# A WOMAN'S VOICE: METHODS AND OBSTACLES OF FEMINIST TRANSLATION IN PERSIAN, SPANISH, AND TURKISH POETRY

by

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One feature of poetry is its ability to prompt words to create meaning in unusual ways. A striking example appears in a twentieth-century Persian poem, where a seemingly innocuous word like "hair" carries an unexpected meaning that inscribes gender in a language without gendered pronouns. Drawing from the area of inquiry of feminist translation theory, I track the work of three key poets: the Spanish Rosalía de Castro, the Persian Forugh Farrokhzad, and the Turkish Gülten Akın. I argue that feminist translation theory, when expanded beyond its current Eurocentric frame, reshapes conventional understandings of gender. This polyphonic project works to dismantle misogynistic aspects of patriarchal language through translation, and uses the process of transference to reclaim the "feminine" voice through women poets writing under cultural marginalization. At the same time, I offer my own alternative feminist translations as a means to examine the implications of transnational feminist translation for world literature writ large. My ambition for this project is thus additive and transformative of both feminist translation theory and poetics.

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# Introduction: On Feminist Translation

One feature of poetry is its ability to prompt words to create meaning in unusual ways. The poetry of the twentieth-century Persian poet Forugh Farrokhzad contains a striking and compelling example of a seemingly innocuous word, "hair," which carries an unexpected meaning. In the third stanza of her poem "بر او ببخشایید"["Baar oo bebakhshaied"], Farrokhzad employs the word "گیسو"["geesoo"], one of two meaning "hair" in Farsi.[1] Due to the feminine connotation of "گیسو" in the Persian language and culture, the gender of the subject is revealed with this word alone.

This example demonstrates that pronouns are not the only tool for inscribing gender in language. Gender, like poetry, is a social construct. The term "gender" refers to "learned socio-sexual roles, dress codes, value systems, symbolic order, imposed on individuals by the dominant culture according to our birth sex" (Lotbière-Harwood 100). Language, too, is a system of signifiers that constitutes our world and our reality, while it itself is constituted. In many Romance and Germanic languages, gender is typically designated via pronouns. Pronouns create gender in language and language is used to create societal distinctions between genders in "Western" literature and society. Yet in many languages, one specific word, a word that might appear unrelated at first pass, like Farrokhzad's "hair," is all one needs to signal gender.

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[1] Throughout the project I use the terms "Persian" and "Farsi," depending on whether I am referring to the language itself (Farsi) or the culture (Persian). When I refer to both the culture and language (as in the case of this thesis' title), I use "Persian." "Spanish" and "Turkish" do not require, and in fact do not have, such distinctions because the one term encompasses all of the meanings, and the specific denotation is composed through context.

Interpreting and translating Farrokhzad's poetry within the context of academia in the United States raises ethical questions. Lotbière-Harwood has observed that gender "can constitute an ethical problem for feminist translators" (101). In this project, I build from this acute observation to attend to the complexities that are introduced when we examine translation in non-Eurocentric contexts. The approaches to Farrokhzad differ depending on where in the world one is writing from since "for Iran, she represents the idea of female agency and resistance to Islamic norms, and for the USA, she represents a different vision of Iranian womanhood" (Karim 186). Farrokhzad's "hair" poses additional challenges for English translators, since "hair" does not have the same feminine cultural connotation in English. A translation that pays particular attention to where and how gender appears in the source text and employs various methods to ethically represent the gender within the target text and culture – a "feminist" translation – would be the most useful form of translation in this case. My feminist praxis attends to socio-cultural differences as well as to gender. Due to the ethical and linguistic dilemmas, my analysis and subsequent feminist translation of Farrokhzad will be based upon my interpretation of her poem. I will return to Farrokhzad, her use of hair encoding gender, and the difficulties in translating her poetry further in the paper. If we are to employ feminist translation, let us first trace the genealogy of this still-growing body of theory.

**Genealogy of Feminist Translation**

From the point of its emergence in the late 1970s and 1980s in the writing of a group of scholars in Quebec, feminist translation addresses the problematic tendency in

literary criticism that figured women and translations as discursively inferior.[2] Critics such as Chamberlain, Godard, Simon (among others) pointed out that women writers were at a disadvantage with respect to their male counterparts in every step of the literary field: from access to education, to financial means that might allow them to pursue writing, to finding publishers willing to publish their work. Often the only works they were socially permitted to publish were translations. Meanwhile translations were regarded as lesser versions of the esteemed source texts. Sherry Simon observed that the prejudice against women writers and against translations developed in literary criticism intersectionally; from the medieval period, a hierarchy of associations was built up that valorized source over translation, male over female (Simon 2). This dichotomy between source/male/superior and translation/female/inferior led to the creation and use of androcentric terms for people of all genders. These usages have been referred to as "pseudo-generic" (used interchangeably with the more specified "male pseudo-generic," "pseudo-generic masculine," or "pseudo-generic he") (see Bodine, Lotbière-Harwood, Geoffrion-Vinci), or "generic masculine" (see Ergun).

Some pseudo-generic terms have fallen out of favor over time ("mankind" has been replaced by the gender inclusive "humankind"). Others are still used today (such as when "guys" colloquially refers to a group of women and men). Most languages have some form of pseudo-generic, even languages without gendered pronouns, as the Farsi chapter will further discuss. These pseudo-generic terms in English stem from the first

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2 The growth of feminist translation theory and its key critics include: 1988 (Lori Chamberlain, "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation"), 1990 (Barbara Godard, "Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation"), 1991 (Susanne de Lotbière-Harwood, *The Body Bilingual*), 1996 (Sherry Simon, *Gender in Translation*), 1997 (Luise von Flotow, *Translation and Gender*), 1997 (Francoise Massardier-Kenney, "Towards a Redefinition of Feminist Translation Practice"), 2010 (Emek Ergun, "Bridging Across Feminist Translation and Sociolinguistics"), 2011 (Eleonora Federici, *Translating Gender*).

pseudo-generic, "he," employed by eighteenth-century grammarians in instances of gender ambiguity (Gastil 630). For the grammarians, "linguistically, human beings were to be considered male unless proven otherwise," (Bodine 133). This androcentric worldview remained the dominant, "accepted" form in formal English language for more than two centuries.

While informal opposition existed, it was not until the 1970s that formal resistance by feminists spread through academia. Feminists in all fields began researching and writing about – or rather, against – the use of androcentric terms and highlighting the importance of specificity and inclusivity. The findings in studies conducted on this pseudo-generic, like that done by Gastil (1990), offered "strong support for the general hypothesis that the generic he reinforces sexist thought and action through a linguistic bias in favor of male interpretation" (631). The study concluded that people tend to associate the generic he/man with males alone. As these perceptual studies demonstrate, pseudo-generic pronouns do not "signify neutrality but rather reinforce a binary relationship in which male is dominant or powerful and female is subordinate" (Castro 37). It becomes vital, then, to have specific language in order to recover the woman writer's voice, which has for so long been silenced. Feminist translation theory works towards this recovery by positing gender as the crucial point of transfer and highlighting the female within language whenever possible. It simultaneously reclaims a woman's voice and disrupts historically imposed structures of oppression to make that voice heard through multiple cultural and linguistic zones.

Yet feminist translation theory has not moved beyond its "Western" origins and has inadvertently ignored the world at large. While the core tenet of feminist translation

theory is to "make the feminine visible" (Massadier-Kenney 58), it has reproduced the

Western bias of literary criticism, and once again rendered non-Western women writers

and works invisible. Indeed, the scholarship on feminist translation theory to date draws

upon Western feminism, one that is, in the words of Gloria Anzaldúa, "notorious for

'adopting' women of color as their 'cause' while still expecting us to adopt their

expectations and their language" (167). For example, one of the foundational feminist

translation theorists, Sherry Simon, vouches for translation's role in giving voice to the

voiceless, "for those who feel they're marginal to the authoritative codes of Western

culture, translation stands as a metaphor for their ambiguous experience in the dominant

culture" (135). Her work groundbreaking nonetheless centers on Western culture and

effectively excludes the rest of the world. In the same way that "feminists point out that

the patriarchal canon has traditionally defined aesthetics and literary value in terms that

privileged work by male writers to the detriment of women writers" (Flotow 30), my

work points out that feminist translation theory has privileged work by Western writers

to the exclusion of not only the writers from around the world, but also non-Western

cultures, languages, and histories.

My project is thus both additive and transformative. I work to expand modes of

conceptualizing gender in translation to Persian, Spanish, and Turkish literary and

cultural contexts. By doing so, I seek to establish the parameters of a more global and

inclusive feminist translation theory, a theory that responds to Gayatri Spivak's call for

"responsible translation": "tracking commonality through responsible translation can

lead us into areas of difference and different differentiations" ("Politics of Translation"

193). As a translator, and as an aspiring theorist of translation, I contend that these

differences must be highlighted, culturally and linguistically, especially when transferring texts into new contexts. Spivak's push comes out of a discussion of translating between European and "third world" languages. The term "third world" is now dated and carries with it a negative, even derogatory, connotation, yet the principal contentions of Spivak's work remain relevant to this day. I would also argue that her vision for responsible translation is applicable for translations among any language, even those from the same language "family." Responsible translations, further, contribute to a more ethical approach to world literature as similarities are traced while differences are highlighted.

These differences in the context of world literature are often forgotten, erased, or replaced. This imperialist move takes the up commonality as its cause, that for the sake of commonality, differences must be absolved. But this is a myth that this project works to expose, to reveal that one can – and indeed must – trace commonality while highlighting difference. Differences must also not be subsumed under one umbrella term: the "other." These tendencies toward an imperialist perspective make world literature a problematic category. This project does and does not engage with the idea of "world literature." It draws upon Persian, Spanish, and Turkish literary traditions as examples that speak to the necessity of considering feminist translation theory among differences in pronoun, script, and syntax. David Damrosch's definition of world literature is vital here in order to understand that "world literature is an elliptical refraction of national literatures…with the source and host cultures providing the two foci that generate the elliptical space within which a work lives as world literature, connected to both cultures, circumscribed by neither alone" (Damrosch 281-283). I

operate within a specific subsection within this ellipse, creating the smaller ellipses of Persian, Spanish, and Turkish within the larger ellipse of world literature. Since world literature is "a mode of reading that can be experienced intensively with a few works just as effectively as it can be explored extensively with a large number" (Damrosch 299), my reading of these three literary traditions will bring feminist translation theory to the global stage. To avoid an imperialist perspective and highlight difference, this project takes the source texts and contexts themselves as the focal point for analysis and translation. Specificity and situatedness are central to my project.

**The Presence of the Translator**

My methodology focuses on context and historicity. Along with detailing the context for the source text and the poet, it is also important for my work to highlight the translator. Exposing the translator's context situates the target text and gives readers clarity in terms of the translator's own decisions and methodologies. The presence of the translator can be seen in the practice of Michelle Geoffrion-Vinci's translation of Rosalía de Castro (1831-1885).

Let us first situate Castro, a woman who lived and wrote in Galicia, Spain during a time when Spanish culture and society were heavily patriarchal. Spain imposed Spanish identity, while patriarchal society assigned gender privilege to men. Castro was thus marginalized both for her local community of Galicia and her female gender-identity. Due to limitations on what she could (and could not) write explicitly, Castro's poems are heavily nuanced. Her poetry often reflects pertinent Galician, and women's, issues. While her works have been translated into English multiple times since the

1960s,[3] a translation that highlighted Castro's nuanced writing and historic cultural context was not created until 2014 when Geoffrion-Vinci undertook a feminist intervention with *On the Edge of the River Sar: A Feminist Translation*. Unlike previous translations, Geoffrion-Vinci's work points out the ambiguities and context of Castro's words while also raising the reader's awareness of her own influences on the target text as a translator.

In fact, a key method of feminist translation theory is highlighting the existence and intervention of the translator. Effectively, "when feminist translators intervene in a text for political reasons, they draw attention to their action. In so doing, they demonstrate how easily misogynist aspects of patriarchal language can be dismantled once they've been identified. They also demonstrate their decision-making powers" (Flotow 25). Feminist translators purposefully shed the invisibility of the translator by detailing their approach and in doing so, take on accountability and responsibility for the source text. This yields in a renewed sense of agency for the woman writer because the nuances of her words that have historically been devalued or unrecognized come to light. It also restores agency for the translators themselves by "quite willingly acknowledging their interventionism" (Simon 29).

In her explanation of her method, Geoffrion-Vinci adheres to this practice of highlighting the process of translating and the translator's background. She presents this technique specifically as one of "feminist translation." She admits that "in crafting an English translation of *Sar*, the choices I have made alter the original poems" and that

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[3] Castro, Rosalía de. *Poems of Rosalía de Castro*. Translated by Charles David Ley. Madrid: Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1964.

these choices are colored through her "personal and intellectual inclinations – biases, if you will" (Castro 6-7). In declaring her intentions and methods, and in acknowledging implicit and unconscious biases, Geoffrion-Vinci provides readers with another invaluable context for translation: the situatedness of the translator. Understanding the translator's context in turn leads to a clearer understanding of the translation process as well as the appropriate approach to the new target text. If we understand translation as a mode of interpretation, understanding the translator's context means we understand how she formed her particular interpretation.

Geoffrion-Vinci's voice as the translator speaks throughout her book. It is vital in the instances where the Spanish language, and specifically, Castro's Spanish, gives rise to gender ambiguities that do not occur (or that occur in different linguistic ways) in the English language. For example, in Castro's poem 32 "En sus ojos rasgados y azules" from *En las orillas del Sar*, the structure of the Spanish language allows the entire poem to function without revealing the gender of the lyric speaker. Yet in English, the subject must be identified because the language does not allow for the same kind of structural flexibility. As a feminist translator, Geoffrion-Vinci communicates this gender-indeterminate third person subject through four separate translations, as well as in her notes, which detail how the meaning of the poem changes depending on which gender is used and where (Castro 185).[4] By giving four translations, Geoffrion-Vinci highlights the four possible interpretations/meanings that are all embedded within the

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[4] Pronoun(s) used – meaning of poem
     Their/I – fleeting fame
     His/she – female innocence and male betrayal
     Her/he – male innocence and female betrayal
     Her/she – homosexual innocence and betrayal

single Spanish poem. Rather than choosing only one interpretation to relay to the Anglophone readers, she leaves that choice to the readers themselves. This decision has ethical and cultural repercussions: she leaves space for her Anglophone audience to decide which version they like best, or which meaning they gather from the poem. Interestingly, this furnishes them with the same choice the Spanish audience has. Geoffrion-Vinci thus restores visibility and agency to the woman writer, to the translator, and to the reader alike. Her "feminist translation" extends beyond feminism, encoding ethics in the use of language.

**Resexing Language**

As exemplified by Geoffrion-Vinci, feminist translation is not only a theory but also a practice. Feminist translation theorists discuss strategies and invent methods that can be used to enact a feminist translation. One such method is "resexing," proposed and implemented by the feminist translator and theorist Susanne de Lotbière-Harwood. In her book, *The Body Bilingual: Translation as a Rewriting in the Feminine*, she spins the adage *belles infidèles,* which was introduced by the French scholar Gilles Ménage (1613-1692), and declared that "like women, translations must be either beautiful or faithful," (Simon 10). Lotbière-Harwood affirmed, "in French I call my feminist translation strategies *re-belles et infidèles*. It is a reclaiming of the expression *belles infidèles*…my addition of the prefix *re-* changes the beauties into rebels and implies repetition with change. Translation as a rewriting in the feminine" (Lotbière-Harwood 98-99). She changes an existing word linguistically in order to give it a new socially and politically charged meaning. She argues that as feminist translators, "to make women manifest, what we need to do is to *resex* language, which is where feminization or

gender-marking come into play" (Lotbière-Harwood 115). Changing the spelling of words, creating new words, and using etymology are key elements of her resexing approach to translations which strives to make the female visible on the page. A few of her feminist interventions in language include author/auther, outsiders/outsid(h)ers, addressers/address(h)ers, history/herstory or hystory (Lotbière-Harwood 130). Feminization and resexization are vital for breaking down patriarchal forms of language and bringing to light the feminine that has historically been hidden.

Lotbière-Harwood's innovative methods resist traditionally masculine-dominated language and bring the female and feminine to the forefront. However, these techniques always stem from French and English, and their application has likewise been contained by prominent theorists to these two linguistic and cultural contexts. In fact, the source and target languages treated within feminist translation scholarship have traditionally been French and English: languages that have gendered pronouns, languages that use the Roman alphabet, and languages that allow some degree of syntactical flexibility. This Eurocentric focus greatly limits the scope and application of feminist theories of translation. Especially since pronoun, script, and syntax are central to the conceptualization of language in any theory, the corpus of feminist translation theory, as well as its methods including resexing, must be expanded and consequently fundamentally reworked.

**At the Limits of Feminist Translation: On Fusional, Isolating, and Agglutinative Languages**

Spanish, like French, is a "fusional" language (Sapir). A fusional language is one where a morpheme (a unit of meaning), when added to a word, can have multiple

meanings. For instance, in the Spanish word "caminará" ("She/he will walk") the -á suffix is one morpheme but signifies both the future tense *and* third person. Thus, the morphemes in fusional languages cannot be easily defined since "the constituent elements become difficult to recognize and separate" (Greenberg 183). Undoubtedly the similarity in morphology allows Lotbière-Harwood's resexing technique to extend to Spanish.

English is also fusional; however, it shares aspects of isolating. In a fully isolating language like Mandarin, every morpheme is a separate word and a word only contains one morpheme (Greenberg 182). The English future tense "will" is an isolating feature for it is a single morpheme and a separate word. In most other fusional languages, the future tense morpheme is added onto the verb. Isolating languages separate each morpheme into individual words. While English isn't completely isolating, it has more morphologically isolated words as compared to, say, the fusional French or Spanish languages.

The third linguistic classification is based on agglutination. In an agglutinative language, each morpheme only has one meaning, is clearly visible, is added to the root verb or noun, and can be looked at separately. Turkish is a fully agglutinative language (Sapir). For instance, the morpheme for present tense Turkish verbs is -yor- and the morpheme for the first person is -um. The word "biliyorum" ("I know") can be divided into its morphemes: bil (from the verb bilmek) + i (for vowel harmony) + yor + um. Similarly, "evlerimde" or "in my houses" has the morphemes ev (house) + ler (plural marker) + im (first person possessive) + de (locative case, in).

The resexing method as it stands in current scholarship is not applicable to Turkish because of its agglutination; one cannot alter the spelling of a Turkish word for feminist reasons because that word is composed of multiple, distinct morphemes. A single Turkish word, as detailed, is often a phrase in Western languages like English because of the composition of morphemes. Furthermore, Turkish relies on vowel harmony and assimilation. Changing even a single letter in a word would thereby disrupt the vocality of the words and render it incomprehensible. Whereas the act of changing a word functions as an act of resistance to patriarchal structures in language, we must rethink how to resist structure in agglutinative languages. Perhaps this resistance comes from resisting the agglutination itself through fragmentation, breaking up the morphemes. Structure can be dismantled, as current feminist translation theory has proven with French and English. But to do so in a way that still conveys meaning in an agglutinative tongue is a direction that must be further pursued in order to establish a more inclusive feminist translation.

In addition to being limited by syntax, Lotbière-Harwood's resexing technique presently cannot work in Farsi because this language uses the modified Arabic script. Letters in this script change shape depending on if they appear in the beginning, middle, or end of a word. These letters also connect with each other, similar to how letters in cursive English connect. For instance, one of the two letters signifying <h> is written in four different ways depending on its position relative to the word: ھ [beginning of a word], ﮭ [middle], ﺢ [end], and ه [if it is isolated]. This characteristic makes it nearly impossible to make the female visible visually on the page and in the text, especially considering that there are no female pronouns. It is not possible to show "her" or "she"

within a word because those pronouns do not exist in the language. Resexing in Farsi would need to make the word for woman [زن] or girl [دختر] (which also means "daughter") literally visible, which cannot be done within any given word and still retain meaning precisely because of the interconnectivity of the letters. Current resexing methods are thus limited to gendered, non-agglutinative languages that use the Roman alphabet.

Emek Ergun further elaborates that "the very reason why Lotbière-Harwood can 'resex' the text is because English does have a semantic gender, which allows her to prefer feminine pronouns to masculine ones" (Ergun 312). She advocates for the need of another "innovative" method to mark the feminine, otherwise linguistic gender will need to be suppressed completely. Highlighting the feminine through pronouns is not possible with a language like Turkish which has a genderless third-person pronoun: "o" [oh]. Likewise, Farsi has the genderless third-person pronoun او [oo]. Even though resexing is a useful strategy for creating a feminist translation within most Western languages since they are gendered and fusional, another feminist method must be developed for all the other languages in the world which are nongendered, fully isolating, or agglutinative.

## Source and Target Texts v. Original and its Copy

Thus far I have used, and will continue to use, the terms "source text" and "target text." Put briefly, "source" refers to the text I am translating *from* while "target" refers to the text I am translating *into*. The former has historically been referred to as the "original" and the latter as the "translation" or its "copy." My thesis sides with the translation theories – feminist and others – that understand the terms "original" and

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"copy" to enact a violence against the text. This violence is imbedded in the connotations of these terms. "Original" grants the source undue authority and "copy" refuses to identify the translation as a work in and of its own right. This violence preceds the translation and any analysis of the texts themselves. Original and copy reinforce the power dynamic from earlier where translation is viewed as inferior and "lesser" than the superior "original" from which it is derived. Even in academia the notion of translations as "poor substitutes for 'originals'" exists, as students and scholars alike are "told both to honor [translations] (for what they gestured toward) and to distrust (for their inability to do so adequately)" (Emmerich 192). This suspicious and dismissive attitude towards translation has been detrimental to the growth and respect of translated texts and translation studies.

The paradigm of originals as authentic and translations as inadequate copies fuels the "prevailing view of translation" that figures it as a "problematic necessity" (Weinberger 17). Yet this perspective relies on two factually inaccurate assumptions. The first is that the authenticity of an original rests on its existence as a single, stable entity. However, even in the same language, multiple "originals" exist. This multiplicity inheres in the text's medium (print v. digital, manuscript v. mass produced, magazine v. book collection), in the question of authorship (single known writer, pseudonym, collaboration, editors, publishers), and in the form in which a text appears (places and dates of publication, anthology v. single collection, multiple editions, material and digital formats). This multiplicity also depnds on the reader since "every reading of every poem is a translation into one's own experience and knowledge – whether it is a confirmation, a contradiction, or an expansion" (Weinberger 22). Using the term

"source" counters this mirage of stability perpetuated by the term "original" and points to the text's instability. Emmerich highlights that "the 'source,' the presumed object of translation, is not a stable ideal, not an inert gas but a volatile compound that experiences continual textual reconfigurations" (2). In using the term "source," the assumption of the single, authentic text ceases to exist and the implied inaccuracy of "translation" lessened.

