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## Transnationalizing Feminist Translation Studies? Insights from the Warwick School of Feminist Translation: A Roundtable

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### Cover Page Footnote

This roundtable is the result of the initiative Warwick School of Feminist Translation, sponsored by the School of Modern Languages and Cultures at the University of Warwick, and the Connecting Cultures Global Research Priority fund at the University of Warwick. The authors want to thank all participants in this initiative held in May 2023 for engaging in such constructive discussions.

# Transnationalizing Feminist Translation Studies? Insights from the Warwick School of Feminist Translation: A Roundtable

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**Abstract:** This roundtable article features a conversation among the five scholars who delivered keynotes at the Warwick School of Feminist Translation, held at the University of Warwick, UK, in May 2023: Olga Castro, Emek Ergun, Maud Anne Bracke, William J. Spurlin, and Luciana Carvalho Fonseca. Drawing on their uniquely interdisciplinary expertise on the politics of translation and interpreting, the authors explore the urgent role that translation and translators, as well as the fields and scholars of feminist and queer translation and interpretation studies, play in disrupting and dismantling heteropatriarchal, racist, homonationalist, and colonial regimes of power. Their conversations reveal the urgent need to decolonize intersectionally and globally and to transnationalize (and eventually denationalize) the feminist and queer praxes of translation beyond contemporary geopolitical, linguistic, institutional, and cultural borders; and also beyond normative binary regimes that largely demarcate the contemporary theories, actions, and future possibilities of feminist and queer translation. While doing that, the scholars unpack the notion of transnationality, which cannot be conceived without translation and lives a dynamic polysemic life in translation, yet remains an undertheorized term in much of contemporary scholarship, as the roundtable discussion attests. In exploring the intricate interplay between transnationality and translation (particularly in regard to processes of queer migrations, translocal coalitions, and feminist genealogies), the scholars invite further conversations on how Feminist Translation Studies can transnationalize, decolonize, and queer both the world and itself while operating within the disciplinary boundaries of the globalized neoliberal university.

**Keywords:** Warwick School of Feminist Translation, Transnational Feminist Translation, Queer Feminist Translation, Feminist Genealogies in Translation

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## Introduction

Feminist translation has experienced an unprecedented growth in the last decade, both as an interdisciplinary area of research within translation studies and feminist studies and as an emancipatory activity carried out by translation practitioners and feminist activists. In addition to the growing rates of the academic production of monographs, edited collections, and conferences on feminist translation studies (FTS), the greater number of self-claimed feminist, gender-conscious, and queer translations carried out across a wide range of languages and genres with ideologically diverse motives and missions also demonstrate the growth of feminist translation as an activist practice of

resistance and social change. Most crucially, both the field and the practice of feminist translation is attracting young and early career scholars' attention all over the world, with increasingly more MA dissertations and PhD projects every year, expanding the field's thematic richness and geopolitical scope; this can be seen, for example, in posts and discussions on the Feminist-Translation-Studies jiscmail mailing list.

In response to this growing interest by a new generation of FTS scholars and activists, the Warwick School of Feminist Translation, organized by Olga Castro and Emek Ergun and held at the University of Warwick, UK, in May 2023, emerged with a clear aim: to create a platform for advanced graduate students to become familiar with new intersectional and transnational perspectives on the politics of feminist translation and provide the opportunity to exchange ideas with peers and scholars. We sought to facilitate more interdisciplinary conversations in feminist and queer translation and interpreting studies by hosting twenty-five participants, mostly graduate and doctoral students, determined to build their careers in FTS.

The initiative was sponsored by the School of Modern Languages and Cultures at Warwick and the Connecting Cultures Global Research Priority fund. Despite this vital institutional support, strategic decisions had to be made to keep the School as affordable as possible for participants coming from a wide range of locations—Austria, Brazil, Canada, France, England, Ireland, Italy, Scotland, Spain, and Turkey. This included organizing an intense program of activities over the two days, limiting the number of participants (which unfortunately meant half of the applications could not be accepted), as well as inviting experts from different interdisciplinary backgrounds (women's and gender studies, global studies, translation studies, feminist history, comparative literature, and queer studies) who were locally available. Beyond the organizers Olga Castro and Emek Ergun, UK-based scholars Maud Anne Bracke and William J. Spurlin joined as speakers and mentors. At a later stage, Brazilian scholar Luciana Carvalho Fonseca also joined us as mentor, as we wanted to make the most of her availability as a Visiting Fellow in Germany on the FAPESP (São Paulo Research Foundation) and DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) grants, and that enabled us to increase the number of students participating in the School from twenty to twenty five.

In addition to delivering a lecture, each scholar held a feedback seminar with participants working in their area of expertise, which was then followed by a larger final session where the participants had a chance to individually speak with all the scholars about their work. These intensive conversation sessions were meant to expand and complicate the interdisciplinary repertoires of FTS. Indeed, the inherent openness to interdisciplinarity of feminist and queer translation studies was precisely what made the Warwick School so stimulating for everyone, as they generated more invitations to cross (and blur) disciplinary boundaries in understanding the politics, ethics, art, and practice of feminist and queer translation. This roundtable article, where the five scholars visit some of the critical conversations of the Warwick School, is both a response to and a continuation of those invitations.

## **I. What did you speak about at the Warwick School of Feminist Translation and what specific contribution were you hoping to make?**

**Olga Castro:** My talk was entitled “Strategies for Feminist Translation in the Era of Transnational Feminism” and had a two-fold aim. Firstly, I wanted to discuss feminist translation from an interdisciplinary perspective, at the crossroads between translation studies and feminist, gender, and women's studies. I started with the role of feminism in translation studies, reviewing some of the most well-known feminist perspectives in translation studies in the Western world (Castro and Ergun 2018) in the so-called “era of feminism” (Flotow 1997). I tried to demonstrate that, despite its liberatory articulations, epistemological growth, and increasing geopolitical diversity, until very recently, the way feminism was generally approached within translation studies was limited by a unidimensional analysis

of gender. I argued that there has been a tendency to “apply” a feminist perspective to the main Western-centric debates on translation studies with a focus on gender, disregarding other intersecting categories. I then moved to discussing the role of translation in feminist studies, especially in the more recent “era of transnational feminism” (Castro and Spoturno 2020), in which translation is often understood as a mechanism for enabling cross-border feminist alliances among the diversity of women across multiple geopolitical and linguistic borders; but power differentials and other hierarchies can also lead to very problematic encounters, and translation can expose those violent clashes. So, translation is becoming central to feminist politics, and this is something both Emek and Maud’s talks evidenced. I should also add that the publication of this special issue on translating transnational feminism in a journal of feminist scholarship attests to the growing interest in translation as a domain of (transnational) feminist contention.

Going back to my previous argument, notwithstanding the very productive results yielded by the conceptualization of translation within feminist studies, the existing FTS literature also has some limitations, such as the issues of linguistic hegemony in cross-border feminist encounters or the scarcity of scholarship on how transnational discursive flows and formations materialize in specific cross-linguistic contexts at textual (and sometimes para/textual) level. This was precisely the aspect I focused on in the second part of my talk, in which I reviewed and reassessed research conducted so far about the so-called feminist translation strategies. Over the years, I have identified numerous misconceptions about what feminist translation strategies are or how they should be applied to a particular translation project. Framing this discussion about translation strategies in the context of transnational feminism allowed me to challenge these misconceptions and call for new ways of understanding what a feminist intervention in translation may look like. So, the main contribution I was hoping to make was to offer a new understanding about recognizing the possibility of different feminist translation strategies in the era of transnational feminism, making it clear that there could potentially be as many feminist translation strategies as translators doing a particular translation at a particular place and time. Given the uniqueness of each translation project, feminist translation strategies are context-dependent and should never be considered universally valid. Hence, while analyzing and describing what others have done before us can be tremendously inspiring, strategies should never be prescribed.

