Pedagogies of Feminist Translation: Rethinking Difference and Commonality across Borders

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> The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy… The one place within academia that we as feminists could have the most impact. (hooks 1994, 12, 207)

> Through conversation, through exchanging stories, through exploring our differences without defensiveness or shame, we can learn from each other, share each other's words. As we do so, we'll begin forging commonalities. Perhaps we'll even say, with Susan Guerra, "*I am because we are. Without expecting sameness*". (emphasis original) (Keating 2002, 530)

Introduction: Teaching Feminist Translation for New Global Horizons

Equality and social justice are two of the most pressing issues of the contemporary world. Integrating them in the curriculum across academic subjects is becoming increasingly more of a reality in higher education. Feminist translation studies (FTS) tackles both issues – as it has evolved into an interdisciplinary field in the last decades, its influence on different curricula has favoured the emergence of undergraduate and post/graduate courses in universities across the world, especially within translation studies programmes

and departments. These courses have created critical spaces for discussions on topics such as the feminist politics of language, discourse and translation; feminist knowledge production and dissemination; and the transnationalisation of feminist activisms and movements. FTS, then, can be regarded as part of the transnational expansion of feminisms. In fact, its incorporation in university curricula should be celebrated as a major accomplishment, since it is taking place in a global/ised world where neoliberal values define both research and teaching in higher education. This corporate culture is making universities less compatible with the feminist agenda of producing critical scholarship in the service of local and global social justice (Edwards 2000). Feminist academics are therefore finding themselves "facing insourmountable challenges, new paradoxes and intense ambivalences" (Sifaki 2016, 111).

It is in this precarious yet compelling context that our proposal for pedagogies of feminist translation emerges, where "feminist pedagogy" refers to:

> engaged teaching/learning – engaged with self in a continuing reflective process; engaged actively with the material being studied; engaged with others in a struggle to get beyond our sexism and racism and classism and homophobia and other destructive hatreds and to work together to enhance our knowledge; engaged with the community, with traditional organizations, and with movements for social change. (Shrewsbury 1987, 8)

Such a practice of engaged teaching and learning must be contextualised within a transnational feminist framework and its claims for building alliances among women

across geopolitical borders, so as to subvert all asymmetrical power relations intersecting with patriarchy. It is for this reason that, when applying a feminist pedagogy to translation, our vision of translation goes beyond a purely interlinguistic act of mediation. Rather, we argue that:

> It has to do with linguistic translation, yes, but also with making a work available ... to other audiences and letting it travel. It also has to do with opening scenarios of conversation and proposing new horizons for dialogue. It means opening your choices, your tastes, your affinities to others – which in politics can compromise (or strengthen) your principles. (Prada 2014, 73)

Translation can be an enabler of dialogues between seemingly irreconcilable differences, unearthing transcultural commonalities. Feminist activists and movements have often nourished each other through translational exchanges and cross-fertilisations across time and place. This is clearly illustrated in several chapters in this volume (e.g. Basilio, Mainer, Möser, Robinson, among others). It is also recognised by many theorists of transnational feminism who argue for a politics of translation (e.g. Costa and Alvarez 2014, 557). Thus, translation studies – and specifically FTS – allows us to reflect on the conditions of feminisms' emergence and development as historically situated responses to different regimes and experiences of marginalisation. FTS also allows us to scrutinise how various relations of power intersect with gender in different situations and examine how resistant solidarities are forged against normative regimes.

Bearing all this in mind, we argue that feminist translation is a useful pedagogical tool to teach global politics in disciplines across the humanities and social sciences. Put differently, inasmuch as feminist translation can highlight planetary interconnectivity and the possibility of creating solidarities, it can be considered a promising tool for teaching equality and social justice in difference; and more specifically, in courses on transnational feminism, cultural globalisation, international relations, global social movements, comparative literature, history, sociolinguistics, intercultural communication and so forth. In an attempt to make this tool more accessible, our chapter provides pedagogical strategies for teachers of such courses who are willing to incorporate feminist translation into their curriculum, despite not being familiar with the field.

In what follows, we first present the theoretical framework sustaining our vision of feminist translation as a useful pedagogical tool. This involves discussing its political power to interconnect cultures and peoples despite all the separatist forces that define the global order. The second part of the chapter illustrates how our pedagogy can be practiced in various courses across disciplines. All our pedagogical examples are articulated from the conviction that the feminist classroom is a radical space in which students can be invited to explore translation as a way of rethinking difference and commonality across borders and practicing planetary citizenship.

