A CRITICAL OVERVIEW OF FEMINISM AND/IN TRANSLATION:
CONSTRUCTING CULTURES AND IDENTITIES THROUGH AN INTERDISCIPLINARY EXCHANGE

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Abstract: *'A bridge between cultures' and 'les belles infidèles' are commonly used metaphors to describe translation. The first one shows that translation is a border zone where collaborative dialogues between languages and cultures take place whereas the second example highlights the feminity of the discipline (Simon 1996). They suggest, however, that translation is never a neutral act, but rather a creative act of re-appropriation that contributes to the construction of identities, knowledge and culture (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990). Literary translation can thus be a shaping force for change and renewal. This article presents an overview of Feminist Translation and demonstrates how this approach has, through 'transformance' and transgression, played a catalytic role in shaping women's identities, cultures and literatures. Due to its political and historical background in second-wave feminism and French Feminism, this translation approach has not only drawn attention to gendered language and the place of women's writing, but also forced Translation Studies to rethink pre-established concepts and has participated in the development of feminisms and in the recovering of lost female voices.*

Keywords: Feminist Translation, Feminism, Translation, Transgression, Gender

'Translators and women have historically been the weaker figures in their respective hierarchies: translators are handmaidens to authors, women inferior to men' states Sherry Simon in the opening lines of *Gender in Translation* (1996, p.1). An example of this conflation, based on reproductive and secondary status, is found in tags such as 'les belles infidèles'— the idea that in marriage and in translation, only faithfulness guarantees legitimacy; and in Lori Chamberlain's essay 'Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation' (1988), in which she examines the gender-based paradigm within representations of translation. It seems only relevant then that this convergence encouraged a new approach to translation practices. Feminist translation can be defined as a conscious political activity that seeks to intervene in linguistic and textual structures of domination and to disrupt epistemic mechanisms of marginalisation. In effect, this approach stems from second-wave feminism that saw language as an issue of power, as will be shown through the work of French Feminists and Canadian writers. Feminist translation thus mobilises feminist discourses to connect different movements across borders in order to challenge phallocentric language and gender constructs, facilitate feminist production and make women's (and translators') work recognised in society, and seen as equally important in the literary sphere. This article aims to demonstrate how translation has contributed to the flux of feminist ideas between languages and cultures, particularly between French and English. Feminist translation has shaped the development of feminist thought by participating in the re-construction of women's identity in the West from the 1970s onwards. The focus will be on the Canadian School and the background, strategies and theories of the first wave of feminist translation — strongly related to second-wave feminism. This analysis will then lead to an account of the second paradigm and its redefinition for a more inclusive approach, which is closely associated with third-wave feminism.

The Development of Feminist Translation

A feminist approach to translation originates from the introduction of the notion of 'gender' into discussions of sexual difference in the twentieth century.[1] With the development of post-war feminism in the mid-to-late 1960s, gender became a focus of feminist thinkers, as biological reasons no longer appeared adequate to account for the differences in men's and women's societal and cultural roles (Flotow 1997, p.5). Women's movements focused on 'the behavioural stereotypes that come with gender conditioning' and on the 'ideological and political conviction that women were more unified by the fact of being female in a patriarchal society than […] divided by specificities of race and class' (Eisenstein 1983 cited in Flotow 1997, p.6). The idea of gender conditioning is reminiscent of Simone de Beauvoir's aphorism 'on ne nait pas femme, on le devient' in *Le deuxième sexe II* ['one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' (Beauvoir 1949, p.13 / translation 1953, p.281)], which suggests that,

> a baby born with female reproductive organs does not simply grow up to be a woman. She has to turn herself into a woman, or more correctly, she *is turned* into a woman by the society she grows up in and in response to the expectations that society has of women. (Flotow 1997, p.5)

The concept of gender was thus developed in the interest of examining and understanding women's socialised differences and their cultural and political powerlessness. Although the binary approach to gender has since been criticised (see Butler 1990), the concept has become an important analytical tool in several academic disciplines. Similarly, the notion that all women are unified by their gender, or 'global sisterhood', has been called into question by black feminists (see Alice Walker 1983), and postcolonial feminists (see Chandra Talpade Mohanty 1991), due to its totalising tendencies and its exclusion of women of colour and of other parts of the world.