**Emek Ergun:** My talk drew on my recent book *Virgin Crossing Borders: Feminist Resistance and Solidarity in Translation* (2023), which explores the role of translation in facilitating cross-border feminist connectivities. Inspired by Edward Said’s “traveling theory” (1983, 1994), the book offers an interdisciplinary theoretical and analytical model to study translational flows of feminist discourses. In doing so, it examines feminist translation’s triple power to facilitate intersubjective and intertextual expansion of feminist consciousness, disrupt local heteropatriarchal truth regimes while enriching epistemic repertoires of local feminist struggles, and stimulate transnational feminist solidarities. I investigated this triple power by following the cross-border trajectory of Hanne Blank’s *Virgin: The Untouched History* (2007)—a popular feminist account of the western history of virginity that traveled from the US to Turkey through my feminist translation in 2008. This case study examined two key aspects of textual feminist mobilities: (1) the political agenda of the feminist translator as it was manifested in the textual and material reproduction of the text for a new political audience and setting, and (2) the receptions of the translated text by a group of feminist readers in Turkey.

I ended my talk with an invitation to change the oppressive global culture of textual flows and reception so that translation becomes a way to host the other in our dwellings and connect with one another across differences, no matter what the direction of the flow is. In other words, I wanted the Warwick School’s participants to explore how translation could be an ethical encounter between differently situated feminist subjects, movements, discourses, and dreams in a world of intersecting binaries, borders, hierarchies, and oppositionalities. To do that, it is essential to problematize “borders” as paradoxical spaces of relationality and engage in conversations on how translation can help us

transform borders' antagonistic energies into post-oppositional energies that are indispensable to the formation of transnational feminist resistances. In fact, I hope that participants have come to realize that "transnational" is not even possible without translation and that they will have reflected more on potential interpretive strategies of resistance, so that our scholarship and translation work, and theirs, serve futures of planetary justice and togetherness.

**Maud Anne Bracke:** My talk demonstrated how crucial translation is for feminist politics, as the first part of the title, "All feminism is translated," clearly anticipated. I argued that all feminist discourse and action since the early twentieth century was globally connected and that it was also the result of translation work. Situating this thesis in a longer-term historical narrative of mid/late twentieth century global feminism that builds on decolonial approaches to global history, I wanted to historically trace global transfers and local recontextualizations in this period. More generally, I called for richly contextualized historical case studies to shed light on the practices, actors, and sites of feminist translation, defined here as a politically motivated transfer of meaning from one idiom and socio-cultural context to another.

With respect to translation studies and feminist translation studies, the main contribution I was hoping to make was to show the importance of historicization and the value of richly contextualized case studies, pointing at the deep embeddedness in context, time and place of historical actors and processes. It deliberately proposed a non-teleological narrative of global connections and transfers (against celebratory accounts of the ever-increasing globalization of social movements and feminist politics), and the complex view on actors and their motivations.

**William J. Spurlin:** My lecture examined migration and/as translation, analyzing the queer potential of both, with examples framed in decolonial practices as inscribed in contemporary queer francophone writing by a new generation of authors who have emigrated from the Maghreb, where they spent their childhoods and adolescences, and eventually settled in France. I argued that the crossing and reconfiguration of borders incite translative performativity and is particularly salient to the Maghreb given its history of multiple cultural and linguistic crossings, imperial invasions and occupations (Arab, Ottoman, and French), shifting sites of geopolitical demarcation and signification, and the intersections of Berber, African, Arab, and European cultures in the region. Along these lines, my lecture analyzed the work of Rachid O. (1995), Abdellah Taïa (2008), and Nina Bouraoui (2000, 2004, 2005), who attempt to reclaim in their writing what has been written out of dominant historical narratives and narratives of national belonging by foregrounding translation and narrative reflexivity around incommensurable spaces of queerness in order to index their crossings and negotiations of multiple languages, histories, and geopolitical spaces. The genre of autofictional writing itself, situated in the narrative space between autobiography and fiction, provides a discursive opening for the writers to stage and perform an emergent, translated sense of gender and sexual dissidence instantiated by the felt experiences of contradiction and fragmentation between their indigenous home cultures in the Maghreb and postcolonial, post-immigration conditions in their settlement in France.

The contribution I hoped to make to the Warwick School was to broaden the scope of feminist translation to include queer struggles with gender and sexuality whilst similarly acknowledging the influence of, and contributing to, the emancipatory politics of cross-border feminist work on translation, especially echoing the work of Emek, who acknowledges that any idea of the "transnational" is not possible without translation. I hoped to show the queer potential for a framework of migration and translation as forms of translocation and transcultural negotiation, both respectively and interchangeably, where migration and/as translation mediates between hegemonically-defined spaces, identities, and linguistic/cultural practices so that alternative modes of seeing the self in/and the world are named and reconfigured through new and unforeseen modes of identification and understanding.

**Luciana Carvalho Fonseca:** Although I joined the band at the last moment and did not give a talk, the main contribution I hoped to make to the discussions was underscoring how feminist translations also require feminist editorial projects to fully glow. Olga's talk on the situatedness of translation strategies was the perfect point of entrance to illustrate how feminist book projects—and feminist publishers—are what enables a feminist translation to achieve its full potential and that many successful and effective feminist translation strategies are likely to be editorial rather than linguistic. This included problematizing the nature of paratexts, which could have forms other than that of a translator's preface, addressing feminist strategies for translation commentary, calling attention to the role of design and presentation on less conventional places on the page, in addition to exploring the effects of multilingual editions, among others. The second contribution I hoped to make revolved around the array of possibilities under Feminist Interpreting Studies (Susam-Saraeva et al. 2023). As we know, Interpreting and Translation Studies have developed quite differently in their relation to feminism, the latter has been a solid sub-discipline for more than thirty years, whereas the former still holds much untapped potential and is likely to increasingly become an exciting field of inquiry, methodological avenues, and collective action.

## **II. In your talks you illustrated your arguments by drawing on specific case studies. Could you summarize them?**

**Castro:** Rather than focusing on a case study, I illustrated some of the most common misconceptions about feminist translation strategies providing specific examples and reflecting on their pernicious implications. To focus just on one, I started referring to the widespread understanding of “supplementing, prefacing and footnoting, and hijacking” (Flotow 1991) as “the” three strategies applicable in most cases; that is, recipes to be used irrespective of the language combination, genre or medium, gender ideology of the source text, and other contextual factors. I claimed that this was a clear example of synecdoche: a part (Canadian translation strategies used in the 1980s to translate Quebecois avant-garde feminist texts from French into English, primarily for Anglophone Canadian feminist readers) is substituted for the whole (the vast amount of different strategies feminist translators can use). I argued that this misconception may come from a decontextualized understanding of Luise von Flotow's influential article mentioned above, which in my view was originally free of any universalist aspirations. It is crucial to unmask these misconceptions to avoid their negative repercussions for FTS today. For example, the emphasis on “the” three Canadian strategies clearly downplays the relevance of: (a) other less-known practices implemented in other neighboring—and Western—coetaneous contexts (e.g. Miriam Díaz-Diocaretz, Suzanne Jill Levine, Carol Maier, Françoise Massardier-Kenney, among others), and (b) the reinvigorated, more recent discussions in academic settings where practicing translators explain their feminist approaches in the translation of a specific text. Indeed, I can only provide examples from the languages and contexts with which I am familiar, so I clearly acknowledged my situatedness and blind spots, inviting participants to think about other examples. Drawing on anecdotal evidence as a potential supervisor of PhD students who have approached me with their research projects in the past, this synecdoche is surprisingly common within FTS still today; so, these students may be merely reproducing ideas to which they had been exposed (by translation trainers who are not experts in feminist translation) in their translation studies programs. I was hoping that my talk could be useful for participants. But as I said, I also analyzed other common misconceptions and tried to unmask them by identifying the possible reasons leading to them.