From Borders to Thresholds: Towards a Post-Oppositional Politics of Engagement

Geopolitical borders, infused with racial fears and nationalist arrogances, separate and estrange us from each other by building actual and illusory walls between us. They pit us

against each other by feeding unwarranted hate and hostility into our subjective and collective psyches. By doing so, they prevent us from imagining and practicing eye-to-eye conversations and egalitarian collaborations. We are told and taught to forget about the *man*-made artificiality and the political and economic motivations of domination behind their construction. We ultimately forget that borders are always porous and can be re-envisioned and experienced as "contact zones" (Pratt 1991).

By giving in to the institutionalised fear of the Other instilled by geopolitical borders – and the fear of the potentially transformative intimacy that any contact with the Other may generate – we settle in our "securely" enclosed identity-marked territories. These are our so-called "comfort zones", exclusionary normative spaces that we often call "home". Settled in them, we feel at ease with the illusion of safety forged by borders that turn invisible our capacity to mutate the other's humanity and our commonality in becoming human. In practicing an oppositional form of self-preservation, we forget that we are open-ended incomplete formations. An oppositional understanding of borders makes us ignore that we become *with* the Other, not against them and that we all have a responsibility to one another because, as Rosario Morales wrote in *This Bridge Called My Back* in 1979, "we are all in the same boat" (2015, 89).

In a world organised in mutually sustaining oppositionalities, we learn to become a subject only in opposition to the Other. This is what students often learn out there and subsequently bring to class: an understanding of borders as reactionary sites of antagonism and differences. However, when difference is perceived as something positive and in relation to existing or potential affinities and commonalities, what Charlotte Bunch calls "creative differences" (1990, 51), borders can be transgressive sites

of dialogue and solidarity. It is our job as feminist teachers to introduce students to this different perspective and invite them to leave their comfort zones, so as to offer them the possibility of unlearning the oppositional understanding of borders. This job, however, is not exempt of risks. As Katherine Sang et al. warn, "feminist academics may challenge students' gender attitudes, causing discomfort, which may result in complaints" (2012). In the neoliberal university, such risks of student resistance and ensuing institutional retaliation are very real for feminist teachers, particularly for those of colour and non-hegemonic nationalities (Ergun 2013b). Therefore, it is of utmost importance that students are consistently and persistently exposed to alternative connectionist pedagogies, like those of feminist translation, by a diverse body of faculty across disciplines.

When pursuing such an objective, a number of questions arise: How can we challenge the dominant oppositional views on borders in class and embrace alternative post-oppositional perspectives? How do we teach students to transform their antagonistic and oppositional fantasies into connectionist and post-oppositional energies? How do we invite them to acknowledge the possibility of forging egalitarian networks of cross-border relations and their accountability for the well being of Others? How do we teach them to hear the voices of Others as legitimate articulations of knowledge and political lessons? All in all, how do we decolonise our classrooms so that we learn to trust, care for, listen to, learn from and grow with each other across borders, when all the geopolitical forces around us tell us to be sceptical and afraid of one another?

In response to these questions, we argue that the simultaneous concern with (just, equal and peaceful) diversity and co-existence makes translation a vital force of cross-border connection that does not pursue sameness for togetherness. More specifically, we

consider that incorporating the praxis of feminist translation as a pedagogical strategy can help students develop a post-oppositional understanding of borders as potential transgressive sites of contact and solidarity. Indeed, feminist translation can be used as a tool of intervention into hetero/patriarchal regimes, as well as other intersecting regimes of domination. Here, we define feminist translation as an act of cross-border meaning making that aims both to connect women's voices and stories and also to provide alternative theories of liberation and co-existence. Therefore, we consider it a productive approach to be used in the classroom to illustrate how to imagine and exercise solidarity in difference.