Translation as copy, then, is the second faulty assumption. This view often leads to discussions of the "faithfulness" of translations, or in other words, its "accuracy" with respect to its source text. Accuracy here is measured by how literal the translation is as compared to the source. Seen this way, translation is merely a tool to transfer content from one language to another. Yet in actuality, a translation is a *translingual and a transcultural interpretation*. That is why if you "give seventy translators an identical swatch of text…they will produce seventy different translations that accord with their diverse understandings of what the text means, and of the relative importance of its various features" (Emmerich 1). Each translator brings to the source text their own individual context: their background, upbringing, education, and biases. All of these factors influence and contribute to their creation of the target text. The one "right" or "accurate" or "perfect" translation does not exist, as computer tools would dupe us into believing. Ultimately, "a translation adds a new iteration, in a different language, to the sum total of texts for a work" (Emmerich 3). Translators are creators. They breathe to life a work that has not existed before, whether in that language or in that style. A translation must consequently be seen as a new creation that is both in dialogue with its source and carries the conversation forward into new realms.

**The Cases of Persian, Spanish, and Turkish**

Translation "shifts our perspective and realigns our relation to the world, bringing us into proximity with other modalities. With others. It can draw us across that most guarded border, the one we build around ourselves" (Gander 110). My project aims to draw feminist translation theory across its own Eurocentric border and open up its current European focus to a more transnational one. While it is unrealistic to cover all the languages and all the cultures with equal depth in just one paper, my project turns its attention to three linguistic cultures in particular: Persian, Spanish, and Turkish. These three case studies share similarities due to their historical points of contact in the Mediterranean. From Islamic Spain to the overlapping Persian and Ottoman empires, remnants of the fluid cultural exchange across and around the Mediterranean are visible in the lexicon of these languages to this day. They are also different enough that my analysis and transnational feminist translation methods can be extrapolated to other languages (such as from Persian to Arabic, Turkish to Finnish, Spanish to Galician). The three are vital for a polyphonic comparison – precisely due to their differences in script, syntax, and pronoun. Working with these three cases provides insights that inform a more inclusive transnational feminist translation theory.

This project is divided into three chapters based on the source language and cultural context. Each chapter takes one female poet as its exemplar and analyze two-to-three of her poems and existing translations. My criteria for choosing exemples was quite specific: in each case, I considere work by a female poet who was also socially and politically active, be it in her poetry or other aspects of life. These writers were all influential in some way in terms of women's rights and/or advocacy for women's

writing, and each lived in the 19th and 20th centuries. For each poem engaged in my chapters, I also provide my own transnational feminist translation. I translate with an eye for disrupting stale conventions such as masculine privilege, fixed gender roles, and Eurocentrism. My translingual and transcultural interventions create, adapt, and employ an array of methods that will serve as defining examples of what a "feminist translation" means and looks for these hitherto excluded languages (Farsi and Turkish) and what a "transnational" feminist translation results in Spanish. Since languages are "interrelated in what they want to express" (Benjamin 255), my work among multiple source and target languages demonstrates the interrelatedness of languages and cultures that under "traditional" scholarship are kept apart.

Each chapter begins with the poet's biography. Subsequently, I embark on discussions of each poem. The subsections start with a close reading of the poem, an examination and critique of the existing translation, a discussion of my translation decisions, and side-by-side source and target texts. I chose this specific arrangement for all of the chapters because I wanted to situate the texts within their contexts. My aim was for all (Anglophone) readers – regardless of their literary or linguistic background – to be able to approach, read, and understand the poems with the knowledge of the cultural, political, and historical situations that led to their creation. I also wanted readers to have a sufficient understanding of the poet's life so that her voice is heard in the poems. That is why it was necessary for me to start with the biography and close reading (i.e. context) before diving into the poem and translation decisions (i.e. text). I wanted my readers to be fully equipped to realize the significance of translation

decisions once they reached that section, rather than arriving at that realization retrospectively.

My first chapter, "Forugh Farrokhzad's Feminist Farsi," revisits the issue of gender in words that are not pronouns, such as "hair," and tackles the implications of a gender-neutral, rather than gender-masculine, "savior" figure in another one of Farrokhzad's poems. This chapter also sheds light on the situations where the poet's own gender influences her work's reception. In chapter two, "Rosalía de Castro's Ambiguous Spanish Subjects," I provide a transnational approach to Castro, one that uses the specificity of her work to weave together the different differences among the preceding and subsequent chapters. My feminist translation in this chapter differs from the existing feminist translation of Castro for I foreground the gender-inclusive subject, rather than the gendered female subject, in cases of ambiguity in the source text. The third and final chapter is on "Gülten Akın's Turkish Poetic Voice." Here, I wrestle with and propose methods for capturing the imagery and context embedded in Akın's deeply cultural poems. I work on maintaining meaning without sacrificing the lyrical quality in the target English poems.

This project within, among, and between translations contributes to the "afterlife" of the source and target texts. For Walter Benjamin, translation contributes to the afterlife of a work for it "marks their [the source text's] stage of continued life" (254). Translation allows the life of the source text to grow and renew because translation is not only another iteration, but also a change. In this manner, "translation is change and motion; literature dies when it stays the same, when it has no place to go" (Weinberger 30). If translation, then, gives new life to the source text because it is a

change, what gives translation a new life? Can a translation have an afterlife of its own? This project, I would argue, performs exactly this role. In revisiting existing translations and creating new ones, I highlight the understood yet often forgotten fact that translation is a continual work in progress. Since so few translations in English are published, the publishing industry would make one assume that once a translation has reached the masses, it is over. Its purpose fulfilled. Yet as the push towards gender-inclusive language in the past decade has shown, language is continually evolving and some works and translations, over time, become outdated. New approaches are discovered, like feminist translation theory, which make it fruitful to revisit the purpose and design of earlier translated works. The source text achieves afterlife through translation. This project, however, gives the target text an afterlife (and contributes to that of the source text) by analyzing translations alongside the source and, at times, re-translating with the new theoretical frameworks in mind.

# Chapter 1: Forugh Farrokhzad's Feminist Farsi

Out of a household "headed by an authoritarian father whose military career dominated his family life" (Brookshaw and Rahimieh 1) and a mother with strict affinities for rules and order came a voraciously independent and rebellious spirit. Forugh Farrokhzad was born to a middle-class family in Tehran, Iran, on December 29, 1934.[5] While her brothers studied abroad in Europe, Forugh did not even graduate high school. She married instead, of her own volition and over the objection of her family, at seventeen years of age to a man eleven years her elder: Parviz Shapur. As a distant relative (the grandson of Forugh's mother's maternal aunt), Shapur frequented the Farrokhzad household where he was "the life of gatherings, owing to his sense of humor and witty stories" (Hillmann 11). Forugh Farrokhzad fell madly in love.

After their marriage, Shapur and Farrokhzad moved to the nearby city of Ahvaz and the following year she gave birth to their only child, a boy named Kamyar. Away from the domineering control of her family home, Farrokhzad found a poetic self. When Kamyar was two years old, Farrokhzad began publishing poetry in various literary magazines. Or, should I say, she made her poetry published. Barely twenty years old, Farrokhzad went unannounced to the office of Feraidoon Mooshiri, the head of the literary section of *Roshanfekr* which was one of the most popular magazines in 1950s Iran. She handed him three of her poems ("Forough Farrokhzhad's Biography &

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[5] Scholarly and literary work on Forugh Farrokhzad have historically miswritten her birthdate as January 5, 1935 rather than December 29, 1934. While reasons for this mistake are unknown, it may be attributed to a calculation error when converting from the Solar Hijri Calendar to the Gregorian Calendar. Source: پوران فرخزاد خواهر بزرگتر فروغ چندی پیش اعلام کرد فروغ روز هشتم دی ماه متولدشده است واز اهل تحقیق خواست تا این اشتباه را تصحیح کنند. ("Puran Farrokhzad, Forugh's older sister, has repeatedly stated that Forugh was born on Dei 8 [Hijri Calendar; Gregorian equivalent of December 29] and has requested academics and publishers to correct this error.") (*A Complete Collection of Forugh's Poems* / مجموعه اشعار فروغ).

Unpublished Letters" 00:33:42). Like all aspects of her life, she took charge and an extensive amount of risk in order to start her literary career. The very first poem she gave Mooshiri was "گناه" ["*Gonah*" or "*Sin*"]. In this poem, a female speaker expresses her sensual desire and passion for her male lover. Mooshiri said he would need to consult the editors. They might have been concerned about the consequences of publishing a poem that reversed the male-female relations of thousands of years of poetic history ("Forough Farrokhzad's Biography" 00:37:08). Surprisingly, the editorial committee saw the daring poems as a novelty, and thus began Farrokhzad's publishing career.

While some readers enjoyed the poem, an overwhelming number of readers were so shocked and offended that Farrokhzad was immediately thrown in the spotlight and critiqued ("Forough Farrokhzad's Biography" 00:39:04). This hitherto unheard-of poet became the subject of debate almost overnight. Adulterous women have been portrayed in Persian literature for many years, but perhaps the reason why Farrokhzad's poem evoked such vicious response is because her "woman" is the speaker, has sinned, and is unrepentant. In addition to the religious taboo, the poem openly addresses a cultural taboo: female sexual awakening ("Forough Farrokhzad's Biography" 00:41:01). Above all, the presentation of the poem by the magazine factored into the overwhelmingly outraged public response.

شاعر بی پروا

شکوفه کبود

Figure 1: Scan of the first published pages of Farrokhzad.

From *Roshanfekr* magazine. Includes photos, a biography, and her poem "گناه"

["Gonah" or "Sin"]. . Source: Video via the Library of Congress, "Forough
Farrokhzad's Biography" 00:41:50 – 00:42:08.

In the images above, Farrokhzad's biography, images, and poems appear on the
pages of *Roshanfekr*. The amount of space devoted to Farrokhzad is apparent. Despite
being an unknown poet, she was given two full-page spreads. The focus of the pages,
moreover, is the image of Farrokhzad: her unruly hair, large eyes, voluptuous lips. All
these features are emphasized in the artistic sketch which figures her seductively with
the added coy gaze, heavy eye and lip makeup, and a half-parted mouth. Her poem,
furthermore, not only shares the pages with the photographs and drawing, but also with
her biography. Disappointingly, the focus of this biography is on her physical
appearance, her body, and her marital status. According to Farzaneh Milani, this focus
coupled with the "layout of the magazine turns the poem into a testimonial of sorts" and
causes the adulterous "woman" of the poem to be read as Farrokhzad herself ("Forough
Farrokhzad's Biography" 00:42:58).

In a society in which honor and female fidelity were arguably most important in
terms of societal presence, Farrokhzad and her family received considerable scrutiny.
They isolated themselves, and were isolated by society at large, as a result of this
publication. Yet the strong-willed and ambitious Farrokhzad was not deterred. In the
eye of the hurricane, she carried on. She continued to write and publish. Here in Ahvaz,
her first poetry collection, which contained forty-four poems, was published.
Significantly, this was the first time in Iran that a woman from a non-literary family had
her own collection published ("Forough Farrokhzad's Biography" 00:46:32). As she

continued to shatter glass ceilings, her burgeoning poetic identity awakened her earlier frustrations at the limitations of women, "caught between the seemingly irreconcilable demands of a woman-wife-mother and an autonomous poet" (Milani 134). More and more she discovered the difficulties of navigating between sociocultural expectations and individual desires.

Farrokhzad was an independent-minded individual who chose her own path in life, unafraid to make socially taboo decisions. Among these decisions was her choice to become a great poet. Yet she could not reconcile her poetic ambitions and literary life with that of domesticity. In the same way that she chose to marry, five years later she chose to divorce, "despite the numerous social, psychological, and financial hardships that would result" in 1955 Iran (Milani 134). Consequently, Farrokhzad lost custody of her son and was denied visitation rights; prior to the 1967 Iranian Family Protection Act, children in divorce cases were often given to the custody of the father (Hillmann 23). With much pain and grief over losing her son, Farrokhzad returned to Tehran, where her situation only worsened. She was rejected by some of her family and kicked out of her home by a father who felt "disgraced" by her. Simultaneously, she faced literary criticism for the distinctly female poetic voice employed in her breakthrough book and, at this point, several magazine publications. With her personal and professional lives torn apart, she suffered a nervous breakdown and attempted suicide. Her brother, Amir Masud, took her to the Reza'i Psychiatric Clinic where she was institutionalized for one month (Hillmann 25).

In the year following her hospitalization, Farrokhzad traveled to Europe for over a year. She primarily visited Italy and Germany during her escape from the turmoil of

her life in Iran. This restorative trip gave her a renewed sense of life and freedom. She learned new languages, connected with Iranian expatriates, and reflected on Iran and its society and life from a new perspective (Talattof 86). She would return to Europe again in 1960 and 1964. All the while she continued writing poetry, publishing poems in both literary magazines and collections. Farrokhzad fought to be accepted as a woman poet in this traditionally male-dominated field. She worked to have her poetry judged on the same merit as her male counterparts: on the poems' content rather than on the personal life of their creator. Farrokhzad took this endeavor one step further for she unabashedly poured her emotions in her written work and "bitterly criticized her society, especially its injustice against women" (Milani 135). Her repertoire consists of five poetry collections – one of which was published posthumously – and a 1962 cinematic documentary, خانه سیاه است [*Khaneh siyah ast*] (*The House is Black*), about the leper colony in north-western Iran.

Her poetry "is the chronical of an evolving consciousness, the testament of a growing awareness" (Milani 136-137). This evolution can be tracked chronologically through the tone and content of her collections. While Farrokhzad's earlier poems focusing inwards, her later ones looked outwards. The autobiographical self that garnered so much notoriety transformed into a spokesperson for the masses in many of her post-1950s poems. After this shift into socially conscious poetry, tapping into the emotions of all Iranians and "voicing an anti-patriarchal clarion call that knows no gender," her public receptions became more and more favorable (Hillmann 99).

Having barely reached thirty-two years of age, Farrokhzad was at the height of her career, creativity, and personal happiness. Suddenly, her life was cut short. On

February 14, 1967, Farrokhzad visited her mother, who later recalls the nicest

conversation the two women had ever had (Hillmann 71). At the time she worked at the

Golestan cinema studio. While driving back in her jeep station wagon, she swerved to

avoid an oncoming vehicle. Her car hit a wall and she was thrown out. Her head hit the

cement gutter. She died before reaching the hospital.

During her tragically short life, Farrokhzad transformed modern Persian

literature and her legacy lives on to this day. She was "a woman who was able to shine

in the literary scene of Iranian society with a modern message that remains even more

pertinent today" (Talattof 99). Her lyrics inverted traditional male-female relationships

by voicing a new female speaker and taking men as poetic subjects. While sensuous

love is one of the core themes, Farrokhzad's poetry is as complex as her life's

biography. In fact, "to limit critical analysis of Farrokhzad's poetry to an exclusive

preoccupation with one aspect of love, mainly the erotic, is to trivialize or neglect its

many other merits" (Milani 132). Farrokhzad's women express their desires yet refuse

to be defined by them. The poetic sense of self and identity transcend relationships,

reveal pain alongside pleasure, and engage in socially-conscious reflection.

While still a figure of contention and admiration, Farrokhzad has ultimately

garnered new appreciation as one of the first modern Persian feminist poets. For this

reason, I have dedicated this chapter to her words and hope that my analysis and

subsequent feminist translations can pay homage to Farrokhzad's efforts and legacy.

Half a century ago in Iran, Farrokhzad advocated through her poetry for freedom of

expression, women's rights, equal distributions of power and wealth, and compassion

for those ostracized by society. Her poems remain as pertinent to twenty-first century

Anglophone readers in the U.S. as they were to Farsi readers in 1950s/1960s Iran. The message and ambition of her poetry have value across time and space. Farrokhzad's poetry presents an honest depiction of life and a sincere portrayal of love that tugs at the emotional core of readers and provokes self- and societal-reflection.

Despite the fairly large corpus of critical work on Farrokhzad, a specifically feminist translation into English is hitherto nonexistent. Thus, I will refer to the selected translations provided by Sholeh Wolpé in *Sin* (2007). Herself a poet, Wolpé is also a published playwright, translator, and editor. Born in Tehran, Iran, Wolpé was sent to complete her secondary education in the United Kingdom before coming to the United States for her university studies. She currently serves as visiting associate professor at UCLA. Regarding her translation strategies in *Sin*, she gave great attention to the wordplay and sound structure in order to create poems in the English that "are as fresh, exciting, and surprising as they are in the Persian" (Farrokhzad, *Sin* 117).

Wolpé does not include the source text alongside her translation. Therefore, I turned to *A Complete Collection of Forugh's Poems /* مجموعه اشعار فروغ (2017), published by Ketab Corp. in Los Angeles. I specifically sought out a US- or European-based publisher of Farrokhzad's works because "after the 1979 revolution in Iran, the new Islamic government officially banned Farrokohzad's poems and her publisher was ordered to stop printing her books" (Farrokhzad, *Sin* 117 xxxi). Furthermore, some of the pre-1979 editions of her work in Iran are censored. In order to minimize the risk of censored alterations and to get a source as reliable as possible to Farrokhzad's own words, I chose this anthology by the Los Angeles-based publisher. Any mention of

source text will be coming from this edition specifically, and all "existing translations" are extracted from Wolpé's text.

### بر او ببخشایید [Baar oo bebakhshaied]

In the introduction to this thesis, I touched on the following poem by Farrokhzad. "بر او ببخشایید"["Baar oo bebakhshaied," or "Forgive Her," in Wolpé's English-language translation], appears in her fourth book تولدی دیگر [*Tavallodi Digar*] (1964). The poem is composed of five stanzas with an average of five words per stanza; the shortest line consists of two words and the longest consists of nine. The title is the poem's refrain. It appears as the first line of each stanza except the last. In this final stanza, the refrain is repeated twice in the third and fourth lines. "بر او ببخشایید"is a confluence of Farrokhzad's inward-looking autobiographical persona from her earlier years and her socially-conscious spokesperson persona from her later years. The poem can be read as the poet asking for forgiveness for the controversy her earlier work provoked, yet it can also be read as a poetic voice asking for forgiveness on behalf of a subject who has suffered greatly within society. It is this second reading that my translation of Farrokhzad and interpretation is based upon.

Sholeh Wolpé translated this poem as "Forgive Her." She chose crisp, detailed words in English, and these words successfully transfer the complex imagery this poem evokes. Yet one unmistakable oversight is the gender reveal of the poetic subject. Since Farsi is a language with a singular, gender-neutral pronoun, Farrokhzad makes the gender apparent only later on within the poem's context and cultural connotations of particular words.

In "بر او ببخشایید" the gender of the subject is revealed in the third stanza, with the word Wolpé translates as "hair." The translation is not completely incorrect, however, there are two words in Farsi that signify hair. One is "مو" [moo] which is generic, applied to various types of hair on any individual, and is closer to what the term "hair" connotes in English. The second is "گیسو"[geesoo](singular form of گیسوان [geesovaan]) which refers specifically to long hair and is applied only to women. As noted earlier, it is this feminine connotation of "گیسو"that signals to Farsi readers the subject is a woman.

Wolpé uses the feminine pronouns "she" and "her" from the beginning of the poem, and does not include even a footnote explaining to Anglophone readers the importance of "hair," and how the usage here carries a different cultural connotation than one might assume in English. This omission significantly downplays the potentially striking and disruptive identification of the word گیسوان later on in the third stanza: "Forgive her. / Sometimes she forgets / she is painfully the same / … / whose useless hair still quivers hopelessly" (ll. 1-3, 20). In the Farsi source text, all of these instances of her and she are rendered with the ungendered او [oo] as such: "بر او ببخشایید / بر او که گاه گاه / پیوند دردناک وجودش را / با آب های راکد / و حفره های خالی از یاد می برد / … / و گیسوان بیهده اش / نومیدوار از نفوذ نفسهای عشق می لرزد" (ll. 1-5, 21-22). Thus, over the course of the first two stanzas, a reader does not know whether the figure is a man or a woman. As a consequence, the gender reveal in the third stanza is significant because it changes the tone and direction for the second half of the poem.

Even if the subject's gender was not meant to be the most important element of the poem, it is important for translators to pay attention to the gender. Otherwise, this layer of complexity, which can give rise to multiple interpretations on the part of the reader, would be eliminated. For example, since the gender is unknown, the subject in the first half of the poem for Farsi readers can be interpreted as representing people as a whole. These are the people who are struggling within society: the common-folk, the minorities, the disadvantaged. The poem could be asking readers to forgive these people, to impart some sympathy and empathize with their struggles. Once the subject is identified as a female with the گیسوان section, the poem can be interpreted as shifting its focus from the macro to the micro. The identification of the female subject can serve to highlight women's issues in particular, within the larger structure of society.

It can also posit the feminine – rather than the traditional masculine – as universal, since the subject pre- and post-gender reveal is the same person and the former represented all people. As the Introduction highlighted, androcentric views on humanity and gender representation dominated in the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (see Bodine, Gastil). The same condition was true for Iran, and can be seen even in Farsi to this day. If, for example, I wanted to say "they are good people," in Farsi I would say, "اینها آدم های خوبی هستند" ["inha aadamahaye khoobi hastand"]. "آدم ها" ["aadamha"] means "people," and even though in this context it refers to a gender-ambiguous group, the word is semantically masculine. To draw an analogy to a Western language, "آدم ها" ["aadamha"] is similar to the Spanish third-person plural "ellos," which can be applied to a group of gender-unknown people but is nonetheless semantically masculine. Unlike Spanish, however, there is not an "ellas," or a feminine

version, in Farsi. To be truly gender neutral, the example sentence could be " انسان اینها [ "های خوبی هستند" ["inha ensanhaye khoobi hastand"] which, literally, means "they are good humans." While both these sentences convey a similar message, using "ها انسان" ["ensanha," "humans"] sounds as unusual and odd in the Farsi sentence as it does in the English. In English we would most likely use "people" over "humans" in the same way that in Farsi we would use "ها آدم" ["aadamha"] over "ها انسان" ["ensanha"]. This example demonstrates that even in the most basic sense, "people" in Farsi is thought of in the masculine. Farrokhzad's subject successfully reverses this universal masculine. Her feminization draws attention to the existence of this universal masculine and challenges it.