**Ergun:** My case study was the reception of the Turkish *Virgin* among a group of Turkish readers. I wanted participants in the Warwick School to see how these feminist readers engaged in acts of “faithless translation,” wherein the translated text, in the process of crossing borders, became much

larger than a “western” book (Tsing 2005, 253). While explaining how the readers achieved such cross-border relationality with the imported text, I discussed some solidarity strategies on how to create and occupy transnational contact zones ethically, where differences are not ignored or suppressed but used to create differential universals in a joint pursuit of planetary justice. Although my reception studies seemed to display an idealized depiction of cross-border flows, my talk was mostly dedicated to de-romanticizing translational border crossings. It is true my analyses illustrated that translation could pave the way for transnational feminist solidarities by facilitating cross-border affective affiliations, but I also invited the participants to ask: Can we indeed speak of cross-cultural feminist dialogics as an egalitarian conversation? For instance, do we (particularly those of us situated in the Anglo/American contexts) translate and read feminist texts traveling from outside the West with the same hospitality, generosity, and vulnerability that Turkish *Virgin*’s readers manifested? Here, by shifting the critical gaze to feminists situated in the West and questioning their “responsibility of retelling and receiving stories ethically in a continuous search for justice,” I highlighted that we cannot accomplish transnational feminist solidarity without revisiting our cultural ethos and practices of translation and reading translation (Nagar 2019, 210).

**Bracke:** I illustrated these practices of translation among different actors and sites by focusing on a specific case study—the emergence of a global women’s health movement in the 1970s and 1980s. More specifically, and drawing on unpublished archives, campaigning material and personal testimonies, I focused on the Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights, which emerges as a unique case study of global feminist translation and circulation between Mexico City, Mumbai, London, Amsterdam and Johannesburg. It tells a story of connection as well as conflict. It is important to discuss also the latter in order to, as Emek said, de-romanticize some of the naïve ideas about feminist solidarity, when these practices are situated in asymmetrical positions of power. For example, Chiara Bonfiglioli has explored connections between Italian, French, and Yugoslav feminists of the long 1970s, concluding that the former two groups were unwilling to learn from the latter, approaching them in a prejudiced way and as not “real feminists” (2018). Another tension, as analyzed by French scholar Françoise Vergès, is the deafening silence of French feminists, engaged in vital battles for the legalization of abortion, regarding the approximately 8,000 cases of unconsented sterilization and abortion on the island of Réunion in the late 1960s by medical practitioners close to the French officials (2017). While the scandal erupted in the French press and some of the perpetrators were put on trial, French feminists failed to react strongly or incorporate the experiences of women in Réunion into their concept of reproductive rights (Vergès 2017).

**Spurlin:** I discussed different francophone authors from the Maghreb, as I said earlier, who have reflected and published on their migrant, gender, and sexual struggles. For example, Abdellah Taïa, in *Une mélancolie arabe*, contests active/passive homosexuality as paradigmatic of homoerotic sexual expression between men in Arab Muslim societies and cultures, a resistance that is often elided in translations of queer francophone writing from the Maghreb, where they exist, into English. It is not the passive sexual role itself that Taïa repudiates, but its cultural reduction to emasculation and degradation, in contrast to the virility associated with active homosexuality. When he refuses to be referred to by a girl’s name by a dominant male partner during a sexual encounter, Taïa writes, “Il était surprise. Dans mes yeux, il lisait *autre chose* que la peur et la soumission (2008, 24; emphasis added. He was surprised. He saw *something else* in my eyes besides fear and submission—my translation). Taïa embraces, and thereby recodes and *translates*, the passive sexual role as a site of intimacy, pleasure, and as a defiant sense of agency and power. It is important in the translation to emphasize the *autre chose*, the translation of masculinity into something else, as not reducible to heteronormative inventions of gender, but this is omitted in the published English translation: “What he saw in my eyes had nothing to do with fear or submission” (2012, 24). I also analyzed the early work of Nina Bouraoui,



where she evokes the trauma of her early formative years through a forced emigration from her childhood home in Algeria, following Algeria's independence, and her subsequent struggle in France to articulate, through the act of writing, what has been silenced in her personal history in order to reclaim her embodied memory of Algeria in which her early transgressions of gender norms and her eventual sexual identity are embedded. Early in *Garçon Manqué*, Bouraoui writes: "Je reste *entre* les deux pays. Je reste *entre* deux identités . . . J'invente un *autre* monde" (2000, 26; emphasis added. I remain *between* the two countries. I remain *between* two identities. . . . I am inventing *another* world—my translation), which names the interstitial space in between (the *autre monde*) instantiated through migration. Migration becomes a space for Bouraoui from which to translate her emergent sense of lesbian existence into language through the act of writing without whitening or erasing her biracial cultural heritage, being half Algerian and half French, while leaving a space for that which is unassimilable or untranslatable, given that the writing is heuristic and an ongoing process for reconstructing or translating the self and its (re)positioning in the world. The transgressions and translations of gender and sexual norms in these works make important connections to, and broaden the remit of, feminist translation studies.

### **III. Feminist translation/interpreting studies is an intrinsically interdisciplinary area of research, and the Warwick School had a clear focus on interdisciplinary perspectives too. Where, in this interdisciplinary crossroads, do you situate your research?**

**Ergun:** My intellectual journey to feminist translation has been more of a circular, increasingly more interdisciplinary motion. I had my bachelor's degree in Translation Studies in Turkey, where I became a feminist and a translator but in (seemingly) separate paths, because I was not yet aware of the fact that feminism and translation were immensely intermingled, which is what Maud powerfully discussed in her talk at the Warwick School; for instance, the Turkey's contemporary feminist movement started in translation in the 1980s (Ergun 2017). Feminist translation was not part of the Translation Studies curriculum back then, so translation and feminism stood apart in my mind as separate politics and separate disciplines that had nothing to say to each other. Only after I came to the US to complete a master's degree in Women's Studies, which was a time of intense physical and emotional displacement and new modes of cross-border relationality for me, that those two political platforms started to speak to each other in my mind. This gradual fusion of feminism and translation in my understanding of power, resistance, and liberation, which was initially confirmed by my exposure to the existing feminist translation literature, particularly coming from the Canadian School, was later sustained and enriched by different schools of political thought produced in different inter/disciplines, especially transnational and Third World feminisms, black and indigenous feminisms, postcolonial theory, queer theory, cultural studies, reception studies, border studies, comparative literature, global studies, philosophy, feminist history, etc. Pursuing a doctoral degree in an interdisciplinary program (yet under the brilliant guidance of feminist scholars) further solidified my constantly evolving interest in and commitment to feminist translation as an interdisciplinary and transnational political practice of living theory. This is also precisely why we need to continue creating these transnational dialogic spaces to expand the geopolitical range of conversations on the subjects so that the Anglo-Eurocentric biases and constraints of the field become more consistently and effectively challenged.

**Bracke:** This is a key question to me: I come to feminist translation studies as a historian and feel very inspired and stimulated by encounters with colleagues and students from a range of disciplines. Over the past decade I have studied feminist movements in Europe since 1945 from a range of perspectives, looking at reproductive rights, struggle for legal abortion and contraception, equality in work and labor rights, global connections, and indeed, translation (see Bracke et al. 2021). I have sought to de-center

and de-universalize the historical narratives on Western and European feminisms—hereby aiming to decolonize my own perspective as a white scholar of, and based in, Europe, as well as the perspectives of the historical actors I study. I have attempted to do this by pointing not only to the interconnectedness of European feminists with groups in other parts of the world, but also to the former’s blind spots, the absence of transfer or connection, and their unwillingness to de-center their own experiences and concepts—and there are plenty of examples of this for 1960s-70s feminism in the Western world.