AnaLouise Keating's "pedagogies of invitation" (2013), situated within the framework of "threshold theories", help us lay the theoretical foundation of our proposal. For Keating, threshold theories are those that "facilitate and enact movements 'betwixt and between' divergent worlds" (2013, 10). Drawing on Gloria Anzaldúa's border theories, Keating offers a planetary vision where differences are redefined "as opportunities, or pathways, enabling us to forge complex commonalities" (2013, 46) and the "hierarchical relationship between self and other" is rejected (2013, 173). This framework conceives the self as permeable, which "extends outward – meeting, touching, entering into exchange with other subjects (human and nonhuman alike). … [This is] a mutual, transformational encounter" (2013, 177) where everyone involved is changed by the interaction. Translation is such an encounter between selves. Threshold theories inform pedagogies of invitation inasmuch as they help invite students into alternative stories about the world, encourage them to acknowledge the existence of other partial

truths and provide them with different ways of seeing and being – not in opposition to others, but rather in relation to them. In other words, in post-oppositional terms.

Keating's theory is useful to present feminist translation as a practice of invitation into different, potentially transgressive, truths and regimes of truth. It provides us with an opportunity to notice our blind spots and limits and to comprehend the world in more complex terms. Since we all experience the world from our own situatedness (Haraway 1988), thus having partial and incomplete knowledge of it, we need to engage in such stretching and learn from one another – and feminist translation allows for such interconnected growth. Furthermore, when practised as social justice projects on local and transnational grounds, it presents us with opportunities to engage in transformational cross-border encounters between subjects who permeate each other's different and differently situated beings with reciprocity, humility, hospitality and generosity.

For this to happen, transnational dialogues are an absolute necessity. As Sara Ahmed (2000, 180) writes, "the differences between us necessitate the dialogue, rather than disallow it – a dialogue must take place, precisely *because* we don't speak the same language" (emphasis original). However, she also warns us that, unless a consciously adopted postcolonial and feminist politics of engagement is in place, exercising solidarity in difference may be an insurmountable task. Therefore, she asks, "How can women encounter each other differently, given that such encounters are already mediated by the divisions of labour and consumption that position women in different parts of the world in relationships of antagonism?" (2000, 171).

The praxis of feminist translation may help answer this question, as it pursues an alternative economy of cross-border encounters with three goals: first, to recognise the

global divisions of labour (including in knowledge production) and consumption that silence some voices while privileging others. Second, to intervene in that colonial and heteropatriarchal scheme of division by enabling cross-cultural travels of subversive discourses and transgressive repertoires of action. Although the geographical directionality of such travels may largely reflect existing global asymmetries so far, as in "West-to-the-Rest narratives" (Costa 2006, 73), feminist translation, as conceptualised here, aims to upset this global trend. This can be done not only by increasing "South-to-South oriented dialogues" (2006, 73), but also by privileging translations/travels of texts that have the potential to decolonise the global order. And third, feminist translation encourages women to engage in critical dialogues and epistemic exchanges across languages, cultures, truths, visions, etc. All in all, feminist translation inspires cross-border political growth on both subjective and collective grounds. In the process of the transnational/translational exchanges that it facilitates, new (or hybrid) epistemological, ontological and political visions of equality, justice and solidarity are created and tested.

Feminist Translation as a Pedagogical Tool: History, Travel, Reception and Solidarity

After presenting our theoretical framework of feminist translation pedagogies as well as our vision of the feminist classroom as a radical transformational space (hooks 1994), in the rest of this chapter we propose specific resources to incorporate the praxis of feminist translation in courses that focus on the transnational, global, international, intercultural and comparative. Our curricular model (a) emphasises decolonising local and global

knowledge production and dissemination; (b) engages in critical analyses of borders, (g)localities and transnational formations that are geopolitically, historically and intersectionally situated; and (c) exposes students to "different stories and ways of crossing borders and building bridges" (Mohanty 2003, 238). Our objective is to help teachers invite students to re-envision the world in post-oppositional terms as a complex, interconnected place where difference is not an impediment, but a must to forge commonalities, affinities and solidarities.

We propose a practical application of our pedagogical model in four thematic units, all of which correspond to major research areas in FTS with substantial scholarship: feminist translation in history, textual travel, reception and transnational solidarity.[2] Each of these units, understood as a combination of learning objectives, materials and activities, can easily be integrated into an existing course design. In all units, we suggest specific readings and assignments that we consider useful. We try to be as comprehensive as possible in providing different learning methods and assignments (critical essays, class discussions, research projects, oral presentations, self-reflexive journals, etc.) and they are flexible enough to be adapted to fit the course design they are added in.

