's use of Arabic in the novel shows how any sense of a bounded national "us" is predicated on contamination by "the other"—specifically, how Saudi national identity is crisscrossed, complicated, and formed by its situation within a globalized economy of linguistic use, where local Arabic dialects challenge the "unity in tradition" symbolized by formal Arabic and where English saturates various Arabics. Yet this is not a "global" English. It is a local language of fragments joining other fragments in which the particular relationship of locals and globals is suppressed in a translation that does not allow heterogeneity of language to pebble or scar the smoothed surface of the published rendering.

3. Depoliticizing

With this effacement of radical language practices, the novel's (often hilarious) metafictional commentary on the Arabic literary canon and on pressures to write in conformity to it are mostly deleted. Perhaps it was felt that such a commentary was irrelevant to Anglophone readers, yet such commentary is what adds layers of signification to the novel as a work of cultural critique by constructing implicit parallels between the politics of

writing and the politics of sociality in the culture. And why should Anglophone readers be denied access to the politics of Arabic cultural production? Narrow constraints on social behavior and alliance are inseparable from discursive constraints on the writer, the novel suggests; this parallel is absent in the shortened version sanctioned by author and publisher, and thereby one theme is entirely lost. Loss of that dimension makes this a less complex novel in English, and it bars Anglophone readers from considering the discursive politics of a part of the world that North American discursive politics are constructing and reconstructing daily. Furthermore, this loss of the metafictional dimension enhances a realist sleight of hand, focusing the reader on *what* happens rather than on *how* it happens, or on the way discursive politics frame it.

Other omissions concern extended references to local knowledges and literary discourses through which gender politics are shaped, contested, and reworked. In chapter one, following the quotation of Qabbani's poem, the narrator addresses this poet who hovers over the text:

> You got it right, Nizar baby! Your tongue be praised, Qabbani, you 'weigher of things' as your name tells us! God bless you and *miyy yoo rist in beese*. Whoever first thought to call you 'the women's poet' got it right, too, and anyone who doesn't like my saying so can go jump in a lake.[8]

The narrator then refers to a widely known incident in the poet's family life, when his elder sister committed suicide because she was barred from marrying the man she loved—a tragedy that compelled Qabbani to ponder, and then to boldly contest, prevailing strictures on gender relations. He experienced tragedy again when his second wife, Iraqi-born Balqis al-Rawi, was killed in Beirut in 1982 by a bomb targeted at Iraq's embassy. *Girls of Riyadh*'s feisty narrator addresses him thus:

> In love there's been no one before you and there will never be anyone after you, as the famous song goes, even if your compassion toward the S in SHE isn't thanks to a mutation in your male chromosomes but only due to your poor sister's suicide, the tragic end to a tragic love story. "When love strikes, what it does conquer!" And oh the luck of the late Ms. Balqis, and oh what monkey luck we have, after you—there will never be anyone after you. "Monkey luck" which people from Najd talk about, the luck of the qird, must be derived from the animal's constant jumping and leaping, which resembles luck in its continuous movement and stopping and crouching and waiting. Or perhaps, as some people claim, the expression comes from monkey-tick. But it seems, I'm sorry to say, that no woman among us will find her own Nizar until after she has finished off one of his sisters, so that the tale of beautiful love will no longer be a black and white film but will become a tale called "Love in Prison." Heart of mine, don't grieve.

The published English version, however, excises this passage. It is not easy to convey such local knowledges, but to avoid doing so undermines the novel's richness. It flattens the narrator as a character by silencing her knowledge of critical gender commentary in modern Arabic discourse. This passage highlights the Arabic novel's bold political intervention in gender politics through offering a suggestive parallel between historical events and the stories within the novel. It highlights tensions that many would rather forget, insisting that readers confront their possible roles in a conspiracy of silence around the lack of choices available to the young. It dismisses—or disses—an ideology based on the idea that gender relations are built into human chromosomes rather than societally constructed. Mentioning Balqis, it invokes the context of war that—past and present—brutally shapes the lives and deaths of so many in the Arabic-speaking region. It foreshadows the more "private" stories that the narrator will tell and also the way such stories are both suppressed and known. The stories of the sister and of Balqis thus act as cultural templates for the stories of the four girls, while quietly reminding readers and characters of the ultimate tragedies that result from attempted resistance to the implacable dominance of shared cultural practices and historically shaped communal tragedies. The passage is important thematically and structurally; to delete it is to depoliticize and de-gender the text. Ironically, Penguin's and Alsanea's practices as translator-editors have yielded a text that, through omissions and changes, becomes more complicit with the dominant ideology the novel satirizes.

Culturally specific references in the form of proper names (for example, of singers) are also omitted. These are becoming part of world culture, and the reader should encounter them. To omit names of Arab singers while leaving in those of European designers alters the text's politics of cultural consumption. The point is that young Saudi bourgeois subjects are consuming both the local and the globalized. In the process, they are having an impact on what counts as a cultural center in today's world, which is an insight that is deemphasized as the text loses its cultural specificities.

The aforementioned examples come, for the most part, from the first chapter,[9] and I could continue in this vein throughout the entire novel. While I recognize that the author's input provided some needed cultural knowledge and, in places, tightened my wordiness, most of the changes that were introduced into my English translation suggest a different ideology of translation, reducing cultural difference, homogenizing language to ease difference for the Anglophone reader, and minimizing daring cultural interventions and deadly serious humor. The preference for a smooth, cliché-ridden language over the "unevenness" of colloquialism and punning perhaps indicates a desire to create a style—and a work—that is both less of a romp than the Arabic text is and easier to read for an Anglophone reader. But a serious work need not have a serious tone, and the loss of the novel's satirical edge as well as its gender and cultural politics is a great loss indeed. If literary translations—crucial, given "the need to extend the American

imagination . . . which regulates much of the world system"—require "thick and situated" understandings and rewritings (Appiah 2004, 399–400), this rendering of *Girls of Riyadh* does not fulfill its potential. The novel might be luckier in languages that the author cannot read or control.[10] Only then will the translation be allowed to thickly convey one language's wit and politics into another's.

4. The Marketing of Islam via the Author's Visibility and Translator's Invisibility

In complicated ways, market forces permeate the fabric of the new work that emerges from this translation-publishing process. As we know from decades of critical work on culture industries around the world, no published text is solely an act of disinterested aesthetic creation impervious to material forces of book production and marketing. But literary translation is a particularly troublesome arena for competing pressures on the text, and the issues range far beyond the extent to which a translation may be said to represent the original, or precisely how it does so. There are issues of ownership, issues of the material bases of culture production. Also at issue is the translator's status as a piecework wage laborer whose access to the text is barred in the process of creating a particular kind of public image. In this process of creating a representation, who owns the text?

These are not easy issues; there is no "right answer" here. However, given the dominance of a rather static set of gender-saturated images in competing representations of Islam, Muslimness, and Arabness in today's global informational marketplace, it is important to ask how translational processes produce, contribute to, or undermine these dominant discourses (in a certain venue, at a certain moment), which continue to construct the homogenized figure of the Muslim woman; it is important to ask who controls these processes and what the effects might be. These questions are part of an ongoing conversation about the status of contemporary Arabic letters in translation—one that was perhaps publicly initiated by Edward Said's "Embargoed Literature," published in the *Nation* in 1990. As the language of *Banat al-Riyadh* is domesticated into its new Anglophone home entitled *Girls of Riyadh* through the erasure of many cultural and linguistic specificities, both the story in the text and the story of the text's controversial appearance in Arabic become more easily digested as ethnographic accounts where "difference" is easily assimilable to North American cultural and linguistic norms, and all of this is buttressed by the image of the author in the literary marketplace. This has the effect of further depoliticizing the narrative, taming the differences within, and—as a corollary of the author's status in the Euro/American marketplace as an authentic ethnographic subject—sidelining and discrediting the translator's role in producing the text.[11] Whatever the author's own intention in rewriting the translation and dismissing the translator's role might have been, this produces a particular

effect: it foregrounds the image of the authentic-but-cosmopolitan Muslim woman whom the publisher and Anglophone audience appear to desire. This is an image of someone who is comfortable with English and able to write her own English text. Not only does this figure of the writer-heroine efface processes and effects of translation—and the status of literature and the author as globalized commodities—but it also silences questions about gender privilege and perhaps even Saudi national politics which arise in the Arabic text.

Effacing the translator—dismissing her reading of the text—twines together several strong strands of contemporary "global" culture production, both generally and specifically concerning Arabic literature in English translation. There is the history of the marginal and muted status of the translator in capitalist societies, fortified by a prevalent ideology of individualism that upholds romantic ideals of the author as lone genius.[12] With a history too complex to narrate here, this yields a notion of translation as mechanical reproduction and the translator's role as ideally one of graceful self-effacement—a notion itself globalized despite translators having held different statuses in other times and places, including Europe at earlier moments. These long-established concepts of the translator's role, shaped by humanist notions of authorship as privileged individuality, not only are hard to dispel but are useful to the marketplace. They operate in tandem with the equally persistent view that literature (or some literatures) can act as a transparent siting of "the real" within the very real world of Frankfurt-and New York–driven mass publishing.

This would explain why publishers are keen to get their hands on Saudi writing: if there is a single society that contemporary readers in the global North see as encapsulating the mystery of the "Islamic Orient," it is Saudi Arabia. Within that mystery, the mystery of mysteries remains the Arab-Muslim woman, often homogenized and made to stand in for an entire society and history. A work purporting to tell the first-world Anglophone reader about the Middle East and Islam from the perspective and through the voice of that most mysterious and hyper-representative inhabitant and symbol of that world, a text authored by a Saudi woman and narrated by a young female Saudi character, gets to the veiled heart of Western fascinations. It is by now almost a cliché to note that the most intensely saturated stereotypical space of discourse when it comes to images of Arabs or of Islam is the space of gender. Not for the first time, the familiar nationalist trope of "woman" as the repository of tradition and yet simultaneously as the primary imagery of an "imagined national modernity" acts as a globalized symbol of everything that is supposedly wrong with the Arab/Islamic/Middle Eastern Other and of everything that needs to be made right. Although *Girls of Riyadh* is fiction, its market potential is based partly on this (mis)conception of representation and the recent popularity and iconography of autobiographical writing by women self-identified as Muslim, Arab, Middle Eastern, etc. Its author's celebrity status hinges on North Americans'

and Europeans' fascination with "unveiling" the Muslim female author who attests to feminine experience. It seems no accident that profiles of Alsanea shortly after the English translation came out emphasized her own life experience and assumed the documentary value of her book, thus collapsing author and narrator into one.[13]

5. Conclusion

It is often assumed among audiences both in the West and in the Arab world that we translators have a modicum of power to choose which works—here, of Arabic literature—will emerge on the world market and how they are translated, and in informal settings with writers and readers, we are often criticized for making bad choices of texts to translate. This does speak to the relatively powerless position of most Arab fiction writers (excluding an internationally famous few). Yet it ignores other, often more powerful, players: publishers, editors, agents—and occasionally authors, even those who hail from the global South.

For me, as translator, embeddedness in certain narratives—of US state and non-state engagement with Arab societies, of prevailing and homogenizing images of "the Muslim woman," and of cultural expression in Muslim-majority societies (images in which censorship, "tradition," and lack of creative output dominate)—spurred my resistance to a translation practice that might support those homogenizing images. Alsanea, the author, might be embedded in some of the same narratives, but her situatedness is different and perhaps raised a different set of concerns governing her translational preferences. The concept of enframing-reframing developed by translation theorist Mona Baker (2007) is useful here. In Baker's terms, Alsanea made different choices which "reframed" the translation, including self-presentation to journalists, a paratextual envelope that also shaped how readers would come to the text. For both of us, the reception context for *Girls of Riyadh* was heavily determined by a discursive context in which "the Muslim woman" as a covered figure stands in for "Islam," but how we handled that inescapable framing diverged. It may be that because Alsanea was able to present herself as representing her society, offering a personal narrative to mediate some readers' consumption of her novel, she did not feel a need to emphasize localities and differences in the text as I did. Alsanea's "re-narration" (Baker's concept) of my "re-narration" of her Arabic narrative suggests the power of situatedness in acts of translation.

For Baker, and based on social movements theory, framing may consist of "deliberate discursive moves designed to *anticipate* and guide others' interpretation" of events (156; emphasis in the original). Alsanea and her editors reframed the novel in English by altering my translation: they reduced the available feminist narrative that I had played up with my choices. I am not calling upon, or assessing, a notion of translational accuracy here (a futile task in any case), but I would argue that my translation remains closer to the

original Arabic in reproducing (not omitting) lexica, modes of address, and genres of cultural repartee.[14] It does not, for instance, efface the available narrative of class and globalization that emerges in the Arabic through the use of Arabenglish. Such choices, Baker argues, are not random but are "embedded in and contribut[e] to the elaboration of concrete political reality" (158). Of course, my writing of this article and others, and my widely circulated letter to the editor of the *Times Literary Supplement* (2007) in response to its review of the translation, are also attempts to reframe the translation.

The translator is a pivot point in intercultural conversations—a broker of discourses. Translators usually possess considerable cultural capital, as educated bilingual or multilingual citizens of the world and often employees of elite educational institutions. Yet the translator is also a wage laborer in the transnational circuitry of representations—one who most often does not own the rights to her or his own work. Once a text is released into the public sphere, of course, circulating as a commodity while representing the democratic claims of intercultural conversation, it is owned above all by the readers who interpret it. But readers need to remain vigilant about the highly mediated processes and contestations that lie behind the word on the page. The transformation of *Banat al-Riyadh* into *Girls of Riyadh*—with a marketing and publicity apparatus encouraging readers to regard the author as translator and spokesperson, and the Americanization and de-politicization of the text in translation—suggests just how differentially local the transnational marketplace of literary production is.

The task, for me, was to "bring the reader to the work"—to insist on an English rendering that would defamiliarize the text, draw readers into its Arabic discursive world, complicate Orientalist desires, raise questions about the extent to which it could be read easily as a transplanted *Sex and the City*, and obligate audiences to take account of its political critique. For Alsanea and her editors, it appears, the task was to "bring the work to the reader"—to play up pop-lit affinities (whatever the author's longer-term ambitions might be to transcend the pop-fiction rubric in her own career), minimize its gender politics, and give it an easy popularity on the North American street, which allows readers to comfortably consume the familiar Otherness of this story set in Saudi Arabia—as well as to sell copies.

Notes

* Permission has been granted by *Translation Studies* and *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* where parts of the text were published in Volume 1, Issue 2, 2008 and Volume 6, Issue 3, 2010, respectively.

1. This chapter consists of an amalgamation of Booth (2008) and Booth (2010), edited by Nancy Tsai.
2. Chick lit "high readability" is Stephanie Harzewski's formulation (Mazza 2006, 25–26).
3. All translations not followed by a citation are from my manuscript. Because I am mostly comparing translations, I give the Arabic only when crucial.

4. As customary in Arabic, literally, My ladies, my young misses, my gentlemen.
5. Al-Ghadeer (2006, 297–98) explains the phrase's relationship to a Lebanese TV show title.
6. See Booth (2010) for more discussion of this, particularly p. 171 and reviews listed on p. 179 n. 22. One reviewer said, "Clunking phrases and clichéd images are found on every page" (Koning 2007). Given enough space, it would not be difficult to demonstrate that many of the clichés result from translation choices made during the editorial process rather than being present in the Arabic text (or in my unpublished translation); at times, moreover, clichés are used precisely to point up stereotypes, which is a strategy I endeavored to convey but which the editor and author apparently did not wish to maintain.
7. For example, my "it's the hideous ones who are flying off the shelves these days" is substituted by "the ugly ones seem to be in demand these days" (Alsanea and Booth 2007, 5).
8. Published version: "Right you are, Nizar baby! Your tongue be praised, God bless you and may you rest in peace. Truth be told, though you are a man, you are indeed 'the woman's poet' and if anyone doesn't like my saying so they can go drink from the sea" (Alsanea and Booth 2007, 3). "Drink from the sea" translates the Arabic idiom literally, and on reflection, I prefer it to my use of an American idiom. The poet's name, Qabbani, means "weighmaster," an important post in premodern Arab societies which went beyond weighing to overseeing aspects of public social negotiation. I chose to highlight this double meaning.
9. Other changes include adding cultural information as footnotes rather than within the text, blended into its chatty tone; deleting puns; deleting my use of present tense, which draws readers into the scene's immediacy (the published version puts the entire narrative in past tense). I often used terms with multiple resonances; these are now changed to words with narrower meanings.
10. This is what my conversations with the Finnish translator have suggested! But the multiplier effects of secondary translation must be considered: often, works of Arabic literature, like works from other so-called difficult languages, are translated into other tongues from the English or French translation rather than from the Arabic.
11. For an elaboration of these points, see Booth (2010).
12. I do not mean to suggest that historically translators have been "invisible" only under capitalist structures, but the intersection of ideologies of individualism and modes of capitalist production has fostered this view of translation; under other regimes of culture production, translators have sometimes been regarded quite differently. See Venuti (1995) 2008.
13. See Booth (2010).
14. For examples, see Booth (2008).

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8 The Travels of a Cuban Feminist Discourse

Ena Lucía Portela's Transgressive Writing Strategies in Translation

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1. Introduction

The emergence of "new" and different feminisms, such as Third World feminisms (see Mohanty 2003), black feminism (see hooks 2000), chicano feminism (see Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981), and Islamic feminisms (see Ali 2012) across an increasingly globalized world invites translation—an activity that plays a crucial role for this both activist and theoretical intercultural movement. Translation serves not only to disseminate feminist content on an international scale but also to create spaces where dialogues, debates, and discussions between different feminist communities can take place. But what is the role actually played by translation in the dialogue between different feminisms? While translation doubtless succeeds in overcoming linguistic barriers, does it also succeed in metaphorically *translating* feminist meaning? In other words, is translation, in the context of international feminisms, truly an intercultural vehicle for new ideas?

Today, feminists of colour, postcolonial feminists and feminists of the South who subscribe to the school of thought labeled "transnational," emphasize alliances based on the recognition of diversity, thus displaying an attitude that ought to affect translation: "Differences rather than similarities among women should be drawn on as an occasion for global dialogues" (Davis 2007, 208). In what follows, the English and French translations of work by Ena Lucía Portela, a contemporary Cuban writer, will be examined to see how useful they are in creating such dialogues within the movement of transnational feminism, for such a movement is politicized and relies, globally speaking, on the function that texts take on, both in the source culture and the culture they travel into. This chapter follows the functionalist approach to translation used by Annie Brisset (most notably in her book *Sociocritique de la traduction: théâtre et altérité au Québec (1968–1988)* (1990)) and seeks to discover if the literary exchanges taking place right now between Cuba and the West produce translations that function the way they would for transnational feminist purposes. Knowing that transnational

feminism can hardly be the priority for commercial literary translation, we nonetheless want to explore the ways this kind of feminism could benefit from better translation practices, and vice versa.

2. Ena Lucía Portela, Cuba, and the *Novísimas*

Ena Lucía Portela was born in Havana in 1972, where she continues to live and work. She is the author of several novels and collections of short stories and regularly publishes essays and newspaper articles. She first came to public attention with the publication of the short story "La urna y el hombre: un cuento jovial" in *Los últimos serán los primeros*, an anthology edited by Salvador Redonet in 1993. In 2007, she was selected to participate in Bogotá39, an event at the Bogotá Book Fair, which brought together the thirty-nine most important writers of Latin America who were under the age of thirty-nine. In Cuba, she is considered one of the most critical voices in regard to Fidel Castro, and for some, her narrative world is "the most rich, ambitious and accomplished of the nineties" (López 2009, xx). She is one of the major representatives of the *novísimas*, a literary movement that emerged from the "special period" in 1990s Cuba, when numerous women writers transformed the Cuban literary landscape by bringing in transgressive feminist projects.

In 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, Cuba's imports and exports declined precipitously because of a lack of energy supplies. To deal with the unprecedented economic crisis that ensued, and which came on top of the US embargo, the Cuban government was forced to put in place a number of reforms that had an enormous impact on society; this was the beginning of Cuba's "Special Period in Time of Peace," a very considerable period of crisis during which "[t]he Cuban population underwent conditions . . . not unlike those experienced in a war zone" (Davies 1997, 222). The repercussions of this special period were particularly felt by women since, as Gloria Vergès (2011, 52) explains, the patriarchal culture of Cuban society causes women to shoulder most of the family responsibilities. In terms of services for the population, the remains of the socialist heritage of the Cuban Revolution disappeared as quickly as they had appeared, and the women had to resort to all kinds of measures to support their families:

> At a time when the state can no longer provide the full panoply of services it once so proudly offered, women are turning to their own internal resources, family and neighbourhood ties, immense intelligence, and in some cases, the allure of their own seductiveness to survive.
>
> (Behar 1998, xiv)

The elimination of numerous public services as well as the collapse of socialist ideology worldwide showed the population the weaknesses and the traps of the Cuban Revolution. Considerable gaps appeared in the hegemonic

structures of Castro's Cuba—gaps that created spaces for critical discourses, notably those of women (Davies 1997, 223). In fact, the special period "opened up the possibility for Cuban women to reflect upon the meaning that feminism might now have, to imagine an afterlife without male heroes" (Behar 1998, xiv), especially as the heroes had evidently "failed," and it was henceforth rather difficult to believe in Cuba's revolutionary project. What's more, over the course of the 1990s, the state drastically reduced its public expenditures in the area of arts and culture, which meant a reduction in the ideological control exercised on the country's cultural production: "[W]ith the decrease of funds coming from the official cultural institutions and, consequently, of the control these institutions were exercising on the national culture, came the emergence of new spaces and possibilities for artistic creation" (López 2009, x).[1] After 1990, then, the ideological landscape of Cuba diversified considerably, allowing for the articulation of marginal and transgressive discourses, in particular in the literary work produced by the novísimos and novísimas.

This was a group of young writers who took note of the distance between the official history as disseminated at school and in the media and the history that could be observed in the streets (ix). And it was precisely the "real" history, the subjective and personal histories that they set out to explore in their work in order to undermine the idea of a homogeneous and unidimensional society that had so long been asserted by the Revolution: "[T]his narrative underlines a distinct type of marginality, that of the counter-culture, which belongs to young outcasts, renegades, rebels, or simply indifferents, excluded from the real power structures" (ix). The novísimos assigned great importance to the immediate present and took on topics that had previously been silenced and taboo, in particular those touching women: eroticism and homoeroticism, ambiguous sexual identities, prostitution, incest, physical violence, pedophilia, and so on. Cuban literary critics consider the novísimos the very first post-revolutionary writers, since neither the process nor the outcome of the Revolution is of any interest to them (xiii).

The writers of particular interest here are the novísimas, ambassadors of contemporary Cuban women's writing. Indeed, as critics describe it, the 1990s in Cuba saw the emergence of prose, and specifically short stories, written by women (Vergès 2011, 43). This blossoming of a resistant literature by women parallels other developments in Cuban life and culture in the mid-1990s. Everywhere, women set out to "promote the emergence of the understanding of gender, give major visibility to the history of women and their cultural accomplishments, and by doing so, reinforce the self-esteem which is critical in times of crisis and uncertainties" (Campuzano 2003a, 40). Many of the women writers in fact used their writing to explore "the current social realities, recent transformations and upheavals, and the different human responses to these changing times" (Campuzano 2003b, 17), and in the process, they created an innovative literature that broke dramatically with the established literary canon in Cuba in order to tackle many

other issues and contemporary problems. According to Luisa Campuzano (2003a, 40) they used writing strategies that were as complex and conflicting as the social situation of the 1990s, thereby demonstrating how the discourses were changing and how resistance was being organized. The short stories these women wrote examined and unmasked the Cuban systems of ideas, as well as the social structures and institutions that foster inequality.

In summary, the literature that emerged in the 1990s in Cuba offered "new topics relating to the feminine condition [which is] described from a very different perspective, and employ[ed] a new narrative syntax" (Bobes, cited in Campuzano 2003b, 10). The writing strategies which catalyzed around a great economic and social crisis, countered the discourse the regime had put in place in 1959, and proposed another, that was both subversive and diverse. In their writing, the novísimas demanded what was not being demanded elsewhere: the abolition of patriarchal social structures that limited the lives of Cuban women on a daily basis, for it was clear that, "even though there has been a great deal of accomplishments by Cuban women in many areas, we live in a very old-fashioned country that, in many ways, still reinforces a patriarchal culture" (Campuzano 2003a, 39). In response to this sexist oppression, the women writers of the 1990s formulated a transgressive marginal discourse that breathed life into feminism and gender studies in Cuba.

This new discourse was also a response to the official "party feminism" that promotes national, and ideologically determined, objectives (Durán 2000, 60). This party feminism is represented by the Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (FMC), an organism created in 1960 in order to eradicate the obstacles preventing women from participating in the public sphere and in work. Headed by the government and presided over by Vilma Espín (the wife of Raúl Castro and a member of Castro's Council of State) until her death in 2007, the FMC represents what can be considered the dominant, official, and institutionalized discourse about women in Cuba. With a membership of about four million (out of a total of eleven million inhabitants of Cuba) and heading most of the demands, struggles, and public debates around women, this organization is the main organism of the Cuban women's movement and has been responsible for the official discourse on women in Cuba since 1959—a discourse that aligns with and parallels the discourses on the Revolution and those pronounced by Fidel Castro.

Even today, the FMC remains a prisoner of its nostalgia: the book *Mujeres y Revolución* (Women and Revolution) (2006), constitutes an ode to Fidel Castro and is filled with his speeches and photos. The FMC's online journal *Mujeres* [Women] is no different (http://www.mujeres.co.cu). Besides a few articles on domestic violence and the sections entitled "Hablemos francamente" (Let's Be Frank) and "Salud" (Health), which discuss "feminine" problems as disparate as the magic of love, urinary incontinence, the benefits of aerobics, and salt-free diets for children, *Mujeres* pays homage, week after week, to the great female combatants who became famous during the

armed struggle of the 1950s: Vilma Espín (former FMC president), Célia Sánchez, Haydée Santamaría, and so on. Nowhere is there mention of the personal emancipation of women, for as Vilma Espín (as quoted in Waters 2012, 29) explains,

> I always emphasize that at the time we didn't talk about women's liberation. We didn't talk about women's emancipation, or the struggle for equality. We didn't use those terms then. What we did talk about was participation. Women wanted to participate.

The FMC does not really represent women; it is first and foremost a governmental agency whose task is to ensure that Cuban women are integrated into the public sphere and the labour market. It has no intention of setting up a liberatory feminist project since such a program would counter the goals of the Revolution. As Campuzano (2003a, 39) explains,

> [A] social change so profound as the Cuban Revolution . . . led to prioritizing not only the construction of a consciousness of class, which would guarantee unity, at the expense of a consciousness of gender, which was seen as dangerous and distracting; it also, consequently, privileged and canonized the dominant discourse, the "master narrative" of the time, in other words, the discourse, definitely masculine, of epic nationalism.

The FMC thus does nothing more than target women with the discourse of the revolution, enjoining them to participate in public life and support the national project to the detriment of their own emancipation. Samuel Farber, a specialist on the Cuban revolution, summarizes this ideological and discursive phenomenon as follows: "Cuba supports its own version of the liberation of women, although this type of 'liberation' is clearly subordinate to the leader's view of other government priorities" (2011, 192). In brief, the dominant feminine discourse in Cuba, transmitted primarily by the FMC, is controlled by the state and inscribed in the Revolution. However, it is a fact that all this changed in the 1990s when a great number of other—feminist and dissident—ideas on the topic of the situation of Cuban women emerged, thanks to the novísimas.