As I started to focus on the translocal circulation of texts, ideas, and practices across national borders and cultural spaces, my findings regarding the significance of translation resonated with some of the key ideas in Feminist Translation Studies. Specifically, the feminist notion of resignification has been very productive in giving meaning to what happens when actors transpose a text or discourse from one locality to another, how they translate, what motivates them, and what impact the transformed text may have in different environments. What guides my research is a focus on the actors, sites, and practices of translation; and on a basis of a detailed analysis of these, I attempt to draw wider conclusions regarding cultural transfer, resignification, and the political meaning of translation.

It is quite unusual for historians of feminism to engage with (feminist) translation theory in this way. Apart from North American feminist theorists such as Adrienne Rich and the Canadian school of feminist translation (which, as has been argued by Castro and Ergun [2018], itself needs to be historicized and de-universalized), I also draw on the key insights of postcolonial scholars of feminism, including Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan’s notion of scattered hegemonies, as a framework for exploring the possibility of, and tensions in, global feminism (1994), as well as Gayatri Spivak’s critical reflections on translation and its place in global feminist histories, including her notion of the refusal to be translated (1993).

**Fonseca:** This question certainly invites self-reflection, and I will approach it from my positionality and by acknowledging that my research is shaped by what I know and what I know is shaped by *who* I am and *where* I am and come from. I am a Brazilian Assistant Professor of English and Translation at the University of São Paulo who has been living in Germany for just over a year with my family. I am on a research leave and currently on a FAPESP (São Paulo Research Foundation) and a subsequent DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) grant to research the birth experiences of Brazilian women in Germany. Through their birth stories, I am looking into the colonality of language in birth settings and interpreting practices within maternal healthcare. In Gabriela Veronelli’s (2015) terms, the colonality of language is a process of racialization of certain groups whose language and means of expression are met with disdain and as evidence of their inferior nature. Therefore, one of my aims is hopefully to impact interpreter education, because at no point in my translating or interpreting education did anyone mention how colonality affects my decisions as a translator or interpreter, or the lives and treatment of those for whom I interpret or translate. I aim to investigate how interpreting sustains colonality (the “dark side” of interpreting) and how (or whether) it can be used to upheave it. This question has been addressed in the recently published roundtable discussion entitled “Feminist Interpreting (studies)—The Story So Far” (Susam-Saraeva et al. 2023), in which a group of feminist interpreters reflected on and shared their feminist interpreting practices, which included many areas including maternal healthcare.

I came to feminist translation through birth activism. Having become a birth activist after having struggled to give birth on my own terms in a country where elective c-sections reign, and the c-section rates for my demographics are above 85%, together my partner and I wanted to help transform birth in Brazil and strengthen the humanized birth movement. It was imperative to translate and publish books that encouraged women-centered births and presented a critical view on doctor-centered maternal healthcare, books not readily found in Brazilian Portuguese. We opened a small independent feminist publishing house called Ema Livros in 2015. This new experience in editing and publishing shed new light on my knowledge about translation and made me see what feminist translation takes,

hence my interest and work in collective feminist translation practices that go hand in hand with feminist editorial projects. One of our recent projects was the collective translation, by the Coletivo Sycorax, of Maria Mies' *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale* (2022), originally published in 1986. This was the first time the translators involved also had full control of the editing and publishing processes. The translators also held events and workshops to discuss the translated work among local social movements such as the *Movimento de Moradia e Luta por Justiça* (Movement for Housing and Justice) and the *Ocupação Mauá* (Mauá Occupation) both in the city of São Paulo (Teer 2017; Phillips 2017). In sum, through collective feminist translation practices many other feminist practices unfold, and so do opportunities for theorizing about feminist translation and developing translation methodologies and strategies, which are shared in our prefaces and translators' notes. To wrap up, the short answer to this question is that I currently situate my research in Feminist Interpreting and feminist collective translation and feminist publishing in reflexive dialogue with experience.

**Spurlin:** Trained in comparative literature, I situate my work on translation at the intersections of queer theory, gender studies, postcolonial studies, border and migration studies, and francophone studies. Translation is not merely a linguistic, textual, and transcultural practice, but is a mode of being for writers living in diaspora, where acts of translation are staged and performed *within* the text itself and participate in critical reformulations of gender and sexual alterity, which are reducible neither to the construction of gender/sexuality in western European cultures nor in the writers' indigenous cultures. At the same time, broadening the scope of translation studies across an array of other disciplines and bringing it into the sphere of queer cultural struggles articulates translation as knowledge production, thereby displacing the idea of translation merely as a form of interlinguistic transfer reducible to a binary relationship between a sacrosanct original and derivative copy. In other words, such a multidisciplinary focus enables radical rethinking of translation not as a subsequent practice performed on a text but imbricated within it as its defining hermeneutic principle.

There are further questions to be addressed regarding queer translation around terminology in writing about sexual dissidence in postcolonial literatures. I use the term *queer* to name spaces in between geopolitical, discursive, and temporal borders that put pressure on absolute differences and fixities of categories, and I use *queer* as a so-called umbrella term to name dissident embodiments, performances, identifications, and practices of gender and sexuality that challenge heteropatriarchal social relations. Brian James Baer identifies two binary poles of radical alterity and transposability in queer translation (2021, 55), which assumes that there is no space in between, given that same-sex sexualities in indigenous contexts are assumed to be so different that they are beyond western comprehension and thereby subject to false understandings, on the one hand, or that any attempt to translate indigenous sexualities into western languages or notations automatically reproduces the imperialist gesture, the latter view reflecting that of Joseph Massad in his critique of queer studies work on Arab Muslim societies and cultures (2007). I am suggesting that it might be more productive not to maintain absolute borders between distinct geopolitical locations, especially between the global north and global south, and to examine how negotiations of postcolonial sexual identities may be influenced by, but not blindly copied from, the West, since they are modified, that is, translated, or *resignified*, as Maud would argue, citing Adrienne Rich's notion of resignification, to fit particular social contexts and circumstances, which extends to the importance of Rich's idea of the politics of location (1986, 183) and the positionality of gendered and sexual experiences. Indeed, African writers have spoken to the viability of using and resignifying (i.e. translating) queer in African contexts—Stella Nyanzi, writes that “queer Africa must reclaim African modes of blending, bending, and breaking gender boundaries” (2014, 66). I would like to see future work in queer and feminist translation studies address further new negotiations of gender and desire in the spaces between geopolitical borders, acknowledging that currents of gender identification and sexual knowledge flow in multiple directions, globally and locally, and that the pathways of migration and translation are never completely “straight” in both senses of the

word.

**Castro:** I am a translation studies scholar whose professional and personal life has always been defined and driven by feminist values, so I suppose it is fair to say that academically, my research interests cross the fields of Translation Studies and Feminist Studies. I am interested in exploring the operation of power in translation across geopolitical borders, particularly as tensions, asymmetries and hierarchies manifest in relation to feminism and non-hegemonic cultures. I completed my graduate and doctoral studies in Galicia, Spain, and then migrated to the UK to start my postdoctoral academic career in 2010, being affiliated to three different departments of Modern Languages and Cultures. As a result, most of the case studies discussed in my work can be framed in the also intrinsically interdisciplinary field of Hispanic Studies; yet my focus on non-hegemonic cultures in postcolonial Spain (Miguélez-Carballeira 2024) means that I am interested in feminist translation in relation to multilingualism, self-translation, indirect translation in situations of diglossia, and stateless literatures and minorized languages such as Basque, Catalan, and Galician. It is not uncommon that scholarship in global and transnational studies talks about the global south and the global north as two fixed and homogeneous entities, ignoring practices of intra-colonialism in the western world that therefore create (non-)hegemonic spaces. By doing so, they are neglecting the specificities of these (non-)hegemonic communities (also in relation to gender), their internal anticolonial struggles and demands for national sovereignty and self-determination (alongside their feminist claims), as well as the role that translation may have in enabling (or disabling) alliances with other non-hegemonic (also feminist) communities from the global south. It is precisely in these (non-)hegemonic spaces where my research on feminism and translation is situated.