Our pedagogies of feminist translation are inevitably drawn from our own teaching experiences in several Women's and Gender Studies Departments (for Ergun) and Translation Studies Departments (for Castro), across various universities in the US and the UK – also influenced by our own student experiences in Turkey and Galicia. We are aware of the different institutional terminologies, educational traditions, curricular expectations and material resources informing different academic cultures. Therefore,

although the four units provided below are framed within the Anglo-American higher education system, we try to use a broad enough terminology and design to make it easy for our units to be adapted across academic cultures. We also hope that, despite differences among disciplines, our interdisciplinary examples can be integrated into courses offering critical takes on the processes of cultural globalisation; or at least, they are inspirational enough to develop other post-oppositional, connectionist pedagogies.

A. Feminist Translation in History

A thematic unit on feminist translation in history aims to illustrate the trans/formative role of translation in inspiring and expanding women's and feminist movements in different localities, always situated within a transnational context. Histories of local feminist movements are too often told as national histories that do not disclose their international connections and enrichments by translational "imports" of theories, agendas and energies – and here we refer not only to translations of publications, but also to travelling feminist activists, international political gatherings, citations, etc. We argue that if students are exposed to alternative – transnational/translational – histories of local feminist movements, they could gain concrete knowledge about global interconnectivities and their political significance for social change. They would also question nationalist discourses woven around ideas of purity and authenticity that too often function as exclusionary and antagonistic mechanisms. This thematic unit, thus, enables students to learn about the ways in which translation helps activists come together across (and despite) national borders. It provides them with historical lessons on how such encounters

and transnational modes of interconnectivity did actually happen or failed to happen: whether exchanging repertoires of action, theory and knowledge on gender justice, or falling into the geopolitical trap of assimilating the Other's differences in translation and ending up affirming preconceived nationalist, orientalist, colonialist notions of the Other.

Although the contents of the unit may be adapted to the national context where the course is offered (or to its geohistorical focus), we would still like to offer some well-documented "national" translation histories of feminisms as examples. One is the case of bilingual Quebec, where the overlapping movements of national sovereignty and feminism used French-English translations of experimental transgressive texts as a major political tool in the 1970s and 1980s (Lotbinière-Harwood 1991; Flotow 1997b; Simon 1996). In fact, Quebec was the political milieu within which "feminist translation" was first claimed as a distinct theory and praxis. Other useful cases to illustrate the historical role of translation in the development of feminist praxes include those of China, where translated feminisms from the metropolitan west transformed the terms in which modern Chinese understand their subjectivities and histories (Ko and Zheng 2007); Turkey, where the translation collective *Kadın Çevresi* [The Women's Circle] played a key role in the emergence of the post-1980s' feminist movement (Ergun 2016; Paker 1991); Italy (Basilio in this collection); Spain (Sanchez in the collection); and the translational making of "French feminism" in the US (Freiwald 1991; Moorjani 1996; Moses 1998; Penrod 1993; Susam-Sarajeva 2006; and Möser in this collection).

This unit could start with students reading and discussing such historical narratives that reveal translation's trans/formative impact on local feminist movements. As for the assignment, students could engage in a research project, digging into histories

of feminisms (or other political movements, progressive or reactionary) within the context of their locality to uncover the transnational/translational doings of political activists. Such a research project facilitates at least three learning outcomes: (1) students comprehend how political movements are encouraged and expanded through cross-border dialogues (including conflictual exchanges); (2) they see that histories charted in national terms are often not as exclusively "national" as they seem to be; (3) they understand that the local and the global do not make a binary opposition, but they rather interact as co-constitutive sites – in other words, the global is made up of multiple localities (albeit hierarchically positioned) and the local is "where globalisation is constituted, as well as where its effects are played out" (Thayer 2010, 6).

B. Feminist Translation in Textual Travels

A thematic unit on textual travels, understood here as the circulation of texts in translation, aims to reveal the empowering effects of translating feminist discourses. Translational travels enable cross-cultural flows that facilitate and reinforce local and transnational feminisms and connect feminists across borders. Such textual mobility does not take place in a vacuum and should always be situated in relation to colonialist imperialist legacies and regimes of regulation. Without such contextualisation, the unit runs the risk of romanticising the notion of textual travel by depicting a picture of discourses freely floating across seemingly un-ideological, equally situated routes.