The question of gender became nevertheless central in feminist writing through explorations of the body and of sexual identity. Indeed, language was no longer solely seen as a communicative tool but also as a manipulative one used by patriarchal societies. This idea was central to the work of French Feminists such as Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray, and of Nicole Brossard and Louky Bersianik in Canada. Writers took issue with conventional language and grammatical constructions which they saw as reflecting and perpetuating patriarchal power structures, gender constructs and sexual-based stereotypes. As Luce Irigaray wrote: 'Si nous continuons à nous parler le même langage, nous allons reproduire la même histoire. Recommencer les mêmes histoires' ['If we keep on speaking the same language together, we're going to reproduce the same history. Begin the same old stories all over again'] (Irigaray 1977, p.205 / translation

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[1] I would like to thank my supervisors, Professor Michael Syrotinski and Professor Susan Bassnett, for their guidance and constructive feedback; as well as Dr Eamon McCarthy and Dr Emeline Morin for their support.

1985, p.205). From questions centred around language use and language issues in power struggles — meaning how language reflects and maintains power differences amongst sexes and can be an instrument of oppression and subjugation—, feminist writers questioned and transgressed patriarchal language through experimental writing. Nicole Brossard created feminised neologisms such as 'mourriture' to link nurture, putrefaction and death (Flotow 1997, p.15); Louky Bersianik's character in *L'Euguélionne* (1976) investigated the different qualities applied to men and women, and Anne Garréta wrote *Sphynx* (1986) without using any gender markers to refer to her main characters. Exploring new grounds and seeking to develop new ideas, feminist writers invented words, spellings, images and metaphors, and deconstructed conventional grammatical constructions. The theory behind these practices was that linguistic innovations would breathe life into women's creativity and feminist consciousness. Parallel to re-writing the word, which was a critical aspect of experimental writing, feminists also re-wrote the body:

> At the root of much feminist work is the recuperation of the objectified, obscured, vilified or domesticated female body. This is a body that has been depersonalised by patriarchy, that offers services in return for its maintenance, while at the same time maintaining the system that subjugates it. The body is, however, also the source of women's creative energy, a largely unknown entity that has been long silenced and needs to be written. (Flotow 1997, p.17)

The writing of Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray has influenced both feminism and feminist translation practices. Their work investigates the symbolic and historical roots of patriarchy through language in order to challenge discursive constructions of sexual identity. In *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Cixous urges women to claim their body back:

> She must write her self, because this is the invention of a *new insurgent* writing which, when the moment of her liberation has come, will allow her to carry out the indispensable ruptures and transformations in her history […] By writing her self, woman will return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display –– the ailing or dead figure, which so often turns out to be the nasty companion, the cause and location of inhibitions. Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time.
> (Cixous, translation 1976, p. 880)

In effect, inviting women to write their own history and body encouraged the exploration of a subject that had hitherto been described in terms of stereotypes: lover, mother, virgin or whore. Feminist writers identified sexuality as the underlying element of devaluation and therefore developed a vocabulary for either censored parts of the body or taboo topics. Julia Kristeva for instance introduced terms such as the polysemic 'jouissance' and 'invagination'; Luce Irigaray created the neologisms 'sexué' and 'sexuation' and Nicole Brossard referred to 'la perte blanche.' Translating this French body into English caused linguistic and cultural problems that pushed translators to reflect on the limitations of their own language. In Kristeva's vocabulary, sexual pleasure is covered by 'plaisir' but 'jouissance' has a number of meanings ranging from enjoyment to pleasure to sexual pleasure to orgasm, as well as the presence of meaning (jouissance = j'ouïs sens = I heard meaning). It is also 'a word with *simultaneously* sexual, political and economic overtones [as in the "enjoyment of rights" and "property"]' (Wing 1996, p.165). Translation solutions have included 'bliss', 'sexual pleasure', and 'enjoyment' but have been deemed unable to render fully Kristeva's writing (Simon 1996, pp.102-103). A similar difficulty is found in the translation of Nicole Brossard's 'la perte blanche.' The term refers to vaginal discharge but has been rendered literally as 'white loss', which excludes the meaning of bodily secretions (Godard 1984, p.13). As Barbara Godard points out, this translation demonstrates an insufficient knowledge of biology in English. These translation debates showed gaps between French-Canadian and American feminist discourses and testimonies of cultural situations. They also raised questions about censorship, creativity and power in translation, particularly of how a new translation sensibility could benefit from and further feminist theories. Translating feminist texts has thus enabled these writings to cross cultural and linguistic borders and has participated in fostering an international exchange in the re-creation of women. In effect, it opened up a new dialogue on how Western languages and cultures defied phallocentric discourses. The marginal and intercultural nature of translation may explain why translation appeared ideal to convey and pave the way for feminist ideas, especially in the deconstruction of normative linguistic gender representations. Indeed, it can be argued that feminist activists explored ways in which translation could be an explicitly political tool because at the core of much feminist and translation work are the notions of transgression and transformation.