**IV. The Warwick School was not only a critical space of sharing, networking, and cooperating among scholars and students of Feminist Translation Studies (FTS), but also an invitation to highlight the transnational in connection to translation and claim FTS as a partner of transnational feminist studies and practices. What do you think about this invitation?**

**Fonseca:** Despite the overwhelmingly positive connotations the term “transnational” has acquired as applied by FTS—among which are sharing, connectedness, mutual interests, solidarity, borderlessness etc.—it is by no means unproblematic, therefore being invited to highlight the transnational in connection to translation is an opportunity to reflect critically on both. Before the term “transnational” became so pervasive, Translation Studies had been calling for more “international voices” in the discipline while criticizing the hegemony of English in its scholarship. To this end, translation studies used terms such as *internationalizing* and *internationalization* (Tymoczko 2005, 2009). Note that the term was *internationalization*—coinciding with the spike in internationalization policies at universities, which translate differently depending on whether one, as *overseas*, is paying the pricey tuitions of many global north higher education institutions or enrolled in a government funded university in Brazil, which does not charge a penny from its international students—not *internationalism*, which in turn is related to the Marxist workers’ movement world network of struggles; but I will not go into this here because I want to focus on *transnational* and make the point that any term we choose to signify a socio-historical notion will be Bakhtinianly political and interdiscursively related to other terms and notions sometimes in contradictory ways. Even though I am aware and fully appreciative of the fact that the term transnational was developed by Statian feminists of color in the 1990s, and employed to signal not only feminist solidarity that *transcends* national boundaries but also as a conceptual framework challenging *international* feminisms, as a feminist, the *national* in both international and transnational is still unsettling to me because it naturalizes the *nation* (hence, borders) as a point of departure, a zero-

point; thus, the nation, this “imagined community” (Anderson 2006) is used *ad nauseam* to justify violence and is crucial to cementing capitalism, patriarchy, and coloniality--everything the feminisms in many of us struggle against. Hence, we should always bear in mind that rearticulating the discourse of the nation to define our exchanges, collaborations, solidarities, and struggles, without acknowledging its contradictions, may not always be in our best interest, but at the same time problematizing the term, especially with young scholars, can lead to fruitful and transformative discussions and collaborations.

**Castro:** The call for scattering gender hegemonies to fight the universalist and colonial gestures of Western cultures has been at the core of transnational feminism since it started being conceptualized by racialized USA-based scholars in the 1990s (Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Alexander and Mohanty 1997), drawing on the intellectual and political legacies of Black feminism, Marxist feminism, postcolonial feminism, Third World feminism, lesbian-feminism, among others. The fact that the term was first coined in North America, however, does not mean that transnational practices of feminist solidarity had not taken place before in different geopolitical spaces; the obvious example that comes to mind is the *Encuentros feministas latinoamericanos y del Caribe* (Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Forum), a key network for cross-border dialogues in the South and Central American continent since 1981. And the fact that the transnational often emphasizes the potential for mutually enriching encounters, does not mean that tensions never arise; in fact, they do! Even so, I find the category “transnational” still very relevant nowadays, particularly for feminist translation studies, for two reasons. First, it has an enormous potential to problematize the meanings associated with different (necessarily interrelated) identity categories in specific “national” contexts, transforming them as and when they are re-situated via translation, through a process of “transnational” and cross-border contact; and these contexts include stateless nations, with their demands of national sovereignty (Wray and Miranda 2019). And second, it can also help problematize asymmetries and power differentials not only against patriarchal, systemic structures but also within different feminist traditions (and needless to say, among cultures and languages of different status). As such, the focus on the “transnational” unmasking hegemonic formulations from liberal feminism, which, for example, bases a few women’s successes on the exploitation of 99 per cent of women (Arruzza, Bhattacharya, and Fraser 2018). Understood in this way, the notion of the “transnational” offers an opportunity to dismantle heteropatriarchal relations of domination, privilege and coloniality that can emerge in the very process of transnational cultural contact. In other words, the term “transnational” de-idealizes the celebratory and self-indulgent part that some cross-border encounters may have; instead, it has the potential to acknowledge and contest asymmetrical privileges, and not only between the global north and the global south, but also in relation to (non-)hegemonic spaces defined by practices of intra-colonialism which are geographically inscribed in the global north.

Yet, the term “transnational” itself is understood very differently in different disciplines and scholarly traditions, as well as in different geographies. For example, it has important “shortcomings in cultural studies” (Vatanabadi 2009), where “transnational” is often understood as simply transcending national borders and therefore losing the strong political and counter-hegemonic character it has in transnational feminism and reducing its possibilities. I would argue the same applies in translation studies, and this became evident when the special issue “Towards Transnational Feminist Translation” (Castro, Ergun, Flotow, and Spoturno 2020) was being prepared for the Latin American translation journal *Mutatis Mutandis*. We received over forty proposals, mostly from translation studies scholars, with barely one third actually engaging with the term “transnational” as had been described in the call for papers and in “transnational feminism,” while the rest seemed to understand “transnational” simply as a buzzword. Indeed, outside Anglo-American scholarship, “transnational feminism” is still a quite obscure notion. I have been questioned about it several times, from different perspectives: once a Chilean colleague voiced her reservations against the term for its alleged parallels with big transnational corporations. In sum, the “transnational” lives a life in translation.

**Ergun:** The reason why I stick to the term “transnational” is rooted in a similarly anti-nationalist, decolonial, and anti-racist argument. I prefer to use “transnational” in my work because transnational feminisms recognize the aggressive material relevance and destructive hegemony of nation-states and nationalisms in the contemporary world order, while also envisioning a future planet without them. As a translation scholar, I am interested in exploring the violent impact of national borders and nationalist ideologies on feminist politics and how borders bring particular challenges to the making of the translational feminist solidarities. In this framework, I conceive borders and nations as well as feminisms as translational formations. We already know that translation has historically served to uphold national (and colonial and gendered) borderings and becomings. In fact, the nation-state is made and remade in translation—and that is precisely why translation can help us denaturalize (and eventually undo) nation-states and nationalist discourses and operations. As Naoki Sakai comments on the close connection between language, translation, and nation, “the modern regime of translation,” with its claims of “the unities of national languages,” has played a key role in the creation of the modern nation-state (2017, 106–107). Similarly, in his study on the emergency of Filipino nationalism in the nineteenth century, Vicente L. Rafael speaks of “nationalism as translation” (2005, xvii). However, we should also recognize that national borders are paradoxical and unpredictable spaces where colonial legacies and nationalist energies can be sustained or contested depending on the nature of the encounters that take place in that liminal space of relationality, translationality, and transnationality. Indeed, Sakai confirms this paradoxical work of translation noting that, “translation can inscribe, erase, and distort borders; it may well give rise to a border where none was before; it may well multiply a border into many registers; it may erase some borders and institute new ones. . . . It shows most persuasively the unstable, transformative, and political nature of border” (2017, 106). So, borders—key units of analysis in transnational feminisms—are seemingly fixed and fixated, but contested, in-between spaces where the conflicting dynamics of belonging and un/belonging not only foster antagonisms and violent, even deadly, operations of the nation, but also open transgressive spaces for subjugated peoples to engage in unsettling dwellings and subversive crossings. Then, both the separatist and connectionist mechanisms of borders are relational and dialogic, no matter what political meaning or corporeal effect/affect they generate. That relational and dialogic potential of borders, in addition to the fact that they are “man-made,” is exactly why translation can be a tool of trespassing, resistance, and solidarity, which is precisely what FTS pursues in its praxes. And it is that transgressive cross-border potential of translation that I think *transnational* FTS works to reveal and further facilitate.