This is the context that allows us to understand the importance of the role played by novísimas' literature for the current social demands of Cuban women. In a country where there is no forum for the discussion of rape, incest, or sexual violence (Behar 1998, xviii), literature is one of the most important media for the expression of problems faced by women. The short stories written by women, which largely address issues of daily life, provide documentary evidence of the way Cuban women think: "Their verisimilitude stands in lieu of sociological studies on sex and gender which are so evidently lacking" (Davies 1997, 153). One of the major figures in this female discourse in Cuba, and within the novísimas movement, is without a

doubt Ena Lucía Portela. Campuzano considers that her work has brought Cuban literature "un nuevo decir" [a new way of talking] (2003a, 45).

On the whole, Portela's work—its themes, its experimental aspects, its black humour—is representative of the literary movement of the 1990s and of Cuban women's discourse that derives from it. Over the years, she has in effect produced "a narrative marked by the estrangement of explicit referents, a skeptical, ironic or satiric point of view, the treatment of themes like rock music, drugs and homoerotism and, above all, by self-references, intertextuality as well as the fragmentation and thematization of the dilemmas inherent to writing" (Araújo 2001, 20–21), where marginal characters hold central positions. In her short stories and novels, she confuses genres, mixing serious themes with humour, combining different language registers, breaking up the narrative line with anecdotes and differing points of view. In so doing, she deconstructs the official discourses and their codes of conduct while devising marginal characters who live their lives "ignoring those prescriptive and normative discourses, as if they lived in a bubble where the only thing that matters is their personal relationships" (26). Indeed, her universe is inhabited by monstrous characters who practice incest, masturbation, voyeurism, and develop within purely personal and private spaces, transgressing the monological, authoritarian, and dogmatic ideas about identity, whether sexual or national (Dorado-Otero 2013, 2).

A number of researchers, among them Ángela Dorado-Otero, view Portela's work as the avant-garde of new feminist paradigms and genres in Cuba. Although her work rejects any labels that might define women in any monolithic manner, there is no doubt that her publications as a whole parody patriarchal discourse (Dorado-Otero 2013, 8) and are part of the transgressive feminist discourse in Cuba. The female body and lesbian sexuality are at the centre of her work, thus acquiring an unprecedented visibility in Cuban literature. The inversion of traditional roles and stereotypes, the use of transvestite play, and syntactic ambiguities are only a few of the aspects of Portela's writing that undermine conventional categories and definitions. Contrary to the work of many Cubans who live, write, and publish abroad, Portela's text are also published, circulated, and read in Cuba. She writes with Cuban readers in mind, "avoiding stereotypes about Cuban people and concerns about 'Cubanness,' and circumventing the marginalization and discrimination, which normally secures a position in the literary market" (López 2009, xvi).

Ena Lucía Portela thus represents the Cuban movement among women who, "through their writing, disrupt patriarchal values and fixed expressions within politics, families, relationships, and so on" (Cámara 2010). In her review of Portela's collection of short stories *El viejo, el asesino, yo y otros cuentos*, Madeline Cámara (2010) reminds us of how original an author's expression must be in order to discuss, even in literary work, the machismo and dictatorship that rule Cuba, which she describes as "so archaic, yet so lingering."

One might expect that the translation of such a corpus of writings, which is so full of sociocultural details, unique stories, and deliberately strategic literary tactics would take an interest in precisely these elements in order to emphasize the difference of the text and upset the reigning discourse. This, however, is not the case.

3. Portela in Translation

This recent Cuban writing by the novísimas thus expresses resistance through its discursive and thematic writing strategies; its transgressive approaches to literary, cultural, and social norms; its opposition to dominant patriarchal discourses; the questioning of dogmatic and monolithic subjects created by these discourses (i.e. the Revolution); and the blurring of identities (usually sexual). These strategies are best understood in relation to the immediate context which has seen them emerge and develop—a context with which they maintain a tight connection. But what happens when such subversive strategies are translated and sent out to other cultures where the contexts of production are different? Does literary translation then take an interest in this resistant and transgressive aspect that is one of the main characteristics of a certain Cuban women's writing today? Characteristics that have become the mark of much writing by women from Cuba over the past twenty years?

Three short stories by Portela have been translated into both English and French: "Un loco dentro del baño" (first published in 1999 in Havana), "Desnuda bajo la lluvia" (first published in 1999 in Havana), and "Huracán" (first published in 2006 in Puebla, Mexico). The first text presents a set of oddly perverse characters engaged in an absurd game of spying, fantasy, and supposed sexual deviance, while the second text is concerned with the violent sexualization and objectification of the female body, as well as pedophilia. "Huracán" consists of an explicit critique of the Cuban regime and the closed system of ideologies and aesthetics deriving from this (Cámara 2010). The three short stories, which later appeared in the collection *El viejo, el asesino, yo y otros* (2009c), represent a solid extract of Portela's work—the universe she has created and the writing strategies she deploys to do so. They are the focus of the analysis that follows.

4. The Translators and Translations

The following details on the translators and their work are important, if only to highlight the fact that the translations are produced by different people from different backgrounds, but who share the same literary culture. This means that the results of the following analysis are attributable to the "matrix of translation" (Brisset 1989, 56) inherent to the target cultures, not to the distinct, individual approaches to translation.

"Un loco dentro del baño" was translated into French by Caroline Lepage as "Un fou dans les toilettes" in 2001, and published in *Des nouvelles*

de Cuba. Lepage is a specialist in Gabriel García Márquez, Cuban literature (she co-edited *La littérature cubaine de 1980 à nos jours* (Lepage and Ventura 2011)), and women's writing, having co-authored *Femmes écritures et enfermements en Amérique latine* (González et al. 2012). Her impressive portfolio of literary translations includes works by the Cuban Leonardo Padura and the Chilean Alejandro Jodorowsky.

The English translation of the same short story, "A Maniac in the Bathroom," is by Cindy Schuster and published in the anthology *New Short Fiction from Cuba* (2007). Schuster is a poet, holds a doctorate in Latin American literature from the University of California, Irvine, and was involved in the translation of the collection entitled *Cubana: Contemporary Fiction by Cuban Women* (Yañez 1998), in which Portela also appears.

The translations and publications of both Lepage and Schuster provide evidence that they know contemporary Cuban writing and its context of production as well as its focus on women's issues.

The short story "Desnuda bajo de la lluvia" was published in French in 2003 as "Nue sous la pluie" in a special issue entitled "Alger/La Havane" of the journal of literary translation *meet*, which is compiled by the Maison des écrivains étrangers et des traducteurs de Saint-Nazaire. The first half of the publication presents contemporary Cuban writers in French translation and then in the original Spanish. François Maspero, a writer, translator, bookseller, publisher, and director of French literary reviews, translated Portela's text. His experience as a translator is quite diverse, but his biobibliography reveals a steady focus on political dissidence and liberation movements which he documents through journalistic texts, for instance, on Bosnia in 1998 and the Caribbean in 2000.

The English version of this short story, "A Nude in the Rain," was produced by Pamela Carmell and published in *Cuba on the Edge: Short Stories from the Island* (2007). Best known for *Apocalypse Z*—her translation of Manel Loureiro's Spanish best seller—Carmell knows Cuba well, both on paper as the translator of Nancy Morejón and Belkis Cuza, and on the island itself which she visits frequently for meetings and literary conferences.

Finally, the French translation of "Huracán," entitled "Ouragan," is the work of Albert Bensoussan and appeared in the anthology *Les bonnes nouvelles de l'Amérique latine* (2010). Bensoussan, of Algerian origin, is a novelist, an academic, and a translator who works from Spanish. He is the French voice of a number of Latin American writers, in particular Mario Vargas Llosa, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, and Manuel Puig. Nothing in his background indicates knowledge of Cuba, or political dissidence, or women's writing; his main focus seems to be "his love of the language."[2]

The English version of the same story was produced by Janet Hendrickson for the anthology *The Future is Not Ours* (2012), a partial adaptation of *El futuro no es nuestro* (Trelles Paz 2009)—a collection that offers a panoramic perspective of the contemporary literary production in Latin America by bringing together twenty Latino writers born between 1970 and

1980—and was published by Open Letter (Rochester, USA). Hendrickson is the translator of the twenty-three short stories that make up the volume and is a doctoral student at Cornell University.

These details are revealing of the aforementioned "matrix of translation" which govern the act of literary translation: the diversity, or even randomness, of translators and publishers, as well as the anthologization of Portela as a young and contemporary Cuban writer along with hordes of other writers and themes, suggest that the function of her work undergoes quite a transformation in translation. The next section elaborates on what this transformation is and means.

5. Analyzing These Translations

A textual analysis of these six translations quickly reveals the numerous and quite profound changes that Portela's transgressive style and discourse of resistance undergo. First of all, the English translations produced in the United States constitute perfect examples of "domesticating translation," as Lawrence Venuti has described it, where the domestication resides "in the development of a translation strategy that rewrites the foreign text in domestic dialects and discourses, always a choice of certain domestic values to the exclusion of others" (2002, 67). This occurs when the translation practice accords greater importance to the values, norms, and customs of the target culture than to the specificities of the source text or the culture from which it hails. In the case of Portela, the influence of the target culture is very evident in the English translations and includes an effect of "personalization" (causing the subject of her stories to shift from collective to individual), the addition of capitalist notions of ownership through the addition of possessives, and value judgements based on binarisms, all of which recall what sociologist Robert Bellah (Bellah et al. 2007, 147) has labelled as the deeply rooted adherence to a US-American doctrine of individualism.[3] For instance, the systematic appearance of possessive determiners (his, her, their) for translating Spanish definite articles (*el*, *la*, *los*) inserts a different world view in Portela's work, especially in the short story "Desnuda bajo la lluvia," where the main character has absolutely no control or ownership of her body. For example, in the following scene, a nameless model is posing for Bruno, an erotic photographer:

- ". . . se lo coloca debajo de las nalgas.—Aparta las manos, dice Bruno. Vamos a ver qué pasa. Vuelve a posar y ahora exhibe, rodeada por el vello color cobre espléndidamente idéntico al de sus axilas sin depilar, la vulva rosada, algo húmeda, burbujeante. Un ovalito contraído . . ."
  (Portela 2009a, 55)

- ". . . places it under **her** butt. 'Spread **your** hands,' Bruno says. 'Let's see what happens.' She poses again and now displays **her** rosy, slightly

> moist, bubbly vulva, surrounded by **her** sumptuous copper down that matches **her** unshaved armpits. **Her** little oval . . ."
>
> (Carmell 2007; emphasis added)

For Portela, material things and even body parts or emotions are never granted; throughout her work, she emphasizes the non-belonging of things and the lack of control that characters, especially women, have over their environment and themselves in the context of the Cuban dictatorship. The insertion of the notion of possessivity is typical of a Western worldview, where everything can be bought and owned. A similar shift is observed with the systematic appearance of the first-person pronoun, "I," in the English translations. Here is how the narrator escapes a "hurricane" (a metaphor for the Cuban Revolution) when her truck gets stuck in the middle of the storm:

- "No sería extraño que lo reventara, pensé, y esa idea me devolvió la tranquilidad. Lo cierto es que la camioneta se había atascado en un bache."

  (Portela 2009b, 105)

- "**I** wouldn't be surprised if the rain shattered it, **I** thought, and this idea restored **my** calm. What's for sure is that **I**'d gotten stuck in a pothole."

  (Hendrickson 2012, 102; emphasis added)

Perhaps, unintentionally, this shift accentuates the active role of the protagonist and therefore creates a totally different effect. Whereas in Spanish, Portela's characters are subject to external factors, the English translations suggest that the characters have more control over their fate and that they play an active role within the narrative. For politically charged texts such as "Hurricane," however, such a transformation is significant, since Portela seeks to underline the fact that young Cubans passively suffer the oppression and that they do not want to be a part of the Revolution whatsoever.

Further, the English translations make the texts much more readable, demonstrating the focus on "fluidity" in the US-English translation that Venuti (2004, 1) has observed:

> A translated text . . . is judged acceptable . . . when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent. . . . The illusion of transparency is an effect of fluent discourse, of the translator's effort to insure easy readability by adhering to current usage, maintaining continuous syntax, fixing a precise meaning.

Whether it means changing the order of the elements in a sentence to make it clearer, or producing shorter, simpler sentences in English, the translations do read more fluently. For instance, the sentence "Con la linterna encendida, me subí a la camioneta" (2009b, 104) is translated into "I got

into the Ford pickup with the flashlight" (Hendrickson 2012, 100), thus bringing the active subject to the forefront and relegating the sentence complements to the end. Perhaps the increased readability of the English text is even more evident in the following example (another description of the nameless model from "Desnuda bajo la lluvia"), where one single sentence in Spanish is fragmented into five sentences in English:

- "La muchacha secreta con los codos apoyados en la alfrombra: las nalgas redondas, no muy firmes, escandalosamente inmaculadas, en forma de corazón invertido, manzana o pera, como las que exhiben, según el enano, las coristas del Molino Rojo; un anillo todavía más contraído que el ovalito: « por aquí ni se te ocurra »—rosado como todo lo rosado que hay en ella, quizás más oscuro; el vello color cobre, la sonira vertical ahora al revés, pero igual de esponjosa y tentadora entre dos labios rechonchitos que caen un poco y hacia el fondo de la composición, aprovechando el ángulo favorable, también caen los senos como mangos maduros, puntiagudos y verdaderos, anteriores a esa cultura de la silicona que no le hace ninguna gracia al gran brujo."

  (Portela 2009a, 59)

- "The mystery girl, propped up on her elbows on the rug: her round and slightly flabby buttocks, shockingly flawless, shaped like an upside down heart, an apple or a pear, like the buttocks that chorus girls in the Moulin Rouge bared, the one the dwarf drew. A ring even more pursed than her little oval, warning the invisible enemy: 'don't even think about it.' Pink like all the pink on her, maybe a bit darker. Her copper-colored down, her vertical smile now backwards, but equally spongy and tempting between two chubby little lips that droop a bit toward the back of the composition, taking advantage of the favorable angle. Her breasts droop, too, like ripe mangos, pointed, the real thing, pre-dating the silicon culture that doesn't do a thing for the great sorcerer."

  (Carmell 2007)

In sum, the English translations modify Portela's style and discourse to fit with the literary conventions and linguistic usage of the United States by conforming to the criteria of readability established by American publishing norms and erasing numerous stylistic strategies of resistance which take their meaning in the source text from the context of its production. This means that Portela's discourse in English is flat and conformist, and does nothing to put into question either the monolithic Cuban discourses she criticizes through her writing or the dominant ideologies and ways of thinking in the United States.

The paratexts that accompany the English translations, however, do succeed in pointing out how the rhetoric and the discourse of contemporary Cuban women's writing overlap. Almost without exception, Portela's short

stories appear in anthologies of Cuban authors.[4] And while the emphasis is often on Cuba as the source of the writing, there is also a certain focus on the new Cuban feminism: both *Cubana: Contemporary Fiction by Cuban Women* (Yáñez 1998) and *Open Your Eyes and Soar: Cuban Women Writing Now* (Berg 2003) include a preface or an introduction, sometimes both, that places the short stories into their sociohistorical context—the "special period"—and develop information on quality of life, censorship, dominant ideologies in Cuba, etc. Moreover, these collections are often compiled by intellectuals of Cuban origin—Mirta Yáñez, Marilyn Bobes, Ruth Behar, etc.—which allows for an actual Cuban perspective in regard to their content. The books are published by independent presses or university publishing houses, which doubtless explains the inclusion of detailed and enlightening introductions intended for informed and competent readers. Presenting the authors in their context—the novísimas movement is often mentioned—the English paratexts often make reference to writing strategies that are particular to these writers. Unfortunately, however, these strategies of resistance are generally lost at the textual level and replaced by a style that conforms to Anglo-American literary and linguistic norms.

The French translations of Portela reveal several of the "deforming tendencies" that Antoine Berman (1995) has ascribed to translation: ennoblement, destruction of rhythms, qualitative impoverishment, and destruction of vernacular networks—phenomena of translation that all lead toward clarifying and rationalizing Portela's texts. According to Berman (80), "all the [translation] tendencies identified in the analysis lead to the same result: the production of a 'clearer,' more 'elegant,' more 'fluent' and 'purer' text than the source text." The stylistic changes that Portela's texts undergo in French translation can, at least partially, be attributed to the literary and cultural norms that rule the act of translation. The widespread use of the preterit tense and of literary formulations qualifies as what Roland Barthes (1972, 29) labelled "the ritual of French 'belles-lettres,' " and the systematic use of the singular for what is expressed in the plural in Spanish rationalizes the discourse. In French, Portela's writing style is cleansed and adapted to that of conventional French fiction; in translation, her work is transformed into "real" literature. The French translations indeed render Portela's vernacular and colloquial style into a sophisticated literary form with the use of *passé simple* and of polished expressions that no one uses when they talk, such as "le visage empreint d'une si violente panique" (Lepage 2001, 352), "il ne venait guère qu'à l'esprit de Danilo" (362) and "et je m'en suis allée" (Bensoussan 2010, 400). As for the verb tense, the *pretérito perfecto simple*, employed by Portela and the whole Spanish-speaking community on a daily basis, would be best translated by the French tense called *passé composé*. But that does not discourage the translators from choosing the *passé simple*, a less accessible tense that is only employed in literary and written forms.

The impact of the target culture's literary conventions is evident. The literary system is configured to meet social conditions, and this imposes

constraints not only on the choice of texts to be translated but also on the very manner of translating them. The literary "acceptability" of foreign texts in a new sociocultural environment stems from the function that these texts are expected to have in the polysystem of the translating culture. The relationship between the translated text and the source text, a central preoccupation of translation studies, is thus subordinated to the requirements of the literary institution within the translating culture, which takes on as much importance as, if not more than, any demand for equivalence in the content and structure of the original text (Brisset 1989, 51).

The influence of French literary institutions is unequivocal when it comes to the function of Portela's texts. The textual analysis of her texts in Spanish and their French translations show that her transgressive and popular discourse becomes tangled in an array of French literary commonplaces. Translation, a practice supposedly intended to convey the Other's discourse, instead uses the Other to caution, and not subvert, its own discourse (Brisset 1990, 312). A brief analysis of the French paratexts will confirm this influence and shift of function.

Contrary to Portela's publishing history in English, her work has been produced largely by commercial publishers (Gallimard, Métailié, Seuil) in France, with the only exception being the short story "Nue sous la pluie," which came out in the bilingual literary journal *meet*. The paratexts reveal this commercial aspect: in *Les bonnes nouvelles de l'Amérique latine*, for instance, the authors are described as "the heirs of this long and noble tradition of Latin-American literature" (Guerrero and Iwasaki 2010, 14) who have acquired the "right to participate in the world Republic of Letters" (15). The journal *meet* praises the "literary genius" of Havana (Deville 2003, 9). The collection of short stories, *Des nouvelles de Cuba*, makes the claim that in spite of exile and diaspora, "there is only one Cuban literature" (Strausfeld 2001, 9, 17, back cover). Meanwhile, although the book includes a number of other novísimas besides Portela (Karla Suárez, Marylin Bobes, Mylene Fernández Pintado, etc.), it comprises work by more than twenty-seven writers (men, women, whites, blacks, living in Cuba or in exile, young and old), which is a very broad offering.

And so, Portela's unique style and rhetoric appear along with a plethora of writers who have little in common with her, except that they are Latin Americans and have been assigned so-called literary genius status—descriptors that mark (and limit) her work in France. By decontextualizing Portela's writing, the paratexts make her writing—which is resistant and transgressive—impossible to grasp. This resistance is thus doubly erased: on the one hand, the stylistic changes carried out through translation make her text conform to French literary norms, while on the other, the presentation of the text does not provide the contextualization to explain what is at stake and the questions Portela's writing raises.

In the United States, a kind of ethical interventionism, as promoted by Venuti, can at least be seen in the paratexts, the choice of translators, and

the publishing houses, all of which work toward a "politicized" version of Cuban feminist writing by describing it as such and supplying long introductions and detailed prefaces. In France, however, Portela is only of interest for her critical success; she is not associated with any transgressive movement and is lumped together with all Latin American writing. But does that make the politicized American version a more accpetable literary text than the French one? The English-language publications locate Portela in her context but assign labels (of sexual or national identity). Indeed, the abusive labelling and cover designs of anthologies such as *Cubana* and *Open Your Eyes and Soar* run the risk of ghettoizing and marginalizing the fiction written by Cuban women, which is a tendency that has been criticized by Chandra Mohanty (2003, 17) and Ivan Rubio Cuevas, who recently noted that abusive categorization causes the marginal and transgressive status of certain authors "to be reduced to a stereotypical and exotic image that sells its externalized alterity and turns its heterogeneous writing strategies into a profit" (2000, 83). In France, Portela is hardly categorized or ghettoized in this way; she is completely detached from her context of production, and this has certain consequences for a global understanding of her work and her call for resistance. It would be hard to say which of these two approaches the author herself might prefer.

As Brisset suggests in a number of her publications, it does not suffice to simply note how a translation may differ textually or stylistically from a source text. Her sociocritical approach takes into account the "conditions under which discourse is produced as a parameter in the operation that is translation" (1989, 52). She claims that a translator will produce a discourse in line with the ideological currents and discursive norms holding sway in the target culture rather than take account of the uniqueness of peripheral, foreign texts. And so, the questions persist: "[I]n the absence of cross-cultural communication unaffected by domestic intelligibilities and interests, what kinds of communities can translation possibly foster?" (Venuti 2002, 469). Does the translation of feminist literature of resistance as practiced today serve feminism on a larger scale?

6. Conclusion

Literary translation, as produced in France and in the United States, and as discussed here, treats the work of Ena Lucía Portela quite differently. The translations of several of her short stories published in English and French in fact erase a great number of her transgressive writing strategies and other unique aspects of her work, which in the original give her writing a singular character and (could) make it quite "other" for the readers. This analysis of the publications prepared in the United States and in France shows that these translations were part of a larger "translation project" (Berman 1995) that first and foremost sought to comply with the norms of the literary system of the target culture and conform to the linguistic expectations of the

target readership. The particularities of Portela's writing—her feminist and resistant literary strategies—are erased so that the text produced is easy to read and corresponds to the conventions of the cultures where it is to be read. In other words, it is a kind of translation that can hardly be seen as part of a transnational feminist movement.

The translation of feminist texts could doubtless benefit from contemporary theory, notably the development of a transnational feminism that recognizes diversity and difference, as well as a feminist ethics of translation. Transnational feminism is what provides a basis for ethical intercultural dialogue, recognizing that, in difference, we can truly welcome the Other as Other. The analysis of Portela's work in translation has shown that, unfortunately, "the failure to engage feminist theory can result in homogenizing views of subaltern cultures that ignore or underplay sexual, gendered, racialized, class, age and other differences and power relations that sustain hierarchies" (Alvarez 2014, 9). The translation of feminist texts of resistance and their circulation abroad do not suffice. As Mohanty (2003, 77) puts forth, "[T]he existence of Third World women's narratives in itself is not evidence of decentering hegemonic histories and subjectivities. It is the way in which they are read, understood, and located institutionally that is of paramount importance." In transnational feminism, the practice of literary translation should underline the differences as well as the similarities that distinguish resistant and subversive texts coming from other cultures. Portela's work in translation has become a rehash of peripheral literature whose difference has been erased and which is destined to be consumed by a readership "in the centre." In 1992, Gayatri Spivak already noted the effects of this translation phenomenon,

> when all the literature of the Third World gets translated into a sort of with-it translationese, so that the literature by a woman in Palestine begins to resemble, in the feel of its prose, something by a man in Taiwan. (2004, 400)

When a foreign text is fitted into a new mould, it ends up losing its original shape and its authenticity. For a more ethical dialogue with the Other, one that upholds a distinct voice and resistance to dominant discourses, literary "translation projects" in the West need to revise their goals and strategies. They need to take into account feminist theories in gender studies, as well as in translation studies, that underline the importance of recognizing difference and celebrating it.

Notes

1. All citations from Spanish sources have been translated into English by Luise von Flotow.
2. This focus is explained in detail on the website of the journal *meet* ("Albert Bensoussan").
3. A study of US-American books carried out in 2012 has shown that an ideology of individualism continues to shape discourses in the United States: "An analysis of

words and phrases in more than 750,000 American books published in the past 50 years finds an emphasis on 'I' before 'we'—showing growing attention to the individual over the group. The study, published today in the online journal *PLoS One*, analyses how often certain words and phrases appear in written language from year to year. Researchers say it is yet another indication that US society since 1960 has become increasingly focused on the self" (Jayson 2012).

4. The exception is *The Future Is Not Ours* (Trelles Paz 2012), which brings together emerging and promising writers from all parts of Latin America.

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9 Gender and the Chinese Context

The 1956 and 1999 Versions of Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing**[1]

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Published in 1999, Xie Tianzhen's *Medio-Translatology*[2] was the first to introduce Western feminist translation studies in China. By 2013, gender-oriented research in translation had become a burgeoning field. To date, over two hundred journal articles, two monographs, and more than one hundred graduate dissertations have been published on the topic. However, the bulk of the work rests on theoretical commentary; not enough is devoted to their domestic application. Moreover, even when the commentary is decidedly domestic, it most often focuses on the translator alone. The interest lies in the translator's gender awareness, gender identity, and how these factors relate to the translation being produced.

Yet this is a limited scope that does not necessarily take into consideration the larger domestic context, its gender norms, women's rights issues, or the evolution of those norms and issues. It results in a mechanical application of Western feminist theories that labels the translators as either one-dimensional "feminists" or "chauvinists" (Li 2008, 19). Much is left to be desired when it comes to evaluating the effects of changing gender discourses on translation.

For example, gender discourse in China experienced monumental shifts in three distinct periods: the late Qing and early Kuomintang Republican years (late nineteenth to early twentieth century), the first three decades of the People's Republic of China (1949–1978), and the years following Deng Xiaoping's Opening Up and Reform (1978–present), the famed economic policy that transformed China into a major global player in a very short time. Have these shifts been reflected in the translations being produced during those periods? Does the same text display different gender perspectives when being retranslated in a different period? Do the men and women in a story remain "the same person"? In this chapter, I would like to attempt to answer these questions using two different Chinese translations of Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* (1950) which were, respectively, published in 1956 and 1999.

1. Chinese Translations of *The Grass Is Singing*

The Grass Is Singing is Nobel Prize winner Doris Lessing's first novel. It tells the story of Mary Turner, a white woman living in the time of racial divide

in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Race and identity form the nucleus of the novel. Mary, born into poverty, manages to escape her impoverished fate through hard work and perseverance, eventually building a respectable, independent life for herself in the city. Nonetheless, under the pressures of social expectations, she chooses to marry and becomes the wife of a man who brings her little happiness and much hardship. She lords over the blacks serving in their household, mean and hostile, but develops a complicated relationship with one of them, a black man named Moses. In the end, unable to reconcile her desires with the prevailing social norms of the white community, she suffers a mental breakdown and chooses to abandon him. In turn, Moses kills her.