With the implication of gender in language, feminists have demonstrated that a woman's identity is formed through language. She needs to be rewritten by the *écriture féminine* to reconstruct her self, according to French Feminists, which implies writing through her body, undermining patriarchal expressions, and inventing her own language. The production and translation of feminist texts favoured the development of a new approach to translation, which not only ensured but also reinforced the transmission of feminist discourses. Moreover, it can be argued that this politicised the translation practice and the translator, who now identified as a 'feminist translator' and defined her practice as part of the larger feminist movement.

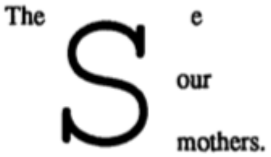
The First Wave of Feminist Translation: the Canadian School

Feminist Translation Studies emerged within the Anglo-French cultural dialogue in Canada, as a method of translating the focus on and the critique of patriarchal language by feminist writers in Quebec. Its development was favoured by the unique political and cultural context in which fights for representation and recognition of both women and bilingualism were taking place (see Voice of Women and the Quiet Revolution). In the 1970s and 1980s, authors such as Nicole Brossard, Madeleine Gagnon, and Denise Boucher, produced experimental work to denounce and dismantle 'the conventional language they perceived as inherently misogynist' (Flotow 1991, p.72). To write in the feminine through an attack on language, these writers questioned its materiality. In effect, this meant research into the etymology of conventional vocabulary and its deconstruction, for example, through puns and neologisms or the dismantlement of words to reveal concealed meanings, as is evidenced by Brossard's use of the word 'délire/de-lire' ['delirium/reading'] in *Amantes* (1980, p.11) [translated as *Lovhers* by Barbara Godard (1986, p.16)]. In her poem, the wordplay may refer to the excitation a woman experiences when reading another woman's text, 'the uncontrolled expression of women's realities', or the 'process of un-reading' (Flotow 1991, p.73). Grammatical strategies also involved the silent 'e' that marks the female gender in French, which became an important element in the critique of the masculine as the generic term. The aim of these authors was to write about women's experiences that had not been put into words before and therefore to write 'l'inédit' (or 'unwritten' in Godard 1990, p. 89). These texts were first translated with two feminist plays: *Les fées ont soif* and *La nef des sorcières*, in which is found the striking and often cited feminist translation example: 'Ce soir, j'entre dans l'histoire sans relever ma jupe' (Flotow 1991, p.69). Two translations read as follows: 'this evening I'm entering history without pulling up my skirt' and 'this evening I'm entering history without opening my legs' (Flotow 1991, pp.69-70). This illustration shows the radicalness of both feminist writers and translators to challenge authority and of the cultural and social context of feminism in Canada. The 'greater shock effect' of the second translation 'makes explicit a major feminist topos, namely the repossession of the word; the naming and writing of the life of the body, the exploration of its images, as experienced by women' (Godard, 1984, p.14). It also raises the issues of equivalence and fidelity in feminist translation.