**Spurlin:** Like Luciana, I have some misgivings about the term transnational to the extent that it naturalizes and echoes the nation-state and can be a somewhat vexed and contradictory term for articulating feminist and queer solidarities across borders. Rather, I prefer to work with the paradox of geopolitical borders in migration and diaspora; that is, borders as both territorial and fixed, as well as invented and contested entities, exploring their relational and dialogical aspects, as Emek has noted, in order to exploit the queer potential of the liminal space in between borders that stages translative encounters while disturbing hegemonic notions of national and cultural belonging that are conflated with geopolitical, capitalist, and colonialist mappings. Challenging geopolitical borders as static and fixed entities, as well as constructions of African diasporic identity as necessarily associated with displaced victimhood, Simon Gikandi refers to younger generations of Africans living in diaspora as being “connected to knowable African communities, nations, and traditions,” but also living “a life divided *across* cultures, languages, and states,” thus simultaneously being *both* of Africa *and* of other worlds (2011, 9; emphasis added). This implies the creation of an interstitial, deterritorialized space in between, challenging migration simply as a once-and-for-all-movement in a single direction but creating instead what Trinh Minh-ha refers to as “a mode of dwelling” (2011, 33) that is not simply binary. Similar to migration and the space between geopolitical borders, I would argue that the space between languages and cultures is also a transitory threshold, mediated and negotiated through

translation, yet always already constituted by diffusion, appropriation, difference, and ambivalence, hinting at possibilities of *l'intraduisible*. Given that the physical and social act of migration is always already an act of translation, my use of *migration and/as translation* (Spurlin 2022) speaks to the (re)iterative aspect of all symbolic systems, where one signifier both replaces and displaces another through the endless play of signification, yet remains constituted by residues of difference, slippages, deferrals that refuse domestication, equivalence or complete integration, given that both migration and translation are mediating, yet interminable, processes. In this sense, migration/and as translation serves as a metaphor for queer as a transgressive practice that disturbs and destabilizes but can also potentially work to repair the legacy of violent imperial relations and essentialized notions of national and cultural origins, producing new, but unassimilable, circuits of gender and sexual dissidence, and thereby potential spaces for decolonization.

**Bracke:** Reflections about the transnational have been indeed very productive. Yet I would like to also discuss another concept which I think is equally crucial for FTS research today and that relates to my approach to transnational as a historian—the concept of *feminist genealogies*. In our current times, marked by a revival of feminist radicalism and action as well as state, religious, and other attacks on women's lives and bodies, it appears particularly important to think about *feminist genealogies*. I see this as thinking about, and responding to, connections across place and time in terms of feminist principles, aims, and practices. Activist-researchers, broadly defined, can play a particular role here, in exploring and revisiting how “our” politics has changed over time and depending on context, and how “we” build on insights and experiences gained by those to whom we feel connected through similar aims and ethics. Here, the “we” is as contested as it is crucial: its boundaries will always be uncertain, and subject to contestation and negotiation. Is this a flawed teleological perspective, based on the illusion of progress over time? Does it sufficiently account for the non-transferability of experiences and knowledge from one set of circumstances to another? While these dangers exist, I will try to briefly explain why overall, the work of re-building the “we,” and with it, uncovering shared genealogies, is more important than ever.

Political and cognitive genealogies, thus, are central to our contemporary politics, but they are not uncontested. There is a specific aspect here for a feminist like me standing, if critically so, in the traditions of twentieth century European feminism: as many scholars of Western 1970s (“second-wave”) feminism have noted, there is a peculiar constancy in the ways in which feminists have, over and again, felt the urge to “kill their mothers” to mark a break with past feminisms, reject past approaches and agendas, and establish a revolutionary “year zero.” Perhaps this need for rupture explains the discomfort some feminists feel in rendering genealogies explicit.

Another element of discomfort resides, surely, in the dangers of establishing a canon. There is insufficient space here to revisit the very pertinent feminist critiques of canonization in literature, but I assume the arguments will be generally known. The establishment of such canons reflects the silencing of those marginalized by structures of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism—and has in turn exacerbated the erasure of their voices and texts. In a global perspective, numerous scholars and critics have pointed at the silencing or devaluing of the non-Western world in textual, artistic, and intellectual canons. Here, thinking critically about translation has been important in revealing the mechanisms of *canonization as hierarchization*. While especially from the nineteenth century onwards, the increasingly dense global circulation of printed texts has tended to consolidate the cultural hegemony of certain countries and regions over others, and (commercial) translation has facilitated this. On a concrete level, the commercial and ideological decisions underpinning translation work has more often entrenched global and linguistic hierarchies than it has unsettled them.

The task of working towards a genuinely *global* feminist genealogy, in terms of our political thinking and how we position ourselves as researchers and activists, is as compelling and necessary as it is complex and daunting. Among the dangers of universalization, canonization, and teleology, I am

guided by the insights of Claudia de Lima Costa (2002) in my focus on grassroots activism—its languages and practices, its local embeddedness and its *translocal* connectivities (like Luciana, I note the limits of the notion of transnationalism and have stopped using the term in my work).

I can offer one concrete illustration of the search for a global feminist genealogy from my current research aimed at decolonizing and de-Westernizing the history of French feminism and reproductive rights in the 1960s–80s. The activist practices and debates of campaigners operating in the “periphery” shaped the politics and contexts of feminist activism in mainland France in numerous and fundamental ways. I am looking specifically at what I call the reproductive justice activism (and I deliberately use the term reproductive justice ahistorically, as the actors at the time did not use it) of women’s rights campaigners and family planning activists in Martinique and Guadeloupe, France’s “old colonies” in the Antilles, transformed into French administrative departments after World War II. As every other aspect of social life, reproductive health and rights were governed by France’s exploitative economic interests and stratified governance along the lines of race and class—despite the fact that the inhabitants of the islands were, in theory, French citizens. Jacqueline Manicom-Letourneur (1935–1976) was a leading family planning activist, midwife, and novelist from Guadeloupe. She co-created the first family planning organization in the French Antilles in 1950. While fully aware of the racialized anti-natalism that marked French policies in the overseas departments, leading to extreme cases of reproductive violence on women of color in the island of Réunion in the late 1960s (including thousands of cases of unconsented sterilization, as analyzed by Vergès), she attempted to optimize the dissemination of contraception and sexual education. In my ongoing work, I argue that alongside other activists in Guadeloupe and Martinique, she insisted this should occur only on the basis of a woman’s right to choose.

My point is that these actors had a more complex understanding of reproductive rights than feminists in mainland France, who were fighting for the legalization of abortion as they were cognizant that bodily self-determination involved the right to be a mother—denied in numerous colonial contexts—as well as the right not to carry unwanted pregnancies. The fact that a key French feminist, Gisèle Halimi, defense lawyer at the crucial abortion trial at Bobigny in 1972, was close to and influenced by the vision of Manicom-Letourneur has largely been obscured by historical scholarship and feminist writing in France. It compels me to explore other lineages and influences which remain buried beneath the standard narratives about 1970s feminism (in this case, West European feminism being predominantly influenced by North American feminism). Analyzing the specifics of translation is central to this exploration: mapping the networks and connections across borders, the transfers of texts and ideas, and, crucially, the resignification of political concepts and agendas, and their adaptation to local contexts.

## **V. Given the current debates and discussions in the field, what do you think are the blind spots of Transnational Feminist Translation Studies?**

**Spurlin:** I very much agree with Olga’s critique, in response to the first question, as to how, until recently, feminism within translation studies has been limited by a unidimensional, nearly essentialist analysis of gender. In my view, feminist translation, coupled with queer translation, can make an important intervention in social struggles around disagreements in some strands of feminist work that refuse to acknowledge transgendered women (MTF) as women, thereby essentializing chromosomal sex. Feminist and queer translation studies are especially equipped to intervene in and contribute to these debates since both translation and transgender are transitory stages, a moving across, and are interminable processes. As I pointed out previously regarding the queerness of translation being more than a mere transfer of meaning that “no longer forms a dependency on the original text, but actually transforms it, subverting radically the binary between [the so-called] original and copy” (Spurlin 2014,



206), the queer performativity of translation, similar to the (queer) performativity of gender, challenges the idea of an “original,” be it textual/linguistic or “biological.” If transgender is a space for ongoing translations across the gender binary, as well as for negotiating the space in between the binary, and acknowledging that translations are always already constituted by spaces of incommensurability, undecidability, and difference, how can feminist-queer translation enable more elastic understandings of gender performativity as forms of translation that are shifting, variable, and contingent across and between the gender spectrum in order to avoid what Jack Halberstam refers to as the stabilization, rationalization, and trivialization of transgender lives (2005, 54–55), whilst allowing new translations of gender to emerge not dependent on the mere biological as its source or origin?