The New Literature and Art Press in Shanghai published the novel, which appeared in English in 1950, in Chinese in 1956. The translator was Wang Keyi, then a prolific translator of foreign novels, which included Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Percy Bysshe Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam*, Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (co-translator, Fang Ping), and Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*. However, in light of the haste in producing this translation, Wang, concerned about its quality, did not want to publish it under his own name. Instead, he used his one-year-old daughter's name: Wang Lei (Wang 2002). In 1999, Yilin Press in Nanjing published a second Chinese translation by a translator called "Yi Lei." The translation was not a "re-translation" per se, but a revised version of the 1956 translation. And "Yi Lei," it turns out, was actually Wang's daughter, Wang Lei. The name "Yi Lei" comes from combining the last characters of the first names of father and daughter.

Forty odd years separate the two translations. They belong to different social contexts and are products of two distinct gender discourses. As such, comparison of the two serves as an excellent case study of how different gender discourses influence the treatment of the text and its characters, from framing the author, framing the text itself, to gender expectations imposed on the characters in the story. Another reason a comparison of the two translations is more than apt is that neither translator nor publishing house is known for being either pro- or anti-feminist. In other words, both translators and both publishing houses can represent the average attitude of the average reader in terms of gender perspectives. This way the results of the analysis can be interpreted as reflecting the norms (and not extremes) of the times.

2. The Field and the Framing of the Author

All translation activity occurs in a specific time and space, which Antoine Berman ((1995) 2009) refers to as "the horizon of the translator" (63). According to Berman, this is "the set of linguistic, literary, cultural, and historical parameters that 'determine' the ways of feeling, acting, and thinking of the translator" (63). But what is missing in Berman's horizon of the translator are the hierarchies between those parameters and the power relations

influencing them. If we take a power relations lens and apply Bourdieu's theory of "field," then what is expressed in the translations reflects "a structured system of social positions" (Jenkins 2002, 85) in which the "field of power"—that is, *politics*, is "the dominant or preeminent field of any society" (86). No other field—economic, literary, translation—can escape its influence (Casanova (1999) 2004, 126–63). This is what I will attempt to demonstrate by showing the different treatments both the author, Doris Lessing, and her protagonist, Mary Turner, received in two distinct political and gender discourse periods in China.

2.1. "Field" Politics in the 1950s and the "Communist" Writer Doris Lessing

When Wang Keyi's translation of *The Grass Is Singing* came out in 1956, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was only in its seventh year and was undergoing economic, political, and cultural restructuring according to the Soviet model of socialism. As per Mao's policy line for the arts—"Politics First, Art Second" (Mao (1942) 2002, 73)[3]—politics received the mandate to directly intervene in and influence all artistic affairs, including literature. The literary field was thus subject to the political one and enjoyed little independence. To produce what was "politically correct" (and not "artistically correct") became literature's highest priority and its means to accumulate symbolic capital. Literature that was not politically correct would not be published at all, and those who produced such literature might even face punishment.

In the field of economics, China was implementing the principles of a planned economy, where all authors, translators, literary journals, and publishing houses were funded by the State and operated within State institutions (not out of personal interest). Literature, translated or not, was therefore heavily influenced by State ideology. Under these conditions, the priority of literature was not simply to introduce foreign culture and new literary models, but to reinforce the State ideology—namely, fighting imperialism, promoting socialism, and supporting the revolutionary efforts of smaller, weaker nations. It is no surprise that "when it came to translating foreign literature of the 20th century, Chinese literature was mainly interested in translating authors whose works were in line with 'Realism' and deemed 'progressive' (in 'socialist' terms)" (Hong 1999, 20).[4]

Concerning gender discourse, although Chinese women gained equal rights as Chinese men after the founding of the PRC in 1949 (such as equal political representation, education, and economic rights), "this kind of liberation is still in fact based on the ideas of a [proletarian] class liberation and not liberation for the sex known as 'woman'" (He 2005, 704). Social attitudes did not fundamentally shift to "criticize the patriarchal culture from a gender perspective and affirm the value of womanhood" (704). Gender awareness was still very much lacking despite the appearance of "equality" in law.

In regard to the politics in these various fields, Doris Lessing was not introduced as a "woman" writer to her Chinese readers. The woman narrative in her stories was not of particular concern to the scholars of that time either. What was of interest, as directly influenced by 1950s Chinese politics, was Lessing's "communist" identity, her depiction of the African continent (the Third World), and her criticism of racial discrimination. In fact, Lessing traveled to the Soviet Union in 1952 as part of the delegation of British Communist Party writers and was labeled in Russia as a "progressive young writer." The fact that she was translated into Russian directly influenced China's decision to translate her. In 1955, Shanghai's Joint Publishing House of Literature and Art published Jie Buwu's translation of Lessing's *Hunger* (London, 1953), which marked the first time a translation of Lessing's work was ever published in China. A Chinese translation of V. Vladimirova's "Doris Lessing, Novelist," an essay originally published in the May 1954 issue of the English edition of *Soviet Literature*,[5] was also included.

Vladimirova praises Lessing's treatment of Africa and believes she is different from other "white bourgeois authors" because she "approaches the African people with respect," and her writing shows "the voice of indignant protest that she raises against a grasping colonialism, against the plundering of the African people's heritage, against racialism in all its forms" (Vladimirova 1955, 2). Because it was the 1950s and feminism had yet to enter literary criticism, the essay made no mention of Lessing's treatment of women and did not highlight her as a "woman" writer. The only markers of sex were the pronouns "her" and "she." But Vladimirova's essay proved to be fundamental in framing Doris Lessing as an author and also framed her reception by Chinese readers of that time. Both the translator's foreword in Wang Keyi's 1956 translation of *The Grass Is Singing* and later the translator's afterword in Dong Qiusi's 1958 translation of *A Home for the Highland Cattle* were modeled on Vladimirova's ideas.

There is no mention of Lessing's treatment of women in either the foreword by Wang or the afterword by Dong. At most, they refer to Lessing as the "young woman writer" (Wang 1956, I) or "woman writer" (Dong 1958, 82). Further, only *Hunger*, *The Grass Is Singing*, and *A Home for the Highland Cattle* (1953) were translated and published in China during this period. Her other works, such as *No Witchcraft for Sale* (1951) and *The Old Chief Mshlanga* (1951) were passed over because the black characters were deemed "vague and figureless" (Vladimirova 1955, 2) or, as in the case of *Martha Quest* (1952) and *A Proper Marriage* (1954), Lessing was not seen as portraying blacks as "a force capable of offering active resistance" (2). In the latter two, she even demonstrated disappointment in the communist party's treatment of women. Because of the intentional filtering and translation of Lessing's works, she became known in China as a communist writer critical of the white bourgeoisie and sympathetic towards victims of colonization. In this way, she had acquired a big amount of symbolic capital under Mao's politics first policy.

2.2. "Field" Politics in the 1990s and the "Woman" Writer Doris Lessing

China in the 1990s and China in the 1950s could not be more different. Significant shifts in the political and economic fields occurred during the forty years that separate the two periods. In 1978, the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China officially abandoned "class struggle" as a guiding doctrine and proposed that the Party instead focus on building a modern socialist country (Hong 1999, 226). Ideologies veering too much to the left were discouraged and totalitarian control over mind and culture was relaxed. The 1980s also marked a shift from a planned economy to a market economy. By the 1990s, the market economy model was there to stay, and during the 80s and 90s, China also saw an influx of Western ideas, such as feminism, which created a much more diverse social landscape.

By 1999, the major works of feminism from the West, such as Simone De Beauvoir's *Le deuxième sexe*, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, Mary Eagleton's *Feminist Literary Theory*, and Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, had been translated into Chinese to enthusiastic response. A number of these works even had multiple translations.[6] The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing also facilitated growing gender awareness in China and helped create "an era in which Chinese feminism would take root and grow" (Chen 2006, 37). Indeed, since the 1980s when women's studies and feminist studies were first introduced, they had been studied, then taught, and finally institutionalized with the establishment of research centers and various programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Gender discourse no longer inhabited the margins of Chinese society. It was now part of mainstream debate.

The literary field was also gradually breaking free from the direct influence of the political field (or better, the political field was gradually loosening its hold). In 1979, at the Literature and Art Workers' Congress, it was declared that the responsibility of the Party

> was not to lead the development of art and literature by way of order and command, nor would it ask literature and the arts to carry out any provisional, concrete, or direct political mission. Instead, art and literature should develop according to their own characteristics and evolution, and the Party should assist by way of creating the conditions for their further development.
>
> (Hong 1999, 227)

The spirit of the literature and art guidelines, "Letting a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools of thought contend,"[7] received renewed implementation. By the 1990s, under the market economy, the political field had loosened its hold on the literary field. Writers, publishing houses, works of

literature, and translated literature were now also subject to market conditions and competition, and not simply subject to political concerns. In terms of translated literature, what determined its value, whether in terms of economic or symbolic capital, was the writer's fame and the artistic and/or marketing potential of the work.

The shift in "field" politics allowed Lessing to be re-interpreted and re-translated for this new Chinese market. In 1988, Liaoning People's Publishing House published *The Golden Notebook* (translated as *The Crisis of the Woman* in Chinese[8]). In 1999, Shanghai Translation Publishing House brought out *Love, Again*. And in the same year, Yilin Press issued the revised translation of *The Grass Is Singing*. Lessing was no longer a one-dimensional "communist" writer. She was a versatile writer whose complex treatment of various issues, such as "colonialism, racism, feminism, politics, war, social welfare, health care, education, the arts, rites of passage, schizophrenia, madness, dreams, religion, and mysticism" (Fan 1999, 111), were now fully recognized.

The most significant departure from the 1950s, a time when the political message trumped all others, was the discovery of "gender" as crucial to the emancipation of the human individual. In 1981, Sun Zongbai noted that in addition to sentiments of anti-discrimination and anti-racism, "a recurring theme in Lessing's works was the equal rights and liberation of women" (67). In 1982, Shan edited and translated "The British Woman Writer Doris Lessing on Her Own Novels," in which issues such as whether or not *The Golden Notebook* was a feminist manifesto, the development and future of feminism, and Lessing and feminist writing were discussed. Other articles also explored the woman and feminist themes in Lessing's stories: Wang Jiaxiang's "Doris Lessing" (1987), Huang Mei's "The Crisis of Woman and the Crisis of the Novel" (1988), Lin Shuming's "The Boundaries of Freedom—A Comparative Study of Lessing, Zhang Jie and Wang Anyi" (1994), and Wang Jun's "Doris Lessing and Feminist Literature" (1997).[9]

3. The Field and the Framing of the Text

Publishing houses play an important part in the promotion of translated literature; the different positions of the various publishers significantly affect the framing of *The Grass Is Singing*.

3.1. Publishing Houses in the 1950s: "The Story of the Oppressed African"

In the 1950s, the State directly funded and controlled publishing houses according to planned economy principles. The New Literature and Art Press, which published the 1956 translation of *Grass*, was a direct product of this centralized system. It was a joint state-private ownership established by merging the publishers Qunyi, Haiyan, and Dafu in 1950[10] and then

further merging six other publishing houses in 1954. Following this restructuring, the new publishing house became one of the mainstream publishers of translated works, and its publications closely followed Party ideology.

According to "The Editing and Publishing Plan of New Literature and Art Press" (February 5, 1952) put together "under the guidance of Mao Zedong's thought," "literature and art should serve workers, peasants and soldiers [. . .] in accordance with the [then] current national policy." The publications in 1952 were thus expected to "advocate patriotism and internationalism" (Xing and Zhou 2002, 26).[11] As recalled by Liu Xuewei (1982), the first president of the press and the chairman of its board, "as soon as the editorial department of the press was established, we set up Mao Zedong's *Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art* as the guideline for editing and publishing" (210). In *Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art*, Mao ((1942) 2002) claims that literature and art should advance the interests of socialism and be subordinate to politics. This guideline dictated what texts were deemed "excellent" and "progressive"—attributes which were then highlighted in their promotional material or in introductions and such.

On the copyright page of the 1956 translation by Wang Keyi, Lessing's novel is characterized as "depicting a morally bankrupt white community" and as "a passionate accusation against the colonizers . . . celebrating the wisdom and spirit of blacks and their desire for liberation." The synopsis of the novel mentions Moses, the black servant, as if he were the protagonist: "He killed his white master, the woman, Mary"; "the local white police wrongly accused him of killing for money"; "he was a mere one among millions of blacks who have been humiliated and exploited."

Even though the summary mentions Mary, she is just supporting cast. Moses is the star. Who is Mary? What is her story? These are questions barely touched upon. When she is mentioned, it is in relation to Moses and how she is a perpetrator of white colonialism. Moses is the victim. He "was whipped in the face and badly injured" by her, "manipulated and flirted with," and finally "kicked away like a dog." Most sentences in the synopsis start with "Moses" or "He," drawing the reader's attention to this black servant and his plight. The tone is full of empathy. Whenever "Mary" comes up, she is positioned as the one victimizing Moses, the passive receiver of her actions. The tone used to describe her is decidedly not empathetic, but cold and judgmental.

3.2. Publishing Houses in the 1990s: "The Story of a Woman and Racism"

Since the implementation of the Reform and Opening-up policy in 1978, the Chinese government's official position towards the publishing industry was to "relax control and decentralize power" (IPED 1999, 3). This allowed the publishing houses to make their own decisions based on the principles of a market economy instead of ideological concerns. Yilin Press, which published the 1999 revised translation of *Grass*, was established in 1988; it was

a product of the new reform policies and the market economy. As a mainstream publisher of translated works, it translates foreign literature (foreign literary works and scholarly publications on literature), publications in the humanities and English as a Second Language (ESL). The publisher has not been particularly interested in feminism and few of its translations or Chinese publications in literature, literary studies, the humanities, and social sciences were on the subject. It did publish a translation of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* in 1998, but in general there are few publications that might be labeled "feminist."

Yilin has never published a series or collection of women writers either. The reason it purchased the rights to translate *Grass* in 1997 and included it in their *Modern and Contemporary World Literature Series* was Lessing's literary fame and the literary value of the novel itself (Xing 2007). But even if Yilin did not position itself as a publisher of women's literature, "Doris Lessing" represented market potential, because in the relaxed political environment and increasing gender awareness of the 1990s, the market was ready for a "woman" writer and her "woman" themes.

In fact, the introduction on the back cover of the 1999 version of *Grass* completely overturns the conclusion drawn by the 1956 version. Now it is Mary's story, her life, her childhood, her dreams, her independence as a single woman, her reasons for marriage, her married life, and her death. Though the introduction does mention racism, it does not accuse Mary of being a white colonizer, but rather sympathizes with her situation and believes she wants to be different. It is only in the face of social norms that she marries and surrenders to reality. Moses enters her life at her most vulnerable point, but their relationship is damned from the start because "racism was seared into the souls of all living in the south of Africa."

The introduction is sympathetic, compassionate. It highlights the plight of women living in the south of Africa during that time. Mary is now the subject, the active agent, of the sentence. She is the theme of the story. The complex relationship between Mary and Moses is described in a positive light: "Moses, the black servant, entered her life, and renewed her will to live." She is no longer the master commanding the slave, nor the one who "manipulates" him, as the 1956 version would have it.

4. Translator Habitus

> Practices are produced in and by the encounter between the habitus and its dispositions, on the one hand, and the constraints, demands and opportunities of the social field or market to which the habitus is appropriate or within which the actor is moving, on the other.
>
> (Jenkins 2002, 78)

As such, translation practices are also produced by the encounter between the habitus of the translator and the constraints, demands, and opportunities

of the field the translator finds himself or herself inhabiting. According to Bourdieu (1990),

> The habitus, which is the generative principle of responses more or less well adapted to the demands of a certain field, is the product of an individual history, but also, through the formative experiences of earliest infancy, of the whole collective history of family and class.
>
> (91)

In the following two sections, I will discuss the habitus of the two translators who undertook the 1956 and 1999 versions of *Grass*. In other words, I will be looking at how the individual dispositions of Wang Keyi and Wang Lei are the dynamic products of family, class, and field.

4.1. Wang Keyi and Habitus

Wang Keyi was born in 1925 in the province of Anhui. He graduated from the English department at Fudan University in 1952 at the age of twenty-seven, three years after the Communist Party of China founded the PRC (i.e. New China), succeeding the Republic of China in the Mainland. After graduation, he worked as an editor for several mainstream publishing houses: Shanghai's Joint Publishing House of Literature and Art, New Literature and Art Press, and the Shanghai division of People's Literature Publishing House. He committed suicide during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) at the age of forty-three.

All of Wang's translations were completed during the 1950s and 1960s when he was working as an editor. This was a time of high political interference in the literary field. Publishing houses published according to State ideology, which represented itself as the mainstream value of Chinese society. This meant that translating *Grass* was not an individual translator's choice, but one made in accordance with the publishing house's "political mission" (Wang 2002).

Most of his other translations also corresponded to the political demands of the time. Either they "established the image of the model laborer in a socialist society" (Wang 1952, 3), "satirized the incompetency of the church" (Fang and Wang 1958, synopsis), or "humorously ridiculed the middle class life of the time" (Wang 1980, 5). In terms of gender, Wang's perspective on women's issues also corresponded to the mainstream values of the time: class struggle was above and beyond all issues, including women's equality; equality for women was part of the larger struggle to tear down China's feudal society. In his foreword for *Pride and Prejudice*, Wang (1980) commended Austen for exposing the pettiness of bourgeois life, and it was under this framework that he then proceeded to look at the women in the novel.

The foreword shows that the most important part of *Pride and Prejudice* is its criticism of capitalism and feudalism. The narrative of equality in

marriage becomes an exemplary attack on capitalism and not a woman's issue in itself. Wang (1980) believed that the novel "showed how women strongly protested against the institution of marriage based on money and class and other corrupt social practices of the time" (10). He praised Elizabeth for her "rebelliousness" (13). Though the foreword reflects Wang's support for the pursuit of equality in marriage, it also reveals that this equality was seen as part of the larger struggle against capitalism and feudalism and not necessarily against patriarchy.

4.2. Wang Lei and Habitus

Wang Lei was born in Shanghai in 1955. Because her father, Wang Keyi, was condemned in the Cultural Revolution, she worked as a laborer after graduating from junior high school. In 1981, she started working as an editor for Shanghai Translation Publishing House and later enrolled as a part-time student in the Department of Foreign Languages at the Education College of Shanghai (now part of East China Normal University), where she received her bachelor's degree. When she retired, she was associate senior editor of Shanghai Translation Publishing House.

Shanghai Translation was established in 1978. Currently part of the Shanghai Century Publishing Group, it is known as "China's largest comprehensive publisher of translations" (Baidu Baike 2016). Its core business includes translating, editing, and publishing foreign works of literature and the social sciences, as well as dictionaries and reference books pertaining to teaching ESL. Similar to Yilin Press, which published the new revised translation of *Grass* in 1999, Shanghai Translation is a mainstream publishing house that does *not* focus on the promotion or publication of feminist texts.

Wang Lei did not publish many translations. Besides revising the translation of *Grass*, she also translated D. K. Swan and Michael West's *Three Great Plays of Shakespeare*, Hemingway's *Across the River and Into the Trees*, and co-translated Julia Barrett's *Presumption* with Xiao Zhang. Award-winning books she has edited in Chinese include *The Complete Works of Dickens* (1998), *The Great Tradition of English Literature* (1998), and *The Collected Works of Steinbeck* (2004).[12]

From the limited information we have of Wang Lei's life—her family background, education, professional work—she does not seem to display a preference for any particular type of literature, nor does she seem to take interest in any particular ideology (such as feminism). As the deputy editor of a mainstream publishing house specializing in translation, her choice of texts to translate was influenced by the publisher. And she worked on revising *Grass* because her father, Wang Keyi, produced the first translation (Wang 2002).

In general, the translations produced by both father (Wang Keyi) and daughter (Wang Lei) reflect the mainstream ideologies and literary values of their respective positions in the literary field. From the choice of source

texts to the reproduction of those texts in translation, both translators were influenced by the norms relevant within their fields at a particular point in time. The choice of *Grass*, therefore, did not stem from personal interest in the work itself. The father translated *Grass* because it was assigned to him to fulfill a political need. The daughter, on the other hand, revised it because it was her father's work.

5. Different Interpretations of *The Grass Is Singing*

Berman (1995) 2009) points out that "every translator has a specific relationship to his own activity, a certain conception or perception of translation, of its meaning, its purpose, its forms and modes." The translator's preface, foreword, or afterword provides a place for the translator to write about the translation, to analyze it, and to reflect upon it. It provides space for the "translating position" of the translator. But the translator's position does not just reflect personal tastes, attitudes, or "drive," it shows that the "translator is indeed marked by a whole historical, social, literary, and ideological discourse on translation" (58).

In other words, translators and their positions are influenced by the developments of the fields in which they find themselves. That is why in Wang Keyi's 1956 translator's foreword, he sought out the anti-colonial sentiments in *Grass* and did not place particular emphasis on women. And that is why, in Wang Lei's afterword in the 1999 revised version, she focuses on the tragedy of Mary and highlights the plight of women in the novel. The messages in these respective paratexts of *Grass* are consistent with the mainstream politics and gender discourses of their respective times.

5.1. The 1956 Translator's Foreword: Anti-Colonialism

The 1956 translator's foreword was written "in reference to the May 1954 issue of *Soviet Literature*" (Wang 1956, II). Based on the traditions of socialist realism, it emphasizes the novel's criticism of colonialism and capitalism. Wang Keyi points out that the running theme in all of Lessing's works is "a protest against the greed and shameless acts of imperialists and their colonial policies, a protest against racism" (I). The novel is capable of "invoking our deepest sympathies for the oppressed blacks and our strongest hatred for imperial colonialists; it allows us to understand that the only way to avoid tragedies like these was to vanquish colonialism!" (II).

Wang's treatment of Mary, the female protagonist, presents her as a racist. She is a cardboard figure representing the practices of racism. He believes the reason Mary is murdered by a black is because "she was morally corrupt and had an affair with her black servant (even though she obviously did not love him) and then conveniently discarded him. So the humiliated, gentle soul, having been utterly provoked, killed her" (II). He reserves no sympathy for Mary.

The reason for Wang's (re)presentation of *Grass* can be found in the politics of the literary field of 1956. The most important political discourse of the time was class struggle and national liberation. Mary, as a colonial white master to her oppressed black servant, fit the political bill of the time perfectly. From this perspective, it is very understandable that Wang interpreted the theme of the novel to be anti-colonial and framed Mary as a colonialist, disregarding the oppression she suffered as a woman. He fulfilled the political task assigned to him as the translator of the novel.

5.2. The 1999 Translator's Afterword: Women's Issues

In the 1999 translator's afterword, the previous one-dimensional emphasis on the anti-colonial aspects of the novel is abandoned. Instead, Wang Lei offers a comprehensive assessment of the novel by looking at its complex presentation of gender, racial, and cultural issues, placing particular attention on women's issues. This reflects the Chinese society of the 1990s, in which political control was relaxed, culture was growing more diverse, and women's issues were gaining momentum in everyday discourse. She points out, "*The Grass Is Singing* touches upon a recurring theme in Lessing's works: the social status of women and their survival; the effects of institutionalized racism, history, and culture on the individual" (Wang 1999, 226).

She notes too that Mary's tragedy is not only the result of the sustained effects of racism and colonialism on the human psyche, but it is also due to the inability of women to extract themselves from notions or situations of dependency. Mary was once economically independent, but the pressure of "social norms" eventually led her to marry Dick, a man she did not love. In the hope of escaping her unhappy marriage, she fled back to the city, but society was not about to provide a place for a married woman outside of her home. So she went back to the farm and drudgery. Wang Lei expresses full sympathy with Mary's situation: "As a woman, even if she is a bona fide racist, in her subconscious, she still desires comfort, love, and strength" (228).

She also sees Mary as the victim of racism and not just a perpetrator. Her death is the result of not being able to free herself from the ideological claims of racism, even though she harbors notions of democracy and equality, and experiences sympathy towards blacks (227). Moreover, Wang Lei points out that a deciding factor in Mary's tragedy is that she "never understood the true meaning of 'freedom' and passively accepted her situation and fate" (229). A frequent theme of Lessing's works is the idea of a "free woman," and Wang Lei's interpretation of Mary's death effectively links it with Lessing's notion of freedom for women.

Although the translator never once mentions "feminism" but only refers to the interpretation of the text, her speaking from the perspective of the woman and her freedom can be seen as a feminist reading which differs from that of her predecessor's. Wang Lei highlights race and racism, but she

also points out the particular difficulties and struggles of the white *woman* in this racist context, which was both colonial and patriarchal.

6. Textual Translation Differences between the 1956 and 1999 Versions of *Grass*

The most interesting aspect when comparing the 1956 translation and the 1999-revised version is the different representations of "Mary" as a character. In the 1956 version, already framed as a colonial perpetrator, Mary is a woman who is mean, manipulative, and morally questionable. In the 1999 version, however, she is presented in a far more positive light via changes in the translation, which suggests a shift in the translator's position according to the respective shifts in field politics. The following are some examples.

1. She was so conscientious that Samson found things had worsened rather than improved: even his understood one-third allowance had gone, and she wore the store keys tied to her belt.

(Lessing 1950, 73)

Wang Keyi [WK]: 她非常小心眼儿 [She was extremely petty], 因此萨姆逊觉得, 事情不但并不比从前对他有利, 反而越来越糟: 甚至原有的三分之一的数量也没有了, 因为玛丽把钥匙系在自己裤带上。

(1956, 55)

Wang Lei [WL]: 她用起东西来非常小心谨慎 [She handled things with extreme care] 因此萨姆森觉得, 事情不但不比从前对他有利, 反而越来越糟, 甚至原有的三分之一的数量也没有了, 因为玛丽把钥匙系在自己的裤带上。

(1999, 59)

Very briefly, I present the context of this example: Mary has just married Dick and is settling into her new life and role on the farm. This includes taking on the responsibilities of managing the household and its food supplies. Samson, the old black servant, has a habit of stealing food behind Dick's back, but can't anymore because of Mary's "conscientious" management. A very basic dictionary definition of conscientious is "careful to do everything that it is your job or duty to do" (Longman 2003). It is a neutral and perhaps even positive quality in most professional situations.

But the 1956 version chooses to use the Chinese expression 小心眼儿 (petty) to translate "conscientious." "Petty" is by no means a positive quality. In fact, it is exactly the opposite. In the 1999 version, however, the translation is changed to "handled things with extreme care," which reverses the negative image of Mary that the 1956 version created and portrays her as a responsible housewife. Superficially, it seems that "petty" is wrong and the 1999 version corrects this mistake. But if we look at the matter from the translator's

position in the literary field of a specific time and place, this "mistake" was not made simply because Wang Keyi translated in haste and overlooked the nuances of the word "conscientious." In the same token, Wang Lei's "correction" was not simply a source-target, linguistic-dictionary matter either.

"Text is meaning and meaning is choice" (Halliday 1978, 137). For the translator, this means that one must choose what meaning to render in another language. What is chosen (or not chosen), what is rendered (or not rendered), cannot be simply labeled as a "faithful" or "unfaithful," "correct" or "incorrect" rendition of the source text. It can, however, be understood as a conscious or unconscious reflection of the habitus of the translator and the specific field in which he or she is located.