It is worth noting that there were parallel developments undergoing simultaneously in Translation Studies and feminist theory in the 1970s and 1980s. The 'rethinking' of translation through the 'Cultural Turn', brought about by theorists like André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett (1990), as well as Lawrence Venuti (1992), highlighted the importance of the cultural and political context in which translations take place, and consequently redefined the binary concept of equivalence as faithfulness/sameness, and of the translating subject: who is translating and why? The issue of the subject's identity is also a central concern of feminist thinking. Feminist theorists indeed establish a parallel between the status of the translated text, often considered inferior to the original, and that of women, often seen as inferior to men. Identifying and critiquing 'the tangle of concepts which relegates both women and translation to the bottom of the social and literary ladder' (Simon 1996, p.1) is fundamental in feminist translation projects. Aiming to combat repressive and dominant attitudes and to offer alternatives, feminist translation brings the two fields together by posing itself as an in-between:

> The translator is a being in-between. Like words in translation, s/he endlessly drifts between meanings. S/he tries to be the go-between, to cunningly suggest what readings there could be in the foreign language other than those the chosen translation makes available. Is there a word in English, that, like *langue,* designates both the bodily organ and the existence of words, the structure of speech? Should it be language, should it be tongue? You are led to reflect on how particular translations become constructed. What gets lost, what is gained, what and how altered, in the passage from one language to the next. (Ward-Jouve 1991, p.47)

However, consciously feminist translators are not passive 'in-betweeners': through a set of techniques and strategies, they make themselves and their work visible. To perform these changes, feminist translators 'womanhandle' the source and target texts (originals and translations) by replacing the self-effacing translator (Godard 1990, p.94). Luise von Flotow defines three strategies: 'supplementing', to compensate for the differences in languages; 'prefacing and footnoting', and 'hijacking', meaning interventions from the translator to make the 'feminine seen and heard' (Flotow 1991, p.79). A creative example of supplementing is the translation of the neologism in the title of Brossard's novel *L'Amèr* by Barbara Godard. This wordplay on 'mère' (mother), 'mer' (sea), and 'amer' (bitter) reflects the themes of the subjugation of women to reproduction, 'her suffocation in this unrecognised labour and her subsequent tendency to suffocate her own children' (Flotow 1991, pp.75-76). Godard supplements her translation of the wordplay whose effect in French is based on the silent 'e':


The S e
our
mothers.

From Flotow 1991, p.76

This title can be read 'The Sea Our Mother' + 'Sea (S)mothers' + '(S) our Mothers'. Compensating for the silent 'e', she includes the 'sour' and 'smothering' aspects of patriarchal motherhood to foreground female subjectivity in the production of meaning, and to convey the multiple layers of Brossard's title. The third method, 'hijacking', was adopted by von Flotow from David Homel's critique of Susan de Lotbinière-Harwood's interventions in her translation of *Lettres d'une autre* by Lise Gauvin. Indeed, he faults her for deliberately feminising the text — a tactic that she discusses in the preface:

> Lise Gauvin is a feminist, and so am I. But I am not her. She wrote in the generic masculine. My translation practice is a political activity aimed at making language speak for women. So my signature on a translation means: this translation has used every possible translation strategy to make the feminine visible in language. Because making the feminine visible in language means making women seen and heard in the real world. Which is what feminism is all about. (De Lotbinière-Harwood cited in von Flotow 1991, p.79)

The 'supplementing' and 'hijacking' strategies are arguably their most powerful and shocking tool because they involve visible and conscious textual and linguistic manipulations: as in French feminism, feminist language in translation attacks language itself and not only the message. One of the best-known examples involving all three strategies is Suzanne Jill Levine's translation of Guillermo Cabrera Infante's *La habana para un infante difunto* and her article 'Translation as (Sub)Version'. Confronted with a sexist discourse, which to her mocks and manipulates women and their words and exposes archetypal relationships between men and women, Levine uses the source text's narrative mechanisms against itself in her translation:

> When the Havana narrator makes the jaded statement "no one man can rape a woman", the infernal translator [what she calls herself] undermines this popular myth with the book's own corrosive mechanism of alliteration and writes: "no wee man can rape a woman." (Levine 1984, p.92)