**Ergun:** FTS also provides a useful analytical framework for transnational feminist studies, which to date has not paid much attention to the politics and ethics of translation. As Maud discussed in her response to the previous question, translation enables a rewriting and remaking of feminist genealogies and feminist archives precisely because many, if not all, of those genealogies and archives are transnational (see Simon 1996; Bracke et al. 2021). Hence, paying attention to histories in, and of, translation and interpreting helps us expand and blur the borders of feminist movements, legacies, and archives. Only if we recognize that, we will be able to see that feminisms have been affected (even infected) but not always parochialized or closed off by national borders. For instance, the case of Tunisian-French feminist Gisèle Halimi that Maud mentioned earlier has another transnational and translational dimension that nicely illustrates this point.

In the early days of the women’s liberation movement in 1980s Turkey, Halimi was invited to give a talk at the “Conference on Women’s Problems” by the organizers (several of whom were feminist translators that played a key role in generating a feminist language and literature in Turkish). In her talk, consecutively interpreted into Turkish by Şirin Tekeli, one of the organizers and key feminists in Turkey, Halimi uttered the word “feminist” becoming the first to publicly announce the name of the emergent movement in Turkey. Tekeli remembers: “In fact, the director of YAZKO [Authors and Translators Cooperative] wanted to invite Simone de Beauvoir to Turkey. But we not only believed that we had to be more modest, but also cared about the fact that Halimi was both a human rights lawyer and a woman originally from Tunisia. She was a Third World feminist and inviting her could invalidate the accusations that we were going to get for copying feminism from the West” (1989, 37). After taking refuge in the translated voice of a feminist activist of color from the global south (yet speaking the prestigious language of French) in response to local nationalist accusations of illegitimacy on the grounds of “westoxification,” the newborn women’s movement in Turkey continued to grow as a vital platform of transnational feminism and feminist translation co-energizing the activists. It is indeed a result of this mutually sustaining and transforming relationship between translation and transnational that we now insist on *transnational* feminist translation studies. Yet, we should also recognize that the “over-use” of some terms, like transnational, decolonial, or intersectional, may cause their political critiques and interventionist energies to dissipate or get co-opted into white neoliberal feminist projects, as Luciana mentions above. While this “buzzword” effect (Davis 2008) is a legitimate concern, I think transnational is still promising ground for FTS with its critiques of neoliberal, nationalist, and colonial border politics as well as its emphases on the formation of transgressive cross-border relationalities and collectivities because, as Kathy Davis has written about intersectionality, transnational “has precisely the ingredients which are required of a good feminist theory. It encourages complexity, stimulates creativity, and avoids premature closure, tantalizing feminist scholars to raise new questions and explore uncharted territory” (2008, 79). In other words, transnational FTS, by highlighting the plurality and interconnectivity of feminisms (and patriarchies that feminisms target) around the world, helps us to reveal the global networks of relationalities that have been established in translation among feminist individuals, movements, discourses, texts, actions, and affects.

**Castro:** I have already argued that the focus on the transnational, bringing to light geopolitical power differentials in any cross-border encounter, has very promising goals for FTS in my opinion. But as Jacqui Alexander claimed decades ago, the transnational has also risks, and “continues to be haunted by relativist claims that effectively reinscribe dysfunctional hierarchies” (2006, 183). To me, the issue of linguistic hegemony in feminist cross-border encounters via translation is a very clear example. When hegemonic and non-hegemonic languages interact, additional challenges, tensions and dilemmas are created that may ultimately deactivate the intended potential of the transnational endeavor. And all these issues originated by linguistic hegemony (i.e., the hegemonic position of some languages over others) are often a blind spot in transnational FTS; what we can see most of the time, particularly in FTS, is a rather naïve positive vision of translation as a celebrated encounter. A lot has been said already about the centrality of English, understood as the international language of our times, both in academia and in the publishing market, and also in numerous feminist transnational projects rooted in monolingualism with the underlying logic that everyone understands English (Descarries 2014; Lunny 2019). Some (but not much) attention has been paid to “less translated languages” (Branchadell and West 2005). But it is crucial to also look at encounters between other languages that may coexist in multilingual contexts, often defined by practices of (intra)colonialism. As Reine Meylaerts argues (2018), in multilingual contexts, languages are never on an equal footing, so there is a hierarchical and diglossic situation by which one of the languages has higher diffusion and status—this connects with the idea of the coloniality of language, as described earlier by Luciana. To think about a particular example: when a feminist solidarity network involves speakers of non-hegemonic languages in a colonial context, what languages are considered noteworthy and legitimate to make encounters possible in translation?

One of the very few examples discussed unveils the tensions between Caribbean feminists at the already mentioned *Encuentros feministas latinoamericanos y del Caribe*. In her 2013 “El idioma silenciado,” the Mapuche-Argentinian poet Liliana Ancalao described how in the 2007 forum, indigenous women from different countries left one workshop about the situation of women in indigenous communities (coordinated by a non-indigenous white woman) when it was announced that Spanish (an imposed, colonial language for them) would be the only language allowed in the meeting. The conflict escalated when, following the event, the organizers described the indigenous women as “difficult” and “ungrateful” for the space of mutual exchange that had been given to them (Ancalao 2013), failing to acknowledge that imposing the “common language” (of the colonizer) would not just be crippling their creative force, but would also be a violation of their linguistic rights. This clearly illustrates how spaces for transnational feminist solidarity are affected by language hegemony, that is, by who has a voice, a presence, and the rights attached to it. And yet, discussions in transnational FTS do not seem to pay much attention to these key questions, when translation could clearly function as a mechanism to give a more equal and polyphonic relevance to all voices and find out what is shared in that specific framework. There are many other multilingual contexts that would deserve attention and have not yet been explored in transnational FTS as sites of tension. I am referring, for example, to tensions between different co-official and non-official stateless languages in contemporary Spain (Castro and Linares 2022), when it comes to literary translation flows of feminist writers who choose to write in languages other than Spanish; more often than not, these authors have to pay the price of being mediated by Spanish in order for their feminist texts to travel to other non-hegemonic contexts, let alone to get international recognition.

**Fonseca:** As I implied in my previous answer, one of the blind spots would be the problematization of the term *transnational*, especially when compared to terms such as *translocal* and *coalitional* (Alvarez et al. 2014; Lugones 2003) employed in other geographies and epistemologies. Therefore, this means that the “usual suspects” in terms of blind spots continue to be the unequal flows of knowledge—and translation—between the global north and the global south. I would also point to a focus on the