In the 1956 translator's foreword, Wang Keyi sees Mary as the morally corrupt representation of white colonialism. It would not be out of line to suggest further that his bias towards Mary might have been accentuated by the fact that he was translating under extreme time pressure and did not have enough time to contemplate nuances. Why was Mary "petty" for being a good manager of the household food supplies? Who was she being "petty" towards? Here Wang Keyi takes the viewpoint of the black servant, Samsom. To Samson (the colonized), Mary (the colonizer) is petty. This is in line with Wang's anti-colonial and anti-racist sentiments. It shows his sympathies towards the colonized, but non-existent sympathies towards the struggles of a married woman.

Wang Lei's 1999 revision might be taken for granted as a "correction" any translator would make if he or she "carefully" read the source text. But no "correction" happens in a vacuum. They are all products of certain conditions. If the revisions had not been made in the context of the 1990s when Chinese society was rapidly opening up to the world and its ideas, which included feminism and gender awareness, the revisions might not have taken this direction. If the translator were still heavily entrenched in the doctrines of class struggle, the particular struggles of a white woman in the context of racism and colonialism would likely still be overlooked.

2. She could not bear to think she had got her way by these methods; and because she did not want to remember it, she slowly recovered.

(Lessing 1950, 188)

WK: 玛丽简直不忍去回想自己怎么会那样随心所欲，不择手段 [got her way by doing whatever she wanted, however she wanted]; 她因为不去想这件事, 身心也就渐渐地复原了。

(1956, 150)

WL: 玛丽简直不忍回想自己竟会那样随心所欲 [got her way by doing whatever she wanted]。因为不去想这件事, 她的身心也就渐渐地复原了。

(1999, 161)

Here is the context: Mary cannot bear the thought of her behavior after Moses offers his resignation. She had relinquished her dignity as the white master and begged him tearfully to stay. And he did. "By these methods" refers directly to Mary's "tears and appeal." The fact that she "could not bear to think" indicates that she was ashamed of her behavior, that she was unable to control herself and ended up getting what she wanted with tears and begging. Wang's translation of "whatever she wanted, however she wanted" suggests a person who is in control, who knows what she wants and will spare no scruples to get it. Mary was not such a person. She was in the throes of struggling against her attraction to Moses and her upbringing as superior by virtue of being "white." She was in a constant state of mental turmoil, not to mention that she was also terrified that her husband would scold her for making another servant leave.

The 1956 translation of "whatever she wanted, however she wanted" emphasizes the side of Mary that is the in control white colonial master. She becomes the manipulative "evil woman" who deliberately uses tears to get her way. The 1999 version takes out "however she wanted," which in Chinese is in fact very strong wording suggesting someone will do *whatever* it takes, fair or foul, to get what they want. The removal of this phrase significantly reduces the negative implications on Mary's character. And this change corresponds to the sympathy and understanding Wang Lei shows towards Mary's situation in the translator's afterword.

The next three examples occur when Charlie, the farmer, visits Mary and her husband. By this time, hardship has befallen the farm and Mary is mentally unstable.

3. Charlie examined her closely when they were inside the lighted room, more closely because of the way she had said, "Good evening . . ."

(Lessing 1950, 217)

WK: 大家一走进那间点着灯的房间, 查理就仔细地打量着玛丽, 特别是因为她那样柔声媚气地说了声 [the way she gently and sensually said] "您好". . . 。

(1956, 174)

WL: 大家一走进那间点着灯的房间, 查理就仔细地打量着玛丽, 尤其因为她那样柔声地说了声 [the way she gently said] "你好" . . . 。

(1999, 187)

The English text does not specify "in what way" Mary says "Good evening." The 1956 translation specifies she says it in a "gentle and sensual" way. The choice of "sensual," though it can imply an attractive characteristic in a woman, is a judgmental choice in this context and becomes a negative attribute since the translator regards Mary as morally corrupt as suggested in his translator's foreword. In the 1999 version, "sensual" was taken out,

which has the effect of immediately turning our perception of Mary around. She is no longer trying to seduce Charlie.

4. She laughed, twisting her shoulder in a horrible parody of coquetry.
(Lessing 1950, 217)

WK: 她笑了, 一面扭动着肩膀, 做出一副肉麻的卖弄风情的姿态 [in a cheesy coquettish manner]。
(1956, 174–75)

WL: 她笑了, 一面扭动着肩膀, 笨拙地做出一副卖弄风情的姿态 [in a clumsy coquettish manner]。
(1999, 188)

This particular laughter takes place after she tells Charlie that she and Dick haven't seen him in a long time. The 1956 translation does not translate "a horrible parody," thus producing the effect that Mary is indeed a wanton woman who is purposefully coquettish, while the reality is that she is socially awkward because poverty and her ego have prevented her from participating in social activities in the white community for many years. She is socially inept, hence the "parody" that her behavior produces, not to mention that she is mentally unstable at this point. When Charlie arrives at their impoverished farm, she is forced to put on a show but is an ill-suited actor. The 1999 version adds "clumsy" to the translation, which again shows that Mary is not by nature coquettish, nor is she purposefully trying to act that way.

5. "Mr. Slatter doesn't like us," she informed Dick socially, "or otherwise, he would come to see us more often."
(Lessing 1950, 217)

WK: 她亲密地告诉迭克说 [informed Dick intimately], "斯拉特先生和我们不够交情, 否则他决不会隔了这么久不来看我们的。"
(1956, 175)

WL: . . . 她 . . . 转身对迪克用一种社交应酬的口气说 [she informed Dick in a socializing manner]: "斯莱特先生和我们不够交情, 否则他决不会隔了这么久才来看我们。"
(1999, 188)

After Mary's "horrible parody," she turns to her husband, Dick, and says this. In the 1956 translation, the word "intimately" is used to describe the manner in which she talks to her husband, while the 1999 version changes it to "a socializing manner." Comparatively speaking, it does not seem that the 1956 translation need have an overtly negative impact on the reader's perception of Mary. But if we take these five examples as a series, and not just

independently, the 1956 translation creates a very different "Mary" from the 1999 version. In 1956, Mary is a woman who is sensual, coquettish, and intimate; in 1999, she is awkward, clumsy, and ill at ease. And her level of intimacy with her husband? "Social."

Following this series of comparisons, we can see that the 1956 translation either explicitly or implicitly presents Mary as "loose," which corresponds to Wang Keyi's framing of her as "morally corrupt" (1956, II). The 1999 version, on the other hand, reframes her as a white woman who becomes socially incompatible with her own white community, suffering a mental breakdown as a result. She is, as Wang Lei puts it, "an unfortunate victim of fate" (1999, 227).

There are many more instances where the two translations differ in terms of their treatment of women or women's issues. The ones I discuss here are some of the more prominent ones concerning the treatment of "Mary." In one she is mean and manipulative, a flirt, and sexualized; in the other, she is hardworking and suffering from both physical and mental hardship—a much more sympathetic figure.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of these two texts shows that the field in which a translator is located, its politics, and the gender discourse within the field exert significant influence over the translation. In China in the 1950s, political ideology reigned supreme and gender was at best an afterthought, so "naturally" Lessing was introduced into China as an anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, communist writer. *The Grass Is Singing* was thus celebrated for its message of anti-colonialism, while the women's issues it also raises were overlooked.

The 1956 translator's foreword and synopsis present *Grass* as a story about Moses, the black slave. Mary is relegated to playing the unjust white colonialist. These paratexts effectively de-womanize the theme of the novel. Reissued during the opening up of Chinese society to Western thoughts and feminism in the 1990s, the 1999 version reactivates the woman theme of the novel, highlighting the plight of the white woman and women's issues more broadly. The publisher and translator no longer understand the text solely as a dichotomy of bad colonialist/good colonized.

The differences in the two translations can be attributed to the differences in the fields in which they were produced. In other words, "context" exerted significant influence but in subtle ways, or, as Basil Hatim points out, ". . . in subtle and intricate ways, context . . . acts on and interacts with text" (2009, 37). There was no flagrant manipulation of the text in the 1956 translation, but in terms of the character "Mary," for example, a series of linguistic choices were made which correspond to the paratext and the context of the time. Mary became mean and manipulative, a white colonialist woman with loose morals. In the 1999 version, subtle changes were made to reverse

that representation. The paratext showed a much more sympathetic view of Mary; the interests of women (rather than the colonized) became the theme of the novel.

How the treatment of women and women's issues differ in these two translations (including their paratexts) show that different contexts and different gender discourses have the potential of exerting considerable influence on the outcome of the translation. A marginalized gender discourse in society produces a marginalized gender awareness in the translator; a prominent gender discourse in society produces a heightened gender awareness in the translator. The translations either de-emphasized or accentuated gender-related issues, as I have sought to demonstrate using the two different versions of Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing*.

Notes

* Permission has been granted by *East Journal of Translation* where the article appeared in the 2015 CIUTI Issue. An earlier version of this article was published in Chinese in *Comparative Literature in China*《中国比较文学》2012, Issue 86.
1. The China Scholarship Council and the Young Teachers' Research Team Program of Shanghai International Studies University funded this research.
2.《译介学》
3. 政治标准第一, 艺术标准第二
4. Unless otherwise noted, all citations from Chinese sources have been translated into English by Nancy Tsai.
5. *Soviet Literature* was a monthly journal published in English, French, German, Polish, and Spanish in Moscow. It introduced novels, plays, and stories by Soviet writers, critical essays, and information on cultural events in the U.S.S.R. Here the citations are taken from the English edition of the journal.
6. The major Chinese translations of *Le deuxième sexe* before 2000:《第二性-女人》*The Second Sex—Woman*, translated by 桑竹影 Sang Zhuying and 南珊 Nan Shan, Hunan Literature and Art Publishing House, 1986;《女性的秘密》*The Secret of Women*, translated by 晓宜 Xiao Yi, 张亚莉 Zhang Yali, et al., China International Interchange Press, 1988;《女人是什么》*What Is a Woman?* translated by 王友琴 Wang Youqin et al., China Federation of Literary and Art Circles Press, 1988;《第二性（全译本）》*The Second Sex (A Complete Translation)*, translated by 陶铁柱 Tao Tiezhu, China Book Press, 1998. The Major Chinese Translations of *The Feminine Mystique* before 2000;《女性的奥秘》*The Mystique of Women*, translated by 巫漪云 Wu Yiyun et al., Jiangsu People's Press, 1988;《女性的奥秘》*The Mystique of Women*, translated by 程锡麟 Cheng Xilin, Sichuan People's Press, 1988;《女人：走出陷阱》*Women: Leave the Trap*, translated by 毛迅 Mao Xun et al., Knowledge Press, 1992. The Chinese Translation of *A Room of One's Own* before 2000;《一间自己的屋子》*A Room of One's Own*, translated by 王还 Wang Hai, SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1989. The Chinese Translation of *Feminist Literary Theory* before 2000;《女权主义文学理论》*Feminist Literary Theory*, translated by 胡敏 Hu Min et al., Hunan Literature and Art Press, 1989. The Chinese Translation of *Sexual Politics* before 2000:《性与文本政治-女权主义文学理论》*Sex and Politics of the Text—Feminist Literary Theory*, translated by 林建法 Lin Jianfa and 赵拓 Zhao Tuo, Time Literature and Art Press, 1992.
7. 百花齐放, 百家争鸣
8.《女性的危机》

9. 王家湘的“多丽丝·莱辛”(1987)、黄梅的“女人的危机和小说的危机”(1988)、林树明的“自由的限度—莱辛、张洁、王安忆比较”(1994)、王军的“多丽思·莱辛与女性主义文学”(1997)
10. 群益出版社、海燕书店、大孚图书公司
11. I could not locate the publishing plan for 1956, but considering the social and historical context in China in the 1950s, it is unlikely that the principles of its publishing plans would be greatly adjusted.
12. 《狄更斯文集》(1998),《英国文学的伟大传统》(1998),《斯坦贝克文集》(2004)
13. The publisher only provided the Chinese transliterated names of the other three authors. I was unable to locate the original spelling of their names.

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10 Manipulating Simone de Beauvoir

A Study of Chinese Translations of *The Second Sex*[1]

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Chinese translations of Western feminist classics have been complicated by cultural barriers and manipulated by publishers and translators. In 1953, H. M. Parshley translated *Le deuxième sexe*, often regarded as a major work of feminist philosophy and the starting point of second-wave feminism, into English. Although severely criticized (Flotow 2000; Moi 2002; Simons 1983), Parshley's English translation was the only source text for most Chinese translations. This chapter analyzes two earlier translations of *The Second Sex* and two of *Le deuxième sexe*, all in Chinese. It engages with the paratextual materials of the Chinese translations, especially translators' prefaces and publishers' notes, to see what cultural mediators say about these translation projects given the ideological and political constraints in Mainland China, known formally as the People's Republic of China (hereafter PRC), and across the Taiwan Strait, in Taiwan. Drawing on the translations of the marriage and sexuality chapters, I investigate different word choices in four Chinese translations and analyze the "value orientations" behind these selections (Munday 2012, 13). I will take examples from prefaces and notes in a number of different translations, but restrict my more detailed analyses to four specific translations (Taiwan, 1973; PRC, 1998; PRC, 2011; Taiwan, 2013).[2]

1. The Sociopolitical Contexts of PRC and Taiwan

Following the Chinese civil war (1927–1950), the Communist Party of China took full control of Mainland China and founded the PRC in 1949. The Nationalist government had relocated its government to Taiwan in 1948, where it imposed martial law that was not lifted until July 15, 1987. Under military rule, formation of new political parties was illegal in Taiwan; the Taiwan Garrison Command censored all publications; registration of newspapers was limited to existing ones (Ku 1989, 12). Practically speaking, all channels of reform or change were closed, and it was made very clear that the government wanted no agitation of any kind. The Nationalist Party attempted to preserve the patriarchal and Confucian tradition in a tightly controlled society as one way of countering the drastic social and political

changes taking place in Mainland China (PRC). Women were encouraged to play supportive and subservient roles both at home and in society, and a maternal image of women was propagated and glorified (Ku 1989). In contrast, and as a result of the Communist Party of China's policy of subordinating women's organizations to national interests, gender differences in the PRC were erased and "iron girls" who "held up half the sky" served as role models for women. Paradoxically, for some time, Taiwan and the PRC resembled each other in their

> subordination of feminism to priorities of nationalism and class-based revolution. . . . Both revolutionary parties attempted to impose discipline whenever expressions of feminist autonomy or radicalism appeared divisive, and both encouraged a retreat from radical feminism and family revolution.
>
> (Stacey 1983, 76–77)

Drastic social change transformed Taiwan in the 1970s, when the socioeconomic structure shifted from an agricultural to an industrial economy, with fast accumulation of wealth, growth of the middle class, migration of workers from the countryside into the cities, and the rapid advancement of women into the workforce (Ku 1989). The new generation experienced an uninterrupted expansion of educational opportunity and economic prosperity, so far unprecedented in Taiwan, so that yearnings for social justice as well as political, legal, and social reforms prevailed.

Meanwhile, moving out of the rigors of the political winter of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), PRC society was reviving some of the diversity and vigor that had been harshly repressed by the revolutionary-totalitarian regime (Min 2005, 274). This period, sometimes described as one of "Culture Fever," nourished a translation effort that sought to present Western feminism to the Chinese intellectual world (Wang 2001). Li Xiaojiang, a pioneer of Chinese feminism, recalls the first publishing of Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* in Mainland China: "It was attractive, not for its content, but for its title, and especially the word *nüren* (woman), which was added by the Chinese mainland publisher after the actual name, *The Second Sex*." Li further explains, "For *nüren* (woman) to appear in a book title in mid-1980s in China was refreshing" (1999, 12). Western feminism, which reflects the Western ontological tradition, came at a time when Chinese women were seeking support in their struggle to break away from the grip of class theory.

2. Prefaces and Paratexts

The first Chinese translation of *The Second Sex* appeared in 1973 in Taiwan, twenty years after the English translation. The first translation in the People's Republic of China was published in 1986. Until 1998, all Chinese translations were limited to text from Book II of Parshley's "translation and

edition." Book I was completely left out. Among these translations, the 1988 PRC translation even deletes Chapter XV of Book II, "The Lesbian," and Chapter XIX, "Prostitutes and Hetairas." There is only one sentence in the translator's preface explaining the deletion:[3] "These (other) chapters, constituting a woman's life, suffice to answer 'what a woman is' "[4] (Wang et al. 1987, 441). In other words, "lesbians" and "prostitutes" are not "really" part of the normative understanding of women. Such deletions were a common occurrence in 1980s and 1990s PRC, mostly because Marxism had become the established ideology in Chinese society (Zhou 2006, 143). Chinese women were not allowed to discuss their rights, and questions about the status of women were socially and politically taboo (Honig and Hershatter 1988, 309). Writers, translators, and publishers were compelled to conform to this ideology as will become evident in the discussion of the prefaces and notes that date from this period.

This strict political control may go some way to explaining the declarations in prefaces and notes in the 1970s and 1980s in which publishers and translators reject or criticize Beauvoir and/or existential feminism. For example, in the 1986 translation published by Hunan Literature and Art, the publisher states that "Simone de Beauvoir . . . the author of this book believes that she upholds the ethics of existentialism. We cannot completely agree with or accept this philosophy and point of view"[5] (2). In the translation published in 1987, the preface points out: "Here, Beauvoir mainly analyzes the lives of European and American women. These lives are certainly different from the lives of Chinese women."[6] The 1987 edition reduces Beauvoir's criticism of a socially constructed sex role by naming it "women's introspection"[7] and also states that "this kind of introspection seems to have no direct link to women's progress"[8] (Wang et al. 1987, 441). Due to Chinese Communist Party (CCP) policy of subordinating women's organizations to national interests and class-based revolution (Stacey 1983, 76–77), "feminism" (*nüquan zhuyi*, sometimes translated as *nüxing zhuyi*) has long been a negative term in the PRC. It is always accompanied by the adjective "bourgeois" and often by the qualifier "Western" (Wang 1999, 1). The use of this kind of terminology in explanations or disclaimers in prefaces and other paratexts seems to demonstrate the PRC translators' or publishers' perhaps coerced beliefs in the superiority of Marxism over other ideologies and their antagonism toward feminism. It also reflects the Chinese government's efforts to reinterpret feminism within the framework of Marxism and bring the women's movement into the Marxist track (Zhou 2006, 143).

Across the Taiwan Strait, things were somewhat similar under the Nationalist Party's Martial Law (1948–1987). In the translator's preface to Ouyang Zi's[9] 1973 version of *The Second Sex*, the translator writes,

> However, Beauvoir's purpose for writing this book is not to encourage women to rise up to revolt, but rather sincerely to dispel the myth, and

> to promote people's true understanding of and insight into women and women's situations. This is also our purpose in translating this book.[10]
>
> (2)

This deliberate emphasis on "not encouraging women to rise up to revolt" is doubtless due to the taboo attached to social activism which was not lifted until the 1980s (Ku 1998, 115).

In terms of attitude towards communism, existentialism, and socialism, Tao Tiezhu's translation, published in the PRC in 1998 by China Book Press and reissued in Taiwan in 1999 by Owl, is a perfect example. The 1998 PRC edition has a translator's preface in which Tao states, "as a researcher in women's studies, I sincerely hope that this book will be a useful reference text for Chinese women's studies"[11] (5). As a member of the CCP, he attributes the improvements in Chinese women's economic, social, and political status to the Chinese Communist Party's decades of hard work and claims his translation of *The Second Sex* aims to support the party's work (5). When published in Taiwan a year later, Tao's preface was deleted and replaced by introductions written by two university professors, Gu Yanling and Li Yuanzhen. Gu and Li are prominent feminists in Taiwan, who have been active in the women's movement since the mid-1970s. In 1982, together with a group of colleagues who supported gender equality, Gu and Li established the magazine *Awakening* [婦女新知] to encourage women's self-awareness and to raise public concern about women's issues in Taiwan. In her introduction to Tao's Chinese translation of *The Second Sex*, Gu (1999) writes that

> local academic discussions, debates around social issues, and even the formulation of laws and policies often tend to be empty, general, and hasty, failing to leave a profound cultural mark. This is due to the lack of systematic translation and introduction of world classics by the publishing industry, resulting in the difficult accumulation of cultural assets.[12]
>
> (iv)

While Tao's PRC introduction speaks highly of the CCP, Gu in Taiwan criticizes communist class struggle as a means for women's liberation:

> Now equipped with the concrete experience gained from the second wave of the feminist movement . . . looking back to examine *The Second Sex*, we can certainly find some questionable points, such as the overestimation of socialism. But Beauvoir herself later changed her stance on this. Studying the experience of communist nations, she discovered that class struggle does not liberate women. Women have to become real feminists in order to fight for their own liberation.[13]
>
> (iv–v)

Clearly, Gu's emphasis on Beauvoir's feminism echoes her own support for the women's movement in Taiwan.

3. Detailed Translation Analyses

It can be argued that regardless of the claims translators make in their prefaces, they consciously or unconsciously move the texts they translate into their own ideological positions and sexual stereotypes: gender and sexual identity seem inseparable from the activity of (re)writing (Santaemilia 2011). This section analyzes the complexities of gender/sexual identities that translators present, the tension between patriarchy and feminism the translators face, the resistance towards the source text translators express in their manipulations, and, ultimately, how all of these factors shape the Chinese translations of Beauvoir's views of marriage. I chose the chapter "The Married Woman" for this analysis because marriage and sexuality are privileged areas in which to study "issues of cultural sensitivity [that are] encumbered by issues of gender stereotyping and cliché"—areas where each culture places its moral or ethical limits and encounters taboos and historical dilemmas (Flotow 2000, 31). In "The Married Woman," Beauvoir ((1953) 1983) expresses her attitude towards marriage by saying that "to ask two spouses bound by practical, social and moral ties to satisfy each other sexually for their whole lives is pure absurdity" (466). She thinks that marriage "almost always destroys women" and is a perverted institution oppressing both men and women (466). Beauvoir's discussion of marriage is thus a perfect place in which to analyze the shifts and variations among the four translations and to examine how a translator's subjective stance manifests itself linguistically in a text. The following examples from the four translations will be discussed with a special focus on several key words, including marriage, sexuality, virginity, and family. Yang and Tao translate from Parshley's English translation; Qiu and Zheng translate from Beauvoir's French source text. Here is the very first sentence of the chapter "The Married Woman":

(1) **Parshley**: Marriage is the destiny **traditionally offered** to women by society.

((1953) 1983, 415)

Yang (Taiwan): 婚姻, 是**傳統社會指派**給女人的命運。

((1973) 1992, 6)

[Marriage is the destiny **assigned** to women by **traditional society**.]

Tao (PRC): 结婚, 是**社会传统赋予**女人的命运。

(1998, 487)

[Marriage is the destiny **endowed** to women by **social tradition**.]

Beauvoir: La destinée que la **société propose traditionnellement** à la femme, c'est le mariage.

((1949) 1976, 221)

Qiu (Taiwan): 在**傳統社會**裡, 女人的命運**註定是要**走入婚姻。
(2013, 707)

[In **traditional society**, women are **destined to** enter marriage.]

Zheng (PRC): 从**传统**说来, 社会**赋予**女人的命运是婚姻。
(2011, 199)

[Speaking from **tradition**, the destiny **endowed** by society to women is marriage.]

As Munday (2012, 16) says, "The translator needs to uncover the source text writer's choices and to re-encode those choices as appropriate in the target language." I, therefore, see translators' choices as meaningful expressions of their conscious or unconscious decisions at the lexical level, which represent the translator's interpretation of the source text. Positively inscribed affect and appreciation are explicit and intense in Tao (PRC, 1998) and Zheng (PRC, 2011) who translate "offer/propose" as "赋予" (endow), which conjures up notions such as "endowed human rights" or "innate God-given human rights" in Chinese. Negative attitudes are conveyed very strongly by Yang (Taiwan (1973) 1992) and Qiu (Taiwan, 2013): "指派" (assign) and "註定是要" (are destined to). Regardless of its collocation, "指派" (assign) would have a negative value on its own because it clearly denotes a top-down hierarchy of who is giving the orders and who is accepting them. In Tao (PRC, 1998) and Zheng (PRC, 2011), marriage is "endowed upon women," while in Yang (Taiwan, (1973) 1992) and Qiu (Taiwan, 2013) marriage is an (unavoidable) assignment.

These disparate attitudes continue in the Chinese translations of the terms "traditional" and "society." Coincidentally, the two Taiwanese female translators, Yang and Qiu, make the same decision by combining them into one phrase: "傳統社會" (traditional society). Yet the male translators, Tao and Zheng, render this as "社会传统" (social tradition) and "从传统说来" (speaking from tradition/traditionally speaking). In Chinese, the position of a lexeme has an effect on emphasis. The semantic emphasis in the two women's translations is on "society," while in the men's it is on "tradition." As Tani Barlow (1994) pointed out, half of Chinese humanity has historically found personhood inaccessible since tradition made women "vulgar, passive, dependent virtuous wives and good mothers." All female roles, especially "virtuous wife, good mother," have historically repressed the emergence of personality in Chinese women. Before the women's studies movement, liberation for women proceeded against "feudalism." Now women struggle against traditional society (350). "Assigned by traditional society," as in Yang/Taiwan, implies that what is assigned at some point in history is not necessarily assigned now; and second, it evokes the modern society in which readers are living and contrasts it with the traditional society in the source text. This juxtaposition of "now and then" and "here

and there" is indicative of Yang (Taiwan, [1973] 1992) and Qiu (Taiwan, 2013) as feminist-identified translators pleading for revolt against marriage. However, Tao (PRC, 1998) and Zheng (PRC, 2011) send a different message with their emphasis on tradition. As a result, Beauvoir's view of marriage is distorted in their work, and in their translations, she appears to see marriage as a positive endowment for women.

Now, what if a woman does not get married?

(2) **Parshley**: The **celibate woman** is to be explained and defined with reference to marriage, whether she is **frustrated, rebellious**, or even **indifferent in regard to that institution**.

((1953) 1983, 415)

Yang (Taiwan): **女子到了相當的年齡而未完婚**, 不論是**由於失戀、找不到適當的對象, 或由於反對結婚**, 或甚至對婚姻**置之度外**, 人們均稱呼她們為"**獨身**"女子, 以別於"結了婚"的女人。

((1973) 1992, 6)

[**When women reach a certain age still unmarried**, no matter if it is **because of a breakup, failing to find a suitable partner, objecting to marriage**, or even **having no regard for** marriage, people all address them as "**single**" women, as distinct from "married" women.]

Tao (PRC): 对**独身女人**的解释和界定与婚姻有关, 不论她**是受挫的、反抗的**, 还是对婚姻制度**满不在乎**的。

(1998, 487)

[The definition and demarcation of a **single woman** is related to marriage, no matter if she is **frustrated, rebellious, or couldn't care less** of the institution of marriage.]

Beauvoir: C'est par rapport au mariage que se définit **la célibataire**, qu'elle soit **frustrée, révoltée** ou même **indifférente à l'égard de cette institution.**

((1949) 1976, 221)

Qiu (Taiwan): 一般也都以婚姻為標準來評斷**獨身的女人**, 說她因**失婚而受挫, 說她因叛逆而拒滿婚姻**, 或者說她**不在乎**婚姻制度。

(2013, 707)

[Generally marriage is used as a standard to judge a **single woman**. They say she **is frustrated due to divorce, or she rejects marriage because she is rebellious**, or she **doesn't care for** the institution of marriage.]