To further justify their ideas, feminist translators have appropriated certain concepts developed by male academics such as 'deconstructionism' coined by the French scholar Jacques Derrida, whose subversion of traditional Western literary discourses coincided with and influenced feminist translation practices. Although Derrida is not a translation theorist, issues of filiation and of translation occupy a central place in his work. His ideas are particularly relevant in feminist translation because the anti-metaphysical dynamics of deconstructionism are key in the texts of French Feminists, notably Cixous, as they provide the conceptual foundations of their critique of language (Simon 1996, pp.92-93). The core idea of 'deconstructionism' is that the original text is an unstable object subjected to different interpretations and that languages are different from one another. According to Derrida, meaning can never be stable nor 'original' as it cannot ever be free from the context within which it is produced. From this perspective, meaning cannot be 'reproduced' or 'recovered' but is in fact always recreated (see Derrida 1967, 1979, 1996). In this framework, translation cannot be a mere transfer of meaning but will always entail its transformation: translation is thus a form of original. Moreover, translators are not impartial mediators and cannot provide 'the' unequivocal meaning of an original, as they will interpret it with their own subjectivity and background, which means that in some way or another, all translations involve manipulation. However, Derrida does not advocate the notion that 'anything goes', and 'deconstructionism' is not and cannot lead to an endless free play (Davis 2001). This approach has changed the traditional conception of faithfulness in translation and the relationship between source and target texts. It has also stimulated a renewed interest in both the active character of translation and in the work of the translator. For Simon, Derrida's theory and the translations of his work favoured the development and the establishment of feminist translation practices because they provide the basis for 'new inquiries into the ethics of language transfer' (Simon 1996, p.93). The translations also represent the 'point of juncture between Derridean and feminist translation as developed most notably by Barbara Godard. It is through Derrida that feminist translation finds its new definitions of textual authority and develops its politics of transmission' (Simon 1996, p.94). Indeed, through these 'new conditions of authorisation', feminist translators could justify and legitimise their practice and redefine their idea of faithfulness to the source text and author. For von Flotow, it 'endowed [the feminist translator] with the right, even the duty to "abuse" the source text' (1991, p.80).

Another French translation theorist often quoted by feminist translators is Antoine Berman. In *Pour une critique des traductions : John Donne* (1995), Berman provides the tools and methodology for a productive criticism of translations. For him, a translation is both a critical and a creative process determined by the translator's translational position, their translation project, and their translation horizon — meaning the linguistic, literary, cultural and historical parameters that impact the translator (Berman 1995, pp.74-75). This conception thus allows Berman to state: 'le traducteur a tous les droits dès lors qu'il joue franc jeu' (1995, p.93) ['Translators have *all the rights* as long as their game is played up front' (cited in Simon 1996, p.36)]. Arguing against functionalist approaches to translation which believe that the function of a translation in the target culture determines translation strategies, Berman emphasises the creative role and the power of the translator. Because 'he recognises the translating project as a formative influence on the resulting text, his outlook is consonant with that of much feminist translation theory and practice' (Simon 1996, p.37). Indeed, in feminist translation, translators place fidelity towards a parameter identified as their 'writing project' (Simon 1996, p.2) to foreground a feminist dimension in the target text. They challenge the idea of faithfulness and of the translator as being 'duty-bound' to respect the source author, and present instead their work as a tool of resistance against dominant and traditional modes of presentation and subjectification. Aiming to reveal and destabilise the idea of language as an unbiased portrayal of reality, they reconstruct the *difference* of the subject in language in order to effect changes in the status of woman/translation/translators.

> The feminist translator, affirming her critical difference, her delight in interminable re-reading and re-writing, flaunts the signs of her manipulation of the text. *Womanhandling* the text in translation would involve the replacement of the modest, self-effacing translator. Taking her place would be an active participant in the creation of meaning who advances a conditional analysis. Hers is a continuing provisionality, aware of process, giving self-reflexive attention to practices. The feminist translator immodestly flaunts her signature in italics, in footnotes –– even in a preface. (Godard 1990, p.94)