In order to maintain the initial ambiguity, instead of saying "Forgive her, / sometimes she forgets" I state, "Forgive the one / who sometimes forgets." My translation further understands گیسوان as "tresses," which the Oxford English Dictionary defines as "a long lock of hair(esp. that of a woman)" ("Tress, n.1). This mostly female application of "tresses" coincides with the female "گیسوان". Only from that point onwards do I employ the female pronoun to further solidify in English that the subject is now identified as female. My feminist translation of Farrokhzad's poem, similar to Geoffrion-Vinci's feminist translations of Castro, restores agency to the reader by maintaining the initial ambiguity of Farrokhzad's words. Anglophone readers, like those in Farsi, now have the option of choosing how to interpret the subject's gender in the first half, whether they see the subject as female from the start like Wolpé's interpretation, as representative of all people like my reading, or as something different all together.

| Source by Forugh Farrokhzad: <br> „بر او ببخشایید“ (1964) | Translation by Sholeh Wolpé: "Forgive Her" (2007) | Feminist Translation by Elmira Louie: "Forgive" (2018) |
|---|---|---|
| بر او ببخشایید <br> بر او که گاه گاه <br> پیوند دردناک وجودش را <br> با آب های راکد <br> و حفره های خالی از یاد می برد <br> و ابلهانه می پندار <br> که حق زیستن دارد <br><br> بر او ببخشایید <br> بر خشم بی تفاوت یک تصویر <br> که آرزوی دوردست تحرک <br> در دیدگان کاغذیش آب می شود <br><br> بر او ببخشایید <br> بر او که در سراسر تابوتش <br> جریان سرخ ماه گذر دارد <br> و عطر های منقلب شب <br> خواب هزار ساله اندامش را <br> آشفته می کند <br><br> بر او ببخشایید <br> بر او که از درون متلاشیست <br> اما هنوز پوست چشمانش از <br> تصور ذرات نور می سوزد <br> و گیسوان بیهده اش <br> نومیدوار از نفوذ نفسهای عشق <br> می لرزد <br><br> ای ساکنان سرزمین ساده <br> خوشبختی <br> ای همدمان پنجره های گشوده در باران <br> بر او ببخشایید <br> بر او ببخشایید <br> زیرا که مسحور است <br> زیرا که ریشه های هستی بارآور شما <br> در خاکهای غربت او نقب می زنند <br> و قلب زود باور او را <br> با ضربه های موذی حسرت <br> در کنج سینه اش متورم می سازن | Forgive her. <br> Sometimes she forgets <br> she is painfully the same <br> as stagnant water, <br> hollow ditches, <br> foolishly imagines <br> she has the right to exist. <br><br> Forgive a photo portrait's <br> listless rage, <br> whose longing for movement <br> melts in her paper eyes. <br><br> Forgive <br> this woman whose casket <br> is washed over <br> by a flowing red moon, <br> she whose body's <br> thousand-year sleep <br> is perturbed by the night's stormy scent <br><br> Forgive this woman who's crumbling inside, <br> but whose eyelids tingle <br> still with dreams of light, <br> whose useless hair still <br> quivers hopelessly, <br> infiltrated by love's breath. <br><br> People of the land of plain joys, <br> you who have opened your windows to the rain, <br> forgive her, <br> forgive because she is bewitched, <br> because your lives' fertile roots <br> burrow into her exiled soil <br> and pound | Forgive the one <br> who sometimes forgets, <br> who is painfully the same <br> as stagnant water, <br> hollow ditches, <br> and who foolishly imagines <br> has the right to exist. <br><br> Forgive <br> a portrait's listless rage, <br> whose longing for movement <br> melts in its paper eyes. <br><br> Forgive <br> the one whose entire casket <br> is washed over by the moon's scarlet flow, <br> whose body's thousand-year sleep <br> is perturbed by the night's stormy scent <br><br> Forgive <br> the one who's crumbling inside, <br> but whose eyelids tingle <br> still with dreams of light, <br> and her useless tresses still <br> quiver hopelessly, <br> infiltrated by love's breath. <br><br> O people of the land of plain joys, <br> O you who have opened your windows to the rain, <br> forgive her, <br> forgive her <br> because she is bewitched, |

| | with envy's rod her naïve heart, until it swells. | because your lives' fertile roots burrow into her exiled soil and pound her naïve heart with envy's rod until it swells. |
|---|---|---|

**کسی که مثل هیچکس نیست [Kaasee keh mesle heechkaas neest]**

Farrokhzad's fifth and final book, ایمان بیاوریم به آغاز فصل سرد] *Iman Beyavarem Beh Aghaze Fasle Sard*], was published posthumously in 1974. This collection includes seven lengthy poems that were initially published in various literary journals and magazines during the poet's own lifetime before being anthologized in this book. For this section, I will focus on only one of these poems: "کسی که مثل هیچکس نیست"["Kaasee keh mesle heechkaas neest"]. This ninety-six-line poem is divided into nine stanzas. The stanzas are of varying and inconsistent length, word count, meter, and rhythm. The longest stanza has twenty-nine lines and the shortest has just one. In the poem an unidentified first-person narrator recounts a dream of "someone" who is coming. From here on out, I have chosen to refer to this person as Someone, with a capital "S." Readers learn a lot about them, even though Someone is unnamed and ungendered.

Someone will be unlike anyone the speaker knows, including the speaker's parents. They will be unique. Someone is tall and brave, with a bright, "heaven-sent" face, as per the religious allusion in lines 19-20 ("و صورتش/ از صورت امام زمان هم روشنتر" or "And who's face / Is brighter than Imam Mehdi's face" [translation mine]). Someone is intelligent – both with letters and numbers. Someone can buy whatever they need on credit, which implies that they have paid their credit back in the past and are thus

trustworthy and reliable. They are skilled enough to make the sign above the mosque turn on again, and remain lit every night, a feat that for reasons unknown no one has been able to accomplish. Readers learn all this from the first two stanzas. The speaker then goes on a tangent, revealing their desires and describing various people and places within their community. The whimsical tone gets more somber after this interlude, in which the speaker interrogates their own powerlessness and that of their father and other townsfolk. The speaker expresses frustration that these people do not do anything to speed up the arrival of Someone, whom the speaker is anxiously awaiting.

While waiting, the speaker has swept the stairs and washed the window panes. Culturally, this act is performed whenever a household is expecting guests. The speaker has thus prepared their home for the coming of Someone. It is an arrival that cannot be stopped by force or the law. Someone is much too powerful, and their coming is inevitable. And yet, Someone, or at least their essence, appears to already be here. Someone has roots in Yahya's trees and has already appeared in the speaker's dreams. In another sense, Someone's full being has yet to arrive. When they do so, Someone will bring justice and equality throughout the land. Someone will break bread and make sure every mouth is fed, every person given a fair share. This final act can be interpreted as a critique of society, one where a small number of people hoard all the wealth and amenities.

One of the most pronounced formal features in this poem is repetition. Words, phrases, and ideas are constantly reiterated. The repetition unifies the long poem, and parallelism structures Farrokhzad's sentences and poetic verse. The most frequently used word is "و" ["va"] ("and"), a conjunction that appears forty times and quite

literally, on a syntactical level, connects the lines and ideas together. When phrases are repeated, they often appear in the very next line(s). For instance, the phrase "و می‌تواند" ["va meetavanad"] ("and who can") is repeated five times in a sequence of sentences in the second stanza. Similar parallelism occurs with "چقدر...خوبست" ["cheghadr...khoobast"] ("how fun/tasty/great is…") (ll. 47-51) and "و...قسمت می‌کند" [va...ghesmat meekonad] ("and will distribute/divide…") (ll. 85-94). Other times entire lines are repeated, as with "کسی می‌آید" ["kaasee meeyayad"] ("someone is coming") (ll. 9, 10, 73, 74), "چقدر روشنی خوبست" ["cheghadr roshanaie khobast"] ("how nice is brightness") (ll. 37, 38), and "من پله‌های پشت بام را جارو کرده ام / و شیشه‌های پنجره را هم شسته‌ام" ["man pelehhaye poshtebanra jaroo kardam / va sheeshehhaye panjereh ra ham shosteham"] ("I have swept the stairs leading to the rooftop / And have washed the window panes") (ll. 67-68, 71-72).

Key ideas and symbols, such as dreams, are repeated throughout the poem, and with each iteration they gain new meanings. Dreams create Someone in the same vein that they create this poem. In the first line the speaker declares they had a dream "someone" is coming and proceeds to describe this Someone for the next ninety-five lines. These descriptions merge the dream-world and real-world together, as Someone is continuously compared to people the speaker presumably knows despite having only appeared in the speaker's dreams. The abilities of this dream-Someone, and the actions they commit, are tethered to reality. When in the seventh stanza the speaker wonders, "Why does my father dream / Only when he's asleep?" dream comes to signify change, hope, and action. Our speaker's dream has manifested in Someone who will change the current state of life, a beacon of hope that will act and help others and promulgate

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equality. Similarly, the speaker wishes for the father to dream when he is awake, i.e. to dare to make a difference in the real-world as he presumably does in the dream-world. Again, there is a confluence of these two "worlds." As dreams began the poem, they end it as well. But the ellipses in the last line implies an unspoken repetition: although the poem has ended, the dream has not, and perhaps never will. The dream will continue so long as the speaker dreams of it.

Another reiterated symbol is trees. In the poem, trees appear in three distinct forms: the architect's trees (second stanza), Yahya's old trees (eighth stanza), and Saint Javad's daughter's trees (ninth stanza).  While the trees always belong to specific individuals, their significance is framed in relation to Someone. The architect's trees are used as a point of reference for the physical height of Someone, Yahya's old trees are the location where Someone bore a child, and Saint Javad's daughter's trees are one of the items which Someone will divide evenly among people. The relation of Someone to trees further solidifies – or should I "roots" – the person to the plane of existence, of reality. The symbol of the tree also functions to represent the deep-rootedness of Someone and their ubiquitous presence.

"کسی که مثل هیچکس نیست"["Kaasee keh mesle heechkaas neest"] presents not only a dream-world and a real-world, but also two additional worlds: that of the private and the public. The private or inner-world is largely that of the domestic sphere. This includes the rooms of the speaker's home (second stanza), the yard pond of the slaughterhouse townsfolk (fourth stanza), the window panes the speaker washes (sixth and seventh stanzas), the rooftop the speaker likes to sleep upon (third stanza), and the

stairs leading up to it which the speaker sweeps (sixth and seventh stanzas). The public or outer-world, on the other hand, is comprised of specific locations: Saint Javad's store (second stanza), Mohammadieh's Square (fourth stanza), Baghe Melli (fourth and ninth stanzas), and Fardin's Cinema (fourth and ninth stanzas). These places are all places in the speaker's neighborhood since they say how much they enjoy going to each of these places, or as in the case of Saint Javad's store, imagine Someone going. The inner and outer worlds are thus localized via the speaker. Rather than serving as oppositions, the private and public spheres merge while remaining distinct. The all-encompassing Someone and the speaker are situated in both worlds, and it is their very situatedness that marks the specificities and unity of the two zones.

Sholeh Wolpé translates this poem as "Someone Like No One." For the most part her target translation maintains the repetition and parallelism, central to the source text. However, even though her Someone is unnamed, Wolpé genders this person as a male. She employs the masculine pronouns he/his/him in lines 20, 22, 26, 30, 34, 36, and 89 (Farrokhzad, *Sin* 117 104-107). By making Someone a man, Wolpé follows the traditional trope of male heroes coming to the rescue in times of need. But there is no indication by the source text whether Someone is a man or a woman. Farrokhzad is quite intentional with this ambiguity. For example, in the second stanza Someone is contrasted with both men and women: father (a man), Ensi (a female Persian name), Yahya (a male Persian name), and mother (a woman). The descriptors of Someone and the actions Someone will perform can be applied just as well to a woman as to a man.

This ambiguity allows readers to make their own interpretation. Thus, it becomes clear that Wolpé interpreted Someone as a man. Her interpretation is

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completely valid because in patriarchal societies, men are often seen as the active

agents. Thus, a savior-like character would most often be thought of as a man.

However, a male Someone is only one possibility. In my translation approach, I try to

present all possibilities and allow readers to come to any conclusion of their own

choosing. I see this as a translator's ethical responsibility to not allow one's interpretive

bias to alter the target text. When bias does occur, it is again the responsibility of the

translator to notify readers of said bias and its effects on the target text, as well as

possible alternatives. For instance, had Wolpé included a second translation using

female pronouns, or at the very least included a brief translator's note detailing the

ambiguities of the source text, she could have maintained her interpretation without

taking agency away from her readers. But by not taking those initiatives and coding

Someone as a man, Wolpé removes any other possibility and limits her readers'

interpretations. She even adds a line in the second stanza, "not like any man," referring

to Someone, that does not exist in the source text but that unmistakably – and

unnecessarily – solidifies Someone as a male. Again, there is no indication in her

translation that signals to readers that this line comes from Wolpé, and not from

Farrokhzad. Since the target text is not included her book, readers have no way of

knowing this line is the translator's own addition unless they track down a separate

source text, as I did, and compare Farrokhzad's text to Wolpé's.

Yet tracking down the source text could lead to additional confusion, as there

are multiple reprintings of this one poem. Take, for instance, the difference between

"Saint Javad's daughter's trees" (my literal translation) and "Saint Javad's daughter's

clothes" (Wolpé's translation) (l. 98).  The source text that I am using states: " درخت‌های

"دختر سید جواد را قسمت می‌کند". The word in bold [derakht-ha] is the Farsi word for "trees." The word رختهای [rakht-ha] signifies "clothes." The only lexical difference between these two words is a single letter: د [de]. While "clothes" is very different from "trees" in English, this confusion is not all too curious when one considers the source language.

This confusion likely came about sometime between the poem's publication in a literary magazine (December 1966 issue of *Arash*) (Hillmann 65) and its inclusion in the posthumous collection, ایمان بیاوریم به آغاز فصل سرد [*Iman Beyavarem Beh Aghaze Fasle Sard*]. To supplement his analysis, Hillmann helpfully reprints the poem as it appeared in *Arash*, and the word رختهای , clothes, appears in the fourth-to-last line ["و رختهای دختر سید جواد را قسمت می‌کند"]. Presumably, Wolpé's source text is either the 1966 *Arash* issue, or a reprinting from that magazine. My source text, however, reprints the poems as how they appeared in Farrokhzad's collections. In this version of the poem, from the collection, the word درختهای , trees, appears. Several online versions of the poem, all of which draw from the book source, wrote "trees" as well. It is possible that since the book was published posthumously, the editors or publishers misread/miswrote the word by adding the letter د [de]. It is also possible that *Arash* mistakenly left out the د [de] and years later her book's publishers caught and fixed the error when referencing Farrokhzad's journals or the notes that she had left. Without consulting the author, there is no way to know which version was the author's true intent.

This issue between "درختهای" and "رختهای" exemplifies a larger issue in academic writing and literary translation: the problem of the "original." Throughout this thesis I have refrained from using the term "original" and have chosen instead to refer to the text from which the translation is derived as the "source text." As detailed in the

Introduction, this is because the term "original" carries with it an authority or authenticity that is merely a mirage. The term original assumes "a singular entity whose lexical content is stable or fixed" whereas in actuality the text passes through multiple hands, from the writer(s) to the editor(s) to the publisher(s). With each pass of the baton, the text is changed. Translation is another such change, this time from one language to another. As Karen Emmerich points out, "the entire translation is a text that didn't exist before: all the words are added; all the words are different…. [translation] puts forward an embodied interpretation of a literary work" (Emmerich 3, 196). My translation method is hyper-aware of differences among editions and specific versions of the source text I am using. Due to this awareness, I discovered this discrepancy among the different reiterations of this text. Since this discrepancy appears in the various texts in the source language, it becomes crucial for me as a translator to make my Anglophone readers aware of its existence and be clear about the source text I based my translation on.

I have decided to follow the words as they appear in my source text. As such, in my translation I have written "the trees of Saint Javad's daughter." I have also maintained the gendered ambiguity of Someone throughout the poem by employing the phrase "Someone who," rather than switching to gendered pronouns. Grammatically speaking, pronouns are used to prevent repetition. Yet in the case of this poem, the repetition enhances the reiterative feel of the source text. This decision keeps Someone ungendered and is closer to the sentence structure of the Farsi with "کسی که" [Kaasee keh].

In addition to my feminist praxis, I have made several translation decisions that are attuned to the specificity of Farrokhzad's words. For example, Wolpé translates خربزه ها [kharbozehha, plural] in the third stanza as "cantaloupes," whereas my translation understands this word as "honeydews." Both words signify a type of melon, but honeydew precisely means خربزه (singular), while cantaloupe is طالبی [taalebee]. This change is significant because honeydews and cantaloupes look and taste differently. They are different fruits despite belonging to the same category. This difference is analogous to tigers and cheetahs, both of which are felines yet are distinct animals.

I made a similar translation decision in the second stanza, regarding the mother's prayer: "یا حاجت الحاجات / یا قاضی القضات" [ya ghazial-ghozat / ya hajatol hajat]. These two lines are not Farsi, but rather Arabic. Interestingly, the word "یا" [ya] exists in both languages but carries alternative meanings. When used as "یا… یا" in Farsi, it can mean "either…or," and when it appears just once it is simply "or." Yet in Arabic it serves as the poetic apostrophe, "O." When used in prayer, یا signals an invocation. Wolpé translates these lines as "either *Judge of Judges* / or *Granter of Wishes*" (ll. 28-29) and uses italics to distinguish between source-Arabic and -Farsi. She thus takes the Farsi meaning of یا along with the Arabic names in the prayer. However, names in these types of invocations often do not appear alone. In other words, one says "O" before the name. The یا must therefore, in my interpretation, be that of the Arabic. As such, my translation renders these lines "*O Judge of Judges*, / *O Granter of Wishes*," and uses italics to indicate both that these lines are a religious invocation and that they come from a different source language. Significantly, my translation with the Arabic "O"

marks these invocations as invocations, whereas Wolpé's Farsi "either…or" turns the invocation into proper nouns stripped of their religious importance.

Along with being attuned to the source text, I was also alert to the linguistic and cultural context into which I was translating. This target context influenced several of my translation decisions, for what is said in one language is said in a different way in another language, yet both instances carry a similar meaning. This occurred in the poem most notably with phrasing, idioms, and imagery. For instance, the phrase, " و پلک چشمم هی می‌پرد" ["va pelke chashmam hey meparad"] in the third line literally means "and my eyelid kept jumping." Wolpé used this meaning. However, in Farsi, the verbs "to jump" and "to twitch" are expressed with a single word: "پریدن" ["pareedan"]. Since in English a distinction between "jump" and "twitch" is significant, my translation renders this phrase as "and my eyelid kept twitching" in order to more accurately arrive at the meaning behind the words.

Similarly, to present the meaning of "و نان را قسمت می‌کند" ["va nan ra ghesmat mekonad"] (literally: "and divides the bread") (l. 85) I used an English idiom rather than performing a close translation. While this phrase could be interpreted as Someone literally dividing bread, metaphorically it means Someone will divide up the food so that everyone has something to eat. In English, "dividing the bread" does not fully capture the symbolic function of bread in this case, or the metaphoric significance of the phrase. For my translation, I used the idiom "break bread," which means to share a meal. This idiom thus contains the literal and metaphoric meanings of the source phrase, and its added religious connotation even fits in with Someone's savior-like qualities.

One of the most challenging translation decisions, however, concerned the phrase "لامپ الله" ["laampe Allah"] (l.32) which literally, as in Wolpe's translation, is "Allah lamp." In English, this phrase does not make much sense. Is the lamp religiously significant? Does it say "Allah" on it or does it somehow spell out the word? Is it owned by Allah? All of which begs the ultimate question: what is an 'Allah lamp'? The problem is that although "لامپ" signifies "lamp," here it is not being used as lamp in the typical Anglophone sense. The poem says that this not-lamp lamp is above a mosque and that it used to shine green. In Iran, there are signs strung above mosques that use LED lights to spell out "Allah." These signs are turned on at night and illuminate the immediate area surrounding the mosque. "Allah lamp" is thus referring to these signs, since in Farsi that is what they are literally called. In order to transfer an accurate image of the referent of لامپ الله , I wrote "LED 'Allah' sign." Although the word LED is not in the source text, it was necessary for me to include it in my translation so as to distinguish this sign, one with lights, from other types of signs. As opposed to a literal translation, mine translates the meanings and images evoked by the source text given its context.

By detailing some of the key decision I made I hope to have demonstrated my feminist translational practice and engagement with ungendered translation choices. Overall my translation focuses on the nuances of words, the intended source meaning, and the target context for meaning making. My line and stanza breaks follow exactly that of Farrokhzad's from my source text; however, due to the quality of the two languages themselves, my English lines are often longer than Farrokhzad's Farsi. I have not added or removed any lines and any major changes have already been discussed.