Zheng (PRC): **独身女人**的定义由婚姻而来, 不论她是**受挫的、反抗过的**, 甚或对这种制度**毫不在乎**。

(2011, 199)

> [The definition of a **single woman** comes from marriage, no matter if she **is frustrated, had rebelled before, or doesn't care** about this institution **at all**.]

The three adjectives in the source text, "frustrated, rebellious, or even indifferent," are translated literally by Tao (PRC, 1998) and Zheng (PRC, 2011) as "受挫的, 反抗(过)的, 满/毫不在乎的," the most simple and direct Chinese equivalents. Yang (Taiwan, (1973) 1992), however, provides rich explanations and descriptions for each of these states of unmarried women. "由於失戀、找不到適當的對象" (because of a breakup, failing to find a suitable partner) is one of her explanations for a woman's frustration. Coincidentally, Qiu (Taiwan, 2013) produces similar explanations in her translations: "因失婚而受挫, 說她因叛逆而拒絕婚姻" (she is frustrated due to divorce, or she rejects marriage because she is rebellious). The two Taiwanese translators' obvious additions in their translations reveal their sympathy for unmarried women. As Sherry Simon writes in her preface to *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*, "The identity and motivations of translators affect the work they do" (1996, ix). This is doubtless the case here, for in addition to translating *The Second Sex*, Yang Meihui published *Women, Women* (1973), *Women's Problems: New Essays and Translations* (1974–1976), and *Women, Feminism, Sexual Revolution* (1988),[14] in which she summarizes a number of works of Western feminism, including Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, Margaret Mead's *Sex and Temperament*, and Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. She also translated Kate Chopin, Sidonie Gabrielle Colette, Katherine Anne Porter, and Betty Friedan. Beauvoir is a crucial component of Yang's body of work, and is heavily referenced in *Women's Problems: New Essays and Translations*. As an openly feminist writer and translator, Yang's emotional affinities and sympathy for women explain this addition in the translation.

In this last example, I contrast patriarchally identified translation with feminist-identified translation:

(3) **Parshley**: This legend once again **betrays the male's flair for domination**, expressing his wish that she should be in no way independent, even in her longing for him.

((1953) 1983, 370)

> *Ouyang*[15] *(Taiwan)*: 這一傳說再度**洩露了男性之控制欲**, 表達出他希望她在各方面, 即便在她對他的渴望中, 都無法獨立。
>
> ((1973) 1992, 147)

> [This legend again **gives away the male's desire for control**, expressing that he wishes that she, in every aspect, even in her longing for him, cannot be independent.]

Tao (PRC): 这一传说再一次**表现了男性有支配的天赋**, 并表达了他的这一愿望: 她决不应当有独立性, 甚至在她渴望他时。

(1998, 427)

[This legend again **manifests that the male has a gift for dominance**, and expresses his wish: she should never have independence, even when she longs for him.]

Beauvoir: Cette légende **trahit** encore une fois **le goût de domination du mâle** qui veut qu'en sa compagne rien ne soit autonome, pas même l'envie qu'elle a de lui.

((1949) 1976, 152)

Qiu (Taiwan): **這種看法完全是錯誤的**；**這種錯誤的認知**再一次**說明瞭雄性想要統轄一切的心理**, 他並不希望他的伴侶是獨立自主的, 甚至不希望她對他也有欲望。

(2013, 635)

[**This perspective is completely wrong; this incorrect understanding** again **demonstrates that the male wants to control everything**. He does not wish his partner to be independent, and does not even wish that she desires him.]

Zheng (PRC): 这种说法再一次**透露了男性对统治的兴趣**, 他希望他的女伴毫无自主性, 甚至没有对他的渴望。

(2011, 137)

[This saying again **reveals the male's interest in dominance**; he wishes that his female partner has no independence whatsoever, or even desire for him.]

Different attitudes towards the "male's flair for domination" make the translators' renderings different. Ranked in terms of a positive view of men's flair for domination, Tao (PRC, 1998) comes first with "男性有支配的天赋" (the male has a gift for dominance), followed by "男性对统治的兴趣" (the male's interest in dominance) (Zheng PRC, 2011); from Taiwan we read "雄性想要統轄一切的心理" (the male wants to control everything) (Qiu Taiwan, 2013) and finally "男性之控制欲" (the male's desire for control) (Ouyang Taiwan, (1973) 1992). These different renderings of the same source text concern the negotiation of meaning where a translator chooses one of many possible linguistic interpretations. The choices made reveal much about the values the translator holds. Tao (PRC, 1998) does not criticize the male's flair for domination, rendering it instead as the "male's gift/natural talent." In contrast, Qiu (Taiwan, 2013) refers to the legend as "這種看法完全是錯誤的/這種錯誤的認知" (this perspective is completely wrong/this

incorrect understanding). Regarding the translation of the verb "betray" in this citation, where the legend "betrays the male's flair for domination," Ouyang (Taiwan, (1973) 1992) writes "洩露" (gives away) and Tao (PRC, 1998) writes "表现" (manifests/shows). In other words, Ouyang uses a term that commonly describes a negative situation in which secrets have been exposed, while Tao uses a neutral term, which can be construed as positive.

4. Conclusion

Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* has been translated via different trajectories, in uneasy and even broken processes in the PRC and Taiwan. While the paratexts of different Chinese translations of *The Second Sex* offer valuable insights into the presentation of Beauvoir's existentialist feminism within the changing historical and political climate, and while the translators' prefaces and publishers' notes may reflect some of their intentions, a comparison of four Chinese translations—a study of word choices and the value orientations behind these selections—reveals deeper, subjective, and personal choices that each translator made in regard to Beauvoir's perspective on marriage.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the Tenth International Postgraduate Conference in Translation and Interpreting (IPCITI), October 29–31, 2014, at the University of Manchester, United Kingdom. Given the space here, this chapter will not go into all the details regarding the Chinese translations of *The Second Sex* in Mainland China and Taiwan. However, the complexity of the translations is thoroughly analyzed in my MPhil thesis.
2. See Table 10.1 for a list of translations.
3. Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of the Chinese are mine.
4. 这几节正好组成了女人的一生, 回答了'女人是什麼'的问题。
5. 西蒙波娃 . . . 这部书的写作作者就自认为所持的便是存在主义的道德理论。这种理论和观点, 我们是不能完全同意和接受的。
6. 在这里, 波伏瓦所分析的, 主要是欧美妇女的生活, 这种生活和中国妇女的生活肯定是不同的。
7. 女性反省意识
8. 这种反省意识似乎和女性进步没有直接的联系。
9. The English spelling of Chinese names in Taiwan can come down to personal choice. Since it would be extremely difficult to determine how the authors from Taiwan spell their names in English without personally verifying with them, I have opted here to use pinyin for initial convenience and identification purposes.
10. 然而波伏娃寫此書的目的, 並非鼓吹女人起來革命。卻是滿腔真誠地企圖打破'迷信', 促進世人對女性與女性處境的真正認識與領悟。這也是我們翻譯此書的目的。
11. 作为一个妇女理论研究者, 我真诚地希望, 本书的出版能对我国的妇女理论研究提供一个借鉴。
12. 本地的學術討論、社會議題論辯乃至法律、政策的制定, 經常流於空泛草率, 無法劃下深刻地文化軌跡, 這個現象和出版業欠缺系統性的世界經典譯介, 以致文化資產難以累積有關。

13. [如今隔著半個世紀,] 當我們配備了第二波婦運的切身經驗, 以及運動中誕生的婦女研究成功, 回頭檢視《第二性》, 必然可以找出一些值得商榷之處, 例如對社會主義的過分高估, 在這個觀點上波娃自己後來也改變了立場, 從共產國家的經驗中, 她發現階級鬥爭並不解放婦女, 婦女必須變成真正的女性主義者, 謀求自己的解放。
14. 女人,女人 (1973), 婦女問題新論譯叢 (1974–6), 女性,女性主義,性革命 (1988).
15. The Chinese translation is based on the second volume of Parshley's translation; it consists of three parts. Ouyang is the translator of the first part, while Yang is the translator of the second and Wang the third.

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Table 10.1 All Chinese Translations of *The Second Sex* to Date

Year	*Translator(s)*	*Chinese Title*	*Publisher*	*Source*
1971–1974	歐陽子 Ouyang Zi 楊美惠 Yang Meihui 王俞靜 Wang Yujing	第二性-女人 The Second Sex—Woman	臺北: 晨鐘出版社 Taipei: Morning Bell Press	The second volume of Parshley's translation
1986	杨美惠 Yang Meihui 王俞靜 Wang Yujing	第二性-女人 The Second Sex—Woman	长沙: 湖南文艺出版社 Changsha: Hunan Literature and Art Publishing House	The second volume of Parshley's translation
1992	歐陽子 Ouyang Zi 楊美惠 Yang Meihui 楊翠屏 Yang Cuiping	第二性 The Second Sex	臺北: 志文出版社 Taipei: Zhiwen Press	The second volume of Parshley's translation
1988	晓宜 Xiao yi 张亚莉 Zhang Yali 等 et al.	女性的秘密 Women's Secrets	北京: 中国国际廣播出版社 Beijing: China International Broadcasting Publishing House	Abridged translation of the first volume of Parshley's translation
1988	王友琴 Wang Youqin 邱希淳 Qiu Xichun 丁文娟 Ding Wenjuan 于銀春 Yu Yinchun	女人是什么 What Is a Woman	北京: 中国文联出版公司 Beijing: China Federation of Literary and Art Circles Press	Part IV (without chapter XV) Part VII (without chapter XIX) of the 1983 Penguin classics edition
1998	陶铁柱 Tao Tiezhu	第二性 The Second Sex	北京: 中国书籍出版社 Beijing: China Book Press	Complete translation of Parshley's translation
1999	陶鐵柱 Tao Tiezhu	第二性 The Second Sex	臺北: 貓頭鷹出版社 Taipei: Owl Publishing House	Complete translation of Parshley's translation
2004	李強 Li Qiang	第二性 The Second Sex	北京: 西苑出版社 Beijing: Xiyuan Press	Abridged translation of the first volume of Parshley's translation
2009	舒小菲 Shu Xiaofei	第二性 The Second Sex	北京: 西苑出版社 Beijing: Xiyuan Press	Abridged translation of the second volume of Parshley's translation
2011	郑克鲁 Zheng Kelu	第二性 The Second Sex	上海: 上海译文出版社 Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House	Complete translation of Beauvoir's 1949 *Le deuxième sexe*
2013	邱瑞鑾 Qiu Ruiluan	第二性 The Second Sex	臺北: 貓頭鷹出版社 Taipei: Owl Publishing House	Complete translation of Beauvoir's 1949 *Le deuxième sexe*

Part IV

Feminist Translation Projects

11 Voices from the *Therīgāthā*

Framing Western Feminisms in Sinhala Translation

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In Sri Lanka, a country that has a prolific translation industry, feminist theory remains one of the least translated subject areas. Yet, although these works are not widely available and not read nearly as often as theories such as Marxism, there seems to be a commonly accepted consensus as to their nature. As Kumari Jayawardena points out, "the words 'feminism' and 'feminist' have become emotive words that often evoke hostile reactions" and negative responses from a variety of people including "traditionalists, political conservatives and even certain leftists"[1] (1986, 2). And so, in a project to translate a selection of modern feminist theoretical writings into Sinhala, specifically for university students reading in the Sinhala language stream, this sort of knee-jerk resistance to anything feminist poses a serious challenge, especially in the current socio-political context where extremist ethno-nationalist ideas are freely disseminated in the country's, and the university's, popular culture and social imaginary.[2] This chapter discusses an approach that might be taken to introduce significant feminist theories to university students working in Sinhala in order to demonstrate that they are not being confronted with something completely alien.

This chapter conceptualizes a framework for introducing Sinhala-speaking Sri Lankan university students to a selected body of feminist theory in a way that encourages students to engage with these texts and ideas in their full complexity rather than offhandedly dismissing them as foreign, and therefore irrelevant. To develop such a project, one must consider language politics, probe questions related to the production of knowledge, critique reductive statements made about "Third World women" by "Western" feminists, problematize nationalist discourses that too easily dismiss feminist concepts as "Western" imports, and imagine creative translational strategies. One must consider approaches to engage with feminist theory not merely as an epistemological system located elsewhere but also as a critical knowledge system that will enable students to dialogue with already existing knowledge *within* their own culture. It is in this context that I propose to explore the usefulness of bringing in selected verses from *Therīgāthā*, accounts by Buddhist women dating from the fourth century B.C.E., to frame and introduce the translations of selected modern feminist texts.

Comparing and juxtaposing concepts such as gender, body, and liberation as they appear in the ancient and modern texts, respectively, will enable the readers to approach feminist theories with a familiar vocabulary and a new perspective, which will in turn facilitate a rereading of the Buddhist texts. The purpose of this chapter, however, is not to offer an in-depth analysis of the feminist texts and the verses from *Therīgāthā*, but to offer a framework that would enable Sinhala-medium students to approach a selected number of feminist texts through ideas that they are already familiar with in the receiving culture. Thus the chapter explores the pedagogical possibilities of the translational act that are created through translation.

CONTEXTS: THE SWORD

"Kaduwa," in Sinhala, is the sword. "Kaduwa" is also the Sinhala slang word for English because the language enables social mobility and increases employment opportunities. In Sri Lanka, English is taught in primary school, from grade three onwards.[3] Yet, because of the limited number of qualified teachers and resources, students in non-urban settings, as well as in certain urban schools, seldom get a solid foundation in the language. Many learn basic communication skills, but do not necessarily possess high reading skills in English. The group of students who form my target readership for this project follow the Sinhala, not the English, language stream in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Peradeniya and are not usually advanced readers of English. As a result, they are often at a disadvantage when it comes to reading material. While the students working in the English medium have the distinct benefit of directly accessing the most recent publications and primary reading material, students in the Sinhala and Tamil language streams do not.[4] And although some source material may sometimes be available in translation, there are many instances when it is not. The limited access to reading resources creates a distinct gap in learning.[5]

By considering a translation project that involves moving feminist texts mainly from English into Sinhala, I am not unproblematically accepting knowledge systems provided by the "West." It is not a matter of uncritically embracing knowledges from outside. It is, however, a matter of addressing a deeply rooted problem of class and privilege that makes certain materials accessible—or inaccessible—to a particular university population simply because of lack of access to English and lack of translation. This problem is exacerbated further by the ambient nationalist ethos that discourages students from learning English—an attitude that the current university subculture also seems to promote. The widespread nationalist sentiment that discourages the learning of the "para-bhashawa,"[6] the outsiders' language, also contributes to a general lack of interest in developing language skills in the second language. While the question of access to knowledge is thus a much wider one, and not just confined to the field of feminist theory, the case for translating feminist theory raises particularly interesting and challenging questions.

1. The Peradeniya Subculture

In the Peradeniya University subculture, women are widely referred to as "baduwa," which means the thing or the commodity.[7] Women are also appraised based on their physical appearance, and the women whom the subculture categorizes as beautiful are called "toyya," a derivative of the English word toy. Relationships within the subculture are also stratified from the point of view of male students, with female students categorized by the services they provide male students. Thus "bath love,"[8] which translates as "rice love," designates a relationship in which the girlfriend cooks and brings food for the boyfriend. Another type of university relationship known as "note love," indicates a relationship where the woman attends classes and takes down lecture notes for the man. These relationship terms and types are predicated on the woman providing either physical or intellectual labor for the boyfriend.[9] Given this state of affairs in the campus environment, a dialogue on the detrimental nature of patriarchal discourse seems necessary, especially because this negative language embodies an entire system of existence where women are perceived and construed as being not only below their male colleagues but also objects to be used and disposed of by men as they please.[10] Furthermore, their male colleagues of the same academic year inculcate this subculture in female students, and other male students as well as female students who acquiesce to being valued based on the patriarchal system reinforce it. Gender expectations and privileges are initially transmitted to first-year male students, who pass them on to the female students in their cohort. The subculture's sign system demeans women and places them at a subordinate level via words such as "baduwa" and "toyya" at the same time as it establishes a hierarchy between women and men of the same year by granting the men first access to the subculture.

If, as Gayatri Spivak affirms, "language may be one of many elements that allow us to make sense of things, of ourselves" and "making sense of ourselves is what produces identity" (2012, 312), then the implications of a construction of women as lesser-beings, or worse, as things, can be insidiously destructive. If the process of making sense of what it means to be a female student at Peradeniya, a member of the university subculture, entails understanding the notion of becoming a "baduwa," a thing, or a "toyya," a toy or a plaything, what sort of identity does that produce? Where does one start to unravel the patriarchal discourse that dominates the university environment in which the integration of women to a repressive sexist system via a discourse of thingness dangerously obliterates women's identities as human beings?

2. Germination of the Idea: Why Feminist Theory?

Working as an assistant lecturer in the Department of English, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, I was approached by Namali, a student from the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, to discuss the basic tenets of

feminist theory.[11] We conversed about the different stages of feminist thinking and activism. In the middle of our discussion, Namali said, "feminist theory is really a Western thing; our women don't need it." In the same conversation, she asserted that there is scarcely any feminist theory in Sinhala. In a similar situation, Ven. Mahinda, a Buddhist monk who was a student in the Department of Philosophy, accused faculty in the Department of English of importing "Western" ideologies such as feminism, which he deemed unnecessary to Sri Lankan culture. "Our women don't need it," he said with certainty. Yet when asked what specific writings he was referring to, he replied that he had not read a single work of feminist theory because of his limited ability to read in English. He then suggested such texts be translated. It was in this context that I first thought of making modern feminist texts accessible to students in the Sinhala medium because they were, in fact, grappling with general, popular, distorted views of feminism. The questions now confronting the project are how to pursue the translation project without being accused of importing "unnecessary Western ideas" that will contaminate the Sinhala Buddhist culture and how to translate selections by Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir, bell hooks, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and Judith Butler, to name just a few, and avoid the criticism of aping "Westernized" political agendas?

This is all the more complex given the truth in the assertion that certain "Western" feminist writings have created a monolithic image of "Third World women" by categorizing them as "powerless" and as "victims" (Mohanty 2003, 23), as well as contrasting this image with that of "Western" women "who present themselves as modern, educated, controlling their sexuality and their bodies" (Mills 1998, 106). Chandra Talpade Mohanty affirms that women in the global south are constructed by this scholarship as an always-already oppressed group and this fixed definition has allowed Western feminists to fashion themselves as progressive and liberated. Mohanty writes,

> This average third-world woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender [read: sexually constrained] and being "third world" [read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition bound, religious, domesticated, family-oriented, victimized, etc.] This I suggest is in contrast to the [implicit] self representation of western women as educated, modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities and the "freedom" to make their own decisions.
>
> (2003, 22)

This construction is no different from Western humanist discourse that sees the Other as inferior and unchanging. Therefore, such feminism becomes another discourse complicit with projects that are motivated by an "interested desire to conserve the subject of the West, or the west as subject" (Spivak 1988, 271).

Also, the "Western" feminist perception of the Other women as essentially objects of knowledge excludes Third World women from becoming *subjects* of knowledge production; they are used as statistics to support theories, but not seen as the theorists. bell hooks has commented on this issue in regard to the context of racism in North America. She contends, "Apparently no one sympathized with my insistence that racism is perpetuated when blackness is associated solely with concrete gut level experience conceived as either opposing or having no connection to abstract thinking and the production of critical theory" (hooks 1990, n.p.) This comment is often also applicable to the situation of Third World women who are convenient as objects of study, but not taken seriously as producers of knowledge.

A comparable trajectory occurs in the nationalist rhetoric where feminist ideas are easily dismissed as coming from outside.[12] Not only are male "protectors of culture" disclaiming an entire school of critical thinking, they are also silencing such voices within their own culture, and as Narayan (1997, 410) asserts, "'Westernization' often seems simply a rhetorical label, used selectively to smear those changes, those breaks with tradition, that those who have the authority to define "tradition" do not approve of." The facile exclusion of feminist theory as "Western" plays a part in obliterating or discrediting non-Western women's radical writings in their home countries. The term "feminism" might be a modern "Western" phenomenon, but concepts about women's freedom and liberation cannot be confined to the "West." Tragically, non-Western women's writing is subject to a double obliteration: first, because of condescending Western feminist discourses, and second, because of patriarchal structures in the writer's home country. Both parties make reductive and patronizing claims about the brown women they want to save. The result is that the woman, in this case the woman who writes, disappears. Gayatri Spivak writes, "Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and object formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'third-world woman' caught between tradition and modernization" (1988, 306). As Spivak further asserts, the third-world woman is "doubly in shadow" (298).

Therefore, in translating feminist theory into Sinhala, one has to counter the reductive claims made by local nationalists who only see writings about women's liberation as coming from outside and also question the mainstream, Western feminists who do not see non-Western women as producers of knowledge. How does one envisage such a project? The framing of the translations is significant in this context. Andre Lefevere affirms, "let us accept that refractions, the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience, with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work, have always been with us in literature" (1992, 4). Lefevere is speaking about literature here, but can a similar method of "refraction" be used in translating theory? What in fact "happens to theories when they travel across time and space?" (Brodski 2011, 263). What I propose is not

exactly an adaptation of the source text, but a frame for the source text that will make it more accessible to the target audience. The collection of translations will be framed in a way to suggest that the texts do not belong only to the source culture, but that they will also enable a conversation with the modes of thought in the receiving culture. The preface will seek to reveal "new linkages" (Mezei et al. 2014, 12) and posit the source texts as not completely alien.

Since the negative responses to anything slightly associated with feminism come from spaces of unchallenged patriarchal privilege, nationalist fervor, and the assumption that women in Buddhist contexts do not need such ideas because Buddhism is an egalitarian religion, it is especially apt to bring into this discussion a text such as *Therīgāthā*. Compiled in the fourth century B.C.E., the verses in *Therīgāthā* "provide the earliest extant evidence of women's experience in any of the world's religious traditions" (Collins 1997, vii). It contains verses by therīs, Buddhist nuns who have attained Nirvana, the ultimate liberation in Buddhist practice, and commentaries on their background. While some of the biographical commentaries offer detailed accounts of the therīs' lives, others briefly explain why these women made the decision to follow the spiritual path. *Therīgāthā* covers a wide selection of women's lives from diverse social strata; we hear from mothers, wives, princesses, prostitutes, and courtesans—all enlightened when they utter these verses of liberation.

The history of the inscriptions and translations of *Therīgāthā* is remarkable. The verses that were uttered in the sixth century B.C.E., during the time of the Buddha, were transmitted through the oral tradition and finally written down in Pali in Sri Lanka in the fourth century B.C.E. Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids, through the Pali and Buddhist Society, first translated them into English in 1909.[13] K. R. Norman's version, *Elders' Verses II*, was published in 1971.This was followed by several other English translations. In Sri Lanka, there are several Sinhala versions of *Therīgāthā*: translations done by Martin Wickramasinghe (1952), N. A. Jayawickrama and T. B. Kangahaarachchi (1958), and Kusum Dissanayaka (1994) are among them.[14]

Apart from the translations, some of the stories in *Therīgāthā* have become a distinct part of the popular culture. A well-known story that is often enacted in the form of films, plays, and religious artwork, such as "pandals," is the tragic tale of Patācārā.[15] The daughter of a wealthy man, Patācārā marries a servant of the family. When she is expecting her second child, she decides to deliver the baby at her parents' home. On the way, her husband is bitten by a poisonous snake and dies; her newborn is taken away by an eagle, and her first child drowns. When she arrives at her parents' place, completely devastated, she discovers that the entire house and all its inhabitants have been destroyed by lightning. As she walks, utterly distraught, without a single item of clothing on her body, she encounters the Buddha and as a result of their conversation starts following the Buddhist path.

Patācārā 's story is one that gets reenacted often. Perhaps it is the sensationalism of the story that is attractive; perhaps it is the tragedy that befalls a mother and a wife. Another story that is frequently enacted is that of Kisā-Gothamī, who is also devastated by the death of her only child. Popular cultural productions of *Therīgāthā* often focus on the stories that portray wives and mothers who leave domestic life as a result of a misfortune. The women are distraught and completely lost when they encounter the Buddha and then decide to find peace in spiritual practice.

Though *Therīgāthā* includes several stories where mothers and wives enter the religious order as a result of a tragedy in the family, not all stories are of that nature. Some women make a conscious decision to take a differential route than the path of marriage and motherhood prescribed by society. Subhā's story is an example. Subhā grows up in a wealthy household and leads a comfortable life. Yet she seeks something different: "she grew anxious over the round of life . . . and discerned that safety lay in renunciation" (Rhys Davids 1997, 127). Subhā's decision to leave domestic life does not come about as a result of a private tragedy. She seeks an alternate lifestyle and finds fulfillment in Buddhist practice. Therīs such as Nanduttarā and Dantikā also enter the Order as a positive, empowering choice rather than a reaction to events. It is not an external tragedy that propels these women to embrace Buddhism; they seek an alternative existence to marriage and social status. In the stories that are highlighted in the popular Sri Lankan cultural imaginary, we rarely hear the stories of women who challenge the status quo. As a result, what remains largely unspoken is the radical nature of freedom that some of the therīs exemplify.

Liberation for most of the therīs comes after enormous struggle with their families and against other societal pressures. They cannot leave the domestic sphere with the same ease as the men who become Buddhist monks. In her close comparative study of *Theragāthā* (the verses by Buddhist monks) and *Therīgāthā* (the verses by Buddhist nuns), Kathryn Blackstone illustrates how "the models of liberation the [two] texts present are very different" (1998, 112). She writes, "the model portrayed in *Therīgāthā* is one of hardship and struggle; in *Theragāthā* it is one of peacefulness and quietude" (112). The monks have the mental and physical space to contemplate nature and its soothing effects, while the nuns speak of their struggles with multiple societal and cultural forces. As women, they are bound by household duties and other family ties and thus the decision to leave the domestic sphere for a spiritual one comes through multiple levels of struggle. At times, the therīs don't make explicit claims about these topics, but their lives and verses embody these ideas. The use of their texts to frame the modern feminist works will bring forth the therīs' views of the domestic sphere, body, gender, and liberation, and will suggest, perhaps even reveal, parallels between their ideas and those expressed in contemporary feminist theories. This juxtaposition will offer a comparative exploration of related ideas found in texts located in very different historical periods and contexts.

How would Wollstonecraft, Beauvoir, and Butler sound in Sinhala, then? How would they signify in the current Sri Lankan context, in the university environment? Would certain concepts they address such as the domestic sphere, body, and gender appear completely alien if we were to approach the texts and discuss them through a rereading of *Therīgāthā*? This strategy does not implicate an erasure of the problematics of these texts nor an obliteration of the power hierarchies when it comes to translation. I am interested in exploring the possibility of approaching a foreign text through a familiar text and vocabulary so as not to alienate the reader in the receiving culture. This is not a process of localizing the source text. The task of discussing the two texts side by side would be done in the introduction to the translated work and consist of an attempt to discuss some of the themes that run across the two texts such as notions of kitchen drudgery/domestic sphere, painted puppet/angel in the house, body, and gender. This placing will be done with an understanding that the nuns' verses are based on a spiritual tradition and that modern feminists writings are based on a different context. In the following section, I will provide three examples to illustrate the way in which the introduction to the translated texts will suggest possible points of entry to the source material through concepts that readers are already familiar with in *Therīgāthā*.