One study of textual travels that could be useful in courses taught in different cultural contexts is Kathy Davis' *The Making of* Our Bodies, Ourselves*: How Feminism*

Travels across Borders (2007). This book tells the story of the translational remakings of Boston Women's Health Book Collective's *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (*OBOS*), a globally renowned feminist classic that came out of the US-American women's health movement of the 1970s (see Pincus 2005 for a discussion). Davis' book highlights the activist role of translators in the transnational production of feminist knowledges on women's bodies, sexualities and health, and it also emphasises the political agency of readers in these transnational processes. Her analysis illustrates that differences in culture, language and historical legacies are not necessarily an impediment to cross-border collaborations among feminists. Rather, those differences make feminist agendas stronger if they are recognised as opportunities for dialogue, self-reflection and epistemological growth. The book shows that cross-cultural feminist dialogues occurred during and after the numerous translations of *OBOS* precisely because translation is a creative operation of differences – where differences are put to use and preserved, rather than ignored or assimilated. This book would provide (English-speaking) students with concrete ideas on how to engage in more egalitarian, polyphonic practices of transnational exchange, despite the hierarchical and oppositional modes of cultural imperialism that systematically hinder such collaborations (including "feminism as cultural imperialism", also discussed in the book).

A related learning activity that could follow that reading involves students researching whether *OBOS* has been translated into the language/s spoken in their context. In that case, examining the translated book (perhaps in juxtaposition with the English source text/s) and/or talking to its translators (and readers) can be incorporated in the unit as an assignment. A useful resource here includes the prefaces written by *OBOS* translators. Many of these prefaces are translated into English and compiled as "OBOS

Transformed Worldwide" (Chatterjee 2015), which further fosters transnational feminist dialogues. These prefaces could indeed be used as learning materials in the unit. Otherwise, if the book is not translated to students' language/s, the class can still discuss whether it would be a feasible project in their locality and perhaps even do some preliminary survey into the local feminist groups that could potentially take on the task.

The second example of this unit is the global circulation of Simone de Beauvoir's *Le deuxième sexe* [*The Second Sex*] (1949), a classic in feminist scholarship. In the book, Beauvoir meticulously deconstructs myths about women. Her oft-quoted claim, "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman" is deemed central to the development of western feminisms. Beauvoir understands feminism not only as a theoretical and philosophical matter, but also as a cross-cultural political practice, which seems to have increased the relevance of her work for different cultural contexts and facilitated its travels into several languages through translation. *Le deuxième sexe* has been translated into some 40 languages so far and several of these translations have been studied in regard to their political impact on local feminist movements and feminist knowledge production.

Based on the geographic location or focus of the course, some of these studies on different translations could selectively be incorporated as reading materials in this unit, for instance the analysis of the Japanese (Inoué 2002), Russian (Patterson 2002), German in former East Germany (Selle 2002), Turkish (Koş 2015), Galician (Castro 2009a), Serbian (Jovanovic 2010), Catalan (Godayol 2013a) or Chinese (Yu 2015) translations. All these studies offer valuable insights into the translational journey of *Le deuxième sexe* to different contexts at different points in time.

In some cases, *Le deuxième sexe* has been translated to the same language twice. Such is the case in English (Simons 1983; Moi 2002 and 2010) and Spanish (Nielfa Cristóbal 2002; Castro 2008), where the second translation was done as a response to feminist analyses that revealed not only the existence of "hetero/patriarchal" translation strategies in the first rendering, but also a consequent distorted understanding of Beauvoir's arguments in the target culture. This was particularly prominent in the Anglophone world, where she was perceived as a confused, incoherent thinker (Simons 1983, 562). The findings of such analyses on the politics of translation could serve as inspiration for having students engage in similar comparative analyses between the co-existing re/translations of *Le deuxième sexe* or another text. This would help them understand translational travels as political processes of mediation with actual (connectionist or separatist, reductionist or expansive) effects on cross-border dialogues, rather than as innocent renderings of supposedly transparent signs between languages.

If, instead of focusing on a single case of language, the teacher seeks to expose students to a wide range of translations (and mis/translations) to emphasise the multi-directional travels of *Le deuxième sexe*, various cases could be assigned as part of a classroom presentation. Each student (or group of students) would then research and report back on a specific translation case geopolitically situated as a transnational feminist project. After hearing each other's presentations, students would be informed about multiple cases of translational travels of feminist theories and knowledges.