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For reference and additional clarity, below I have included side-by-side versions of

Farrokhzad's, Wolpé's, and my own texts.

| Source by Forugh Farrokhzad: "کسی که مثل هیچکس نیست" (1974 posthumous publication) | Translation by Sholeh Wolpé: "Someone Like No One" (2007) | Feminist Translation by Elmira Louie: "Someone Unlike Anyone Else" (2018) |
|---|---|---|
| من خواب دیدهام که کسی میآید<br>من خواب یک ستارهٔ قرمز دیدهام<br>و پلک چشمم هی میپرد<br>و کفشهایم هی جفت میشوند<br>و کور شوم<br>اگر دروغ بگویم<br><br><br>من خواب آن ستارهٔ قرمز را<br>وقتی که خواب نبودم دیده ام<br>کسی میآید<br>کسی میآید<br>کسی دیگر<br>کسی بهتر<br>کسی که مثل هیچکس نیست، مثل<br>پدر نیست، مثل انسی نیست، مثل<br>یحیی نیست، مثل مادر نیست<br>و مثل آن کسی است که باید باشد<br>و قدش از درختهای خانهٔ معمار<br>هم بلندتر است<br>و صورتش<br>از صورت امام زمان هم روشنتر<br>و از برادر سیدجواد هم<br>که رفته است<br>و رخت پاسبانی پوشیدهاست<br>نمیترسد<br>و از خود خود سیدجواد هم که<br>تمام اتاقهای منزل ما مال اوست<br>نمیترسد<br>و اسمش آنچنانکه مادر<br>در اول نماز و در آخر<br>نمازصدایش میکند | I dreamed someone's coming.<br>I dreamed of a red star.<br>My eyelids keep jumping and my shoes keep paring.<br>Blind me if I lie.<br><br>I dreamed of that red star when I was awake. I saw someone's coming.<br>Someone's coming.<br>Someone different.<br>Someone better.<br>Someone like no one.<br>Not like father,<br>not like Ensi,<br>not like any man,<br>not like Yahya,<br>not like mother.<br>Someone like one should be,<br>taller than the trees by the architect's home,<br>and his face<br>even brighter than Imam Mehdi's.<br>He's not afraid of Siyyid Javad's brother<br> – who's gone and put on a police uniform –<br>not even afraid of Siyyid Javad himself | I dreamt that someone is coming<br>I dreamt of a red star<br>And my eyelid kept twitching<br>And my shoes kept pairing<br>And may I go blind<br>If I lie<br><br>Even while awake<br>I dreamt of that red star<br>Someone is coming<br>Someone is coming<br>Someone else<br>Someone better<br>Someone unlike anyone else, not like father, not like Ensi, not like Yahya, not like mother<br>Someone like one should be<br>Someone who's taller than the architect's trees<br>And who's face<br>Is brighter than Imam Mehdi's face<br>And who's not afraid of Saint[6] Javad's brother,<br>The one wearing a police uniform,<br>And who's not afraid of Saint Javad himself, to |

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[6] The source text states "سیدجواد" [Siyyid Javad] where Javad is a male name and Siyyid is a title given to descendants of the Prophet Mohammad. I have thus decided to translate "Siyyid" as "Saint," which has a similar religious meaning that a Western, Anglophone reader would recognize, whereas "Siyyid" might not culturally be known as a title and may be misinterpreted as a regular name.

<table>
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<td>

یا قاضی القضات است
یا حاجت الحاجات است
و می‌تواند
تمام حرفهای سخت کتاب کلاس
سوم را
با چشمهای بسته بخواند
و می‌تواند حتی هزار را
بی آنکه کم بیاورد از روی بیست
میلیون بردارد
و می‌تواند از مغازهٔ سیدجواد، هر
چقدر که لازم دارد، جنس نسیه
بگیرد
و می‌تواند کاری کند که لامپ الله
که سبز بود: مثل صبح سحر سبز
بود
دوباره روی آسمان مسجد
مفتاحیان
روشن شود

آخ...
چقدر روشنی خوبست
چقدر روشنی خوبست
و من چقدر دلم می‌خواهد
که یحیی
یک چارچرخه داشته باشد
و یک چراغ زنبوری
و من چقدر دلم می‌خواهد
که روی چارچرخهٔ یحیی میان
هندوانه‌ها و خربزه ها بنشینم
و دور میدان محمدیه بچرخم
آخ...
چقدر دور میدان چرخیدن خوبست
چقدر روی پشت بام خوابیدن
خوبست
چقدر باغ ملی رفتن خوبست
چقدر مزه ی پپسی خوبست
چقدر سینمای فردین خوبست
و من چقدر از همهٔ چیزهای خوب
خوشم می‌آید
و من چقدر دلم می‌خواهد
که گیس دختر سید جواد را بکشم

چرا من اینهمه کوچک هستم

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who owns every room of our house.
And his name, as mother says
in the beginning and the end of her prayers,
is either *Judge of Judges* or *Granter of Wishes*.

And he can recite,
with eyes closed,
all the hard words
in the third-grade books;
he can even subtract a thousand from twenty million
and not come up short.
He can buy everything he needs
from Siyyid Javad's shop on credit
and can make the Allah lamp
that used to shine green like dawn
light up again in Moftahian mosque's sky.

Oooh…
How nice light is.
How nice light is.
And how I wish Yahya had a cart
and a kerosene lamp
so I could sit on his cart among the watermelons and cantaloupes
and ride around the Mohmadieh square.

Oooh…
What fun riding around the square.
What fun sleeping on the roof.

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whom each of the rooms in our house belongs
And who's name, such that mother calls out
At the start and at the end of her prayers:
*O Judge of Judges*,
*O Granter of Wishes*,
And who can recite, with eyes closed,
All the hard words from third-grade textbooks
And who can even subtract a thousand from twenty million
Without coming up short
Who can buy all the necessities from Saint Javad's store on credit
And who can make the green LED "Allah" sign
Shine as recurrent as the dawn,
Lighting up Moftahian mosque's sky once more

Ohhh…
How nice is brightness
How nice is brightness
And how I wish
That Yahya
Could have a cart
With a kerosene lamp
And how I wish
I could sit in Yahya's cart, amongst the watermelons and honeydews,
And ride around Mohammadieh Square
Ohhh…
How fun it is to ride around the square
How fun it is to sleep on rooftops

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| Persian | Translation 1 | Translation 2 |
|---|---|---|
| که در خیابان‌ها گم می‌شوم<br>چرا پدر که اینهمه کوچک نیست<br>و در خیابان‌ها هم گم نمی‌شود<br>کاری نمی‌کند که آنکسی که<br>بخواب من آمده‌است، روز آمدنش<br>را جلو بیندازد<br>و مردم محله کشتارگاه<br>که خاک باغچه‌هاشان هم خونیست<br>و آب حوضشان هم خونیست<br>و تخت کفشهاشان هم خونیست<br>چرا کاری نمی‌کنند<br>چرا کاری نمی‌کنند<br><br>چقدر آفتاب زمستان تنبل است<br><br>من پله‌های پشت بام را جارو کرده<br>ام<br>و شیشه‌های پنجره را هم شسته‌ام.<br>چرا پدر فقط باید<br>در خواب، خواب ببیند<br><br>من پله‌های پشت بام را جارو کرده<br>ام<br>و شیشه‌های پنجره را هم شسته‌ام<br><br>کسی می‌آید<br>کسی می‌آید<br>کسی که در دلش با ماست، در نفسش با ماست، در صدایش با ماست<br><br>کسی که آمدنش را<br>نمی‌شود گرفت<br>و دستبند زد و به زندان انداخت<br>کسی که زیر درخت‌های کهنهٔ<br>یحیی بچه کرده است<br>و روز به روز<br>بزرگ می‌شود، بزرگتر می‌شود | What fun going to the City Park.<br>How great the taste of Pepsi.<br>How nice is Fardin Cinema.<br>How I love all good things,<br>and how I'm dying to yank Siyyid Javad's daughter's braids.<br><br>Why am I so small<br>that I get lost in the streets?<br>Why doesn't father – who isn't small and doesn't get lost in the streets –<br>do something to hurry the arrival<br>of the one I've dreamed of?<br>Or the folks who live in the slaughterhouse district,<br>whose garden soil is blood-soaked,<br>whose pond water is blood-streaked,<br>and whose shoes trace blood…<br>Why don't they do something?<br>Why don't they do something?<br><br>How lazy is the winter sun.<br><br>I swept the stairs to the roof,<br>washed the window panes too.<br>Why does father dream only when he sleeps? | How fun is it to go to Baghe Melli<br>How tasty is Pepsi<br>How great is Fardin's Cinema<br>And how I enjoy all good things<br>And how I would relish yanking on<br>The tresses of Saint Javad's daughter<br><br>Why am I so small<br>That I get lost in the streets?<br>Why doesn't father, who isn't small<br>And doesn't get lost in the streets,<br>Do anything to speed up the arrival<br>Of the one who visited my dreams?<br>And the slaughterhouse townsfolk,<br>With their blood-soaked garden soil<br>And their blood-streaked pond<br>And their blood-stained soles,<br>Why don't they do something?<br>Why don't they do something?<br><br>How feeble is the winter sun<br><br>I have swept the stairs leading to the rooftop<br>And have washed the window panes<br>Why does my father dream Only when he's asleep? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| کسی که از باران، از صدای شرشر باران، از میان پچ و پچ گلهای اطلسی<br><br><br>کسی که از آسمان توپخانه در شب آتش بازی می‌آید<br>و سفره را میندازد<br>و نان را قسمت می‌کند<br>و پپسی را قسمت می‌کند<br>و باغ ملی را قسمت می‌کند<br>و شربت سیاه سرفه را قسمت می‌کند<br>و روز اسم نویسی را قسمت می‌کند<br>و نمرۀ مریضخانه را قسمت می‌کند<br>و چکمه‌های لاستیکی را قسمت می‌کند<br>و سینمای فردین را قسمت می‌کند<br>درخت‌های دختر سید جواد را قسمت می‌کند<br>و هرچه را که باد کرده باشد قسمت می‌کند<br>و سهم ما را می‌دهد<br>من خواب دیده‌ام... | I swept the stairs to the roof,<br>washed the window panes too.<br><br>Someone's coming.<br>Someone's coming.<br>Someone whose heart is with us,<br>whose breath is with us,<br>whose voice is with us.<br>Someone whose coming can't be stopped,<br>handcuffed, and thrown in jail.<br>Someone who's had babies under Yahya's old trees<br>and is getting bigger and bigger<br>day by day.<br>Someone's coming from the rain, from the sound of pouring rain, from among the whispering petunias.<br><br>Someone's coming from the sky over the artillery field, on fireworks' night.<br>And he'll spread the tablecloth,<br>and divide the bread,<br>and divide the Pepsi,<br>and divide the City Park,<br>and divide the whooping-cough syrup,<br>and divide the school registration day,<br>and divide the hospital numbers,<br>and divide the rubber boots,<br>and divide Fardin Cinema,<br>and divide Siyyid Javad's daughter's clothes, | I have swept the stairs leading to the rooftop<br>And have washed the window panes<br><br>Someone is coming<br>Someone is coming<br>Someone whose heart is with us, whose breath is with us, whose voice is with us.<br>Someone whose coming Can't be detained,<br>Handcuffed, and thrown in jail.<br>Someone who's had a baby under Yahya's old trees<br>That day by day<br>Grows bigger and bigger.<br>Someone is coming from the rain, from the sound of the pouring rain, from among the whispering petunias.<br><br>Someone is coming from the firework-laden sky of the artillery field.<br>Someone who will spread the tablecloth<br>And break bread<br>And distribute the Pepsi<br>And evenly divide Baghe Melli<br>And distribute the whooping-cough syrup<br>And evenly divide the registration day<br>And evenly divide the hospital waiting numbers<br>And distribute the rainboots |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | and everything else that's left,<br>and give us our share too.<br>I dreamed… | And evenly divide Fardin's Cinema<br>And evenly divide the trees of Saint Javad's daughter<br>And divide everything else that's left<br>And give us our share too<br>I dreamt… |

## Chapter 2: Rosalía de Castro's Ambiguous Spanish Subjects

On February 24, 1837, in the autonomous region of Galicia in northwestern Spain, rang the cries of a newborn who would come to be known as "Rosalía, voz del pueblo, encarnación del alma galaica" ["Rosalía, voice of the people, embodiment of the Galician soul"] (Mayoral 16). As the child of a priest and a mother from the old Galician nobility, Rosalía de Castro spent her infancy in the Galician countryside towns of Ortoño and Padrón. In these formative years, she cultivated a love for nature and the rural Galician landscape (Mayoral 573). While her father, José Martínez Viojo, was absent in her life, Castro became quite close with her mother. Doña María Teresa de la Cruz de Castro y Abadía eventually chose to raise her daughter as a single mother and served as the female exemplar and maternal role model for much of her daughter's poetry to come (Geoffrion-Vinci 27).

Castro was aware of her "otherness" and used it to create literature that was socially, politically, and culturally aware. For instance, her feminist sympathies can be viewed in her first prose piece, *La hija del mar* (1859), which "evinces the young poet's growing social conscience and her decided interest in the promotion of women's rights" (Geoffrion-Vinci 25). Her progressive Galician regionalist identity speaks through *Cantares gallegos* (1863), a work that is considered "el punto de partida del Renacimiento de la Literatura Gallega" ["the starting point of the Renaissance of Galician Literature"] (Mayoral 581). This piece is the first of two works Castro wrote in her native gallego [Galician]. Gallego is the regional language of Galicia and is morphologically and syntactically influenced by Portuguese and (Castilian) Spanish.

Castro's very first piece, *La flor* (1857), received a review in Madrid's progressive journal *La Iberia*. The reviewer, Manuel Murguía, was a Galician historian, liberal political activist and, like Castro, an intellectual. Murguía praised Castro in this article, for in her work he saw the burgeoning poet's talents, and urged her to continue writing (Geoffrion-Vinci 27). One year after the publication of the article review, Castro and Murguía got married. Castro's intellectual endeavors continued to grow throughout her life, both pre- and post-marriage. She flourished in the Galician and Spanish literary scenes as she developed a distinct, growing social conscience reflected in her works.

Castro and Murguía had seven children, from eldest to youngest: Alejandra, Aura, twins Gala and Ovidio, Amara, Adriano Honorato Alejandro, and Valentina (Mayoral 580). Adriano died after a year and a half while Valentina was stillborn. The loss of her children was amplified by the loss of her mother, which prompted Castro to write *A mi madre* (1863). Castro's life seemed plagued by one tragedy after another. The emotional and psychological toll these events had on Castro can be seen in a theme that appears frequently in her work: life is suffering, death is a relief. Her youngest children and mother passed away while Castro remained, and her poems paint a portrait of a woman who feels the pain of their departure every day.

The loss of loved ones was only one aspect of Castro's difficult life. She was also afflicted with economic hardships and chronic health issues (Mayoral 577). As her health declined, she settled down with her family in a house in the small town of Padrón for the last decade of her life. This home is preserved to this day, thanks to the Rosalía de Castro Foundation.

Figure 2: Rosalía de Castro's home in Padrón, Galicia, Spain.

21 July 2018.

The house is a few minutes' walk away from the river Sar, a gentle river that runs all

throughout Galicia. Given her love of the lush Galician landscape and her home's close

proximity to this iconic river, it is no coincidence that the book Castro wrote during this

period of her life, the last she would ever write, was titled *En las orillas del Sar* [*On the

Edge of the River Sar*] (1884). This collection in particular will be the focus for this

chapter.

Figure 3: Senda del río Sar [Trail of the river Sar], Parque Paxonal.

Galicia, Spain. 21 July 2018.

Many of the poems in this collection, like the one below, depict the river itself.
These poems breathe the river to life on these pages and transport readers to the green,
mossy foliage through which the river sprouts. For example, in the poem below the
opening lines behave much like the river and pull the reader along past a pine grove,
past a spring, and then over a waterfall. The clear water of the Sar reflects the sky above

as though it were a mirror. Only the slight gurgling sound and the gentle waves

convince one otherwise.

| Untitled source text by Rosalía de Castro (1884) | My Translation (2019) |
| --- | --- |
| Del antiguo camino á lo largo,<br>Ya un pinar, ya una fuente aparece,<br>Que brotando en la peña musgosa<br>Con estrépito al valle desciende.<br>Y brillando del sol á los rayos<br>Entre un mar de verdura se pierden,<br>Dividiéndose en limpios arroyos<br>Que dan vida á las flores silvestres<br>Y en el Sar se confunden, el río<br>Que cual niño que plácido duerme,<br>Reflejando el azul de los cielos,<br>Lento corre en la fronda á esconderse.<br><br>No lejos, en soto profundo de robles<br>En donde el silencio sus alas extiende,<br>Y da abrigo á los genios propicios,<br>Á nuestras viviendas y asilos campestres,<br>Siempre allí, cuando evoco mis sombras,<br>Ó las llamo, respóndenme y vienen. | All along the ancient path,<br>Here a pine grove, here a spring,<br>Sprouting on the mossy cliff,<br>Drops to the valley in a tumult.<br>And the rays of the shining sun lose themselves<br>Amidst the green sea,<br>Splitting into crystal clear streams<br>That give life to the wild flowers<br>And they join with the Sar, the river<br>That like a child lulled asleep,<br>Reflecting the sky-blue of the heavens<br>Slowly runs, hiding in the foliage.<br><br>Not far off, in the deep oak grove<br>Where silence extends his wings,<br>And gives shelter to the fortuitous spirits<br>To our home and rural refuge,<br>Always there, when I evoke my shadows,<br>Or call to them, they respond and come to me. |

As the poem progresses, the Sar is compared to a sleeping child and presented as a

place of refuge, solitary contemplation, and the natural conflux between the earth and

the sky. Yet even in this tranquil poem there are echoes of the other themes in this

collection, such as silence and shadows. Overall, *En las orillas del Sar* "attempts to

come to terms with her life, her beliefs – both political and spiritual – and her

approaching death" (Geoffrion-Vinci 31).

On July 15, 1885, Castro lost her battle with uterine cancer. As she lay in bed, her last words are alleged to have been: "Open that window, I want to see the ocean" (Mayoral 585).



Figure 4: Rosalía de Castro's final home.

Casa Museo de Rosalía de Castro, Padrón, Galicia, Spain. 21 July 2018.

Just one year earlier she had published *En las orillas del Sar*. Perhaps the body of water on her mind was not the ocean, since Padrón is about forty kilometers (roughly 25 miles) away from the Atlantic, but rather the Sar: the river that inspired her final poetic words. Castro was forty-eight years of age when she passed. She is currently buried in her birth city of Santiago de Compostela in the monastery of Santo Domingo de Bonaval.

Figure 5: Tomb of Rosalía de Castro.

Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, Spain. 21 July 2018.

Notably, her tomb is located in the Pantheon of Illustrious Galicians. Castro is the only

woman included in the Pantheon.

Figure 6: Convento de Santo Domingo de Bonaval.

21 July 2018.

As referenced in the introduction, Michelle Geoffrion-Vinci performed the first

ever feminist translation of Rosalía de Castro's work. Geoffrion-Vinci's translations in

*On the Edge of the River Sar* (2014) approximate "the length and rhythmic flow of her

verses while providing the richest possible lexical parallels in English" rather than

replicating Castro's meter (Castro 10). Geoffrion-Vinci provides extensive endnotes

where she often details pertinent cultural contexts or elaborates on her specific

translational decisions. Geoffrion-Vinci foregrounds "the identity and agency of the

woman/women" by opting for the feminine in translation whenever possible. For

instance, she translates the gender-indeterminate subject of the poem "Siente unas

lástimas" in the feminine: "She feels pity" (Castro 105). Her decisions bring the

feminine in view, both linguistically and literally on the page with the pronoun "she."

The use of this female gendered pronoun also has the effect of replacing the pseudo-

generic masculine with the universal feminine, as Geoffrion-Vinci replaces all instances

of "el que…" ("the one who…" literally: he who…") with "she who." This solution is still problematic, as "universal feminine" historically tends to include only cis, straight, "Western" women.

My analysis and subsequent feminist translations will be in dialogue with Geoffrion-Vinci's work in order to continue the conversation surrounding the importance of feminist translation, content, and context when it comes to Castro's writing. Unlike Geoffrion-Vinci, I will not impose the feminine as the only choice in gender-indeterminate instances. Instead, I strive to preserve the ambiguity and all the subsequent possibilities it offers. In doing so, I give more agency to readers' interpretations and formulate a more inclusive approach to feminist translation that goes beyond the gender binary. I offer a critical lens regarding Castro's frequent use of the ambiguous subject and the implications for a translation that maintains this ambiguity or replaces it with the feminine. I also emphasize the Galician identity by evoking Galicia's geography, history, and folklore wherever pertinent in my translations.

One of the key points in my transnational feminist translation approach is situatedness and specificity. That is, situating the text within its context of creation and highlighting the specificity of the work, including location, language, initial layout and mode of production, among other important features. Since much of Castro's poetry is tied to her Galician roots, it became vital for me while working on this project to visit Galicia. On this research trip, I saw the Galician landscape she wrote about first-hand, walked along the Sar, heard gallego on the streets, visited her home and tomb. It was there, in Santiago de Compostela, that I discovered a facsimile of *En las orillas del Sar*

as it was printed in the very first edition in 1884.[7] This book reprints the same font, spacing, decorative elements, and arrangement as in the "original" first edition.
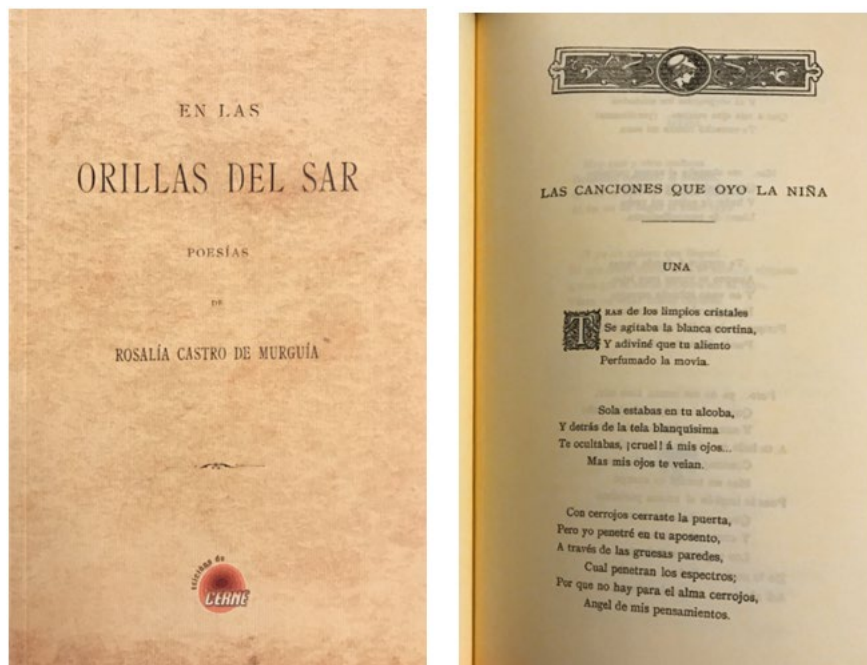


Figure 7: Facsimile of *En las orillas del Sar.*

Even though Geoffrion-Vinci's *On the Edge of the River Sar* is a bilingual edition, she changed the order of where the poems appear. She rearranges the poems in *En las orillas del Sar* and divides them into various categories based on certain common themes among groups of poems. These then make up Geoffrion-Vinci's "chapters," which include, but are not limited to, "passion," "motherhood," "agency," and "resistance." This grouping unavoidably changes how the poems are read and interpreted, both individually and on the whole. The chapters frame the poems and, while helpful at times, they give the poems an interpretive tint before the audience even

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[7] "Nota do Editor: Este libro que ten nas mans é unha reproducción facsimilar da 1ª edición da obra *En las orillas del Sar* por Rosalía de Castro de Murguía. Agradecemos á Biblioteca de Galicia que nos facilitara o orixinal." ["Editor's Note: This book that you have in your hands is a facsimile reproduction of the 1st edition of the work *En las orillas del Sar* by Rosalía de Castro de Murguía. We thank the Library of Galicia for giving us the original."]

reads the poem. This potentially inflects readers' interpretations and molds them in approaching, reading, and understanding in a certain way as dictated by the chapter.