Limits and Criticisms

The poetics of feminist translation have, however, been called into question, especially the faithfulness to the 'writing project'. In 'Fidelity and the Gendered Translation', Rosemary Arrojo questions Suzanne Jill Levine's treatment of Infante's text who hijacks it to make language speak for women. Through her subversions, Levine claims indeed a form of "faithfully unfaithfulness" to her criticism of the source text, which she supports 'by her alleged "collaboration" with Cabrera Infante' (Arrojo 1994, p.152). Even if Levine is a Californian feminist translator and her work is separate from the Canadian School, her translation still raises questions of the place of fidelity in feminist translation, such as: where does one draw the line between acting for the greater good — in this case the place of women in society — and political and personal interests? Should translation be a conscious agent of change and intervene in the text or, on the contrary, should the translator 'simply' make accessible a text that may shock to raise the target audience's awareness to the problem at hand and hope to induce change? Feminist translation can find legitimisation in its aim to challenge existing concepts, but it can also find its limits, such as the relationship to the target audience. It can be argued that certain interventions transform radically a translation, and thus break the link between source and target texts, between author and translator, and between translator and target readers, who are arguably counting on the translator to convey the meaning and the source author's voice. As the target audience has no way of knowing what a translation would have been like without drastic manipulations because they do not understand the source language, it can therefore be said that the tacit contract between them and the translator has been broken. Moreover, such manipulations reinforce archetypal sayings on translation such as 'traduttore traditore' ('translators, traitors').

Another limit is the risk of double standard and contradictory ethics:

> Like Suzanne Jill Levine's and Lori Chamberlain's, Luise von Flotow's conception of a "feminist" strategy of translation is based on a double standard. At the same time that she sees violence in the patriarchal, logocentric tropes that have reduced the translator's role to an impossibly neutral recovery of someone else's meaning, she considers "hijacking" to be a desirable and, we may assume, non-violent approach for the kind of translation pursued by feminists. In other words, and once again, on what grounds can one justify that "womanhandling" texts is objectively positive while "manhandling" them is to be despised? In what terms is the trope of translation as "hijacking" nonviolent? (Arrojo, p.157)

The traditional definition of ethics as faithfulness/sameness towards the source text is, as shown here, rejected by feminist translators. Their interpretation and appropriation of Derrida's theories and second-wave feminism have indeed provided them with the framework to disregard such conception and have encouraged their own definition of faithful/unfaithful ethics. However, through such manipulations, Arrojo argues, feminist translators apply the same double standard — degree and type of violence — that they denounce and try to undermine in their work, as a form of retaliation. They proclaim it as their form of faithfulness under cover of explicit and conscious political strategy performed as a group. The issue here is that linguistic and textual interventions can also happen the other way around to serve diametrically opposed political purposes. Men or women who have different beliefs, for instance, could manipulate a text just as much: if an anti-abortion translator was commissioned to translate abortion leaflets, he or she could 'hijack' the text to serve personal political convictions. This practice would be just as shockingly violent and unethical. Translation scholars have stressed the fact that translation, throughout history, has played a major role in shaping society by making texts, among other things, available in different languages; but it has not done so by manipulating texts to serve each and everyone's (political or not) interests.

Scholars, outside of feminist theory, have also denounced the apparent impossibility of gender neutrality, because to them, biological sexual differences are a given, and so must be expressed in languages (see Nida 1995 in Flotow 1997, pp.77-78). Among feminists, the Canadian School has been attacked on the basis of elitism: reading experimental writing is not necessarily accessible to all readers and some translations render them even more obscure (see Gillam 1995). Moreover, the first wave took place within bilingual Quebec, and so it derived from a specific political, linguistic and cultural situation, and worked mostly with French and English texts. Other criticisms are therefore concerned with the treatment of minority literatures in Western languages which, according to Gayatri Spivak, perpetuates a colonialist attitude in translation by presenting homogeneous narratives that are exotic enough to be attractive but not to the point of making Western readers uncomfortable (Spivak 1992). She also argues for the necessity to address the cultural and political differences amongst women, in terms of religion, ethnicity and race for instance.

The Second Wave of Feminist Translation: Towards a Redefinition?

In the late 1990s-early 2000s, research on feminist translation moved on from the Canadian School and second-wave feminism to look into the gendering of translation, issues around transnational feminist translation, and to analyse women as subjects and objects of translation. This second paradigm seems to align itself more closely with third-wave feminism in terms of ideas regarding gender, diversity, inclusivity and intersectionality. It should be noted that despite the debates on the wave typology when applied to women's movements (see Kathleen Laughlin 2010), it is still commonly used, hence its application here. In regard to feminist translation, the current approach does not seem to have been named and is therefore identified here as the 'second wave of feminist translation' to reaffirm its filiation with feminisms, and to distinguish it from the Canadian School, still identified as *the* 'universal paradigm' (Castro 2009, p.2).