C. Feminist Translation in Reception

A thematic unit on feminist translation in reception aims to highlight the role of readers as situated agents in cross-border meaning making operations. Acknowledging the politics of reception is particularly important if the course being offered takes place in the Global North, where students are culturally habituated to either completely dismiss or see translated works from "other" cultures as less important. More often than not, those students are also used to interpreting translated texts with ahistorical and ethnocentric lenses. Such textual encounters between western readers and non-western (particularly women) writers affirm the geopolitical gulf between the author and the reader, failing the connectionist potential of translation. Therefore, in order to facilitate ethical, non-colonial encounters with the Other, it is crucial to teach students about geopolitics of reception.

To structure the unit, we suggest focusing on the sexual politics of orientalism and problematising the gendered binary of "west vs. east". That enables students to realise how this dichotomous framework shapes our reading practices in hegemonic ways and prevents us from seeing and building connections across the west/east borders – borders that are imagined but have material consequences. As such, the unit is comprised of two parts. The first part introduces orientalism as a form of reception politics to set the theoretical foundation of the unit. It starts with reading Liddle and Rai's "Feminism, Imperialism and Orientalism" (1998), which revisits orientalism in a feminist framework and reveals common orientalist practices in western readings/writings about "the Indian Woman". This reading should be followed by chapters from Amireh and Majaj's edited collection *Going Global: The Transnational Reception of Third World Women Writers* (2000). Together, these sources raise students' awareness on the dangers of cross-cultural textual encounters and illustrate how, in their translational travels to the Global North,

Third World women's voices are habitually otherised with imperialist motives. This is crucial to recognise because, without such awareness, alternative (non-orientalist, connectionist) reading practices and interpretive economies cannot be developed.

The second part of the unit involves the comparative readings and analyses of two books travelling from the east (or any non-hegemonic or marginalised culture). We propose the pair of Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2008) and Fatemeh Keshavarz's *Jasmine and Stars: Reading More Than* Lolita *in Tehran* (2007). The books should be preceded by a comprehensive and transnationally situated introduction to the history of Iran. While neither of these texts is a work of direct translation, their stories are voiced and/or populated by otherised women travelling from the orient to the west. Thus, the books pose curious interpretive challenges to readers situated or trained within the hermeneutical and epistemological traditions of the west. That said, the two books differ greatly in terms of their relation to the orientalist truth regimes of the west. Nafisi's book tells the stories of a group of post-revolutionary Iranian women's "enlightening" encounters with western literature and is heavily criticised for perpetuating orientalist motives. Keshavarz's book, on the other hand, criticises Nafisi's work (and its service to orientalist economies) and its totalising narrative on "Iranian women". In her own words, *Jasmine and Stars* aims to reveal "our shared humanity" and "the building of the bridge" by providing an array of alternative stories on women from Iran (2007, 5).

Then, Keshavarz's book performs transnationalism, while Nafisi's performs orientalism. The key difference is in their political effects: *Reading Lolita in Tehran* grows the distance between the east and the west and seals the border as insurmountable, while *Jasmine and Stars* builds a bridge over that distance by revealing commonalities

and invites the reader over to partake in that common humanity. Indeed, the cover pages of the two books visually contribute to their different geopolitical performances. Nafisi's book shows two veiled women who are leaned over with their eyes cast down (presumably reading a book) and Keshavarz's book shows two veiled (more casually) women, who are holding banners in Arabic and looking intently at something and laughing. Given these two different representations, holding a class discussion on the implications of the travelling books' covers before students begin reading them can make an engaging introduction to the second part of the unit. As an assignment, we recommend that students keep self-reflexive journals while reading the books and record their reading experiences, emotions and questions in the process. Once they complete their reading and journaling, they should write an essay where they compare their journals and reflect on their cross-border reading experiences in relation to orientalism, imperialism and their intersections with gender politics. Thus, the essay should be informed by the theoretical insights gained in the first part of the unit. Unlike the previous units that emphasised the connectionist potential of translation, this one provides students with words of caution about the disconnectionist potential of translation that emerges when writing and reading practices fall prey to orientalist, colonialist and imperialist motives.

D. Feminist Translation in Transnational Solidarity

Finally, a unit on feminist translation in transnational solidarity reveals the ways in which different activist practices have travelled across borders via translation, facilitating transnational solidarities for social justice, and the geopolitical risks involved in those

operations of mobility and connectivity. Such travelling practices enrich local repertoires of action and sometimes even turn into global events. Yet, they also often affirm global asymmetries because activisms born in certain parts of the globe have a much better chance of travelling and affecting the political agendas (and future) of the world. In those cases, the transnational potential of translation to help forge solidarities has failed. In order to illustrate these two effects of translation in activism, this unit involves two parts.