In order to perform my own interpretations of the source poems and craft a transnational feminist translation, it was necessary for me to read the poems as they were arranged by Castro. The first edition was the only one in which Castro had any editorial say. All the other editions were published after her death and often times include poems that were not in the first edition. Moreover, the editions have been arranged as editors have seen fit (Mayoral 36). As I have mentioned before, my own objective is to restore agency to the reader, and to the translator, and to the woman writer. Therefore, I will use the facsimile of the first edition in order to respect Castro's own decision in the content and arrangement of her poems.

Any reference to "source text" will be drawn from this facsimile. The facsimile also reproduced the Spanish spelling and grammar rules of the 1800s. To a modern Spanish reader, this spelling might seem strange or outdated. For example, in some cases words like "ó" or "á" or "fué" carry an accent, whereas nowadays this accent is dropped. Readers should note that when such instances appear in the poems of this chapter, they are not errors, but rather reflective of Castro's specific Spanish. They are another tool that highlights the specificity of the source text, language, and context.

An additional complicating issue for scholars and translators who work with Castro's poetry is the fact that her poems are rarely titled. I follow the convention of referring to the first line of the poem in cases wehre the poem is not formally titled. Rosalía de Castro is an exemplary poet whose keen political, social, and cultural awareness blended into a unique female voice that resonates with readers to this day.

Her masterful diction, imagery, and style have led her to be read and re-read, translated and re-translated, from person to person and generation to generation.

**Brillaban en la altura cual moribundas chispas**

To begin, let us turn to an untitled poem, "Brillaban en la altura cual moribunds chispas" [from here on referred to as only "Brillaban en la altura"]. This poem, composed in free verse (verso libre), consists of three stanzas, each of which contains a descending number of lines: 8-7-5. This descent in the form mirrors the descent of the subject into their delusions and, ultimately, death. Most of the poems in *En las orillas del Sar* do not have a regular rhyme scheme, and "Brillaban en la altura" is no exception. They do, however, frequently employ hyperbaton (hipérbaton) and parallelism (paralelismo). For instance, one of the hyperbatons in this poem occurs in line seventeen: "y en él queriendo hundirse" (literally: and in it wanting to drown [her][him]self). In standard Spanish syntax, this line would be "y queriendo hundirse en él" (and wanting to drown [her][him]self in it). The hyperbaton places emphasis on "hundirse" (to drown) rather than on "en él" (in it). This emphasis highlights the *action* rather than the *place*, which is the antecedent of "él" (it) from the previous line, "el vacío" (emptiness): "En su ilusión, creyóse por el vacío envuelto, / Y en él queriendo hundirse," (ll. 16-17). In drawing attention to "hundirse," Castro may also be foreshadowing the subject's suicide later on in the poem.

"Brillaban en la altura" is voiced by an unidentified poetic speaker who recounts the delusions of a subject in the first two stanzas. Each stanza is a set of delusions and the last line is the poetic speaker's interjection or mediation on these visions. This interjection forms the parallelism of the poem since the phrase "¡Qué cosas tan

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extrañas…!" is repeated at the end of both stanzas. At this point, the speaker justifies the sensations that the protagonist feels in repeating the phrase (Mayoral 386). The parallelism thus relieves some responsibility on behalf of the subject; they cannot be blamed for these delusions because they are sick. External blame (i.e. the blame that others place on the person) is effectively transferred from the person to the illness.

Yet these delusions may not be delusions at all. Perhaps it is when the subject is ill that they are able to see things that would normally "ciega la pupila" ("blind the pupil" l. 11). It is this sick mind ("mente enferma" l.8) that allows them to make connections between the dying embers ("moribundas chispas" l. 1), the drying leaves ("las hojas proximas a secarse" l. 4) and the torn arteries ("arterias que se rompen" l. 6). The implication is that the poetic speaker (or the subject, depending on one's interpretation) would not have otherwise made these connections. Notably, in a letter to her husband, Castro admits that when she is sick, she "feels more," and her personality darkens: "sin embargo, estos días en que me encuentro enferma, como estoy más susceptible, lo siento más…cuando estoy enferma me pongo de un humor del diablo, todo lo veo negro" ["Nevertheless, these days when I find myself ill, as I am more susceptible, I feel it more… when I am sick I get in a devilish mood, everything I see is black"] (Mayoral 193). This confession aligns with the dark imagery of the poem ("noche" [night] l. 9, "oscuridad" [darkness] l. 10, "ciega" [blinds] l. 11, "sombra" [shadow] l. 13, "tinieblas" [dark] l. 15) and offers one reason behind these so-called delusions. The state of being sick unlocks an internal ability. It causes the person to see more without sight and feel beyond reason. It makes the intangible stars a feasible aspiration and death an embraced release.

The gender of the subject in the poem is ambiguous until the third stanza where the masculine ending of the word "envuelto" (as opposed to the feminine "envuelta") signals the subject is a man. This final stanza also serves as the "resolution" of the poem, where the consequence of these delusions is death. As the person was thinking about swirling with the stars, being immersed in emptiness and wanting to drown in it, he throws himself on the rocks:

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| En su ilusión, creyóse por el vacío envuelto, / Y en él queriendo hundirse, / Y girar con los astros por el celeste piélago, / Fué á estrellarse en las rocas, que la noche ocultaba, / Bajo su manto espeso | In his delusion, he felt shrouded in the emptiness / And in that depth he wanted to drown himself, / And twirl with the heavenly stars in the celestial ocean, / Like a falling star he crashed onto the rocks that the night concealed / Under her thick cloak (translation mine). |

His death can be interpreted as being a suicide since the subject chose to crash onto the rocks, presumably off a cliff ("fue a estrellarse en las rocas" l. 19), and had suicidal thoughts prior to his death ("queriendo hundirse" l. 17).

Yet "death" here, and in many of Castro's poems, does not carry with it a negative connotation. Mayoral has suggested that Castro "ve en la muerte, sobre todo, el momento de descansar, de acabar un sufrimiento continuado y sin sentido… El morir es un final, un término anhelado porque supondrá el descanso" ["sees in death, above all, the moment of rest, to end a continued and meaningless suffering… Death is an end, a yearned for period because it will mean rest"] (Mayoral 312-313). I would argue that death is embraced in "Brillaban en la altura," for it is chosen. Death presumably will lead the subject to his desire of being engulfed in emptiness and of twirling with the stars in the darkness.

Michelle Geoffrion-Vinci translates this poem as "They shined in the heavens…" and groups it in the "Subjectivity" chapter. She states that "the poems in this chapter are a representative sampling of the numerous ways Castro experiments with gender in both the speaking and nonspeaking subjects in this volume" (Castro 165). The chapter is further divided into six gender-specific sub-headings. Geoffrion-Vinci categorizes "They shined in the heavens…" under "linguistically designated male subjects" (Castro 180). This distinction is due to the masculine ending of the term "envuelto" (l. 16) within the source text. Geoffrion-Vinci's translation presents Castro's rich imagery in the target language with phrases like "dying embers" (l. 1) and the stars in the "heavenly seas" (l. 18). She also includes an analogous parallelism with the phrase "What strange things…!" in lines eight and fifteen.

Yet similar to Sholeh Wolpé's decision in "Forgive Her," Geoffrion-Vinci reveals the gender of the subject much earlier on in the poem than Castro does in her version. This intervention removes the initial gender ambiguity in the English translation. Geoffrion-Vinci uses the masculine pronoun "he" in the second stanza ("he thought he saw a shining in the thick shadow") even though the gender of the subject is not disclosed in the Spanish until the third and final stanza. This erases the possibility of any interpretation the ambiguity allows. In order to maintain the ambiguity of the Spanish, I employ the generic "you" for the first stance of the third-person gender indeterminate. The phrase "you would think you saw…" (l. 14) exists in English, and it makes the line flow more smoothly. The "you" here is used in the more colloquial, general sense rather than the specific second-person. For the next gender-indetirminante phrase, "¡Qué cosas tan extrañas se ven en las tinieblas!" it did not make sense to use

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the generic "you" again, nor would it have been grammatically feasible to use "the one" after having established the generic "you;" moreover, it would have been worse yet to assign a gender, given my feminist praxis. I thereby employ the passive voice which resolves the need for a gendered pronoun in English, keeps the ambiguity, and maintains the poem's overall flow: "What strange things are seen in the dark!" (l. 17). Finally, in the final stanza, I reveal the gender by employing the masculine pronoun in the same line that "envuelto" appears in the source text.

I would like to draw attention to the use of "sombra" (literally: "shadow") in the second stanza:

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| Tan honda era la noche, / La oscuridad tan densa, / Que ciega la pupila / Si se fijaba en ella / Creía ver brillando entre la espesa **sombra** / Como en la inmensa altura las pálidas estrellas, / ¡Qué cosas tan extrañas se ven en las tinieblas! | So deep was the night, / So dense the darkness, / That it would blind even the eye's pupil / If it stared into it / You would think you saw a glimmer in the thick **shade** / Like the pale stars in the vastness above, / What strange things are seen in the dark! (emphasis and translation mine) |

The word "sombra" is not just "shadow" but means "shade" more widely. "Sombra" takes additional significance when we situate the word in Galician culture. Galicia is a region that has, as its folklore reveals, a strong preoccupation with the afterlife, or in Gallego/Galician, "o máis aló" [castellano/Spanish: "el más allá"]. For Castro, this afterlife meant

más allá del mundo de los vivos, pero más acá, o, si se quiere, al margen de un Cielo o un Infierno cristianos, se mueven multitud de seres con los que es posible establecer comunicación y que, de un modo u otro, siguen interviniendo o participando de la existencia terrenal: esos seres son designados frecuentemente por Rosalía con el apelativo de <<sombras>> ["beyond the world of the living, but also here, or if you like, outside a

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Christian heaven and hell, where a multitude of beings move and with whom it is possible to establish communication and who, in one way or another, continue to intervene or participate in earthly existence: these beings are frequently given the nickname of 'shadows' by Rosalía"] (Mayoral 23).

These "sombras" are thus human beings who have recently died but have not passed over into heaven or hell. They exist in a marginal, liminal space, but can also come to Earth and interact with the living. The myth of sombras is similar to that of another rural, northwest Iberian belief: the apparition of la Santa Compaña. The main difference is that la Santa Compaña is led in a procession of the dead and only visits those who are about to die. It thus serves as both a warning and a curse. Sombras, on the other hand, are free to go wherever they please, are not necessarily harbingers of death, and can be summoned in quiet and isolated places (Mayoral 29).

When Castro uses the word "sombra" in her poetry, she is often alluding to both the literal and mythic definitions of the word. Such is the case in "Brillaban en la altura," for the sombra is even compared to pale stars ("Creía ver brillando entre la espesa sombra / Como en la inmensa altura las pálidas estrellas" 11.13-14). The adjective "pálidas" in Spanish is used to describe "fantasmas" ["ghosts"] and is associated with the color (or lack thereof) of death or a dying person. In these lines, the subject could be seeing a glimmer in the shadow, or the glow of a sombra. Furthermore, the "vacío" ["emptiness"] (l. 16) in the next stanza could be alluding to the limbo area the sombras inhabit. Since the speaker wants to be "wrapped in this emptiness" (l. 16), or, in other words, join the marginal field of sombras, he could have killed himself in order to become a sombra.

In the Anglophone tradition, the literary usage of the word "shade" is analogous to the mythic use of "sombra." As per the Oxford English Dictionary, shade's figurative and rhetorical usage includes "the visible but impalpable form of a dead person, a ghost…chiefly with allusion to pagan mythology" ("Shade," n.II). In case my readers would not be familiar with this specific usage of "shade," I also provided a footnote detailing briefly the Galician belief surrounding the sombra. This note also contextualizes the myth, thus even readers who know the history behind "shade" will recognize the poem situates the story specifically in Galician folklore.

I have taken poetic license to add the simile "like a falling star" (l. 19) in my translation. The source text reads "Fué á estrellarse en las rocas, que la noche ocultaba," which I have rendered as "Like a falling star he crashed onto the rocks that the night concealed." The pronominal verb "estrellarse" has multiple meanings in English: to crash, to smash, to collide, to fail, and to come up against, among others. Geoffrion-Vinci translates it as "to throw." Yet "estrellarse" looks awfully like the word "estrellas" ["stars"]. "Estrellas" is repeated in the first and second stanzas but is missing in the third. Present in the third stanza, however, is "estrellarse." It is hard to imagine the orthographic similarities between the two words and convenient break in the repetition of "estrellas" happened by mere coincidence. Afterall, there are plenty of other words Castro could have used that would have had a similar meaning to "estrellarse," such as "chocar." Since the English language does not have a verb that denotes to crash, etc., and looks orthographically like "stars," I have opted for the phrase "like a falling star he crashed." This simile refers directly to the stars from the previous stanza, is visually evocative, and compares the falling of the person to that of a

star. In this comparison, the person gets his wish: he becomes one with the stars. The stars, however, fall in the "celestial ocean" whereas he falls in the literal, terrestrial ocean.

My translation diverges from Geoffrion-Vinci's in various places. For instance, I have understood the plural third-person "Sentíanse" (l. 4) to refer to an unnamed "they," whereas Geoffrion-Vinci interpreted the word as referring to the "withered leaves" and "dying grass" (her translation). The purposefully unidentified "they" allows readers to draw their own inferences. I have also opted for slightly more visceral diction (my "the bursting of torn arteries, / And the shattering of broken bones" versus Geoffrion-Vinci's "the shattering of arteries / and the breaking of bones"). My image-provoking diction heightens and intensifies Castro's powerful imagery in the target poem. I have included the texts side-by-side below for reference.

| Source by Rosalía de Castro "Brillaban en la altura cual moribundas chispas" (1884) | Feminist Translation by Michelle Geoffrion-Vinci "They shined in the heavens…" (2014) | Feminist Translation by Elmira Louie "The pale stars shined above" (2019) |
|---|---|---|
| Brillaban en la altura cual moribundas chispas, Las pálidas estrellas, Y abajo… muy abajo en la callada selva, Sentíanse en las hojas próximas a secarse, Y en las marchitas hierbas, Algo como estallidos de arterias que se rompen, Y huesos que se quiebran, ¡Qué cosas tan extrañas finge una mente enferma! | They shined in the heavens like dying embers, pale stars, and below… far below, in the hushed forest the withering leaves and the dying grass felt something like the shattering of arteries and the breaking of bones. What strange things a sick mind imagines! | The pale stars shined above Like dying embers, And below, down below – In the silenced jungle, On the brittle leaves, On the withered grass – They felt something like the bursting of torn arteries, And the shattering of broken bones, What strange things a sick mind imagines! |
| Tan honda era la noche, La oscuridad tan densa, | The night was so deep, the darkness so dense, | So deep was the night, |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Que ciega la pupila<br>Si se fijaba en ella<br>Creía ver brillando entre la espesa sombra<br>Como en la inmensa altura las pálidas estrellas,<br><br>En su ilusión, creyóse por el vacío envuelto,<br>Y en él queriendo hundirse,<br>Y girar con los astros por el celeste piélago,<br>Fué á estrellarse en las rocas, que la noche ocultaba,<br>Bajo su manto espeso. | that it blinds the eye staring into it,<br>he thought he saw a shining in the thick shadow<br>the wan stars as in the vastness on high.<br>What strange things one sees in the dark!<br><br>In his delusion, he saw himself wrapped in emptiness,<br>and wanting to drown himself,<br>and swirl with the stars in the heavenly seas<br>he went to throw himself on the rocks<br>that night kept hidden beneath her thick cloak. | So dense the darkness,<br>That it would blind even the eye's pupil<br>If it stared into it<br>You would think you saw a glimmer in the thick shade[8]<br>Like the pale stars in the vastness above,<br>What strange things are seen in the dark!<br><br>In his delusion, he felt shrouded in the emptiness,<br>And in that depth he wanted to drown himself,<br>And twirl with the heavenly stars in the celestial ocean,<br>Like a falling star he crashed onto the rocks that the night concealed<br>Under her[9] thick cloak. |

**Cada vez que recuerda tanto oprobio**

Unlike the unique stanzas of "Brillaban en la altura," Castro's poem "Cada vez que recuerda tanto oprobio" is composed in two stanzas of uniform length, six lines each. These unrhymed sestets (sextetos) explore experiences of shame and of memory. Memory's ability to reanimate past shame creates a desperation for which the only release is death. In the first sestet, an omniscient first-person speaker tells readers of a

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[8] In Galician folklore, such as la Santa Compaña, there are beings that live in a limbo space, outside of Christian heaven or hell, but can have contact with the terrestrial plane and communicate with the living. Castro nicknamed these beings "sombras," thus in many of her poems such as this one, "sombra" denotes both "shadow." In the Anglophone tradition, these mythical beings are called "shades," which are similar to ghosts.

[9] Instead of "under its thick cloak," in reference to the night, I used the female possessive pronoun "her" in order to both carry over the feminine article associated with night in Spanish ("la luna") and to personify the character of Night. I could have made the same choice in the second stanza with "ella" and its antecedent "la oscuridad." However, I felt that in this case introducing the female pronoun in English would risk confusion as "her" could be (mis)read as belonging to the subject rather than the darkness.

subject (ungendered) who always remembers all the "oprobio" [shame, disgrace] and whose soul is so humiliated that it wants to disappear. The next sexteto offers a reflection on memory itself and its ability to encompass all of time.

The ideas of memory as reiterative and the shame it causes as perpetual are reflected in the main literary device of the poem: repetition. Four different types of repetition occur in the poem. The most common repetition occurs at the level of the idea; for example, "siempre" [always] (ll. 2, 12) and "cada vez" [every time] (ll. 1, 2). The repetition of these words and phrases denote a perpetual state. Furthermore, the fact that they are both repeated twice within these twelve lines highlights the infinite quality of memory (and shame) within the poem's context.

The repetition of "siempre" and "cada vez" is a repetition of the exact word(s). A slightly different type of repetition occurs with "recuerdo" (ll. 7, 9) and "recuerda" (ll. 1, 2). In the former, "recuerdo" is the noun "memory," while "recuerda" is the present tense singular third-person conjugation of the verb "recordar," or "to remember." While "recuerdo" can also be the present tense first-person conjugation of the verb, the context of the poem makes it apparent that the word as it is used here is the noun: "Recuerdo…lo que halaga hasta el delirio / O dá dolor hasta causar la muerte… / No, no es solo recuerdo," (ll. 7-9). Due to the orthographic similarities between the noun and the verb, the distinction between memory and remembering is blurred. Memory transforms from an independent noun to an integral and intimate part of a person. It is something one experiences in the act of remembering. Furthermore, the exact repetition of the verb "recuerda" occurs in the first stanza while that of the noun "recuerdo" occurs in the second stanza. Accordingly, there is no memory without, first,

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remembering. Castro turns the somewhat abstract idea of memory into an intimate experience that can have physical effects on the body and cause "delirio" [delirium], "dolor" [pain], or "muerte" [death] (ll. 6-7).

Castro also repeats the same verb, but each time with a different conjugation: "Avergonzada su alma / Quisiera en el no sér desvanecerse, / Como la blanca nube / En el espacio azul se desvanece" (ll. 3-6). For the last word of the fourth line she uses "desvanecerse," and the last words of the sixth line are "se desvanece." The word "desvanecerse" is the infinitive of the reflexive verb with multiple meanings in English: to disappear, to dispel, to fade, and to vanish, among others. Meanwhile, "se desvanece" is the present-indicative of the singular third-person conjugation of the verb. In both instances, the poetic speaker states that something disappears, or has the desire to disappear. First it is the soul that wants to disappear, and then it is the white cloud that disappears in the sky. Even in my English paraphrase the repetition of the different conjugation of the verb is apparent: "to disappear" versus "disappears." But these two ideas are not isolated instances. They, and consequently the different conjugations of the verb, are connected via "como" ["like"], which figures the two phrases into a simile. The simile draws on nature to convey the specific sensation of wanting to disappear due to an overwhelming shame and adds another rhetorical and visual element to the poem as a whole.

The final type of repetition in the poem involves concepts: "el no sér" ["the not being" or "nothingness"] (l. 4) and "la muerte" ["death"] (l.8). At first glance the appearance of these words in the poem may not seem like repetition. Yet both phrases carry an analogous symbolic idea that consitutes them as a rhetorical element. Mayoral

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writes that in the poetry of Castro, el muerte "es el <<no ser>>, como la insensibilidad es <<no sentir>>; en ambos casos: <<no sufrir>>" [death "is the 'not being,' as insensibility is 'not feeling;' in both cases: 'not suffering'"] (313). Accordingly, for Castro death didn't result in an afterlife. A Catholic Spaniard's belief of heaven or hell is not reflected in this poem. As alluded to earlier in "Brillaban en la altura," Castro instead viewed death as a release, a respite from worldly suffering. Death isn't like nothingness; death is nothingness. The repetition of "el no sér" and "la muerte" thus connote the same idea of freedom from life, freedom from any pain, shame, or memory that haunts one during life.