3. Domestic Sphere

Unlike most of the Buddhist monks who are in the privileged position of being able to disregard domestic concerns in their quest for spiritual understanding, Muttā and other women are more restricted by societal norms and duties. As a result, the "therīs'," the nuns', verses refer to domestic space and other material realities more often than the verses of the monks.[16] For Muttā, leaving domestic life and attaining Nirvana signifies a dual freedom:

> O free, indeed! O gloriously free
> Am I in freedom from three crooked things:
> From quern, from mortar, from my crookback'd lord.
> Ay, but I'm free from rebirth and from death,
> And all that dragged me back is hurled away.
> (Rhys Davids, 11)

The quern and the mortar represent the laborious tasks that Muttā is expected to perform in the domestic sphere. The first step in Muttā's quest for liberation thus is leaving kitchen drudgery and her "crooked back'd lord." Sumangalamatha, in a similar manner to Muttā, asserts, "O woman well set free! How free am I! / How thoroughly free from kitchen drudgery! / Me stained and squalid 'mong my cooking pots" (Rhys Davids, 19). Muttā and Sumangalamatha feel thoroughly released from housework and experience a sense of freedom. Both therīs have to leave the domestic sphere in

order to find a space where they can attain ultimate liberation, Nirvana. For these reasons, their liberation is twofold: freedom from chores in the kitchen and eventually from the cycle of life and death.

Kevin Trainor, who provides an analysis of Subhā's verse in terms of the conceptions of the body, asserts that Subhā's liberation is also connected to leaving the domestic space with its material concerns (Trainor 1993, LXI). Subhā, unlike Muttā and Sumangalamatha, does not lead a life where she has to labor in the kitchen. Born to "the family of a very eminent Brahmin," she enjoyed a comfortable life (Rhys Davids, 126). Nevertheless, she was not content with the life she was leading. It is stated in Subhā's biographical commentary that she "grew anxious over the round of life, and saw the bane of the pleasures of sense, and discerned that safety lay in renunciation" (126). Thus Subhā's decision to become a nun is situated in her discontent with lay life. Yet, though she renounces the comforts of life and attains enlightenment, she is still harassed by men. It is such an incident that she reports in her verses. Subhā is about to enter a mango grove to meditate when "an unnamed rogue physically blocks the way" (Trainor 1993, 63). He invites her to enter the forest with him to engage in sensual pleasures; he also invites her to live a life of worldly pleasure. The rogue asserts,

> If thou will list to me, where joys of the sheltered life wait thee;
> Dwell in a house of verandas and terraces, handmaidens serving thee.
> Robe thyself in delicate gear of Benares, don garlands, use unguents.
> Ornaments many and diverse I give to thee, fashioned with precious stones
> Gold work and pearls.
>
> (Rhys Davids, 129)

The libertine assures her of a life of luxury and comfort; he promises to "mount [her] on a couch fair and sumptuous" (129). He speaks of a "sheltered life" and dwelling in "a house of verandas and terraces," which is the very same life that Subhā willingly left behind. The libertine is relentless in his pursuit. Subhā refuses his advances, telling him that she has renounced the world: "tempt thou not Subhā; / She understandeth. And now 'tis thyself hast vexation and failure. For I have set my mind to be watchful in whatso befalls me" (130). Subhā is watchful of what would befall her if she were to accept the rogue's invitation and succumb to the attractions of lay life. As Trainer claims, she does not want to revert to worldly life because "a return to society would inevitably entail her subjugation to male authority for the remainder of her life" (Trainor, 64). When the rogue continues to flatter her physical appearance, especially her eyes, Subhā responds by extracting her eyes and giving them to him. Subhā would rather remove her eyes and give them to the rogue than become his woman/possession.

While Muttā and Sumangalamatha refer to the tediousness and repetitious nature of domestic labor, Subhā shows how the domestic space can

become a place of confinement, even if it offers luxuries. For her, the domestic sphere signifies constraint: "Oh! I have seen it, a puppet well painted, with new/wooden spindles, / Cunningly fastened with strings and with pins, and diversely dancing" (Rhys Davids, 131). She sees the woman in the domestic sphere as a puppet; she is controlled by strings and external forces. This controlled space does not give women autonomy.

The conditions described by the women of the *Therīgāthā* might bear some comparison to those criticized in a much different time and context by Mary Wollstonecraft. Wollstonecraft wrote *The Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792, taking a critical stance towards the dominant Enlightenment discourse which did not take into serious consideration issues pertaining to women's education and rights. She was critical of the notion of the angel in the house, the ideal middle-class woman who was expected to be a ministering angel solely devoted to the well-being of her husband and children and at the same time concerned with and maintaining her physical appearance. Wollstonecraft firmly believed in the education of women and was critical of the way in which the social set up encouraged women to fashion themselves into weak and obedient ladies. Women were expected to be physically beautiful in order to please the opposite sex; Wollstonecraft affirms that the "strength of body and mind are sacrificed to libertine notions of beauty, to the desire to get themselves settled by marriage, the only way women can rise in the world" (1792, 6). She further claims that "when they marry, they dress, they paint . . ." (6). She saw the focus on physical beauty as being detrimental to women's intellectual development. She states that the concentration on outward beauty trains the mind to get accustomed to that reality, thus limiting the intellectual capacity: "Taught from their infancy that beauty is woman's sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison" (30). The mind thus becomes a part of the imprisoning mechanism. Thus she wants to "persuade women to aim at strength of mind and body" and to show that "the most praiseworthy ambition is to obtain a character as a human being" (5).

It is true that Wollstonecraft and Subhā belong to two distinct eras and contexts, but is there a possibility of looking at the connections and disconnects between these writings? In what ways can we rethink women's position in society and the domestic space in two very different contexts using Subhā's notion of the painted doll and Wollstonecraft's contestation of the notion of the angel in the house? Wollstonecraft believed that women were weakened in the process of becoming the subdued objects of men's admiration. Subhā strongly feels that she would be relegated to a limited space if she agrees to the rogue's proposal. Are there certain confluences in their ideas? Can we even think of comparing two texts from such disparately distant times and contexts and are we allowed to do so? Yet would not the juxtaposition of Wollstonecraft's ideas of the angel in the house and Subhā's image of the painted doll, albeit written in a religious context, provide space for dialogue?

Engaging with the different writings not only shows the confluences of the ideas but also the ways in which they diverge. For example, Muttā and Sumangalamatha's positions are different from Subhā's. The rogue's invitation to Subhā implies that she will be given a life of worldly luxury if she accepts his proposals. Subhā will have handmaidens and servants, but the other two women labour in the kitchen. These two poems draw our attention to the classed aspect of the lives of these three women. Thus Wollstonecraft's notions do not exactly apply to Muttā's and Sumangalamatha's situations, since she asserts that her focus is "particularly on those in the middle class" (1792, 5). The use of *Therīgāthā* to enter the world of feminist texts in the introduction to the translated work is not to find similarities between these texts, but to engage in a critical discussion about the ideas present in the different writings. The translations will serve a pedagogical purpose and will give students an opportunity to explore the idea of domestic space from diverse perspectives.

4. The Body

The female body occupies a complex place in *Therīgāthā* and the therīs have a markedly different view of the body than the monks. For the monks, the female body is an object of evil, which deters them from the Path; it remains the Other—the Other that should be conquered to attain a higher level of spiritual practice. Though the contemplation of corpses is a normal practice within the *Sangha*, the Buddhist monastic order, the female corpse seems to get marked. Some monks realize the impermanence of life only when they confront the female body in its aging form or corpse state. It is the scrutiny of the "diseased, impure, and rotten" female body, "its oozings and trickling" that brings Kulla enlightenment (*Theragāthā* 2016, n.p.)[17] In the eyes of the monks, the female body remains objectified throughout. Some of them even have lustful feelings towards the female corpses prior to their attainment of Nirvana. Rajatta Thera faces such a conundrum:

> I, a monk,
> gone to the charnel ground,
> saw a woman cast away,
> discarded there in the cemetery.
> Though some were disgusted,
> seeing her—dead, evil—
> lust appeared,
> as if I were blind to the oozings.
> (Bhikkhu 2000, n.p.)

Quite interestingly, this body that Rajatta perceives is not only dead, but in his words, it is also evil. He is unable to go beyond the negative stereotypes of the female body, even in its state of demise; even in the moment of

insightful meditation, Rajatta cannot view the female body without sexual objectification. While some of the monks have the advantage of speculating about the female body in this manner, the body of the Other, to realize notions of decay and suffering, the nuns have to engage with their own bodies. The nuns literally embody this Other, and through a process of conflict must understand the nature of the Self. Here, I am not stating that the monks do not go through a self-reflexive process, but rather want to point out the way in which the female body gets doubly marked in certain Buddhist texts.

In *Therīgāthā*, Princess Sundarī-Nandā, the city beauty, is shown a decaying female form when she resists following the Buddhist Path. Since all her kin have left domestic life in order to join the Order of nuns, she too joins, yet she continues to take pride in her beauty. At this juncture, the Buddha shows her an image, a body, that is "foul compound, diseased, / Impure!" (Rhys Davids 1997, 44). When Sundarī-Nandā "saw the female shape conjured up by the Master growing gradually aged, her mind, intent on the impermanence and suffering of life, turned to meditative discipline" (44). It is only when she is shown a specifically female form gradually aging that she turns to the meditative discipline. She claims, "I, even I, have seen, inside and out, / This body as in truth it really is." She sees her body inside and out and as a result "her consciousness is passion-free" (45). Quite interestingly, her brother is also shown an image of a gradually decaying woman when he hesitates to follow the footsteps of the Buddha. The female body seems to have a dual function in these Buddhist texts: it is a symbol of temptation and evil, as well as a symbol of the transience of life. In these texts, we do not see images of decaying male bodies being conjured up by the Buddha.

Subhā's story, of which I spoke in detail in the previous section, is significant in this context. She is able to distance herself from her own body and thus able to extract her eyes to show the impermanence of the body. She has "seen it—a puppet well painted," and also is aware that "if the strings and the pins be all drawn out and loosened and scattered, / . . . the puppet [is] made non-existent and broken in pieces" (131). By perceiving her own body in a non-attached manner, she manages to surpass worldly ideals, thereby achieving liberation. While it is true that the idea of liberation is attached to a religious tradition, a tradition which sees the transient nature of worldly phenomenon, the abstract level of this thinking, the view of the body from a distance, enables the therīs to realize the constructed nature of the very same body that keeps them tied to a system of repression.

Addhakāsī, a former prostitute, claims, "No less my fee was than the Kāsi realm" and speaks of the way a value was assigned to her body: "Value for value—so the sheriff fixed" (20). In the Buddhist space, she has learned to detach herself from that same body and contemplate life/death. It is her own body that becomes the object of contemplation. For the nuns, the self is both the subject and the object, while some monks operate with a duality where they have to overcome the self through the Other.[18] Unlike the monks, who

view the female body as an object of sin, the therīs seem to have a more complex view of the body and what is required to gain a better understanding of it. They are unable to evade the physical reality of their bodies and elaborate more on experiential aspects.

What societal elements make the woman the marked sex and the male the unmarked one? Why does the woman's body have to be marked even after death? Why does it remain an object of desire even in the corpse state? Students who ask such questions concerning the *Therīgāthā* might also be interested in reading Simone de Beauvoir's work to see how she addresses such issues. In her introduction to the first volume of *The Second Sex,* Beauvoir examines how women are relegated to the status of the Other from a very young age. She illustrates with several examples how young girls and boys are conditioned to view the female as being lesser than the male. In patriarchal discourse, the man not only becomes the unmarked subject, the sovereign Self; he is also seen as positive. Beauvoir claims,

> In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of *man* to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity.
>
> (Beauvoir (1953) 1997, 13)

Thus, in relation to the positive and neutral man, woman is posited as negative. In the eyes of Rajatta, the meditating monk, the female corpse is not only disgusting, but it is evil as well. It is within a similar system of thought that nuns are made to encounter their own bodies and view themselves as the Other; hence, Addhakāsī's detailed listing of the nature of her body parts.

Simone de Beauvoir's work was a forerunner for the second wave of feminism. Though her text is situated in a specific context and time in Europe, could we not, in our attempt to engage with feminist theory, utilize some of her ideas to dialogue with issues of the Self/Other as they appear in *Therīgāthā*? It is not that the therīs speak of an Other, but they are rendered Other by the monks, the patriarchal institution. Othering of the nuns enables the monks to reach enlightenment. The therīs embody this Other as well as the Self in their moment of contemplation and meditation. Beauvoir further elucidates,

> Now, what peculiarly signals the situation of woman is that she, a free and autonomous being like all human creatures, nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other. They propose to stabilize her as object and to doom her to immanence since her transcendence is to be overshadowed and forever transcended by another ego (*conscience*) which is essential and sovereign.
>
> (17)

Thus when Sundarī-Nandā has to observe the decay of a female body, she is compelled to assume the status of the Other. Her brother, who observes a similar female form, is spared this. He is the Other. In the eyes of the monks, the woman becomes the de facto symbol of desire, lust, and impermanence. She is the object for men and for women. The constant reiteration of the woman as the object of desire and of impermanence in fact stabilizes her as object.

5. Gender

As Somā sits down to meditate after she has attained enlightenment, Mara, the embodiment of temptation and evil, arrives and tries to dissuade her from concentrating. Mara typically takes the form of a woman (or women) in order to disrupt the meditating monks, but he applies a different strategy in regard to Somā.[19] He questions her intellect, her (in)ability to comprehend the "Dhamma" because of her two-finger consciousness: "That vantage-ground the sages may attain is hard/ To reach. With her two-finger consciousness/ That is no woman competent to gain" (Rhys Davids 1997, 35). "Two-finger consciousness" is a degrading term used to refer to the lack of intelligence in a woman, and it is connected to her role as a housewife.[20] Mara implies that Somā lacks the intelligence to comprehend the Norm, which only "sages can attain." But Somā responds calmly and asks Mara,

> How would the woman's nature hinder us?
> Whose hearts are firmly set, whoever move
> With growing knowledge onward in the path?
> What can that signify to one in whom
> Insight doth truly comprehend the Norm?
> (Rhys Davids, 35)

There are two parts to Somā's question. Initially, she inquires how "the woman's nature" would be a hindrance if women are capable of focusing their minds and moving forward in the Path. Based on that inquiry she then poses the second question: if women are indeed capable of developing their minds and comprehending "the Norm," what in fact does this concept of "woman's nature" signify? Somā is not only questioning the perceived inferiority of women here, she is problematizing the idea of gender itself. After probing the constructs of woman and man, she takes the argument to another level by drawing attention to the concept of an undifferentiated state of being that lies deeper than gender dualities. Mara attacks her based on her gendered subjectivity, but she calmly deconstructs the very notion of gender by asserting that women are in fact capable of comprehending the very same Norm that Mara assumes women cannot understand. What Buddhism offers Somā is a space to transcend the gender binary; hence, Mara's demeaning statement about women does not affect Somā. He eventually has to leave her in peace.

While Somā in *Therīgāthā* ends her answer with this statement, in Somā Sutta, another text in the Buddhist Pali Canon, she takes these ideas further.[21] It contains one more verse in which Somā tells Mara that his words would only affect someone who identifies as a woman or man:

> Anyone who thinks
> "I'm a woman"
> or "a man" or
> "Am I anything at all?"—
> that's who Mara's
> fit to address.
> (Bhikkhu 1998, n.p.)

Somā defeats Mara because she is able to transcend the binary gender system. She questions the binary of man-woman itself, asserting that the possibility of any subject attaining the highest level of enlightenment questions the idea of gender itself. In an interesting way, Somā's answer reverberates with modern notions of gender, though it is placed in a context of spiritual practice. Would it be possible for us to utilize Somā's claims pertaining to the space of Nirvana and its undifferentiated existence of gender to proceed to analyze the concept of gender as it appears in modern feminisms? Would Somā's verse serve as an apt starting point to engage with Judith Butler's theories of gender?

While Somā questions the notion of gender by referring to the transcendental state beyond gender, Judith Butler focuses on the performative nature of gender. According to Butler, it is repetition and reenactment that creates gender. Referring to Victor Turner's idea that social actions require repeated performances, Butler claims, "This repetition is at once a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation" (Butler 1988, 526).[22] Gender, too, operates via such a trajectory of "reenactment and reexperiencing." It is this very same reenactment that creates gender; in Butler's words, gender "is a kind of imitation that produces the very notion of the original as an effect and consequence of the imitation itself" (Butler 2006, 261). Butler's theorizing problematizes the concept of an original gender—a concept of gender that exists elsewhere than within the concrete space in which it is repeated.

Though Somā and Butler are not making identical statements and do not inhabit similar spaces, their ideas do question a fixed notion of gender. While Somā speaks of a space undifferentiated by gender binaries, Butler claims that it is the behavior that we engage in that creates these very notions of gender. Both Somā and Butler in their different contexts are critiquing the idea of an essential gendered modality. While the Buddhist context connects this to the non-dual space of Nirvana, Butler bases her ideas on theories of performance. As I stated before, the two notions are situated in highly

disparate contexts, but does that preclude the space to reread the two texts through the others' ideas?

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to envisage a way to translate and introduce a selected number of feminist texts for students reading in the Sinhala language stream in the university in a way that would motivate them to engage with the texts rather than dismiss them brusquely. My project involves approaching these texts through a well-established Buddhist women's text, *Therīgāthā*, which has had continuous popularity in Sri Lanka. Rather than localizing the feminist texts, the introduction to the translations will invite the readers to explore concepts of women's bodies, domestic work, gender, and liberation that appear in *Therīgāthā*, as well as contemporary feminist texts. The process entails an attempt to read one concept through a reading and rereading of the other. This effort is taken to counter the facile dismissal of feminism as an alien entity, to explore discourses of women's liberation situated in South Asia, and to explore the liberatory aspects present in *Therīgāthā* further. *Therīgāthā* celebrates liberation, in the Buddhist sense, but this liberation is also a liberation from specifically gendered norms of suffering. At the same time, as I have stated earlier, this project does not erase the ideological politics when it comes to the power hierarchies in the knowledge production and translation process, but proceeds with an awareness of them.

Thus the introduction suggests the possibility of approaching feminisms through concepts in *Therīgāthā*. The main intention is a desire for a close engagement with the ideas, not necessarily an agreement with them. We see here how translation operates in multiple directions. While the feminist texts offer a rereading of *Therīgāthā*, *Therīgāthā* offers a rereading of the feminist texts. It challenges the reader to interpret the notions of body, gender, and freedom in different contexts, perhaps bringing the readers' own contexts to the discussion. Here I am reminded of Gamini Haththotuwegama's question: "If translation is 'hegemonic,' is it a one way process necessarily?"(Haththotuwegama 2005) It does not have to be a one-way process. Ideas of women's freedom do not have to travel from one direction to another either. Rather, a consideration of notions of women's bodies, gender, and freedom as they appear in different contexts could open up fertile space for dialogue.

Notes

1. Jayawardena asserts, "It [feminism] has variously been alleged by traditionalists, political conservatives and even certain leftists, that feminism is a product of 'decadent' Western capitalism; that it is based on a foreign culture of no relevance to women in the Third World; that it is the ideology of the women of the local bourgeoisie; and that it alienates or diverts women, from their culture,

religion and family responsibilities on the one hand, and from the revolutionary struggles for national liberation and socialism on the other." (Jayawardena 1986, 2)

2. Sinhala is spoken by about 74 percent and Tamil by 18 percent of the population in Sri Lanka. English is taught from grade 3. About 10 percent of the population is fluent in English, while many can use it for basic communication and reading.
3. The standard of the teaching varies according to the area and the availability of teachers.
4. The number of students who are in the English medium vary each year. It ranges from 15 percent to 20 percent.
5. Translation plays a major role in the dissemination of knowledge to those who do not possess an advanced reading proficiency in English. There is a distinct difference between having direct access to the primary material and not having access. I was struck by the difference when I started teaching in the Department of Fine Arts in 2013. I had hitherto studied and taught in the Department of English and did not have to think about the availability of material in Sinhala. The students in the Sinhala medium often struggle to find reading material in their subject areas.
6. "Parabhashawa," a slang term used to indicate a foreign language, i.e. English, carries negative connotations. Yet, in the mainstream society, there is an interest in becoming competent in English.
7. The subculture, which is meant to function as a progressive front to address student issues as well as national political issues, unfortunately, is formed along extremely patriarchal lines. Thus, in terms of gender politics, it serves as a microcosm for the sexism that exists in the larger society and reiterates and reinstates some of the most detrimental gender practices.
8. Bath means rice in Sinhala; it is the staple food in Sri Lanka.
9. In Sri Lankan universities, there are separate dorms for women and men. They have similar facilities. Thus women have to engage in the domestic chore of cooking and bring food to the men. What troubled me the most was the way in which some of the male students took it to be the woman's duty and even resorted to coining a degrading term. There is no acknowledgment of the labor that goes into the work. And there are no equivalent terms to speak about men in the subculture.
10. I am by no means indicating that everyone in the subculture has a similar way of thinking. Rather than creating a monolithic category, what I am trying to do is to talk about a socio-cultural practice that seems problematic for a variety of reasons. I have to emphasize that not everyone accepts this culture and that some openly rebel. However, as a result of socio-economic factors, it is not always easy to resist the subculture. Also, this chapter is mainly focused on exploring the gendered aspects of the university subculture, and its scope does not allow me to discuss other factors such as class, caste, ethnicity, and religion in detail.
11. The names of the students have been changed.
12. As Virginia Woolf contends, "The history of men's opposition to women's emancipation is more interesting perhaps than the story of that emancipation itself" (Woolf 1957, 57). Thus the opposition and antagonism towards feminist theory and women's emancipatory movements is not a solely Sri Lankan phenomenon.
13. I will be using Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids' translations of the verses for this chapter.
14. There are numerous translations of *Therīgāthā* into Sinhala. The following are some of the versions: i. *Theri Gatha*. Ven. Royal Pandith Rambukwelle Vipassi Thero. Colombo: Samayawardena Book Shop (pvt) Ltd, 2003; ii. *Theri Gatha: Translations*. M. W. Abayasiri. Battaramulla. Ratna Printers, 1996; iii. *Pali Therīgāthā in Sinhala Song*: B.M.P. Balasooriya. Kuliyapitiya: Sasthrodaya

Printers, 2006; iv. *Therīgāthā Kavyangali*. Pitaseeli Gunasekera Sumanarathna, B.M.S. Bandara. Polgasowita: Sikuru Publishers, 2008; v. Theri Gatha. Nayana Liyanage. Nugegoga: Deepani Publishers Ltd, 2012.

15. A "thorana"/pandal is a structure with images and lights that illustrates a story from the many lives of the Buddha.
16. Some of the monks also make references to how they were liberated from domestic life, but the monks who speak of household duties are significantly fewer than the nuns.
17. *Theragāthā*. http://measurelessmind.ca/sivathika.html. Accessed January 23, 2016.
18. I am specifically speaking about the verses in *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā* in this instance. In Buddhist practice, both women and men contemplate their own bodies.
19. There are a few instances where Mara comes in the form of a man to tempt women, such as in the story of Uppalawanna.
20. Rhys Davids affirms, "For women, from the age of seven or eight, boiling rice at all times, know not the moment when the rice is cooked, but must take some grains in a spoon and press them with two fingers; hence the expression 'two-finger' sense" (1997, 35).
21. Soma Sutta appears in Samyutta Nikaya. This is the third division of the Sutta Pitaka, one of the categories of the Buddhist Pali Canon. *Therigatha* belongs to the Kuddaka Nikaya, the fifth division of the Sutta Pitaka. http://www.accessto insight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn05/sn05.002.than.html. Accessed January 31, 2016.
22. She also claims, "As performance which is performative, gender is an 'act,' broadly construed, which constructs the social fiction of its own psychological interiority" (Butler 1988, 526).

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12 *Meridiano 105°*

An E-Anthology of Women Poets in Mexican and Canadian Indigenous Languages

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What do I want wanting to know you or me?

Trinh T. Minh-ha

1. Introduction

In this text, we[1] will describe and discuss the aims and history of *Meridiano 105°*,[2] an ongoing communal project consisting of a virtual anthology of poems written by contemporary Mexican and Canadian women in their own indigenous languages and translated, in turn, by these same women poets, or when necessary, other translators, into as many other indigenous languages as possible, using translations into English, French, and Spanish as aids. The fact that we wanted each original poem and its multiple translations to be viewed simultaneously so as not to establish a fixed hierarchical order made the format itself a central part of the project, something on which we will comment, as it proved to be the site of multiple insights. In a final section on the future of the project, we will also address some of the doubts that have marked the process as well as some reflections that arose as a result of this experience.

Beginnings

Fourteen years ago, the "Margaret Atwood-Gabrielle Roy Chair," co-founded by the UNAM and the Canadian Embassy in 2002 and basically devoted to circulating Canadian literature and culture in Mexico, organized a newer type of activity: a series of sessions that focused on poetry, particularly by women writing in their indigenous languages. From Mexico, we had Briceida Cuevas, María Luisa Góngora, María Roselia Jiménez, Irma Pineda, and Natalia Toledo, and from Canada, we had Rita Mestokosho, Patricia Monture Angus,[3] and Buffy St. Marie. During the sessions, they talked about their lives and works, and read or recited a selection of their poems in

Cree, Innu, Maya, Tojolabal, or Zapotec and their translations into English, French, or Spanish. Afterwards, during lunch, we started to plan some way of keeping this group alive—an unusual and interesting group based on the circulation of a positive, almost festive, affect and consisting of a varied group of poets with a new agenda. A group, by the way, not normally taken into account by traditional cultural and academic organizations and products, such as courses and anthologies, but which possesses enormous interest and potential, particularly as it responds, at least in part, to alternative ways of conceptualizing the place we speak from and is closely related to how we map our continent, thus leading us to interrogate and revise many of the basic (and problematic) assumptions of the nation-state today—something on which we will comment later as it concerns one of the future aims of *Meridiano 105°*.

The result of those sessions, over time, was this anthology, which is still a work in progress, and which ideally will consist of one poem per woman poet representing each surviving indigenous language from both Mexico and Canada, translated in turn by other women poets or women translators into as many other indigenous American languages as possible and using translations into English, French, or Spanish whenever needed, which is nearly always. At this point, it must be mentioned that from the very beginning, the project was conceived as a non-profit network (often a reciprocal one). If poets, translators, coordinators, and assistants have done all this, it is because they believe in the project and in its potential—literature, culture, language, and society.

When we started, the idea was to have the original poems written in their own alphabets (even if this would very probably mean typographical headaches) and accompanied in as parallel a form as possible by all their translations into the various other indigenous languages of our poets, without producing the impression of a fixed hierarchy. In that sense, it was important that the translations into the three European languages appeared, very noticeably, as reading aids instead of having a central presence, as is usually the case, since the intention was one of re-location, where peripheral (indigenous) languages were brought to the forefront, while central (European) languages took the backstage. Finally, while the idea was to start off with a certain number of texts, chiefly, those provided by the women poets originally involved in the project, we all knew we wanted to incorporate more poets, their poems, and their translations into other indigenous languages as the project advanced. Our current selection of poems reflects this intent, as there are poems from other women poets besides those present in 2002 for the "Margaret Atwood-Gabrielle Roy Chair."