In the first part, we propose to examine activism born in the Global North and then translated to the Global South. As examples, we use two such activist practices that started in North-America and have later travelled widely around the world, while also being criticised for colonial representations or implications. The first example comprises the translations and transnationalisation of the SlutWalk movement, a protest march that first appeared in Canada in 2011 against rape culture. Subsequent rallies were adapted to different localities. Such adaptations necessarily involved translating the title of the movement to accommodate the use of the controversial term "slut" in different linguistic and cultural contexts. Critical readings on the transnationalisation of this contentious feminist practice would complicate students' perspectives on cultural imperialism, global interconnectivity and solidarity building while also framing translation as a politically creative act (Bogado 2015). Readings in English that can be assigned here include those on Indian SlutWalks (Mitra 2012); on the role of Muslim participants at the 2011 London SlutWalk (Lim and Fanghanel 2013) and on the Moroccan SlutWalk (Robinson in this volume). We also recommend searching for sources in languages other than English that may be accessible to students. For instance, the Brazilian SlutWalk (*Marcha das Vadias*)

has yielded a large scholarship in Brazilian Portuguese (Ferreira 2016; Gomes and Sorj 2014; Tomazetti and Brignol 2015).

Our second example focuses on the translations and transnationalisation of *The Vagina Monologues*, an award-winning theatre play written by Eve Ensler in 1996. It is composed of a number of monologues dealing with various aspects of the female body and sexuality (e.g. masturbation, orgasm, birth, menstruation, etc.). The play inspired the global V-Day movement to fight against violence against women and the expansion of this movement itself is a (contentious) case of transnationalisation. The book has been translated into some 50 languages and staged in 120 countries. Different publications in English discuss the adaptation of *The Vagina Monologues* in, for example, Hong Kong (Cheng 2009), Uganda (Makubuya 2005) and Turkey (see Adak 2014 and Altınay's comments in the roundtable chapter of this volume).

While reflecting upon the travels of feminist practices born in western contexts, students should read articles that reveal both the activist potential of translation and the geopolitical risks in cross-border adaptations of political practices developed in imperial contexts. *The Vagina Monologues*, for instance, has been heavily criticised for its universalising, appropriating and othering gaze towards non-western women (Basu 2010; Njambi 2009; Williams 2011). At least one such reading should be assigned together with another that applauds the travels of this text, so that students become informed about the complexities of the geopolitics of feminist translation and transnationalisation of feminisms. It would also be helpful if students are competent in languages other than English and the teacher provides analyses of the translations of *The Vagina Monologues* (or other transnational feminist practices) in those languages – even better, if students see

the show performed in other languages, either live or through the many recordings available on internet sites, such as YouTube.

Following these readings and discussions, students may write proposals for an activist project adapted from another activist practice developed, performed and proven effective in a different context. The benefits of doing research for this proposal and writing a "performable" project are manifold: students get a chance to learn about feminist actions practiced in other parts of the world; reflect historically upon the political legacies of their locality; think critically about the risks and promises of transnational feminist activisms; design their own social justice projects; and re-envision the globe as an interconnected web of relations, rather than in an "us vs. them" binary.

The second part of the unit focuses on activisms that were born in non-western contexts and have subsequently travelled to the Global North. One such example in English is *Playing with Fire: Feminist Thought and Activism through Seven Lives in India* (Sangtin Writers and Nagar 2006), originally co-authored in Hindi and Awadhi by eight NGO activists from Sitapur District of India and Richa Nagar. The book was later translated into English by Nagar in response to the backlash from the administrators of the NGO in question. *Playing with Fire* is composed of "interbraided stories of the journeys of nine *sangtins* (close women companions)" and presents "a constructive collective critique of, and an alternative vision to, what some have termed as 'NGOisation of grassroots politics'" (Nagar in the roundtable chapter in this volume). Illustrating how several women from different religions, castes and backgrounds come together across separatist borders and engage in a journey of solidarity and friendship, the book aims to "envision and rebuild our interconnected worlds, even if such a project

involves playing with fire", as Nagar writes in her introduction (2006, xxi). It is this focus on the challenging (yet promising and rewarding) process of solidarity building that turns *Playing with Fire* into a tremendous asset in helping students exercise connectivity and solidarity across differences.