Geoffrion-Vinci renders the poem as "Every time she remembers" and employs the female pronoun for the ungendered Spanish subject. In her footnotes, Geoffrion-Vinci details that she read the subject as being Castro herself based on her struggles with fame and "trials and tribulations of being both a woman and a public and published poet." (Castro 137-138). Reconciling individuality and a public poetic persona could be an interpretation of "Cada vez que recuerda;" however, all works of translation are, as Lawrence Venuti details, a poet's version, "an amalgam of what we understand today as translation and adaptation, close rendering and free rewriting" (234). I do not see this inner turmoil as the driving force of the poem. Furthermore, to gender the subject as female based on the biographical and emotional conditions a translator projects into a specific poem occludes countless other interpretations that might arise if a more accurate, gender-indeterminate subject is employed. In this case, Geoffrion-Vinci's feminist practice excludes rather than includes.

Yet due to the grammatical structure of the English language, the subject must be identified with a gender-specific pronoun. Since there are only two lines within which the subject acts (the act of remembering), and since these lines appear consecutively, I decided to use both female and male pronouns in my translation. This feminist translation technique is one that Geoffrion-Vinci also employs in a different poem ("Creyó que era eterno tu reino en el alma"). In her notes, she states that "in doing so, my goal is to emphasize the all-encompassing nature of the poem's message" (Castro 193). Likewise, my choice of employing both feminine and masculine English pronouns points to the universality of experiences like memory and shame. With the pronouns, readers are invited to identify with the subject whose memory of the past haunts her/his present and future. While I could have employed the singular "they" in order to be fully gender-inclusive and ambiguous, I did not want to create the possibility of the subject being read as multiple subjects. I wanted to stay close to the singularity of the source text, so I opted for using only feminine and masculine pronouns.

The existence of both pronouns may run a different risk: readers might assume the poem is about two separate subjects. I averted this misreading with the title: "Every time s/he remembers." Here, "s/he" signals that the subject is one person. "S/he" within the poem's verse would have been difficult to read and would have resulted in a less-smooth English poem, so I chose to only use it for the title. In the actual verse, I employ "she" for the first line and "he" for the second. Since the title, with "s/he," has already alerted readers of the singularity of the subject, "she" and "he" within the poem retains the intended universalizing effect and the indeterminacy of the source text.

A final distinction between Geoffrion-Vinci's translation and mine comes from the last two lines of the poem: "El pasado, el presente, el infinito, / Lo que fué, lo que es y ha de ser siempre" (ll. 11-12). Geoffrion-Vinci translates these verses as "past, present, future, / that which was, that which is, and that which will forever be." I render these lines as "The past, the present, the everlasting, / What was, what is, and what must always be." The main difference surrounds the word "el infinito." While "past, present, future" has a recognizable pattern in English, "future" in that context in Spanish would be "el futuro." "El futuro" is a choice. It can still change depending on one's actions in the present. "El infinito," on the other hand, refers to something that is unending, boundless, and infinite. It is unchanging. It is not a matter of choice because regardless of one's present actions, it will stay the same. "El futuro" will also, eventually, come to pass whereas "el infinito" is eternal, timeless. In order to encapsulate all of these complex meanings of "el infinito," I chose "the everlasting." Its correspondence in next line, then, also changed from Geoffrion-Vinci's "that which will forever be," based on her "future," to my "what must always be," based on my "everlasting."

Overall, my translation is attuned to the nuances of individual words and their subsequent implications. While I try to maintain the structure and punctuation of as much as possible, to do so fully with this poem would have resulted in a choppy text that hardly reflects Castro's deft poetics. As shown in the side-by-side texts below, I have kept only one of Castro's three uses of ellipses and one of two exclamation marks. The redundancy in three ellipses in English lost the dramatic effect ellipses carry in a poem, so I opted for only one. I chose the ellipses that would make the most impact and fit best in terms of rhythm and flow. I kept the first exclamation mark, only, because the

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second, combined with the ellipses, not only looked odd in English but made the phrase grammatically confusing. Ellipses imply a continuation of the train of thought though that continuation is not written on the page, whereas exclamation marks end a train of thought on a highly emphasized point. I have also added commas in places I wanted to stress a slight pause in the reading of my translation.

| Source by Rosalía de Castro "Cada vez que recuerda tanto oprobio" (1884) | Feminist Translation by Michelle Geoffrion-Vinci "Every time she remembers" (2014) | Feminist Translation by Elmira Louie "Every time s/he remembers" (2019) |
|---|---|---|
| Cada vez que recuerda tanto oprobio, Cada vez digo ¡y lo recuerda siempre!… Avergonzada su alma Quisiera en el no sér desvanecerse, Como la blanca nube En el espacio azul se desvanece. <br><br> ¡Recuerdo… lo que halaga hasta el delirio O dá dolor hasta causar la muerte!… No, no es solo recuerdo, Sino que es juntamente El pasado, el presente, el infinito, Lo que fué, lo que es y ha de ser siempre. | Every time she remembers that hatred – every time, I said, and she remembers always! – abashed, her soul into nothingness would vanish, like the white cloud vanishes into the blue sky. <br><br> Memory… it brings delirious pleasure or pain that ends in death… no, it's not just memory, rather, taken all together it is past, present, future, that which was, that which is, and that which will forever be. | Every time she remembers all that shame, Every time, I tell you, and he remember always! The soul, ashamed, Wishes to fade into nothingness, Like the white cloud That fades in the blue sky. <br><br> Memory can flatter one to madness Or hurt one to death… No, not memory on its own, But combined with The past, the present, the everlasting, What was, what is, and what must always be. |

**De repente los ecos divinos**

The poems up to now have explored Castro's folklore-inspired belief in "el más allá" and "el no sér." But as a woman who lived in nineteenth-century Catholic Spain, where religion permeated in all aspects of life, Castro also was influenced by Catholic

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belief. Throughout her life, she experienced a spiritual evolution that was tethered to her attempts to reconcile the existence – or rather, the allowance – of pain in a life which God created. According to Mayoral, the more pain and misfortunate Castro experienced, the more her faith waned. Mayoral traces three stages: in the first, although pain exists, God pities humans and remedies this in the afterlife; in the second, pain exists, but one can find console in the image of the suffering Christ and the hope of a better afterlife; in the third, pain exists and is is unjustified, unwarranted, and inconsolable (43). Out of this final stage comes "De repente los ecos divinos," one of the few religious poems in Castro's *En las orillas del Sar*.

The poem is composed of three sestets (sextetos) and begins with a biblical allusion in the first stanza:

| De repente los ecos divinos / Que en el tiempo se apagaron / Desde lejos de nuevo llamáronle / Con el poderoso encanto / Que del fondo del sepulcro / Hizo levantar á Lázaro. | Suddenly the divine echoes / That had faded over time / Called out from afar once more / With the same almighty spell / That from the depths of the sepulcher / Summoned Lazarus to rise (ll. 1-6, translation mine). |

In the Gospel of John (Evangelio de Juan), Lazarus (Lázaro) was sick so his sisters Mary and Martha asked Jesus for help. When Jesus finally arrived in their village of Bethany, Lazarus had already been dead for four days. Nevertheless, Jesus asks for the stone in front of the tomb's entrance to be removed. He says a prayer and then calls out, "Lazarus, come forth!" Lazarus steps out of the tomb, revived. Castro's stanza alludes to this scene of The Raising of Lazarus (La Resurrección de Lázaro) and the "ecos divinos" ["divine echoes"] can be interpreted as Jesus' beckoning of Lazarus.

Yet now, it is a beckoning to an unidentified subject: "llamár**onle**" ["called out to **them**" note: singular]. The next stanza reveals that the beckoning causes the subject's soul to stir, to wake as Lazarus did. Yet here the similarities between Lazarus and the subject end and a new comparison is drawn between the subject and the exiled:

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| Agitóse al oírlo su alma / Y volvió de sueño letárgico / A la vida, como vuelve / A su patria el desterrado / que ve al fin los lugares queridos, / Mas no á los seres amados. | Their soul shook at the sound, / And returned from dormant dreams / To life, like the return / Of the exile to the homeland, / Seeing at last beloved places, / But not beloved people (ll. 7-12, translation mine). |

Accordingly, the simile in line 9 likens the speaker's return to life to the émigré's longed-for return to the homeland. It is an infelicitous return, for although the places are intact, the people are missing. This gesture echoes another critique of Castro's about religion, that it deceives us: "en los últimos [poemas] [Castro] comprende que la fe impedía ver la triste realidad de la vida" ["in the later poems, Castro understands that faith prevented seeing the sad reality of life"] (Mayoral 55). The sad reality in "De repente los ecos divinos" is that after the subject's resurrection (presumably one that occurs after the person has been dead for more than four days), none of their loved ones are still alive. Faith, however, would make one view this "sad reality" as a miracle by focusing on the resurrection itself rather than on its repercussions and effect on the subject's (re)life. The simile also marks a shift in tone, from the hopeful albeit mysterious tone brought on by Lazarus' miraculous return, to the somber tone created by the subject's lonely return.

In the final stanza, the poetic voice addresses the subject's soul directly and advises it to go back to sleep:

> Alma que has despertado / Vuelve á quedar dormida, / No es que aparece el alba, / Es que ya muere el día / Y te envía en su rayo postrero / La postrimera caricia.

> Awakened soul / Return to sleep, / It's not the birth of dawn you see, / But rather the death of day, / Which sends you in its last ray of light / One last caress (ll. 13-18, translation mine).

While divine echoes and resurrection might symbolize a return to faith, this stanza demonstrates the opposite. Indeed, "esas llamadas divinas que el alma siente, son percibidas no como el alborear de un nuevo día, como la apertura a una creencia, sino como los últimos estertores de algo próximo a extinguirse" ["these divine calls that the soul feels are perceived not as the dawn of a new day, like the opening to a belief, but as the last throes of something close to extinction"] (Mayoral 59). Dawn symbolizes a beginning, yet this re-awakening is not a new beginning. It is not a rebirth. It is not dawn. The subject's lifetime has not reset; it has still ended ("ya muere el día") and their loved ones already passed. This resurrected "life" brings the pain of lost loved ones, whereas death, as seen throughout Castro's poetry, is the relief from this pain. "La muerte" or "death" is only used once in line 16 and only in reference to the end of the day. Instead, the poem employs "sueño" ["dream"] (l. 8) and words related to sleep such as "despertado" ["awakened"] (l. 13) and "quedar dormida" [literally: "to remain asleep"] (l. 14) to refer to the subject's death. The diction of sleep and dreams present death as a peaceful slumber. Life, on the other hand, is lonely and one that the speaker advises the subject against. In the poem, death is more favorable to life.

"De repente los ecos divinos" appears as "Suddenly the divine echoes" in Geoffrion-Vinci's On the Edge of the River Sar. Her translation closely follows the line breaks, syntax, and overall effect of the source text. Interestingly, though also perhaps unsurprisingly, she genders the unknown and grammatically ungendered Spanish

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subject as female in her English translation. She uses female pronouns throughout the poem, as early on as the third line: "called to *her* from afar once more" (emphasis mine). In an accompanying footnote, Geoffrion-Vinci explains that this decision is due to the fact the protagonist of the third stanza is "el alma" ("the soul"), which in Spanish is "both masculine and feminine from the grammatical standpoint" for it takes the masculine definite article and feminine modifier in the singular and takes both feminine articles and modifiers in the plural (Castro 87). She thus interprets "el alma" as feminine and chose to translate the ambiguous subject of the first two stanzas in the feminine as well.

Curiously, Geoffrion-Vinci's translation ends with the line "with her repentance," a line that does not exist in her source text (which is facing her target text) nor in my facsimile source text. Turning to her footnote in that line for answers proves fruitless, for the corresponding note simply states: "I opt here for the female possessive as a replacement for the pseudo-generic masculine 'el que ha pecado' or 'he who sins'" (Castro 87). Since Geoffrion-Vinci had already established in an earlier note why she chose the female subject, and that such a pseudo-generic instance does not appear in the source text at this point – because this line does not exist – this leads me to believe this footnote may have been intended for a different section or poem within the book. Perhaps this was an editing or proofing error. Nonetheless, the note only makes the existence of this strange line even more puzzling.

For my translation, I chose to preserve this ambiguity and remove the need for a pronoun in the first stanza. The line in English also flows smoother without that pronoun almost interrupting. Without imposing the female – or any – gendered

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pronoun, readers interpret the recipient of this "calling out" in any way they chose. For instance, the comparison drawn between the subject and the exiled in the second stanza made me think of the mass exodus of Galicians, primarily the men, during Castro's lifetime. In the mid-nineteenth century, Galicia was plagued with a series of famines, which caused the men to move to more urban areas like Madrid to find work and send money to their families back home (Castro 125). Some of the other poems from *En las orillas del Sar* highlight the famine and exodus, and "De repente de los ecos divinos" could be one such poem. I interpreted the "desterrado" ["exiled"] as one of these Galician men who were forced to leave and when they finally returned, their loved ones were gone, possibly fallen victim to the famine. Within the poet's social, historical, and cultural context, the subject could be read quite literally as one of these Galician men to whom the speaker's counsel of "vuelve á quedar dormida" ["return to sleep"] (l.14) could be interpreted as a recommendation to stay away, to not come back for there is nothing left for them. Conversely, the subject could also be one of those left behind: the doting mother, loving wife, or young child. The one for whom eternal sleep is more favorable than the death that haunts the day. But I recognize that this is not the only interpretation; rather, it is one of many. Thus, I leave the decision for readers to make.

As the side-by-side texts below will demonstrate, my translation is attuned to the multiplicity of Castro's words and has English diction that produces analogous imagery. For instance, I employ "sepulcher" instead of "tomb," and "depths" instead of "darkness" (I understood "fondo" as having more so to do with distance). Although Geoffrion-Vinci's line, "with the powerful magic" is a much closer translation of the line "con el poderoso encanto," I understood "encanto" as implying something spoken.

Generally, "magic" does not necessarily have to be something voiced, so I opted for "spell." Since this "encanto" refers to Jesus' beckoning of Lazarus, I rendered this line "with the same almighty spell." The word "almighty" implies that the spell is powerful while also adding a religious connotation.

| Source by Rosalía de Castro "De repente los ecos divinos" (1884) | Feminist Translation by Michelle Geoffrion-Vinci "Suddenly the divine echoes" (2014) | Feminist Translation by Elmira Louie "Suddenly the divine echoes" (2019) |
|---|---|---|
| De repente los ecos divinos<br>Que en el tiempo se apagaron<br>Desde lejos de nuevo llamáronle<br>Con el poderoso encanto<br>Que del fondo del sepulcro<br>Hizo levantar á Lázaro.<br><br>Agitóse al oírlo su alma<br>Y volvió de sueño letárgico<br>A la vida, como vuelve<br>A su patria el desterrado<br>que ve al fin los lugares queridos,<br>Mas no á los seres amados.<br><br>Alma que has despertado<br>Vuelve á quedar dormida,<br>No es que aparece el alba,<br>Es que ya muere el día<br>Y te envía en su rayo postrero<br>La postrimera caricia. | Suddenly the divine echoes<br>that had long since died away<br>called to her from afar once more<br>with the powerful magic<br>that from the darkest tomb<br>caused Lazarus to rise.<br><br>Her soul shook on hearing them<br>and she awoke again<br>from torpid dreams<br>to life, like the homeless<br>to the fatherland returns<br>and sees once more<br>beloved places<br>but not beloved people.<br><br>Awakened soul,<br>go back to sleep;<br>Dawn isn't breaking<br>it's day that's dying,<br>sending you with one last light<br>one last caress.<br>with her repentance. | Suddenly the divine echoes<br>That had faded over time<br>Called out from afar once more<br>With the same almighty spell<br>That from the depths of the sepulcher<br>Summoned Lazarus to rise.<br><br>The soul shook at the sound,<br>And returned from dormant dreams<br>To life, like the return<br>Of the exile to the homeland,<br>Seeing at last beloved places,<br>But not beloved people.<br><br>Awakened soul<br>Return to sleep,<br>It's not the birth of dawn you see,<br>But rather the death of day,<br>Which sends you in its last ray of light<br>One last caress. |

# Chapter 3: Gülten Akın's Turkish Poetic Voice

As the section on agglutination from the Introduction revealed, Turkish is grammatically a non-gendered language without gendered pronouns, articles, or adjectives. Some nouns are intrinsically gendered, such as kadın/erkek (woman/man), kız/oğlan (girl/boy), anne/baba (mother/father), and Toprak Ana (Mother Earth). Aside from these clearly marked nouns, there is nothing on the level of syntax that is gendered. The only pronoun is the gender-neutral "o" that appears on its own or modifies verbs and adjectives accordingly. Thus, it is through cultural codes and context that the language marks – or rather, hints at – gender. For instance, in Cemal Süreya's poem "Piyale" the gender of the addressee is inferred by readers to be a woman because the speaker likens the addressee's lips to a tulip. Under traditional (read: heterosexual) Turkish cultural codes, women's lips are compared (typically by men) to flowers. This example highlights two key factors when it comes to interpreting, analyzing, and translating Turkish poetry. First, all Turkish poets rely on cultural codes to mark the gender of their characters, should they desire to do so, because those are the means by which gender can linguistically be represented. Second, poems always have to be situated within their specific temporal and cultural contexts. Most of the time, regarding gender, the contexts reaffirm traditional relationships (read: monogamous, heterosexual, cis) and stereotypical dichotomies (male/dominant/active and female/submissive/passive). Thus, even while Turkish may seem more inclusive in terms of gender representations, linguistically, due to the constant situatedness in conservative cultural contexts, it can be quite constricting.

For the purposes of this chapter, I will focus exclusively on the poetry of Gülten Akın (1933-2015). At Ankara University, Akın studied law and, working both as a lawyer and as a teacher, she travelled with her husband for many years all over the region of Anatolia. Akın began publishing in the 1950s and won prestigious awards for her poetry and prose ever since. Due to her background in law and education, Akın remained at the forefront of social, cultural, and political movements. She founded Turkey's Human Rights Association and, in her literature, often shed light on women's rights and struggles. As the "first woman to achieve unequivocal recognition and prominence in the [Turkish] literary establishment" (Akın, What have you carried over? xiv), her poetry reflected her progressive beliefs. However, despite her works' seemingly controversial, counter-patriarchal topics, Akın was well received in her own time, both at home and abroad. Being a lawyer by profession helped Akın advocate for marginalized groups in her literary works while avoiding censorship and confrontation with authorities. It was "her knowledge of the Turkish legal system and law [that] helped her to determine how and when to proceed in raising her voice, and thus, possibly contributed to her being the only consistently recognized woman poet on the Turkish literary scene for half a century" (Sürsal, Voice of Hope: Turkish woman poet Gülten Akın 6).

Akın's elevated status is certainly unique. No other female Turkish poet has come close to similar recognition or acceptance. In fact, in a 1985 anthology of Turkish literature, out of 82 poets the only female included was Akın (Akın, *What have you carried over?* xiv). Her law advantage aside, Akın's exceptional fame is also due to her skill as a poet who came into her own voice. While her contemporary women poets

"adopted what we may call a 'male voice' rather than 'their own voice' in their poetry, which was mainly a reflection of the values assimilated from a patriarchal society," Akın created her own distinct and highly original voice, one which "is clearly that of a woman" (Sürsal, *Voice of Hope* 2).

Her popularity and "acknowledgement as 'the greatest living Turkish poet' in 2008" (Akın, *What have you carried over?* 125) could be one factor as to her being the only female Turkish poet to date who has had an entire poetry collection translated into English. While an English anthology of "Turkish Women Poets," published in 2010, include translations of a handful of poems from twenty-two different poets, only Akın has her own English-language book of poems: *What have you carried over? Poems of 42 days and other works*, edited by Saliha Paker, a retired professor of Translation Studies from Boğaziçi University, and Mel Kenne, a poet and translator currently living in Istanbul. Paker founded the Cunda International Workshop for Translators of Turkish Literature (CWTTL) in 2006 and this book is a product of the group of twelve translators who came together in this workshop. I will in these pages refer to this book's translations of Akın's poetry.

Due to the collaborative nature of the CWTTL project, little information is given on the approach, biases, or translation techniques employed by participants in the volume. In the Introduction, the editors claim that they "were particularly mindful of not interfering with the poet's syntax, lineation and punctuation, unless we felt it was necessary" and their desire for "the voice of our translations to remain in close kinship to the poet's Turkish, to the impact of rhythm and, whenever possible, of rhyme, despite the difficulty of rendering all these in a language so very different from the original

one" (Akın, *What have you carried over?* vii). Accordingly, each poem is prepared by a different translator, or a different combination of translators. Reasons for translation decisions, since they are not disclosed, become speculative as the translation process is fairly occluded from the reader.

As a source for the Turkish poems, I will be using Akın's poems as they appear in the three-volume set of her complete works. Unlike the 2010 English anthology of Turkish women poets, the source Turkish poems do not face the target English poems in What have you carried over?. Since I will be focusing on three poems ("Ölmek-Yaşamak," "Kum," and "İzler"), I will only use volume one (Kırmızı Karanfil: 1956-1971 Toplu Şiirler - I ) and volume three (Uzak Bir Kıyıda: 1984-2003 Toplu Şiirler - III ). Two of these poems, "Ölmek-Yaşamak" and "İzler," are translated by the editors of What have you carried over? themselves, while "Kum" is translated by Kenne and a CWTTL participant, Arzu Eker. By identifying each of my source texts, I hope to pull back the curtain on the translation process from Turkish into English and provide transparency for readers when they arrive at my target feminist translations. In this way I hope to open access to the Turkish literary world, starting with the revered words of Gülten Akın.

**Ölmek-Yaşamak**

In 1954 Gülten Akın wrote "Ölmek-Yaşamak," a poem that would make an appearance a couple years later in her very first published poetry collection, *Rüzgâr Saati* (1956). This poem is composed of three stanzas: a quatrain (dörtlük), a septet (yedili), and a sestet (altılı). While three-stanza poems account for only 3.95% of the poems in Rüzgâr Saati, four-lined quatrains are Akın's preferred stanza length and they

appear 77 times throughout the collection (Sürsal, *Gülten Akın, A Pioneering Turkish Woman Poet* 306-308). Along with her inclination for quatrains, Akın preferred writing free verse poetry. The majority of her works are in free verse while a handful employ syllabic verse (hece ölçüsü).