2. First Stage: Compiling Our Materials

For the first stage of the project, which was called *Sinfonía de lunas*, we started contacting poets some of us were in touch with,[4] describing the

project, and asking for a short poem and a translation into one of the auxiliary European languages. The Mexican poets sent poems in their own languages and a self-translation into Spanish. Then, at the UNAM, we translated these into the other two European languages (English and French) and sent them out again to the other poets for translation. For Canada, things were more complicated. Basically, only Rita Mestokosho wrote in Innu, plus she provided a version of her poem in French and in English. Buffy St. Marie, Marilyn Dumont, and Luise Halfe wrote in English, and the first two established contact with translators to translate their poems into Cree. We then translated the poems from English or French into Spanish and sent them to the Mexican poets who translated them into their own languages. We also tried to contact poets writing in some of the obviously missing languages such as Haida or Nahuatl, but this has proven complicated due to a number of reasons. Of course, once we had enough material to work with, the problem was carrying out the next step: to publish and circulate these texts.

3. The Dilemma of a "Simple" Project

As mentioned earlier, during the earliest stage of this project, our goal appeared to be simple: to promote indigenous women's poetry written in Mexico and Canada in as many indigenous languages as possible. However, we soon realized that the enterprise was anything but easy to accomplish.

First, in terms of logistics, our project turned out to be of little concern to the publishing industry. Our inquiries led us to conclude that no major names were interested in the elaboration of a multilingual[5] poetry anthology, especially one whose main focus was the dissemination of indigenous women's poetry. This meant looking into less known publishers, especially those whose publishing policies were aligned with our aims.[6] However, we were forced to acknowledge that restricted distribution channels would limit the reach of a book published under such conditons—and we wanted a text that could circulate with relative ease throughout North America.

Second, the question of what format to print the anthology in quickly became an issue. We toyed, back then, with different designs. One of our favorites consisted of having each poem and its translations printed on separate cards, to give them a certain independence, with the translations into the auxiliary European languages printed on transparent paper, so as to emphasize their secondary status. The whole book would then be a box of "poem-cards" that could be shuffled at pleasure—an action that would incorporate a dynamic quality to the process of translation reading. In the end, however, we were never able to proceed beyond the 'drawing board,' but such a process was immensely valuable as it taught us what our main concern was: flexibility.

What we were aiming for was to find a medium of transmission that in its flexibility reflected the flexibility—the malleability—that we believe

lies at the core of the interaction between languages, which, in a situation of inequality, inhabit the same time and space, negotiating meaning and identity. The promptness with which our women poets joined the project, the ease with which they tackled the subsequent translation process (both the process of translating and of being translated), told a story of suppleness, of being used to inhabiting places of linguistic instability. From their position, as female speakers of indigenous languages, they saw no problem in crisscrossing language boundaries—the same boundaries that keep Spanish (Mexico) and English and French (Canada) separate—nor in opening multiple, and much-needed, communication channels with other languages, especially other indigenous ones. Translation, for our women poets, was not a source of conflict, but a fact of life: something that is done continually, and in some instances, something that *must* be done if there is to be any hope of recognition by official institutions[7] and authorities.[8] As it was, once the theoretical implications started to take shape through the search for an appropriate book format, ideological concerns also came to bear on our project.

Exploring the options offered by traditional publishing, we noticed that, by their very nature, standard book formats tend to favor and promote a certain imperialistic view of translation: a view where the simple declaration of a book being "a translation," or a "bilingual edition," tends to create hierarchical (i.e. unequal) linguistic relations.[9] In this process, the languages engaged in translation are assigned a certain order of importance (one of the languages might be regarded as more "necessary" than the other), or may be viewed as displaying a degree of exoticism (one of the languages is considered "unusual") or a level of sophistication (one of the languages is viewed as more "cultured.") And all of these perceptions could come into play when we considered the fact that the anthology established a translational relationship between indigenous languages, between indigenous languages and European languages, and also between European languages.

And so, we came to realize that to publish the anthology in book format meant exposing it to the risks of hierarchization. Just to give an example, the publisher would be required (for cataloguing purposes) to state in what language the book was printed, and that meant that one language would necessarily have to work as the axis of the publication. Which would it be? Moreover, why, when faced with such a question, did we automatically tend to think that the decision would lie between Spanish, English, or French? Were we unconsciously falling into the same linguistic behavior we meant to avoid (one that posits the necessity of central [European] languages for any significant cultural exchange)? Or was there a way we could subvert this usage? Were we to choose Spanish, English, or French as an "administrative" language (the way we had done when handling the exchange of poems and their translations for further translation), what were the chances that our decision would be interpreted as we meant it (as a central language simply being used as a linguistic auxiliary) instead of as a way that perpetuated

the perceived importance or exoticism of a certain language or languages, or the need for them, in view of the impossibility of doing away with the presence of European languages in the interplay of indigenous ones.

With these doubts weighing down on us unresolved, the book format, nevertheless, appeared to be our only available publishing option. The idea, however, had become so unacceptable once the implications of such an editorial decision became apparent to us that the project was almost abandoned.

4. Second Stage: An E-Anthology (Web Publishing as a Translation Medium)

It was not until the beginning of 2012 that the idea to publish the anthology in electronic format rekindled the project. The design flexibility of web publishing not only became the answer to many of our requirements and concerns, but it also allowed us to explore (and keep exploring) a number of ideas that have derived from the project.

The first hurdle we were able to tackle by switching to web publishing was related to product distribution. Since the contents were to be transmitted through the Internet, the free circulation (both in monetary and geographical terms) of our project (the anthology) throughout the continent became a possibility.

Next, in terms of design, we were able to make use of the range of possibilities offered by web design to tailor our website to reflect our preoccupations.

Language-wise, the anthology's website was designed to simultaneously offer three language options. Presently, these options are English, French, and Spanish, but we are more confident in our use of them as "administrative" or "auxiliary" languages, as in the future we plan to make the anthology available in, at least, the ten different languages used by our poets (i.e. Cree, Innu, Huichol, Mayan, Purepecha, Triqui, Tseltal, Tsotsil, Zapotec, and Zoque). Ideally, at one point, the reader of *Meridiano 105°* will start her or his reading from a point of personal (not imposed or "second-best") linguistic identification and from there establish whatever type or number of relations they wish with other languages, cultures, and identities.

Of course, multilingual websites are not only not new, but in many instances a given (for example, in web stores, corporate homepages, and search engines), catering to the needs of an increasingly globalized society. Multilingualism is a common feature of electronic contents and products (e.g. websites or computer and gaming software), and translation as localization[10] is part of the course. However, we wish to point out that, although the decision of making *Meridiano 105°* available in different languages is not a novel idea, we understand this multilingual move differently than how it is understood in the localization of websites, as what we aim for is not to make the different language versions of the anthology "appropriate and acceptable" to our different readers. On the contrary, what we envision is to destabilize our readers—to offer them a range of linguistic

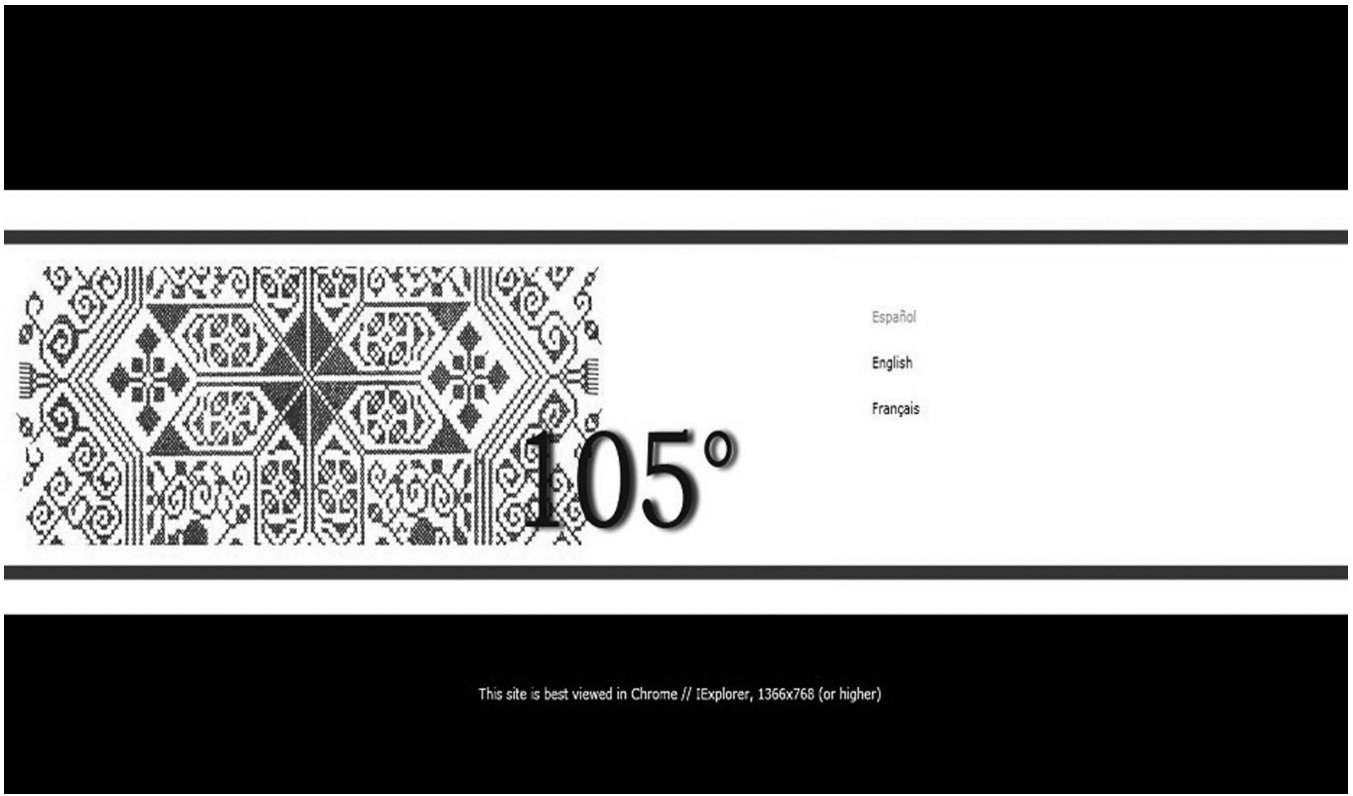

Figure 12.1 Index page of the e-anthology *Meridiano 105°* (screenshot).

Figure 12.2 Example of the "reading page" of one of our poets (screenshot). The first time readers choose a poet, they will also be asked to choose in which languages they want to read the poem. In the case of Mestokosho, the options available so far are (in alphabetical order) English, French, Innu, Spanish, Tseltal, and Tsotsil.

Figure 12.3 Same reading page as in Figure 12.2 (screenshot). In this instance, two languages have been chosen: Innu and Spanish.

possibilities that challenge the notion of languages operating in clear-cut cultural, national, and linguistic niches, where multilingualism is understood more as co-existence than a process of merging. In that sense, our anthology can be read as a countermovement to localization: linguistic variety is not meant to be used to hide variety and difference, but to bring it forth.

That is one of the reasons why we designed the "Poetry Book" section of the anthology to allow the reader to read two translations of any given poem simultaneously without privileging any one language (not even the original).

The idea is to blur the line that separates the original from its translations and by doing so to generate new ways of dialoguing and creating meaning. Moreover, this type of organization (or, perhaps more accurately, disorganization), highlights the complex relationship that our female poets have with their own indigenous languages, placing them on both sides of the translational process: as authors and as translators, as bodies that translate and are translated.

This is, then, how in leaving behind the book format and embracing a new medium of expression (i.e. web publishing) we have been able to engage design, theoretical and ideological concerns, translation, and the dissemination of indigenous women's poetry. Modestly, perhaps, but we feel that this project shows how effectively (and subversively) Western technology can be used as an aid in a project that aims to establish a dialogue between different cultural forms, proving that not all web-oriented translation has to be read as localization, but on the contrary, can also be read as dis-localization.

5. Current Situation: Poets, Poems, and Translations

Up to now, *Meridiano 105°* counts seven Mexican poets: Briceida Cuevas Cob (Maya), Adriana López Sántiz (Tseltal), Enriqueta Lúnez (Tsotsil), Angélica Ortiz López (Huichol), Elizabeth Pérez (Purepecha), Irma Pineda (Zapotec), and Mikeas Sánchez (Zoque), and four Canadian poets: Marilyn Dumont (Cree), Louise Halfe (Cree), Rita Mestokosho (Innu), and Buffy St. Marie (Cree). They belong to different age groups. Most have attended university, and all have published work (though in Mexico indigenous women poets do not publish too extensively, and they always do so in special collections). Some of these women are more visible than others, as they have read their work widely, given interviews, and traveled.

Thematically, most of the poems centre on themes such as lovemaking, conception, birth, death, mothers and daughters, lovers, family, ancestors, the body, valued activities, and traditions. They tend to function in a slightly poetic, atemporal, and traditional setting, and the voices that we find in them seem to speak not so much from a markedly personal position but rather for many other women of their community. The function of the poems is basically descriptive, petitionary, or celebratory, while the tone is affirmative. Nevertheless, there are a number of special aspects to take into

Language / Poet	Cree	Spanish	French	English	Innu	Huichol	Maya	Purepecha	Triqui	Tseltal	Tsotsil	Zapotec	Zoque
Briceida Cuevas Cob		P	x (RM)	x (LA)	x (RM)		O		x (VS)	x (AL)			x (MS)
Adriana López Sántiz		P	x (FD)	x (LA)						O			
Enriqueta Lunez		P	x (FD)	x (CL)						x (AL)	O	x (IP)	
Angélica Ortiz López		P	x (FD)	x (CL)		O				x (AL)			
Elizabeth Pérez		P	x (FD)	x (LA)				O		x (AL)	x (EL)		
Irma Pineda	TIP	P	x (FD)	x (LA)	TIP		TIP			x (AL)	x (EL)	O	
Mikeas Sánchez		P	x (FD)	X (LA)						x (AL)		x (IP)	O
Marilyn Dumont	x (BC/JS)	x (LA)	x (FD)	O		x (AO)				x (AL)		TIP	x (MS)
Louise Halfe		x (LA)	x (FD)	O			TIP			x (AL)			
Rita Mestokosho	TIP	x (LA)	P	P	O					x (AL)	x (EL)	TIP	
Buffy Sainte-Marie	x (KG)	x (LA)	x (FD)	O						x (AL)		x (IP)	

O = original; P = translated by the author; x = translation; TIP = translation in progress

Translators' index: AL = Adriana López; AO = Angélica Ortiz; BC = Beverly Crier; CL = Claudia Lucotti; EL = Enriqueta Lunez; FD = French Department of the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras at the UNAM; JS = Jeremy Saddleback; KG = Keith Goulet; LA = Liliana Andrade; MS = Mikeas Sánchez; RM = Rita Mestokosho; VS = Victoria Sandoval

Figure 12.4 Chart illustrating the women poets so far involved in *Meridiano 105°*, the language they represent, and the languages into which they have been translated.

consideration: Angélica Ortiz's "My Nausi" is given a male speaker, Luise Halfe's "So Sorry"—in a darkly humorous way—interrogates the role of Catholicism in Canada, and Buffy's "Universal Soldier" is a contemporary antiwar poem. These poems (Ortiz, Halfe, and Sainte-Marie's) remind us not to fall for the temptation of the commonplace. The indigenous feminine experience is not a fixed experience (especially when our poets are dispersed all over North America and come from a variety of backgrounds). And one should be aware of the dangers of approaching the reading of poetry written by indigenous women under traditional, Western assumptions of what it means to be an "indigenous" person or a woman.[11]

Concerning the translation process, we can report that most poems have been translated into an average of three indigenous languages, mostly those from the region of modern-day Mexico, particularly Tsotsil, Tsetsal, and Zapoteco. For example, Briceida Cuevas's poem in Maya has been translated, through her Spanish self-translation, into Tsetsal by Antonieta López, into Zoque by Mikeas Sánchez, into Triqui by Victoria Sandoval, and into French and Innu by Rita Mestokosho. Rita, in turn, sent her poem in Innu, French, and English, and it was translated into Spanish by Liliana Andrade, into Tsotsil by Enriqueta Lunez, and into Tseltal by Adriana López. In that sense, regarding the translation into other indigenous languages, the Mexican poets were able to contribute translations more easily than the Canadian poets, where professional translators participated.

For the Mexican poets, their only possibility is to translate themselves into Spanish, as there are no literary translators for the indigenous languages and no support for this either. This constitutes a necessity in their work that predates their collaboration in the anthology. According to many of our poets, it has influenced how they write, as they write in their own languages but are always conscious of having to produce a version in Spanish, and this "having to" translational need becomes the site that reveals the tensions of their position as speakers of indigenous languages in nations with "official" European languages. For example, the fact that the Spanish poetic tradition has very specific characteristics, both regarding formal and thematic aspects, as well as fairly clear rules to determine what type of text can be considered poetry, can be present in one way or another during this dual process of creation and translation and should be explored in depth.

Finally, the role of the academic translators who work in the European languages needs a bit more thought. In the beginning, the idea was that we would try to remain on the margins of the whole process, facilitating it and encouraging it, but in as unobtrusive a way as possible. Nevertheless, it became increasingly impossible not to participate in a number of discussions and decisions that allowed us to share our experience and points of view. At first this worried us but we finally realized that this type of multidisciplinary (multi-identitary) interaction is part of the real picture, today. In fact, our presence made more evident the fact that the techniques, goals, and concept of translation itself varies enormously from one participant to the other and

many times includes rich and stimulating points of view that relate to real-life contexts and experiences quite unknown to our academic world.

6. The Future

We have encountered a number of difficulties on the way and detected important lacks and omissions. However, as we became reconciled to the idea of getting openly involved, as academics, in the project, we decided to keep a register of all this as a central part of the project itself, as it could contain useful information for future work related to translation studies or cultural studies.

In the first place, we realized that we need to include up-to-date contextual information for each poem and for each poet. Perhaps interviews with the different poets, or group conversations could be a good idea. The function of such activity would be, on the one hand, to make visible the multiple realities of our authors. On the other hand, the interviews or conversations would open a space of dialogue beyond that created by the poems.

The project should also incorporate a section planned specifically to register all the different aspects of the translation process itself, both into the European languages as well as into the indigenous ones, paying particular attention to cultural differences and the lack of close equivalences in concepts and vocabulary. This would tell us all a lot about each specific culture, including our own.[12]

For example, monitoring the translations into European languages is particularly important due to the fact that the Western poetic tradition has very wrongly been considered superior to the indigenous ones; in fact, it is still widely believed that many of these other cultures have no artistic traditions of their own, and this sort of belief can contaminate the whole translation process as the original concepts, devices, and rhythms get left out and are replaced by Western ones. So examining how the poems are translated into Spanish, English, and French, guided by the commentaries of the poets, and analyzing what is being left out can become a way of bringing these losses back into focus and an aid in characterizing the aesthetic features of different poetic indigenous traditions.

Another point to be taken into account is the concept of poetry itself. We gradually came to realize that we were using a definitely Western conception and will revise this for the different cultures and languages we are working with, as in many cases, such as in the Aztec (Nahua today) culture, the concept of poetry itself seems to be borrowed from the Spanish tradition, while their own categories seem to have been very different. The project should be flexible enough to incorporate such essential differences instead of ironing them out. On the other hand, in a number of cases, the presence of Western elements can indicate ways in which different groups have appropriated this genre, and these hybrid productions also deserve all our attention.

We have also become increasingly aware of a number of important aspects that we have omitted up to now—due many times to our (academic) Western

outlook—and that we should try and include in the final version of our e-anthology. In the first place, there is the auditive or sound dimension. We have paid too much attention to the textual and left out this other universe of oraliture that is so central to many cultures and groups. Another aspect that is missing is the visual one: facial expressions, gestures, movement, performance, and body language in all its different forms.[13]

Additionally, we would also like to develop a section devoted to cartography. The idea emerged when editing the biographical information of the anthology's poets, as we realized that, for the common reader, it was difficult, if not impossible, to geographically locate the poets just by virtue of mentioning their being, for example, Cree or Tseltal. There is no acknowledgment and, therefore, no clear knowledge of what physical spaces are inhabited by the indigenous peoples today, nor of the land they call their own. Despite their being the original inhabitants of North America, the boundaries that give shape to their territories have been effaced, resulting in a mapping that ignores these ancient configurations and privileges the boundaries of the modern nation-states. Therefore, we believe it necessary to use maps to show other ways of configuring the continent, ways that in their visual unusualness—as they make us look at our continent differently from how modern maps neatly divide Mexico, the United States, and Canada—make visible other realities and other forms of understanding what makes a nation. So taking advantage of the possibilities offered by interactive graphics, we intend to create a "Cartography" section, which will contain different maps that will show the linguistic, historical, and geographical boundaries making up the indigenous nations, while allowing the reader to superimpose different maps (much like the poems and their translations can be superimposed on each other) so as to observe (and recreate) the different types of interactions that take place not only between indigenous cultures and the modern states but also among indigenous cultures themselves.

Finally, as a virtual community, we must decide upon two urgent and absolutely central points. The first one is how we are going to handle the inclusion of new poets, poems, and translations. And the second one relates to the actual administration of the site. These two very briefly stated issues will decide the future life of the project.

7. Conclusion

We would like to conclude this account with a few final comments about the overall importance of the project. First, as an e-anthology, *Meridiano 105°* gathers, organizes, and circulates material in new ways, positioning the local within larger contexts, without it losing specificity. This is a good exercise in these times.

Second, it forces us to think about translation in actual/specific multicultural situations and to realize that translation is not just central to learning or learning more about others but also to learning more about ourselves.

Third, the project has made us realize that we need to think of other ways of handling this sort of material: ways that will allow us to create new groupings and add new material (texts, sounds, and images) on a permanent basis, ways of becoming accessible to anybody that is interested, and ways of participating jointly, via dialogue, across the whole continent without establishing hierarchies. In this sense, only access to and knowledge of new technologies will permit this.

Last but not least, we believe that a project like this changes the old paradigm, which tended to only pay attention to the final, finished product; ours turns the living, collective process—one that is in constant flux, never quite finished, as certain dialogues cannot be finished—into the heart of the project.

Notes

1. Antonieta and I assume full responsibility for this chapter. Nevertheless, this project is the result of many hours of collaborative work performed not only by the poets and translators mentioned in the text but also by a considerable number of colleagues and students of the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras at the UNAM. Two names that must be mentioned here are Liliana Andrade and Carolina Toledo, coordinators of the first and second stage of the anthology.
2. Why the anthology received this name deserves a brief mention. Initially, the anthology was to be titled *Sinfonía de lunas* (*Symphony of Moons*), in reference to the polyphonic nature of the project. It was not until the project came into being as an e-anthology that this first name was replaced by *Meridiano 105°* (or simply *105°*) as we perceived the need for a name that could function in multiple languages without requiring a translation—hence the numeric title. Geographically, the meridian 105° west of Greenwich is a longitude that crosses from north to south through Canada, the United States, and Mexico. We chose it as a symbolic line that functions as a link between nations—those officially recognized in the present era, but also the pre-Columbian indigenous nations—bridging the distance between languages and cultures whose shared history, we feel, has not been insisted on enough.
3. Patricia Monture Angus, though not a poet, has worked substantially on issues related to indigenous women and language.
4. The poets who participated in the reading activity were the first ones involved and helped contact some of the other poets. Marilyn Dumont and Luise Halfe, who had formed part of a previous project, were e-mailed and invited to join.
5. We feel it must be noted that in this project, "multilingualism" does not refer to the modern phenomena of globalization or cosmopolitanism, but to the seldom mentioned reality of the multiplicity of indigenous languages that, both in Mexico and Canada, have historically existed alongside each other and on the fringes of what are regarded as "national" languages, i.e. Spanish, English, and French.
6. The "Taller Leñateros" (http://www.tallerlenateros.com/) is one of the best-known examples of such a publishing project. Based in the state of Chiapas, in Mexico, its aim is to promote contemporary Mayan poetry.
7. For a study on language policy in Mexico and the situation of inequality between Spanish and Mexico's indigenous languages, see Terborg et al. 2006, 415–518.
8. In some even more extreme cases, being able to translate back and forth into one's own language can be a matter of life and death, as was the case of Ernestina

Ascencio, a seventy-year-old Nahua woman gang-raped by soldiers in Veracruz in 2007 but whose testimony in Nahuatl (she spoke no Spanish) was never attended to before she died.

9. One such example can be found in Gideon Toury's description of translational norms, where he proposes that the linguistic reality of any given culture will affect its translation procedures, such as "translation policy" and "directness of translation" (Toury 2012, 81–87).
10. C.K. Quah defines localization as "the process of changing the documentation of a product, a product itself or the delivery of services so that they are appropriate and acceptable to the target society and culture" (Quah 2004, 19).
11. Indeed, while revising the poems for their uploading onto the website, one of the most recent preoccupations has been the extent to which, consciously or unconsciously, the poets have fallen into this ideological trap (if at all) when they chose which poem to contribute to the anthology.
12. An urgent task, as soon as we launch the webpage, is to invite all the participants that have worked on one specific poem to connect, using the site, and share their particular experience due to their particular positioning in a specific culture and language.
13. See, for example, the following video, http://youtu.be/1WWl-hxhYR4 (last consulted: December 6, 2013), of Rita Mestokosho performing Innu poetry.

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13 The Translation of Islamic Feminism at CERFI in Morocco

Bouchra Laghzali

CERFI, MOROCCO

1. Introduction to CERFI

Islamic feminism emerged in the 1990s as a movement to both defend Muslim women's rights and to counter stereotypes about Muslim women by referring directly to Islamic texts. Since Muslim feminists belong to Arab as well as non-Arab countries, and since they read and write in different languages, translation is vital for exchange between the various language communities within Islam. Individual and collective works, such as those available through the Women and Memory Forum[1] (in Egypt) and Musawah[2] (in Malaysia), play a role in this transnational and multilingual communication. In 2010, the *Centre d'études et de recherches féminines en Islam* (CERFI)—also known, in English, as the Center for Women's Studies in Islam—joined this movement in order to produce academic research and studies, and to provide translations on women's issues in Islam. CERFI statistics showed that by July 1, 2014, its website had been visited 102,348 times.[3]

The establishment of CERFI is the result of a partnership between the International Group of Study and Reflection on Women in Islam (GIERFI, *Groupe international d'étude et de réflexion sur les femmes en Islam*), a group that was located in Barcelona but is now defunct, and the Mohammadian League of Scholars in Morocco (*Rabita Mohammadia des Oulémas*).[4] It is one of thirteen specialized centers that are affiliated with the Rabita and in charge of producing academic research in the religious field, including Sufism, Qur'anic studies, doctrinal studies, and women's studies. Moreover, CERFI is the first official religious institution specializing in academic research in the Arab world to adopt Islamic feminism—a movement that calls for revising the patriarchal interpretation of religious texts from a feminist perspective and claims that women's rights are deeply rooted in Islam. It differs from the other two feminist movements that exist in Morocco: traditional feminism that refuses to question Islamic heritage and secular feminism that rejects Islam as a frame of reference.