In this part of the unit on transnational solidarity, *Playing with Fire* could be used in the classroom as a "learning guide" to create a similar "spirit of togetherness" among students (e.g. as part of a team-based project). Hence, the book could be incorporated both as a reading material and as a form of in-class activism, adapted by students to forge similar solidarity groups to engage in collaborative, embodied knowledge production practices – perhaps on specific themes, such as family, education, childhood, sexuality, etc. Like Sangtin writers, students could hold regular meetings to share their life stories with each other and explore systems of oppression and privilege as these have manifested in their (seemingly separate but interconnected) lives. The conversations and ensuing collaborative written narratives could follow the collective "model" presented in the book and students would experience first-hand the idea of interconnectivity across differences and the notion that "knowledge grows out of and is embodied in dialogue" (2006, 154). This activity also poses significant challenges to students, particularly those situated in the Global North, since they have to unlearn their orientalist and imperialist reading habits. Without such unlearning, they cannot truly listen to and connect with the voices of Sangtin writers and regard their narratives highly enough to translate them into their lives and let them transform their selves. For this reason, students need to be encouraged to read other essays discussing the geopolitical risks of cross-border writing/reading practices about the Indian context. A good starting point is the already mentioned article

by Liddle and Rai (1998), as it critically analyses colonial western feminist representations and receptions of the "Indian Woman" (on the risks of cross-border reception, also see Nagar's comments in the roundtable chapter in this volume).

Concluding Remarks

The starting point of this chapter was the conviction that feminist translation is a productive pedagogical tool to promote equality, social justice and solidarity in and beyond the classroom. Enlarging the conventional definition of translation beyond that of a purely interlinguistic act and resituating it in a post-oppositional theoretical framework, we have revealed some of the many areas of political intervention that feminist translation engages in, in the service of transgressive, liberatory and empowering causes. Therefore, it can be claimed that the pedagogical appeal of feminist translation is not restricted to university courses in translation studies departments, but rather it has a great potential in courses on the transnational, global, international, intercultural and comparative, among others.

With this diversity of courses in mind, we have offered various teaching/learning strategies and examples, grouped together around the thematic units of history, textual travel, reception and transnational solidarity. These units, presented as areas of intervention, can be incorporated into different university courses depending precisely on the different objectives they pursue: to reveal the trans/formative role of translation in expanding feminist theories and movements beyond nations (history), to illustrate the transgressive effects of translating and circulating feminist discourses across borders

(textual travels), to unearth the decisive influence that readers have as agents of meaning-making operations in signifying works traveling from other cultures (reception) and to highlight how translation makes it possible for activist practices to expand beyond their localities into global scales (transnational solidarity).

The description of the course materials, as well as the design of the assignments and learning activities we have put forward are necessarily framed within the Anglo-American higher education system, where we have pursued our teaching careers. However, it is our hope that the examples presented are adaptable and inspirational enough to facilitate the development of similar post-oppositional, connectionist pedagogies – pedagogies that not only emphasise feminist translation's potential to bring us closer across differences and around common political agendas of resistance, but also teach us how to ethically connect with one another without resorting to colonial border gestures and mechanisms. In other words, pedagogies that remind us that we always already live in translation. As such, the classroom becomes a crucial place where, as feminist teachers, we help raise a critical awareness on the geo/political risks and promises of "living in translation".

Notes

[1] This chapter is part of the research project "Bodies in Transit: Making Difference in Globalized Cultures" (Reference FFI2013-47789-C2-2-P), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness.

[2] "Linguistic analysis of translated texts", as a research theme, has also yielded substantial scholarship. Indeed, this is probably the most researched area of FTS. Both of us have published linguistic translation analyses (Castro 2009b, 2013b; Ergun 2013a) and papers on their pedagogical applications or implications

(Castro 2010; Ergun 2010b). Given the extensive pedagogical attention we paid to this topic in previous publications, and in order to keep our focus on translation "beyond linguistics" (Prada 2014, 73), we concentrate here on other aspects of feminist translation that, in our opinion, still deserve more scholarly attention. If teachers want to highlight the linguistic aspects of translation, they can refer to the publications indicated above.