Free verse was introduced in Turkish literature in the 1920s by the poet Nâzım Hikmet and quickly became a staple for many twentieth- and twenty-first-century poets, such as Akın herself. "Ölmek-Yaşamak" is not only in free verse but, according to Hilâl Sürsal, the form is "closer to the French *vers libres classique*, in which the lines possess a certain looseness and fluidity while still maintaining a rhyming pattern, albeit irregularly, and/or the first/last line of the stanzas are repeated for inner harmony" (Gülten Akın 263-264). Indeed, this poem is mostly iambic with irregular internal rhymes, a set of end-rhymes in the septet ("hayırsızdı," "bıraktım," "sicaktı" ll. 6-8), and the -memişim morphological ending is repeated in the last line of each stanza ("bilmemişim," "sevmemişim," "olmemişim"). Each line also has its own variation of alliteration and assonance. These stylistic rhythm and sound patterns provide the inner balance and poetic coherence of Akın's take on the "free verse."

"Ölmek-Yaşamak" tells a story in the first person of a person who has passed away. The speaker, who remains ungendered, is looking over their own funeral procession, reflecting on a lost love, and while in this reflective mood looks out and sees the life in a woman and child at the funeral. At that final moment, in death, the speaker learns what it must feel like to be alive. This poem is a prime example of Akın's masterful diction and unique pairing of words. For instance, the second line "İlk defa el üstünde gittim" ["for the first time, they held me up"] refers to being held up as

in a funeral procession where the pallbearers hold the casket up above their shoulders, on the way to the grave site. Yet it is also a play on words with the Turkish idiomatic expression "el üstünde tutmak." This expression means to hold something with care in the palm of one's hands, to pay close attention to that something. Changing the expression to "el üstünde gittim" allows for both images – the one of the funeral process and of paying attention to something, or someone, from the idiom – to function within the same phrase. Thus, it is only when the speaker is held up in the casket that, for the first time, the speaker is given care and attention:

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| Biri bana diye ağlıyordu / İlk defa el üstünde gittim / Kimse duymasin sizden gayrı / Ben yaşamasını bilmemişim | Somebody was weeping for me / For the first time they held me up / [Cradled. In their hands, in the casket] / Nobody other than you should hear this: / I must not have known how to live (translation mine) |

The diction of "Ölmek-Yaşamak" also opens the arena for possible challenges to gender by applying both female and male codes to the figure of the beloved. The second line of the second stanza reads: Sevdiğim koydu gitti hayırsızdı (my uncaring/unfaithful beloved abandoned me and went away). The term "hayırsızdı" (uncaring/unfaithful) is used only within close, intimate or familial relationships and is often applied to men. While women can be referred to as being hayırsızdı, the mostly male association of the word suggests more strongly that the beloved is a man. Yet in the very next line, Akın writes: Bendeki bir tutam saçı rüzgâra bıraktım (I relinquished her/his lock of hair to the world). Long ago in the Ottoman tradition, it was customary that when a partner had to leave for a long, or an indeterminate, amount of time, the woman would cut a lock of her hair and give it to the man, as a token for him to remember her by. Men almost

never gave their own hair; they were always the recipients. Considering this cultural context, the hair in the poem must belong to a woman, which would make the gender of the beloved a female. Yet in the line before, because of hayırsızdı, the gender was determined as male. Accepting one of these cultural codes means resisting the other. Akın skillfully breaks away from convention and sets up a scenario in which readers also act on this fissure. Regardless of which cultural code they adopt and which gender they themselves assign to the beloved, they will resist a traditional cultural coding of gender.

The gender of the speaker is also put into question in the third stanza. Upon seeing a woman and a child, the speaker feels the pleasure of life as if for the first time, despite being carried in a casket:

| | |
|---|---|
| Bir kadın siyahlar içinde taptaze / Bir çocuk iri gözlerini açıp güldü / Üstümde en acısından yeşil üç yaprak / Öyle duydum yaşama hazzını son dakikada / Öyle tepeden tırnağa / Kabilse farzedin ölmemişim | A *taptaze* woman in black / A child, with large eyes opened, laughed / On top of me three of the most bitter green leaves / Thus I sensed the pleasure of living, in the final moment, / From top to toe / Suppose if you can that I am not dead (translation mine) |

One interpretation is that the speaker only feels alive in domestic life, a trait that would be assigned to females. On the other hand, the woman could be the speaker's wife or the "beloved" returned, and the child theirs, which would make the speaker a man. Yet even though the woman is wearing "siyah" (black), the color of mourning, she is described as "taptaze." The closest English rendition of this word is "fresh as a daisy," which implies that the woman is young and full of life. This description is juxtaposed with the funeral setting, a place of death and mourning. Taptaze, however, has an

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additional sexual connotation. It can imply that a person is at the peak of their fertility and sexuality. Interestingly, when one wants to describe fruit as "fresh" in Turkish, the word one would use would be "taze." The adjective "taptaze," then, contains both the fruit connotation and sexual readiness of an individual, which objectifies the woman in question.  Considering these cultural connotations, a closer English translation of "taptaze" could possibly be "ripe." But when ripe is applied to people in English, it carries a much stronger, explicit objectification whereas the Turkish objectification via taptaze is more implicit.

Saliha Paker and Mel Kenne translate "Ölmek-Yaşamak" as "Dying-Living." Their translation succeeds in rendering the words of Akın into English. Yet the meaning is not fully transferred. The poem's emotional charge and tug evaporates in this existing English translation. The first stanza, "somebody was weeping for me/ For the first time they held me up / Nobody should hear this except you / I must not have known how to live," (ll. 1- 4) generally implies and alludes to the speaker's death. But the imagery of the speaker inside a casket, being held literally and metaphorically above the funeral procession, is absent. In the following stanza, they render "Bendeki bir tutam saçı rüzgâra bıraktım" as "The lock of hair I held, I left to the wind" (l. 7). This translation detaches the intimacy of the lock of hair and the cultural significance of the gesture. An Anglophone audience could be quite a puzzled by this line, and without any supplementary information provided by the translators, this crucial line is chalked up to "random" or insignificant. "Taptaze," furthermore, is left simply as "fresh" (1. 12) without any indication to the multiplicity of connotations of the Turkish. Additionally,

"a child opened his big eyes and laughed" (l. 13) genders the child in the masculine despite any gendered indication coming from the source text.

They also decide to gender the beloved as a man, using the masculine possessive pronoun in the eighth line: "my hands were as warm as if I'd held his." Since the speaker's gender is occluded, and the speaker speaks in the first-person, Paker and Kenne may have assumed that the speaker is Akın herself. Then, considering the heteronormative context, it may have been clear to them that the beloved must be a man. The poet and the poetic speaker, however, are not always one and the same, nor should they be assumed as such. I argue that such assumptions, particularly with women writers, are dangerous for they leave one more susceptible to misinterpretations. While biographical context is important, it should not impose meaning onto the text, especially when creating a translation. Meaning should rather be drawn out of the text itself, supported – if/when necessary – with the biographical context. I thus propose a translation that presents the source text as it was written into the target language, without changing the target text based on secondary material or biographical inferences. By doing so, readers of the target translation have the option to perform their own biographical research and choose whether to interpret the poem differently based on any possible secondary sources they discover.

To address the complexities of the poem and existing English translations, my transnational feminist translation employs footnotes to carry key source contexts into the target language, as well as defamiliarization and foreignization strategies. I have chosen to present the image of the casket via an additional line in brackets. The brackets mark the line as distinct from the source, yet the words inside carry the *meaning* from

the Turkish, which includes both the imagery and the play on words from the idiomatic expression. The brackets also allow the stanza to be read with and without that line, giving agency to readers to experiment with their readings and choose what feels best for them.

For "hayırsızdı" I employ "callous" and provide a footnote to further detail the possible masculine connotation in the source. To complicate the gender of the beloved, I translate the next line as "I relinquished her lock of hair to the wind." The female pronoun, combined with the earlier footnote highlighting masculine quality of callous, create the tension and ambiguity of the beloved's gender in the target as it exists in the source. My interpretation reads the poet and the speaker as separate entities, thus I tried to maintain the gender ambiguities from the Turkish instead of simplifying or erasing the uncertainties. In the final stanza, I decided to keep taptaze in the Turkish. Rather than fighting the untranslatable, I highlighted it with a footnote that explains its multiplicity of meanings. As for the child, syntactical restructuring allowed for an English translation that does not require gendering via pronouns.

| Source by Gülten Akın "Ölmek-Yaşamak" (1954) | Translation by Saliha Paker and Mel Kenne "Dying-Living" (2014) | Feminist Translation by Elmira Louie "Dying-Living" (2018) |
|---|---|---|
| Biri bana diye ağlıyordu İlk defa el üstünde gittim Kimse duymasin sizden gayrı Ben yaşamasını bilmemişim | Somebody was weeping for me For the first time they held me up Nobody should hear this except you I must not have known how to live | Somebody was weeping for me For the first time they held me up [Cradled. In their hands, in the casket][10] Nobody other than you should hear this: |

[10] This line is an addition that I deemed necessary in order to translate the play on words with el üstünde tutmak (a Turkish idiomatic expression referring to holding something with care and paying close attention to it) and el üstünde gittim (Akın's wordplay that alludes to the idiom while simultaneously creating the image of being held up inside a casket during a funeral procession).

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|---|---|---|
| Çamlık pınarında yudum elimi<br>Sevdiğim kodu gitti hayırsızdı<br>Bendeki bir tutam saçı rüzgâra bıraktım<br>Ellerim ellerine değmişçesine sıcaktı<br>Şimdi bütün canlılar benden uzak<br>Şimdi bütün duyularım inkâr halinde<br>Sanki hiç duymamışım görmemişim sevmemişim.<br><br>Bir kadın siyahlar içinde taptaze<br>Bir çocuk iri gözlerini açıp güldü<br>Üstümde en acısından yeşil üç yaprak<br>Öyle duydum yaşama hazzını son dakikada<br>Öyle tepeden tırnağa<br>Kabilse farzedin ölmemişim | By the pine grove I washed my hands at the spring<br>My loved one left me, was gone, was no good<br>The lock of hair I held, I left to the wind<br>My hands were as warm as if I'd held his<br>Now all who are alive are far away from me<br>Now all of my senses are in denial<br>As if I'd never felt never seen never loved<br><br>A woman in black so young and fresh<br>A child opened his big eyes and laughed<br>On me three green leaves of the bitterest hue<br>That's how in that final moment I sensed the pleasure of living<br>From top to toe<br>Suppose if you can that I'm not dead. | I must not have known how to live<br><br>I washed my hand in the spring at the pine grove<br>My callous[11] beloved abandoned me and left<br>So I relinquished her lock of hair to the wind[12]<br>My hands were warm as though held by my beloved's<br>Now all of the living are far away from me<br>Now all of my senses are in the state of denial<br>As though I never felt, never saw, never loved<br><br>A *taptaze*[13] woman in black<br>A child, with large eyes opened, laughed<br>On top of me three of the most bitter green leaves<br>Thus I sensed the pleasure of living, in the final moment,<br>From top to toe<br>Suppose if you can that I am not dead |

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[11] I chose "callous" for "hayırsızdı" as that closest English translation of this word that does not truly exist in the English language. Hayırsızdı, instead, has a multitude of definitions in English including uncaring, unfaithful, and cold-hearted. It is used only within close, intimate or familial relationships and often applied to men. It is a very emotionally charged word to describe, ironically, someone without much emotional consideration for their loved one(s). In the poem's content hayırsızdı also serves the role of suggesting the beloved is a man.

[12] In the previous line, hayırsızdı implied the beloved is a man. Yet here I employ the female pronoun "her" in reference to the beloved's hair. This decision was purposeful with the intent of creating tension and ambiguity surrounding the gender of the beloved. In the source text and context, the hair that would be given to the partner upon separation, as a token of remembrance, would be that of the woman. The source text never makes the gender of either the beloved or the subject explicit, so to stay true to the source's gendered complexity I created a translation where a case could be made for the gender, one way or another, depending on the reader's own interpretation.

[13] Taptaze, similar to hayırsızdı, is a word that does not exist in English. Taptaze means young and fresh, but when applied to people – particularly to women – it can carry a sexual connotation. A taptaze woman is one who is ripe, at the peak of her youth, fertility, and sexuality. What better word to carry this specific meaning than taptaze itself? I thus employed a foreignization technique by leaving the word untranslated.

**Kum**

Some forty years after the publication of "Ölmek-Yaşamak," Akın wrote "Kum"
and "İzler" for her eleventh book, Sonra İşte Yaşlandım (1995). While her skill as a
poet had matured over time, the motif of the wind remains as ever-present in her later
poems as in her earlier ones. The role that the wind plays varies quite drastically
depending on which poem it appears in and under what contexts. Let us consider, then,
"Kum" (1995). This poem comprises of two stanzas – a sestet (altılı) followed by a
quatrain (dörtlük) – with sets of internal questions in the first stanza signaled via the
mu/mi/mı markers. An irregular end-rhyme pattern of ABBCDB EFGF, internal
repetition ("geçti…geçti" l. 9), and line-specific alliteration create harmony within its
free verse form.

In "Kum," an unidentified speaker tells the story of a former romance. The
speaker reveals in the first stanza that the relationship began across distance, since the
beloved would send the speaker sand from their own city ("Bana yaşadığı kentin
kumunu gönderen / Bir sevgilim vardı" ll. 1-2). Here the speaker feels the mystery and
excitement of a new relationship, particularly since it is long distance, and wonders
("merak ederdim" l. 3) what the wind in the beloved's city is like. Yet the adjectives the
speaker employs for the wind ("uslu," "deli," and "surekli" l. 4) could be used to
describe a person as well. This line therefore has a double meaning, one that makes the
wind represent the beloved. Whereas on the surface the speaker is wondering about the
qualities of the wind, deep down the speaker is wondering about the attributes of the
beloved. Accordingly, the relationship is not only long distance, but the couple has also
not met each other in person, or at least they do not know each other well. This

interpretation of the poem thus makes the last lines of the sestet read as the speaker's speculation of the beloved's temperament ("Apansız mı çıkar gökte savurur / Yerden aldığını" ll. 5-6).

While both stanzas employ the past tense, the content of the quatrain is in a past closer to the present, linearly speaking. In this final stanza, the relationship is no longer long distance since "Paylaştığımız kentler" (l. 7), they both now live in the same city. Yet once they are together, physically in the same location, the wind blows with rage ("hışımla" l. 9) and the sand that earlier symbolized a burgeoning love now fills the speaker's eyes ("Kum doldurdu gözlerimi" l. 10), presumably clouding the speaker's vision – and judgement? – and making it difficult to see, or, metaphorically, to look out into the future. Sand in one's eyes is irritating and painful, a temporary blindness that paralysis one where the only thought is the invasive sand and the need to be rid of it. The speaker was likewise feeling trapped, as the sand could represent the turn that their relationship took when they finally shared cities.

In 2014, Mel Kenne and Arzu Eker, a then-doctoral student working on translation theory, practice and criticism (Akın, What have you carried over? 126), translated "Kum" into English as "Sand." With apparent attention to diction, they created a close-translation that rendered Akın's Turkish in as equivalent English words as possible. In some instances they even carried the effect, not just the definition, of the words into English. For example, they chose "apprentice" for "acemi" (novice, inexperienced, untrained) which, when paired with "master" ("usta") in the same line, sets up the power dynamic from the source Turkish into the target English. Yet surprisingly they decided to gender the love interest as male when they used the

masculine possessive pronoun "his" in the second line. In the source text, the genders of both the speaker and the beloved are occluded. Perhaps the "his" here is meant to function as a pseudo-generic, which, as the studies discussed in the Introduction revealed (see Gastil 1990), is problematic for it erases the possibility of the female since readers mostly associate the pseudo-generic masculine with males alone. On the other hand, the translators might have assumed the first-person "I" of the speaker was Akın herself, as they may have done with "Ölmek-Yaşamak." Thus, within the normative heterosexual frame, they might have been inclined to code the love interest as a man.

The reason behind the decision aside, this one pronoun removes all possibilities except for the masculine. There are no words or phrases in the Turkish that mark the love interest's gender. As a result, the Turkish language offers multiple meanings and interpretations that are obliterated in the existing target text. This limited translation reflects the hegemony of the Western perspective. In literary studies, a Eurocentric focus cannot see beyond its own tinted glasses. Even when the text at hand is from non-Western parts of the globe, it will be considered from a Western lens that projects its own patriarchal ideas. Consequently, other meanings that come about from taking multiple vantage points, including that of the source text itself, are not seen. The existing Eurocentric translation shuts down possibility and interpretation.

My transnational feminist translation works to combat this Western hegemony by taking the source text's own specificity as the focal point. To address this violence to the text, I have opted for the singular gender-neutral possessive pronoun "their" in my feminist translation. While historically singular forms of the so-called "exclusively-plural 'they'" have been chided by grammarians, critics of "they" tend to be the same

androcentric writers who implemented the pseudo-generic masculine (Bodine 133). In the meantime, "they" has persisted colloquially and slowly come into acceptance in academia, especially in the last decade. For this poem in particular, I found they/their to be the better alternative to she/he for its inclusivity of genders beyond the binary. Furthermore, the neutrality of "their" in this context works as well as the Turkish "o"-forms of verbs and adjectives. My translation also renders uslu/deli/sürekli as calm/wild/stable, respectively, in order to maintain the source's double reference to the wind and the beloved. This duality is not as clear in Kenne and Eker's translation, since human attributes are not typically described as "soft" or "steady." Overall, I worked on the level of diction, syntax, and general flow to create a target poem that transfers the meaning (as opposed to the words alone) and feel of its source.

| Source by Gülten Akın "Kum" (1995) | Translation by Mel Kenne and Arzu Eker "Sand" (2014) | Feminist Translation by Elmira Louie "Sand" (2018) |
|---|---|---|
| Bana yaşadığı kentin kumunu gönderen<br>Bir sevgilim vardı<br>Bense merak ederdim hep oranın rüzgarını<br>Uslu mu deli mi sürekli mi<br>Apansız mı çıkar gökte savurur<br>Yerden aldığını<br><br>Paylaştığımız kentler oldu sonra<br>Rüzgâr usta ben acemi<br>Esti geçti bir hışımla geçti<br>Kum doldurdu gözlerimi | I had a love interest once<br>who from his hometown mailed me sand<br>while I was always asking myself<br>what about its wind<br>is it soft, is it wild, is it steady?<br>does it quickly hurl into the skies<br>whatever it picks up from the ground?<br><br>later we took to sharing cities<br>the wind served as master, I as apprentice<br>in a rage of coming and going it blew<br>filling my eyes with sand | I had a beloved who<br>Would send me sand from their city<br>While I always wondered<br>Was their wind<br>Calm, wild, or stable?<br>Would it suddenly hurl into the sky<br>Whatever it grabbed off the ground?<br><br>Later on we shared cities<br>The wind became master, and I the apprentice<br>With a gust of rage it would pass<br>Filling my eyes with sand |

**İzler**

  Let us return to Gülten Akın's penultimate book *Sonra İşte Yaşlandım*.
Following "Kum," is the poem "İzler" (1995). This fourteen-line poem is broken into
two stanzas, of four- and ten-lines respectively. This is the only time in the entire book
that Akın has a ten-lined stanza. Notably, it is this stanza that differentiates the type of
free verse in "İzler" from that in, say, "Ölmek-Yaşamak." Unlike the *vers libre
classique* of her earlier poems, "İzler" is in "'true' *vers libre*, in which one line can
potentially contain more sub-lines, free-rhyming is the norm, lines are rhythmically
unstable and margins are variable… [and] stanzas are no longer related groups of
thought but rather quite elastic and independent" (Sürsal, *Gülten Akın* 264).
Accordingly, the eleventh line starts in the middle of the page and the second stanza
changes poetic voice, from an omniscient speaker to the subject her/himself. The poem
becomes a monologue in the latter half of the second stanza. Without using any
gendered nouns or adjectives with gendered connotations, an omniscient narrator
describes a silent subject who is feeling weighed down by the burden of bottling up
secrets. The subject is even in pain until, eventually being made to open up, the
subject's voice breaks out. This voice also breaks through quite literally on a syntactical
level, interrupting the narrator's telling of the subject with the subject's own words.

  The editors of the English collection of Gülten Akın's poetry, Saliha Paker and
Mel Kenne, were also the translators of "İzler," or "Traces." Some of their decisions
brilliantly transfer the meaning, as opposed to definition, of difficult phrases such as
"shades of deception" ("aldanma gölgesi" l. 8). Yet their translation falls short in other
areas. First and foremost, the issue of gender. Akın again gives no indication of the

gender of the speaker, yet for undisclosed reasons, Paker and Kenne gender the subject as a woman, using female pronouns throughout the poem.

The female subject, combined with the literal translation of içi ağırlaştıkça as "feeling heavy within" (l. 3), could lead to the (mis)interpretation that the subject is pregnant. The secret could thus be the pregnancy, from an "old passion" (l. 14). When in the midst of pain "they opened her up" (l. 6) could be inferred as the subject giving birth. However, içi ağırlaştıkça refers to the kind of heaviness one feels when one is burdened. It is the weight of bottling up one's feelings or secrets, not being able to confide in someone, or the right one. While the idea of being "pregnant with feeling" exists in the Turkish context as well as the Anglophone context, this idea is not presented with the phrase içi ağırlaştıkça. It is only the literal English translation of "feeling heavy within" that, when concerning a female subject, signals being heavy with child. While one of the many interpretations of this poem is that of pregnancy, it is presented in other parts of the text with other words. This translation's gendering of the subject and literal translation of this phrase, however, erases the source's ambiguity and other possible meanings by imposing this one interpretation.

Another striking change is that in the English there is no mention of "nar" (l. 5) or "pomegranate." The line "ağrıya ağrıya **nar**a dönüştüğünde" (emphasis mine) is instead translated as "ache upon ache as she turned into **fire**." In the Turkish language and cultural context, the image of a pomegranate is often used to describe a deep red color, almost a burning red. "Nar gibi" or "like a pomegranate" connotes the redness of a burning, extremely hot fire. Nar also has an Islamic connotation of "hell fire." Given the source's cultural and linguistic context, it is understandable that "nar" is translated

as "fire." Yet the image of the pomegranate also contributes to the following line: "açtılar içinden sözler çıktı," "they opened her up out came words." When one opens a pomegranate, inside are a multitude of seeds. Since the subject has turned into a pomegranate, when they open the subject they find words where all of those seeds should have been. The image is thus of tons of seeds (read: words) tucked next to each other, layer upon layer waiting to burst. But by rendering nar as fire in the previous line, the imagery of the seeds as words disappears.