discourse of “collaboration” and “mutual interests”—and also of “celebration”, which has been mentioned both by Olga and Maud during this discussion—present in many scholarly FTS productions, which tend to echo elite, white neoliberal feminism assuming equality among feminists and feminisms across multiple locations, failing to see or acknowledge contrasting positions of power and privilege. In short, from a decolonial perspective, I would argue that there is still room for FTS to reflect on its role in upholding structural North-South oppression while not insisting on capitalism as a vehicle of emancipation. To global south feminisms on the other hand, it is clear cut that it is not the expansion of economic opportunities for women (often translated as “gender equality”) that will end exploitation or oppression. This leads us to another existing blind spot in FTS, which is the need for more in-depth discussions on the Translation and Interpreting—feminized—division of labor. Leading global north voices in FTS have routinely stated—and naturalized—feminist translation as unpaid labor. To global south feminist translators, unpaid labor is often a luxury they cannot afford; so instead of presuming this dilettante approach to feminist translation as the norm, carrying out field research on feminist translators in different localities and creating forums to discuss the division of labor in translation and interpreting could help advance feminist translation in the global north and south in different but supplementary ways. Another blind spot worth mentioning is the lack of studies on Feminist Translation and Technology. This is understandable to the extent that FTS have roots and have flourished in Comparative Literature more than in Linguistics or Specialized Language. Although we do find a considerable number of studies on artificial intelligence and gender, they are not openly feminist, so it would be great to see contributions engaging FTS with AI more explicitly addressing gender biases in translation algorithms and databases, as in Johanna Monti’s work (2020). This ties in with Corpus Linguistics methodologies that have been regularly used to analyze gender and translation, whereas FTS has relied predominantly on hand and eye methods, thus indicating that corpus methods and tools have been used only very mildly as a methodological approach in the field; on the other hand, feminist theory and praxis are deeply suspicious of the kinds of universalizing objectivity to which corpus translation studies sometimes seems to aspire. Thus, both fields could contribute to each other by re-examining their paradigms and principles in light of the other (Fonseca 2024). Lastly, as FTS opens up and engages more with specialized language, more avenues of research will appear and we will likely have opportunities to engage in important discussions with much to draw, for instance, from decoloniality, which in turn: (1) challenges what we know and how we know it—oftentimes this *how* is through translation—and criticizes theories and methodologies with universalist aspirations; (2) equally values subjects without hierarchizing them in levels of humanity—as in unidimensional gender categories pointed out by William and Olga; and (3) calls Eurocentrism into question and acknowledges multiple localities, and here I circle back to the beginning of this answer.

### **Concluding Remarks: Envisioning the Future of Feminist Translation Studies**

The interdisciplinary conversations that took place in this roundtable discussion, as well as in the seminars of the School, revealed the need to democratize intersectionally and globally the feminist praxes of translation beyond contemporary geopolitical, linguistic, institutional, and cultural borders; and also beyond binary regimes that largely demarcate the contemporary theories, actions, and future possibilities of feminist translation. The urgency of this double deconstructive approach to the hetero/patriarchal, racist, homo/nationalist, and colonial regimes of “borders and binaries” emerged in all of the conversations of the School. We decided to write this roundtable article in response to that urgency. So, we consider this collective piece as a call to transnationalize, decolonize, and queer FTS so that the field becomes more inclusive, self-reflexive, accessible, and impactful within and beyond academia. We should note that as scholars of the School, we approach these missions and visions of feminist translation from similar critical perspectives but each of us takes a slightly different path in

theorizing and working those missions and visions. Indeed, our different vocabulary choices reflect those different paths. For instance, the reasons why some of us prefer the language of transnationality, while others highlight translocality, point to shared decolonial aspirations while focusing on different layers of spatiality. In short, we do not see “transnational” and “translocal” as mutually exclusive or competing terms, but rather as complementary critical perspectives on possibilities of cross-border and planetary relationality and togetherness.

In order to expand the political reach and impact of FTS, we first need to transnationalize it so that national borders are not only recognized as violent mechanisms, but also challenged in the course of translational exchanges, encounters, confrontations, and collaborations. However, transnationalizing FTS alone is not sufficient to make it as inclusive and transformative as possible. As the Warwick School scholars pointed out above, in order not to perpetuate the regulatory force of nation-states and national borders, we also have to translocalize and decolonize FTS, which is an even bigger challenge since the world system within which we are doing feminisms is deeply colonial (which is also enabled by translation). The third pillar of our call is to queer FTS, challenging binaries, normativity, and any kind of essentialism, as well as acknowledging and creating ambiguities and fluidities. By queering FTS, we will intervene into both the modern language and translation regimes and modern gender regimes that not only elevate western discourses to the status of universal truths, but also normalize the disciplinary operations of essentialist and dichotomous structures such as the gender binary and racial borders. The queer impulse to break (out) of our borders, binaries, bureaucracies, and normative habits is promising for FTS in its search to undo and redo the world(s) of differences.

This is precisely why transnational, translocal, decolonial, and queer feminist translation praxes are key to troubling the global hegemony of Western-centric epistemological conventions and repertoires of knowledge and to proposing alternatives to our ways of knowing the world(s), being in the world(s), and imagining our future(s). They are also central to forging cross-border justice-oriented synergies and solidarities. Then, the question is, how do we promote translational feminist and queer encounters and collaborations in a world that does not have the enabling conditions for those transgressive cross-border connectivities? How can FTS help more with the challenge to transnationalize (and eventually denationalize), decolonize, and queer the world? Moreover, how can FTS transnationalize, decolonize, and queer itself while operating within the disciplinary boundaries of the globalized neoliberal university?

We certainly do not have definitive answers to these huge and complex questions, but the Warwick School gave us many ideas for further reflection and inspired us to join forces in our search for answers. The immense attention that this global academic initiative received from several countries and the enthusiasm that all the participants articulated in their post-conference surveys (as well as their disappointment that the School could not last longer) clearly shows the Warwick School of Feminist Translation was a truly feminist encounter that created a reinvigorating sense of community—a transnational, decolonial, and queer community where issues of power, hegemony, and privilege were debated not just in relation to topics covered in the participants’ research projects, but also in relation to our positionality and situatedness in the world.

All of this equally demonstrates the importance of creating more collaborative and accessible spaces to bring together scholars, students, agents, and “sympathizers” of feminist translation. Yet, addressing the practicalities of setting these encounters reveals some key challenges. While it became evident that human participation was key (for example, the School’s feedback sessions and informal networking produced highly fruitful discussions), issues of environmental responsibility in the era of climate emergency arose, though technology is not always panacea considering how little eco-friendly virtual meetings enabled by big data center servers can be. Similarly, what kind of academic institutions are best suited to host such encounters or is academia even the best space to achieve such collective initiatives? Given the increasing neoliberalization and depoliticization of universities in general, some

institutions may be in a better position to offer support for global events—some more than others depending on factors such as the geographic location of the event and the hosting space’s larger border and immigration regime, conditions of political repression, economic situation, academic conjuncture, technological and material infrastructure, and levels of militarization.

Much ink has been spilled on how “strategically” resorting to English as the language for these transnational feminist exchanges is problematic, as it inevitably (re)produces the hegemony of English and generates more imbalances among participants. Incorporating professional interpreting services in these collaborative spaces to make them more linguistically accessible seems the obvious strategy, yet its costs pose new financial challenges; resorting to gratis interpreting (from volunteers or students) comes with important ethical dilemmas in relation to how free labor may jeopardize the profession. Ways to address the Anglo privilege in these discussions also involves calling for more multilingual academic journals (in translation studies and feminist and queer studies) that facilitate the democratization of knowledge production, not just providing open access to its contents, but also ensuring that research in languages other than English (and most especially research produced in languages that are less privileged in academia) can also circulate, as very often these languages facilitate a better understanding of contexts that would otherwise remain uncharted. Considering the immense profit that big publishing corporations make out of our “free” labor as academics paid by our educational institutions, the lack of a budget to commission translation and interpreting services is difficult to justify. We would like to end this collective reflection by highlighting that, based on the critical conversations held at the Warwick School of Feminist Translation with the next generation of feminist translation scholars, we envision a future for FTS where the gap between theory and practice is narrowed, if not dissolved, as a way for the field to have more impact both on the translation/interpreting profession and on global feminist and queer solidarity practices and networks.

## Notes

1. At the time of publication, Olga Castro is affiliated to the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain, where she is completing a 4-year research fellowship as “Beatriz Galindo” senior distinguished researcher while being on academic leave from Warwick.
2. Luciana Carvalho Fonseca’s participation is under the scope of grant #2023/02812-4 awarded by the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP), Brazil.

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