While GIERFI (Barcelona) targeted mainly non-Arabic-language readers by publishing academic articles in French, English, and Spanish, CERFI (Rabat) is oriented toward Arabic-language readers through its website and electronic journal available in Arabic. Currently, CERFI uses translation

into French and English in order to reach non-Muslim audiences, largely to mitigate clichéd ideas they may hold about women in Islam; its purposes in translating into Arabic are to dispel preconceptions that the local Arab-speaking community might have about the role of Muslim women in society. To this end, CERFI publishes argumentative academic articles that are based on the Qur'an and the *hadith* (the sayings of the Prophet of Islam).

The images most targeted by CERFI publications include the largely non-Muslim views of Muslim women as creatures oppressed by Islam and of the Islamic headscarf as a symbol of this oppression. Within Muslim communities, CERFI also targets ideas about men being preferred over women[5] and women being unable to assume political responsibilities because of their presumed physical weakness and intellectual deficiency. Indeed, the Center was established with a view to revising the Islamic heritage and to reformulating the religious interpretations regarding women on the basis of the scriptural texts, filling the academic gaps in this field through research and translation, and clarifying confusions between Revelation texts, on the one hand, and religious scholars' understandings, practice, and legal reasoning (*ijtihād*), on the other. The Center also aims to explore and reveal the cultural, historical, and social diversity of women in the Islamic world by introducing to a wider audience contemporary Muslim feminists and active women such as Ziba Mir-Husseini from Iran, Aminata Traore from Mali, and Oumaima Abu Bakr from Egypt, among other women who have left their mark on Islamic history.

2. Championing Islamic Feminism

In Morocco, Fatema Mernissi and Asma Lamrabet are among the best-known feminist writers.

Mernissi, who earned her PhD in sociology in 1973 from Brandeis University, is one of the leading Arab-Muslim feminist writers to date. She argues that religious-juristic texts, including the hadiths and their interpretations, have been manipulated by male jurist-theologians who distort the meanings of these ancient texts in order to maintain patriarchal social systems. She studies these texts from a feminist perspective and, in so doing, develops other critical perspectives on Arab-Muslim society, addressing questions such as sexuality in Islam, changes in traditional male/female roles, the importance of education and literacy in empowering women and in improving their health, and the contributions of women to the economies of Arab States. For example, in one of her first books, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (1975), she argues that the machinations of a male elite (rather than religious dictates) are responsible for denying women's rights and imposing sexual inequality, and she considers this a prominent feature of both Islamic and non-Muslim societies.

Predictably, reception of Mernissi's work is mixed. While many readers support her audacity in speaking out about women's situations and status

in a patriarchal society, others reject her criticisms and consider them transgressive, believing they serve a foreign agenda by attacking and criticizing the religious-juristic texts to please "the West" and stem from an ignorance of Islam. Nevertheless, the revolutionary aspects of her work and the controversies it has raised have no doubt resulted in an increased appetite to translate her works, which are now available in over twenty-five languages, including Arabic, Catalan, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Swedish, Turkish, Azeri, English, Bengali, Portuguese, Chinese, Finnish, Hungarian, Indonesian, Polish, Serbian, and Urdu.

However, only eight of a total of eighteen books by Mernissi are available in Arabic. Fatema Zouhra Zriouil, a literary critic and researcher at the Faculty of Arts in Casablanca, completed most of these licensed Arabic translations. One important book that has yet to be translated is *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory* (1996), wherein Mernissi "analyses the role of the state in prescribing women's roles, activities and spheres and explores the insidious consequences of state-supported inequality—not only for women but for the creative and spiritual life of a culture."[6] Although Mernissi sees the translations of her work as a desirable "added value" for intellectual debate in Arabic, she has explicitly rejected pirated or poor-quality work (Mernissi (1975) 2005, 8–9). Because of the limited number of authorized Arabic translations, many Arabic readers are familiar with Mernissi only through secondhand information circulating about her, and they reject her ideas. So, rather than changing stereotypes of Muslim women—and even though she is a crucial figure in the feminist movement, as Rhouni's *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi* (2010) aptly points out—Mernissi and her intentions are often questioned.

Unlike Mernissi, who personally handles permission to translate her works, Lamrabet's work is often treated by CERFI, where she has been the director since February 2010. As an Islamic feminist with prior experience as president of GIERFI (Barcelona) and as coordinator of a research and reflection group on Muslim women and intercultural dialogue in Rabat from 2004 to 2007, Lamrabet focuses on re-interpreting the Holy Scriptures from a perspective that attempts to reveal Islam's inherent support of feminist appeals and on revising certain Islamic concepts according to a modern and reformist vision. She has published many articles addressing Islam and women's issues, as well as six books, all written originally in French. In 2013, she received the AWO (Arab Women's Organization) award in social sciences for her most recent work *Femmes et hommes dans le Coran: Quelle égalité?* (Women and Men in the Qur'an: What Equality?) (2012d).

In her writings, Lamrabet denounces sexist and misogynist interpretations of religious texts and shows that Islamic sacred texts promote gender equality. She also addresses and seeks to eradicate some of the stereotypes circulating in non-Muslim countries about women in Islam by writing about a "new" feminist and ethical vision of Islam. While non-Muslim societies may consider Islam a religion that oppresses women, Lamrabet says it is not

Islam but rather the sexist interpretations produced over fourteen centuries that have legitimated Muslim men's oppression of women. In this regard, she sometimes cites Mernissi.

Furthermore, she often takes a "de-colonialized" perspective, arguing, for example, that the international media applies double standards in regard to women's issues: for instance, domestic violence in Spain is explained as being due to the high rate of unemployment, while the same phenomenon in the Maghreb is considered a result of the Islamic tradition of abuse (Lamrabet 2011). With regard to the international media's running commentary on Muslim women's dress, she writes,

> the sari of the Hindus is a sign of their identity, which is totally legitimate . . ., while the Persian chador, the Maghreb haik, the veil of a young Egyptian student are symbols of an isolated and strange identity and a violation of women's rights.
>
> (14–15)

In a move to spread a liberating message about Islam for women and to criticize policies she considers oppressive, Lamrabet has focused on various topics in her work, including secularism, the veil, inheritance, equality, and justice. Aware of the importance of translation in the dissemination of this message, she has sought to make her writings available in different languages, such as Spanish, English, and Arabic—the latter being the language of her Islamic references and the mother tongue of her Moroccan community.

Since Lamrabet writes mainly in French, translation is required for her work to reach Arabic readers. CERFI has thus undertaken the Arabic translations of her articles, including those that address topics of marriage in Islam and gender equality originally published on her personal website.[7] The first article to appear in Arabic was a translation of a conference presentation entitled "Féminisme islamique: nouvelles voies, nouvelles perspectives" (Islamic Feminism: New Approaches, New Perspectives) (Lamrabet 2016). Similarly, "L'égalité des genres: entre les mythes cultivées et la réalité vécue" (Gender Equality: Between Cultivated Myths and Lived Realities) (Lamrabet 2008) was made available in Arabic on the CERFI site. On the question of women in politics in Muslim and non-Muslim cultures, Lamrabet argues that preventing women from being equally engaged in politics contradicts Qur'anic instructions, and she presents a Qur'anic example of a female political leader whose political skills are recognized in the ancient texts in "Femmes et politique en Islam: entre les textes et la réalité contemporaine" (Women and Politics in Islam: Between the Texts and Contemporary Reality) (Lamrabet 2012c), which CERFI has also made available in Arabic.

Legal issues, such as divorce, are also a concern of Lamrabet. She has published on the Qur'anic principles of divorce in a piece entitled "Les

principes égalitaires du divorce selon le Coran" (The Egalitarian Principles of Divorce in the Qur'an) (Lamrabet 2012a, 93–112). Here she sheds light on the 2004 reform of the Moroccan divorce law that was a result of restoring the Qur'anic message, revealed fourteen centuries ago. Following this reform, a wife and a husband have an equal right to ask for divorce in Morocco. The translation of this text into Arabic was carried out by CERFI for a conference presentation in Egypt; this was considered important, as Qur'anic instructions about divorce that provide justice for women are not applied in most of the Arab-Muslim countries. An article that addresses the Arab Spring from a feminist perspective on women and Arab revolutions, *Femmes et révolutions arabes: quels changements?* (Women and Arabic Revolutions: What Are the Changes?) (2012b), was also translated from French into Arabic because it takes into consideration the fact that Muslim women participated actively in the revolts and thus demonstrated their significant political roles. Most recently, Lamrabet published her second book in Arabic entitled "*alIslam wa lmar'a: attarīq athālit*" (Islam and Woman: The Third Way) (2014); it consists of a collection of articles that appeared in French on a number of different websites over a period of several years.

Although Mernissi and Lamrabet are from two different generations and use different approaches and strategies to deal with women's issues, they share similar objectives and interests in denouncing discrimination against Muslim women.

3. Mediating between Muslim and Non-Muslim Societies

One of the main goals of CERFI is to produce new feminist thought as a third trend besides the two feminisms that already exist in Morocco: secular feminism and traditional feminism. Translation has been used at CERFI since its launch to facilitate communication with more individuals and institutions about this third trend of Islamic feminism. Given its importance in regard to communication, translation is a constant concern and topic of discussion that addresses both the works selected for translation and the goals to be achieved by translation.

Generally speaking, the translation objectives depend on the target audience and the stereotypes that need to be addressed, whether in non-Muslim or Muslim societies. French and English translations tend to target non-Muslim readers, seeking to mitigate stereotypical ideas and convey the universal message of Islam concerning women; Arabic translations, on the other hand, are meant for Arab readers in order to address what are considered erroneous ideas about Muslim women that are spread in the Arab-Muslim community in the name of Islam.

Since a primary function of translation at the Center is outreach, the very first document to be translated into French and English was a brochure that explained the vision, purposes, and working methods of the Center. This was followed by the translation of formal correspondence with a

number of institutions, a call for participation in the Center's journal, and an announcement to university students regarding the organization of training sessions in the framework of the Center's annual program. This was further enhanced by international outreach and impact, where translation served the organization of international meetings such as the conference "Knowledge Building Initiative on Qiwāmah and Wilāyah" (November 8–9, 2013). On this occasion, the conference brochure was translated, and the articles prepared in Arabic by CERFI's researchers were made available in English.

Translation is also required for the Center's journal, *Arrou'ya* (The Vision),[8] which targets an Arab audience and includes, among other things, a section for "translated texts" in Arabic. Arabic articles written by CERFI researchers were also translated by the Center for publication on GIERFI's Barcelona website, where French was the first foreign language of translation. This responded to the interest of Francophone communities in Canada, Europe, and Africa who frequently used the GIERFI site, but it also reflected the fact that French is the first foreign language in Morocco, still in use in administration and higher education, despite decolonization.

Still, only some texts are selected for translation into French. The selection depends on whether articles are deemed appropriate to the cultural and political contexts of the target audience and whether they can achieve the same impact intended by the writer. For instance, the article "Aisha's Necklace: Lessons and Meanings," written in Arabic by Mounia Terraz, a researcher at CERFI, on the importance of jewelry in the life of Aisha, the Prophet's wife, was published on CERFI's website only.[9] It was not translated, because it focuses on women's innate love for and concern with beauty and ornamentation, while CERFI's main objectives are to address stereotypes of Muslim women in non-Muslim cultures and to discuss women's real place in Islam. Thus an article is more likely to be translated if it tackles an issue raised within the target audience context. For instance, "Mariam, sœur de Harun" (Mariam, Sister of Harun), originally written in Arabic for a conference in the United Kingdom, was translated into French[10] to provide an introduction to, among other things, the Qur'anic texts on Mariam since she appears in both the Qur'an and the Bible.

For a better understanding of the Center's translation policy, I will give some examples of Arabic articles selected for translation into French. For instance, a study entitled "Le leadership politique et les femmes" (Political Leadership and Women) was carried out to evaluate the authenticity of a hadith that has been constantly repeated by scholars and laypeople to prove that women are incapable of political leadership. Nadia Charkaoui, one of the researchers at CERFI argues, "the Prophet urged women to contribute to all walks of life, to participate in battles and debates organized in mosques, to be involved in public affairs, claim their rights and defend their dignity." Though never published in Arabic, a summary of the article that left out some of the details, such as the branches of hadith science discussed

in the original text, which would have made the target text too elaborate, was translated into French.[11] It explained that it is not the Qu'ran that forbids women access to political positions; it is the human misinterpretation of the religious texts[12] that has instilled and perpetuated this misunderstanding about the role of Muslim women in society.

Another Arabic article that deals with the issue of women's political governance from a feminist perspective was translated into French as "La reine de Saba" (The Queen of Sheba) to give a Qur'anic example of a political female governor praised in the Qur'anic text as a fair and intelligent leader. This study was translated to draw attention to the real place of women in Qur'anic texts, which are often subject to misogynist interpretations. According to the author Charkaoui,

> the queen was a special person because she is mentioned in the Qur'an. It is an honor to be mentioned in the Qur'anic message addressed to the whole humanity at all times and in all places. Through these Qur'anic verses, this queen is particularly praised as are all female leaders in general.
>
> (Charkaoui 2016a)

In this vein, another article written in Arabic by Charkaoui on "the holistic vision of the Qur'an towards women" was also translated into French (Charkaoui 2016d). It compares the reality of women who are suffering from injustice in different communities all over the globe to the situation of Muslim women at the time of Revelation, whose problems were taken into account and dealt with gradually in Islam. This article states,

> at the time of the Prophet, women participated actively in all fields, including the political (such as their participation in allegiance and invasions), the scientific (by learning Islamic principles), and the social and financial domains. This participation is simply an application of the Qur'anic instructions.
>
> (n.p.)

Certain translations are done in response to articles by non-Muslim individuals, such as Rafat Amari (2004), who accuses the Qur'an of confusing Mary (Jesus's mother) with Mariam (Moses's sister). The Arabic text on "Mariam, Sister of Harun" by Charkaoui that was presented at the UK conference (see endnote 10) sets out to address this misconception through logical arguments and to show that "the superficial reading and understanding of the Qur'anic texts often result in prejudices about Islam, the Prophet Mohamed and the Holy Qur'an." Similarly, Farida Zomorod (the editor of *Arrou'ya*) produced an in-depth analysis of women's participation in society, including in politics, economics, and family, that is mentioned in the Qur'an. It was seen as a way to introduce the Qur'anic vision of the active

roles women play in Muslim life. Neither the original text nor the translation were published, however.

As part of an official religious institution, CERFI is visited by non-Arab academics and by students seeking information about the role of women in the religious institutions of Morocco. Other Muslim religious institutions do not provide such information in languages other than Arabic. Thus a text written in Arabic by Nadia Charkaoui on "the role of official religious institutions in Morocco in correcting stereotypes on Moroccan women," which was delivered at a workshop but not published in Arabic, was translated into French (Charkaoui 2016b) as an informative reference for people interested in religious life in Morocco in general, and the place of Moroccan women in these institutions in particular.

The work done at CERFI to translate Muslim feminist interpretations of the Qur'anic message is part of an attempt to explain in other languages that Islam is not responsible for underestimating women, but that it is rather the human misinterpretation of the religious texts that has corrupted the religion. For instance, when a hadith on women's inability to carry out intellectual and religious duties is repeated erroneously, Muslim women who do not speak Arabic and cannot read the Qur'an in Arabic are unable to defend themselves or even understand the real meaning of this prophetic saying. There are insufficient resources and references in French and English (or other languages) that analyze and interpret it adequately. Nadia Charkaoui reflects on this particular hadith in "*Nāqisāt 'aql wa dīn: bayna sarīhi nasi wa istinbātāt alfuqahāe*" (Women's Intellectual and Religious Deficiencies: Between the Religious Text and Scholars' Interpretations) (Charkaoui 2016c, n.p.). This piece was not published in Arabic, but was translated into French to explain how the misinterpretation and literal reading of some prophetic sayings result in mistaken perceptions about women's status in Islam. As Charkaoui states,

> the prophetic saying studied in this article is used by non-Muslims to distort the image of Islam, and by some Muslims to despise women and make them feel inferior. This hadith that seems to talk about women's intellectual and religious deficiencies was taken out of its context and misinterpreted to prevent women from having access to their divine rights as revealed in the Qur'an.
>
> (n.p.)

Reviews and critical analyses of books dealing with important issues in Islam are also translated at CERFI. For instance, a review of the book *almar'a bayna lmuwājahati wal'istislām* (The Woman between Confrontation and Surrender) (Kaddour 2007), published in Arabic by Fadila Laaziz, a researcher at CERFI, and translated into French, confirmed ideas about motherhood as a noble mission in Islam, but pointed to the existence of other responsibilities conferred upon women to build human civilization.

Through this translated review, CERFI takes an Islamic perspective to shed light on women's roles that include other tasks within the community.

Reports on conferences discussing women's issues are translated as well. "Regards croisés de femmes en lutte: Chemins vers un féminisme sans frontières" (A Look at Women's Struggles: Paths toward a Feminism without Borders) is a report prepared in French by Fatima Zahra Ouadghiri, a member of GIERFI (Barcelona), for an international conference on feminism held in Paris. This report was translated into Arabic for the CERFI website to inform Arab readers about the work of Muslim feminists in other countries.[13] Similarly, in order to address an important current discussion in Morocco about the burning issue of the marriage of minor girls, T. O. Shanavas's academic article "Was Ayesha a Six-Year-Old Bride? The Ancient Myth Exposed," which was published online in English (Shanavas 2001) and discusses the real age of the Prophet's wife, Ayesha, as a bride, was selected to be translated. The French translation appeared on the now defunct GIERFI site; it was published because the question of underage marriage is so sharply criticized in non-Muslim societies. The objective of this translation was to introduce a research-based interpretation proving that "the age of Ayesha has been erroneously reported in the hadith literature" (n.p.). CERFI felt that, although certain Muslim scholars and researchers might reject the ideas expressed in this article, the author's attempt to answer many of the questions asked about the issue deserved discussion. The Arabic translation of the article was published on the CERFI website to provide a different perspective on how the story of Ayesha is used to justify underage marriages in Muslim countries.

Academics interested in women's issues in Islam who come from other institutions also participate in the Center's work. Their writing may also be translated into other languages, provided it is deemed appropriate for the target readers. For example, a French text by Moroccan researcher Dina Kadiri entitled "Complices" (Complicitous), that discussed the prophet's compassion, was first published on the GIERFI (Barcelona) website and then selected for translation into Arabic.[14] The title of this article was modified in translation, however, in order to keep the same impact intended by the writer and to reflect the content of the text. The title chosen was changed to "*annabiyu Muhammad, arrahmatu almuhdāt*" (The Prophet Muhammad, a Mercy to the World). The literal translation of the original title was not considered attractive, nor did it match or reflect the content of the text. Another contribution in Arabic, "*Attasawuru Alqur'ānī lilmar'a: mashrŭ'u Muqārabatin jadīdatin*" (The Qur'anic Vision towards Women: A New Approach), by Moroccan university professor Farid Choukri (2012), was selected for translation into French, since it provides interesting ideas about the priority of the Qur'an as a basic reference in dealing with women's issues. Choukri stresses the importance of understanding the Prophet's sayings about women in light of the universal message of the Qur'an.

Other news that deals with women's issues and the Center's activities and that is published in national and international newspapers or magazines is highlighted and sometimes translated for the purpose of informing Arabic readers. For instance, a newspaper article published in Italian[15] about the success and positive impact of a conference that was held in Italy and in which CERFI's director participated was translated into French but not published; this version was later used to produce the Arabic version.[16] Its purpose was to inform readers about the influence of new ideas disseminated abroad by CERFI members and specifically about the third trend of Islamic feminism.

Finally, some articles are translated to meet the language requirements of other magazines and journals, or for use in conferences. The editors of an encyclopedia, for instance, required contributions in English, and so a study by Lamrabet (2013a) that provides examples of the reinterpretation of some egalitarian Qur'anic concepts and their applications in the new Moroccan family code was translated into English. A text entitled "Les bases de l'éthique corporelle égalitaire pour les hommes et les femmes" and prepared by Lamrabet for the international Summer School on Critical Muslim Studies: Decolonial Struggles and Liberation Theologies held in Granada, Spain in 2013, was translated into English, as "The Basics of Egalitarian Body Ethics for Men and Women" (Lamrabet 2013b). Another text that consists of a reformist analysis of political and social concepts relating to women's issues in Islam and entitled "Importance de la relecture des concepts 'al-khilafa,' 'al-Wilayah' and 'al-Quiwamah' " (An Egalitarian Reading of the Concepts of Khilafah, Wilayah and Qiwamah) was first translated into Arabic for oral presentation at a conference in Jordan and then incorporated in English into *Men in Charge? Rethinking Authority in Muslim Legal Tradition* (Lamrabet 2015). The translations of these contributions to international gatherings attended by CERFI researchers enable the institution to join the international feminist community, discuss women's issues, and exchange experiences with colleagues and peers. Translation is thus immensely purposeful at CERFI and is used and deployed by its members to achieve their broader goals of reaching Arab and non-Arab audiences.

4. Translator Challenges

Many religious scholars specializing in religious sciences in Morocco do not master languages other than Arabic, which may make them less open to new ideas about religious issues. Indeed, any attempt to deal with religious texts from a different perspective and in another language is sometimes perceived as writing that serves the Western agenda and threatens Muslim identity. Translators of feminist texts into Arabic need to take this patriarchal community and the rigidity of certain scholars into account. These traditionalist scholars tend to dismiss feminist criticism or interpretations of religious texts and reject the intellectual effort behind those criticisms and interpretations. For this reason, the translation of articles that deal with controversial

topics such as interfaith marriage or women's prophecy may be rejected by this category of readers, irrespective of the translator's caliber or effort. The Arabic translation may be unjustly criticized, and the translator may be accused of having "mistranslated" or of keeping "inappropriate" ideas in the target text.

In such an environment, the translator's "faithfulness" to the original work is relative. Certain ideas can be eclipsed or modified in the revision process in order to avoid negative feedback and additions can be made for stylistic purposes. For instance, in a recent case, where the source text referred to Islamic thought as "sclérosée" (fossilized), the proofreader amended the chosen term "Mutahajjir" (stony and rough) to "jāmid" (rigid), thereby implying that Islamic thought can be subject to reform. Such modifications are normally approved by the author before the final version of the translation is published—a process which is relatively simple since most of the texts translated at CERFI are also written by researchers there.

An enormous challenge for the translator are the translations of the Qur'anic verses and prophetic sayings that are quoted in feminist writings in Arabic and need to be translated into French or English. These sayings are written in classical Arabic, which is no longer used in contemporary writing. Before they can be translated, explanations of each citation, usually a hadith, need to be found since the meaning of words in Arabic has changed over time. Also, while European languages such as French and English have lexical (and cultural) similarities at the terminological level in relation to feminism (e.g. feminism/féminisme, gender/genre), the terms available for translation in the Arabic language are extremely different. To deal with the Euro/Anglo feminist terminology in Arabic, the translator needs to understand the cultural and religious contexts to be able to transfer the meaning intended in the source culture in an adequate linguistic form. Note that the Institute for Study and Research on Arabization (IERA) in Rabat, which produces lexica in different fields such as the Internet, botany, and urbanism, has not yet produced a glossary on the terminology of feminism. In the absence of such lexica, a translator needs to create her own glossary in order to maintain textual coherence and take into account the cultural system of her own community. CERFI is currently working on building Islamic feminist lexica.

An example of a terminology issue is the term "patriarchal," which is often used in feminist texts and frequently translated into Arabic as "abawi" (paternal). However, since the father is a figure of respect and an important member of the Muslim family, this Arabic term does not always convey the source context meaning. CERFI tends to translate "patriarchal" as "dhukŭrī" (male) to express male authority in the Muslim community, rather than the paternal authority required for a balanced family. There is also the term "feminism," which is translated in Arabic either as "Niswya" or "Nisā'iya." But at CERFI, we choose to translate it as "haraka Nisā'iya" because the adjective "Niswya" has a pejorative meaning and is associated with Western feminism, which is perceived as having a different ideology from that of Islamic feminism.

Another challenge is the translation of divine names. There is no standardized rule on their translation or transliteration. Some translators opt to transliterate the word "Allah" and not localize it to a particular language, while others prefer to translate it as "Dieu" or "God." Over the years, the practice at CERFI has changed, and we now transliterate the word and consider it a proper name deeply rooted in Islamic culture that needs to be kept as it is.

5. Conclusion

CERFI research, translation, and communication activities are a positive and indispensable contribution to overcoming misunderstandings between Muslim and non-Muslim cultures. They also raise international awareness about Islamic feminism. The production of more translations of Muslim feminist writing in Arabic may help to change erroneous ideas that traditionalist scholars have about feminists and Islamic feminism and to clarify the objectives and principles of this new third trend that does not stand against Islamic principles.

Since Islamic feminism is an emerging movement in Morocco, more translations are needed in this field, especially into Arabic, to fill the academic gap in women's issues in Islam. More trilingual lexica are required to fulfill this task, and more translators are needed at CERFI to translate its researchers' production and make its website available in foreign languages. Although translators may be largely invisible in the process, the impact of their work is palpable when translated texts successfully reach a larger readership worldwide, addressing stereotypes and making the writings of Moroccan Muslim feminists available abroad. Therefore, despite resistance and criticism from traditionalists and laypeople, CERFI will continue to translate and publish the work of Muslim feminists to counter ignorance and preconceived notions about Islam.

Notes

Unless otherwise indicated, all translations (of quotations, titles, excerpts) from French and Arabic into English are by Bouchra Laghzali.

1. http://www.wmf.org.eg/en. Accessed October 14, 2015.
2. http://www.musawah.org. Accessed October 14, 2015.
3. Centre d'études et de recherches féminines en Islam (CERFI). Accessed March 16, 2016. http://www.annisae.ma/.
4. http://www.arrabita.ma. Accessed October 14, 2015.
5. For example, the Saudi Wahabi scholar Sheikh Ibn Baz asserts that there is a divine preference of men over women. See his website: http://www.binbaz.org.sa/noor/146.
6. Mernissi's website. Accessed October 14, 2015. http://www.mernissi.net/books/books/womens_rebellion_and_islamic_memory.html.
7. http://www.asma-lamrabet.com. Accessed October 14, 2015.
8. http://www.roeya.ma/. Accessed March 16, 2016.
9. http://www.annisae.ma/Article.aspx?C=5613. Accessed March 15, 2016.

10. Video in Arabic delivered at a conference. Accessed March 15, 2016. http://www.arrabita.ma/Multimedia.aspx?ctr=76&type=v&f=104956&alb=104955&sec=104954&cat=89, translated by Bouchra Laghzali. Accessed March 16, 2016. http://charkaouinadia04.blogspot.com/2016/03/mariam-de-harun-1-nadia-charkaoui.html.
11. This article was not published.
12. Namely, the Qur'an and Sunnah (reported sayings and deeds of the Prophet of Islam Mohamed (PBUH)).
13. http://www.annisae.ma/Article.aspx?C=5733, translated by Bouchra Laghzali (personal communication.) Accessed March 15, 2016.
14. http://www.annisae.ma/Article.aspx?C=5663, translated by Bouchra Laghzali. Accessed October 14, 2015.
15. http://www.sanremonews.it/2012/05/16/leggi-notizia/argomenti/altre-notizie/articolo/sanremo-successo-per-il-seminario-dedicato-allislam-ed-al-femminismo.html#.T7YvPBhRPXQ. Accessed October 14, 2015.
16. http://www.annisae.ma/Article.aspx?C=5684. Accessed March 15, 2016.

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