Arguably, without the existence of "nar" in the poem, the pregnancy interpretation would be nonexistent in the source text. In Western literary traditions, the pomegranate is a symbol of fertility and sexuality. The same can be said for Turkish literature and culture. A popular and old Turkish riddle goes: "Çarşıdan aldım bir tane, eve geldim bin tane" ["I bought one from the bazaar, when I got home I had a thousand"]. What could possibly be this item that *reproduces* on its own? A pomegranate, for it is one item ("bir tane") yet inside are a plethora of individual seeds ("bin tane"). The word "ağrıya" (l. 5), furthermore, has two meanings. One is the literal definition of "pain" or "painfully." The other is of "ripening." There are other Turkish words that mean pain (including, but not limited to, sızı, sancı, acı, and dert) but do not also mean ripening. Akın chose this word specifically, which supports the pregnancy interpretation of the poem. The idea of a person being "ripe" means they are fertile. Growing a child and giving birth are also painful acts, making the duality of ağrıya the perfect word to describe pregnancy.

To address the subject's ambiguous gender, I decided to give multiple translations in English and leave the choice to readers to decide for themselves which

version speaks to them more. The sentiment of the poem in English changes depending on the gender, so readers now have the option to read it both ways and come to their own interpretations/conclusions. I could not, however, employ the singular "they" for the subject because it would have risked confusion with the plural "they" in the second stanza, the ones that open up the subject. Thus, I present two versions of my feminist translation, one with feminine pronouns and the other with masculine pronouns.

My translation is overall quite different from Paker and Kenne's. For instance, "çıktı" (l. 9, 12) is generally used when someone says something, but they don't remember choosing to say it. Rather, the words speak out of one in an uncontrollable manner. I understood this word as "spilled out," which carries the sudden, uncontrolled context into the English and is align with the pomegranate imagery, of seeds spilling out.  Whereas Paker and Kenne decided on "I must go" for "gitmeliyim" (l. 9), I chose "I've got to go." This seemingly slight change restores some agency back to the subject, making the decision to leave their own, rather than being obligated to go as Paker and Kenne's "must" implies. The slightly more colloquial tone of the phrase further distinguishes the line as the voice of the subject rather than that of the speaker.

Rather than trying to make "artık herkesin yüzüne / bütün düşündüklerimi" (ll. 10-11) make sense as Paker and Kenne do ("from now it's right in your face / everything in my mind"), I chose to maintain the syntactical confusion of the Turkish in my English translation: "to everyone's face / all of my thoughts." While some translations work to present the ideas of the source text as clearly in the target language as possible, I felt that to do so in this case would be to erase and distort Akın's poetic voice. These lines in Turkish are not grammatically correct. The second line starts at the

center of the page rather than on the left side like all the other lines. These lines' un-grammatical structure and layout on the page suggest that the two are not supposed to be read together, that perhaps they are both fragments of separate ideas. Given that the context is of the subject blurting out all the words that had been pent up, this fragmentation, as opposed to clarity, seemed more important for me to translate. I felt that by forcing these lines to connect in English, I would be "cleaning up" Akın's Turkish, a Eurocentric practice that unfortunately has precedent in many non-Western texts that have been translated into Western languages. Thus, I performed a literal translation of these lines in order to purposefully create the confusion and disorientation necessary for these lines to appear as fragments of different ideas.

My transnational feminist translation also broke up certain lines into two in order to better render the meaning of the source text into my target poem. I converted the third line, "içi ağırlaştıkça rüzgâra çıkıyor," into two because by giving "içi ağırlaştıkça" its own line ("weighed down from bottling it up inside") I was able to better depict the complex Turkish phrase in English. I gave the fifth line in the source text ("ağrıya ağrıya nara dönüştüğünde") two lines in my target poem. These lines, "Ache upon ache (she)(he) turned into a / pomegranate painfully ripe and red," capture the dual meanings of ağrıya (ache/pain and ripe). Linguistically, "ache upon ache" preserves the reduplication (ikilemeler) of the Turkish "ağrıya ağrıya" into English. While my translation does not make pregnancy the only interpretation, it does make it one such possibility. I also presented the image of the pomegranate, with its multitude of seeds (read: words) inside, and the fruit's cultural associate with the color red in that second line. The alliteration of the "p" and "r" sounds in "pomegranate painfully ripe

and red" create the feeling of a heavy pounding (with the "p" sound) and a tearing or ripping through/apart (with the "r" sound). This alliteration compliments the content of the poem since the speaker feels heavy and "they" open her/him up.

| Source by Gülten Akın<br>"İzler" (1995) | Translation by Saliha Paker and Mel Kenne<br>"Traces" (2014) |
|---|---|
| Susup bekleyerek yaşlanıyordu<br>şeylerin uğultusu arasında<br>içi ağırlaştıkça rüzgâra çıkıyor<br>siliyordu kendini durma<br><br>ağrıya ağrıya nara dönüştüğünde<br>açtılar içinden sözler çıktı<br>kem sözler, kırıcı davranışların izleri<br>aldanma gölgesi, ondurmayan bağışlama<br>"gitmeliyim" çıktı, "dönmemek üzere bir daha"<br>"artık herkesin yüzüne<br>                  bütün düşündüklerimi"<br>"yalnız olmalıyım" çıktı<br>derinlerde sır tutmuş<br>bir eski sevda | Waiting without a word she was growing old,<br>in the midst of the humming commotion of things<br>feeling heavy within she went out in the wind<br>erasing herself never stopping<br><br>ache upon ache as she turned into fire<br>they opened her up out came words<br>vicious words, traces of hurtful acts<br>shades of deception, un-healing forgiveness<br>out came "I must go," "never to come back again"<br>"from now it's right in your face<br>                  everything in my mind"<br>out came "I must be on my own"<br>from a secret held deep<br>an old passion |

| Feminist Translation by Elmira Louie<br>"Traces" (2019)<br>Version 1: Female subject (she, her, hers) | Feminist Translation by Elmira Louie<br>"Traces" (2019)<br>Version 2: Male subject (he, him, his) |
|---|---|
| Silently waiting, she was growing old<br>amongst the roar of things<br>weighed down from bottling it up inside, she took off into the wind<br>erasing herself – don't stop.<br><br>Ache upon ache she turned into a pomegranate painfully ripe and red | Silently waiting, he was growing old<br>amongst the roar of things<br>weighed down from bottling it up inside, he took off into the wind<br>erasing himself – don't stop.<br><br>Ache upon ache he turned into a pomegranate painfully ripe and red |

| they opened her up and out poured the bottled-up words<br>sinister words, traces of cruel treatment,<br>shades of deception, false forgiveness –<br>"I've got to go" spilled out, "never to return again"<br>"to everyone's face<br>             all of my thoughts"<br>"I've got to be alone," spilled out<br>– an old passion,<br>a secret held deep. | they opened him up and out poured the bottled-up words<br>sinister words, traces of cruel treatment,<br>shades of deception, false forgiveness –<br>"I've got to go" spilled out, "never to return again"<br>"to everyone's face<br>             all of my thoughts"<br>"I've got to be alone," spilled out<br>– an old passion,<br>a secret held deep. |
|---|---|

# Coda: A Feminist World Literature

Reflecting on this endeavor, I must admit that translation both an extremely fun and an excruciatingly frustrating process. The hours spent agonizing over a single word are well worth the feeling of satisfaction that comes with finally finding that key target word. Surprisingly, when creating my English translations, I found it was much easier to work with a Turkish or Farsi text than Spanish. I had expected Spanish to be the easiest for it was the language closest to English. Often an exact Spanish word not only exists in English but also looks, orthographically, quite similar. Yet this seeming "advantage" turned out to be the greatest challenge in practice. Because near-exact Spanish words are frequently in the English vocabulary, it was much harder to move beyond a literal translation and create a version that was also poetic. Since Turkish and Farsi are so different from English, a literal translation is often nonsensical. Once the gist is understood, one must think poetically in the target language in order to capture the meaning of the source text. This results in a more poetic target text from the start, one that flows as smooth as the third or fourth draft of a target text from Spanish.

Translation, I also learned, is an intimate process that involves both the heart and mind. As the translator, I had to remember and recognize the context of the poems' creation and simultaneously feel the emotion embedded in the source text so that I could think of ways to evoke that emotion in my target poems. This process was never a one-to-one ratio, as computer-generated programs would dupe us into believing. Computer-generated translations such as Google Translate rely on algorithms that process language based on an existing corpus of writing. While this is intended to mimic the literary background and context a human translator might potentially have, the

algorithm could have inadvertently biased consequences if the existing work it relies on is biased itself. Humans learn and grow and recognize when a text becomes outdated due to explicit, and implicit, biases. A computer does not have such capabilities.

For instance, in 2017 Emre Şarbak, a St. Louis-based technology executive, discovered this type of bias when he used Google Translate to go from Turkish into English. He found "the ungendered Turkish sentence 'o is a nurse' would become 'she is a nurse,' while 'o is a doctor' would become 'he is a doctor'" (Zhou). Şarbak entered a litany of sentences using the ungendered "o" and each time, Google Translate assigned stereotypical gender roles depending the subject's descriptor:

Figure 8: Image posted on Emre Şarbak's public twitter account on 28 November 2017.
https://twitter.com/emresarbak?lang=en

The one anomaly is "o bir polis" which is translated as "He-she is a police." The use of "he-she" demonstrates that the computer is capable of making these distinctions, albeit only for one specific field.

A similar phenomenon occurs with Duolingo, the popular online language learning program. Duolingo's method of teaching language is essentially acts of translation where one sees, for example, a Turkish word or sentence and has to choose the "right" or "equivalent" English words. This structure is then repeated with slight variations. But most times in Duolingo Turkish, the only option available for instances

with "o" is a masculine English pronoun. Very rarely are feminine English pronouns a choice, and even then, they appear alone without the masculine. There are no indications that "o" can be masculine, feminine, and neutral. If one has no prior knowledge of Turkish and is learning with the software alone, they will never know about the gendered neutrality "o" because the current Duolingo program of English pseudo-translations incorrectly teaches one that "o" is mainly just a Turkish masculine pronoun.

Unlike Duolingo, Google Translate has taken measures to address their gender bias. As of December 6, 2018, Google Translate developers made it so that the system provides both feminine and masculine translations for gender-neutral words:
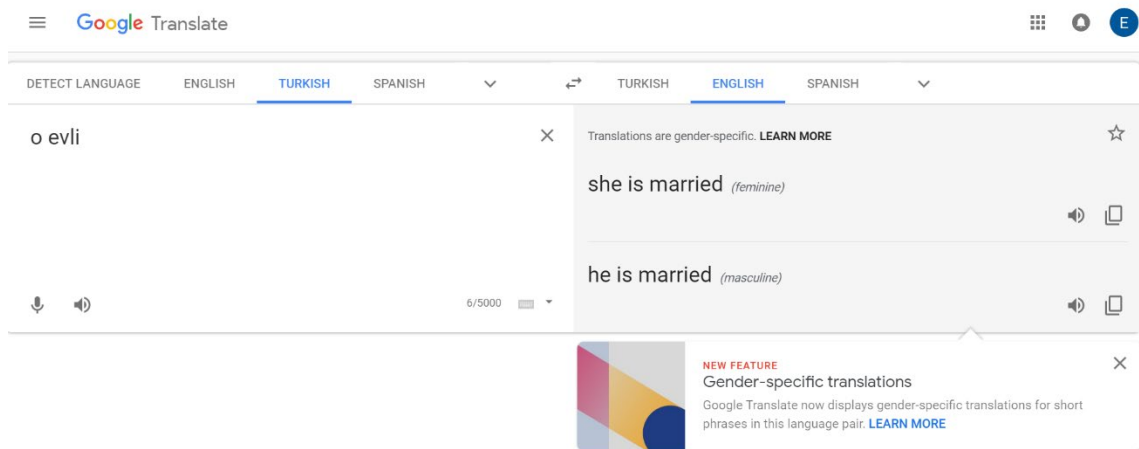


Figure 9: Screenshot taken 8 February 2019.

While this new development is a step in the right direction, it only works with *some* words and *some* languages (Kuczmarski). Turkish is listed specifically as one that has this new feature, yet if we repeat even the first four sentences from Şarbak's experiment, Google Translate quickly reverts to its previously biased format:
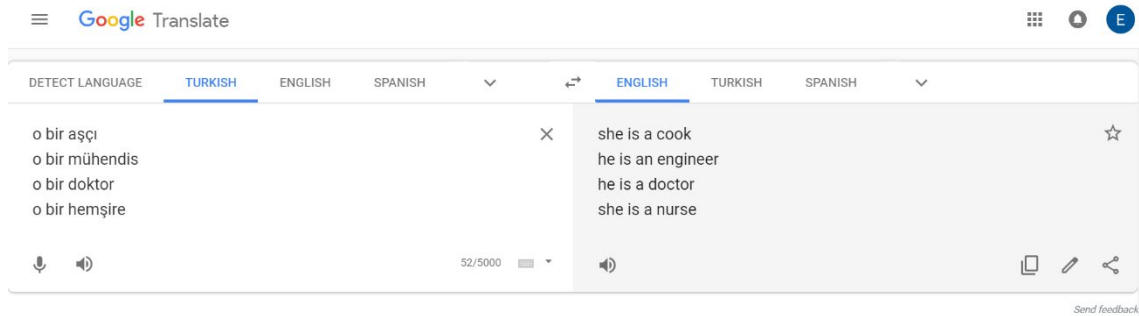
Figure 10: Screenshot 2 taken 8 February 2019.

For longer passages, the bias will exist despite the update. The new feature, thus, is confined to a vague group of words, an un-disclosed number of languages, and only works with single sentences at a time.

The program's product manager, James Kuczmarski, has stated that "Google Translate learns from hundreds of millions of already-translated examples from the web." This method has not only created the program's problematic gender-bias in Turkish but also led to near-plagiarism in Spanish. On March 9, 2010, *The New York Times* tested Google Translate against an "Original Text" in French, Spanish, Russian, German, and Arabic along with the source texts' respective "Human Translation" and two online competitors (Belopotosky). In each case, Google Translate provided more cohesive and structurally-sound translations than its competitors and shared striking similarities to the "Human Translation." In the case of Spanish, the first line of Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien Años de Soledad* was put to the test. Google Translate's version differed from the "Human Translation" by a single word. Before we praise Google Translate on this "achievement," Esther Allen reminds us that "given that Google Translate is a search engine and the translation of *One Hundred Years* one of the most famous texts of our time, widely available across the Internet, should not seem any tremendous feat (indeed, that very slight difference might be deemed a carefully

planned denial of plagiarism)" (100). Google Translate's algorithm works by scanning

online databases for examples of the source and target languages in use. Digitized

translations, particularly those in public domains, are available to the program. Similar

to inadvertently repeating gender-bias, with access to these works Google Translate can

inadvertently plagiarize, which adds another detrimental layer to the invisibility of the

so-called "human translator."

Conversely, I would not view Pierre Menard's word-for-word reconstruction of

*Don Quixote de la Mancha* as plagiarism, but instead as an act of translation. Pierre

Menard is a fictitious twentieth-century French writer from Jorge Luis Borges' short

story, "Pierre Menard, el autor del Quijote." In the story, Menard wants to write Miguel

de Cervantes' novel *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quixote de la Mancha* so he learns

Spanish, become Catholic, and does everything in his power to become Cervantes in

order to rewrite the tale. Ultimately, he decides to write *Don Quixote* as Menard

because "ser, de alguna manera, Cervantes y llegar al Quijote le pareció menos arduo –

por consiguiente, menos interesante – que seguir siendo Pierre Menard y llegar al

Quijote, a través de las experiencias de Pierre Menard" ["to be, in a way, Cervantes and

arrive at Quijote appeared to him less arduous – therefore, less interesting – than

continuing to be Pierre Menard and arrive at Quijote, through the experiences of Pierre

Menard"] (Borges 50). He thus reconstructs the tale from his memory of having read it

as a child. The result is two and a half chapters of *Don Quixote*, word-for-word. Yet

Menard's is, perhaps paradoxically, far from a "copy." He did not transcribe the text

from Cervantes. Menard's text is created from his own "original" words and thoughts,

which "por el olvido y la indiferencia, puede muy bien equivaler a la imprecisa imagen

anterior de un libro no escrito" ["due to forgetfulness and indifference, can very well equate to the earlier vague impression of an unwritten book"] (Borges 52). While the words themselves are the same, the texts are not. Menard's is produced in a different time period and cultural context, for a likewise different audience. His text, written by a twentieth-century French man, gives way to new interpretations for his twentieth-century readers and adds new tonal elements of irony and humor. In short, Menard produces a translation. As such, Borges expands our notion of what counts as a "translation" through the work of Menard.

A translation, therefore, is not a pseudo-science but rather an intricate web of social norms, cultural signs, and historical influences. Feminist translation pushes for heightened awareness of gender across source and target texts and languages. Placing feminist translation theory within the context of world literature, then, expands its notion of feminism beyond the West. It is a feminism of inclusion, rather than exclusion. In acknowledging the agency of the woman writer, it adopts the expectations, language, and sociohistorical context of the source text rather than forcing it to adopt traditional Western narratives. Expanding feminist translation globally, however, does not mean "global feminist translation" in which an "opposition between the local and the global [exists], where 'global' implies western countries" (Tissot 29). Rather, it is a *transnational* feminist translation that requires careful consideration of the differences in addition to the similarities so as to not label the texts as one and the same.

Transnational feminism is the antidote to the all too often trap of categorizing non-Western literature as an "other," indistinguishable historically and culturally. This phenomenon occurs when the focus of Western feminist scholarship is precisely those

not in the West. Chandra Mohanty writes that "Western feminisms appropriate and colonize the constitutive complexities that characterize the lives of women in these countries" (19) through the production of a "Third World difference," a stable, ahistorical something that apparently oppresses most if not all women in these countries. It is "a sociological notion of the 'sameness' of their oppression" that inaccurately binds non-Western women together as a single category in Western feminism (Mohanty 22). The core of Western feminism are universals – "women," "oppression," "Western/Eastern" – that invoke more harm through their simplification and dichotomization.

Transnational feminism, by contrast, "question[s] the so-called 'universal woman subject'" and in revealing the constructedness of universal categories, it brings to light situated differences (Tissot 29). It calls attention to importance of the rhetoricity of the source text for the creation of the target text because "the politics of translation from a non-European woman's text too often suppresses this possibility [of facilitating the connection between source and target] because the translator cannot engage with, or cares insufficiently for, the rhetoricity of the original" (Spivak, "The Politics of Translation" 181). Transnational feminist translation, then, must make the unique woman's voice heard across the different cultural and linguistic zones, and not subsume the voice under an always already constituted other.

My project offers the re-envisioned "future of the transnational" that Olga Castro and Emek Ergun call upon, one that acts "as a polyphonic space where translation (as a feminist praxis) is embraced as a tool and model of cross-border dialogue, resistance, solidarity, and activism" (1). The polyphonic is key in coming to

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an understanding of a transnational feminist translation. In a polyphony, the multitude

of voices remain independent yet are in harmonious unity. Transnational feminism's

polyphony would consider each woman's voice as their own (as I have done with

Farrokhzad, Castro, and Akın) and make them heard in unity via a comparatist

approach. Ultimately, "a polyphonic conversation would entail that no peripheries are

created and that ideas travel in a more multi-directional fashion" (Reimóndes 51). The

polyphonic would ensure the individual voices of women, including "the historically

muted subject of the subaltern woman" (Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak" 91), is

heard. According to Spivak, colonialist and patriarchal ideologies hinder the ability of

the subaltern woman to speak and be heard within the hegemony of Western discourse.

The polyphonic dismantles this hegemony and the hierarchies of power and privilege,

turning the singular Western singer into an intra- and inter-national chorus. Translations

further amplify the polyphony of transnational feminism by enabling "not only the

capacity to speak (upon being translated), but also the possibility of being heard (upon

being read) across differences and borders" (Sánchez 66).

Situating feminist translation theory within the context of world literature,

furthermore, allows us to take the source texts themselves as the point of reference,

thereby moving the field out of the postcolonial paradigm of the West as the focal point.

It breaks down the confinements of traditional area studies to create a theoretical

framework that addresses the limits and structures that come out of the three case study

languages. Gloria Fisk notes how in the twentieth century the term "world literature"

became synonymous with "windows into foreign worlds" and I agree with her claim

that this view can be problematic in its potential to cultivate "Western hegemony in the

globality it constructs" (Fisk 8, 25). The concept of world literature here is not as a mode of foreignization, exoticization, or othering. Instead, this paper understands world literature as the key to breaking down confinements of traditional area studies to better understand a new form of translation studies and practice. It is within this "world literary system" that "objects become meaningful," and come to be "recognized as literary… [and matter] across cultures and time" (Allan 45). All the while, this project and new form of conceptualizing translation transnationally acknowledges the agency of the case study texts, peoples, and cultures.

If we understand translation as "a form of translingual editing, by which a translator both negotiates existing versions and creates a new one of her own, in a language other than that (or those) in which the work was first (or previously) articulated" (Emmerich 2), then feminist translation adds an additional layer of editing, that which is socially and politically motivated by feminism. In fact, making the feminine visible through modifying existing words is an act of editing in itself. Feminist translation thus creates a new iteration of an existing text in a different language, highlights the feminine, and situates this target text within the contexts that bore the source into being. Expanding the body of theory beyond the West allows for critical consideration of linguistic variances in pronoun, syntax, and script. This in turn defines the limitations of current strategies and invents new ones to address these limitations. A feminist world literature is the key to understand the relationship between gender, language, and context across traditional boundaries.

To begin to engage the issue of translation outside of a delimited Eurocentric frame is to encounter a series of urgent, stimulating, and daunting challenges. As this

discussion shows, fundamental differences in script, syntax, pronoun, and culture exists among Persian, Spanish, Turkish, and English. Yet these differences are not insurmountable. Analyzing these differences side-by-side and comparing their linguistic, temporal, and cultural variabilities provides us with a better understanding of all three languages and resultant literatures. This comparatist work also propels us forward, shining a light on more questions of literature and translation: are these works purely aesthetic, political, or sacred? To what extent are poems translatable? How can poetry of languages and cultures different from one's own refine one's understandings of gender and female expression? These are the questions that this analysis, working at the global edge of world literature, confronts.

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