As Olga Castro explains (2009), despite the contributions the Canadian approach had made to Translation Studies, there was a need to redefine the purpose of feminist translation, an idea that had already been introduced by Françoise Massardier-Kenney in 1997. For Massardier-Kenney, the main issue was the use of the assumed stable definitions of 'feminine' and 'woman'. A reconceptualisation of feminist translation was to acknowledge the complexity of such terms, and if not to offer a new definition, to:

> attempt to make the so-called feminine subject visible in language without posing set definitions and by working with texts which are not necessarily what a contemporary North American or European would consider feminist, either because they were written before feminism developed or because they come from a cultural context in which feminism is not a viable strategy. (Massardier-Kenney 1997, p.57)

Firstly, she argues that feminist translators are adapting existing translation strategies that she classifies into two categories: 'author-centred' and 'translator-centred'. Among them are 'recovery' (to take women's work as a starting point to expand the literary canon), 'resistancy' (making the translation process visible), and 'commentary' (a 'metadiscourse' either to make explicit the importance of the feminine in the translated text, or for the feminist translator to describe his/her choices to 'avoid reproducing a textual power structure'). Secondly, she points out the necessity to translate women's writing where gender is present but not explicit, meaning works that are not traditionally described as feminist and/or where gender may be intertwined with other issues, quoting for example Madame de Staël's *Mirza*. Massardier-Kenney argues that a redefinition will help the approach to change literary history, to 'contribute to an examination of the translating activity in general; by emphasising the importance of gender categories and the mechanisms through which the "feminine" is excluded or is valued' and, to show that 'translation is a crucial form of cultural production' (1997, p.66).

Since the 2000s, work in feminist translation studies seems to have built upon this redefinition by re-evaluating historical texts and their translations, as well as their authors and translators, and the socio-political contexts that may have influenced their publications. Michaela Wolf has investigated for instance the works of Luise Gottshed and Therese Huber, two female translators in the 18th century who subverted man-made translation practices and theories. She has also produced a study on feminist translation in German-speaking countries to survey working conditions and publishing house guidelines on non-sexist language (see Wolf 2005). Olga Castro and Emek Ergun explore feminist translation in minority languages and cultures, respectively Galician and Turkish; and the relationship between third-wave feminist (socio)linguistics, translation and feminist studies, to assess the use or dismissal of current feminist linguistic practices in writing/translation such as inclusive language (Castro 2013), and how this interdisciplinarity may facilitate socio-political change (Ergun 2013). New areas of research have also opened up such as the criticism of phallocentric translations of feminist work, for instance the translations of De Beauvoir's texts (Ana Bogic 2011); the study of para-translations of feminist work — a concept borrowed from literary analysis and concerned with the elements surrounding a text (Castro 2009); or, of gender constructs in audiovisual translation (Anne-Louise Feral 2011). Feral demonstrates for example the different constructions of female sexuality between the American versions of *Sex and the City* and *Ally McBeal* (in which women appear active and empowered) and the French subtitled ones (which portray them as more passive).

According to Martin M. Rosario, post-structuralist feminist translators have also shifted their focus towards a more inclusive approach due to feminism developments: rather than just translating in the feminine, feminist translators became more 'gender-conscious' (Rosario 2005, p.36). Indeed, the framework of the Canadian School appeared no longer adequate to reflect the fluidity of gender and the plurality of identities. The influence of gender issues has once again led to new approaches such as queer, gay and lesbian translation, as tools of resistance to heteronormativity and to de-essentialise the approach to women and gender. These practices are concerned with the details of language that may reflect or conceal gendered aspects of language use, the strategies and techniques used by translators, and re-readings of writing from which gender has been censored (see Harvey 1998; Baer & Kaindl 2018).

With the multiplicity of meanings associated with feminism, gender, and translation, it is difficult to assess whether feminist translation is still in its second wave or if it has moved on (or should move on) to a third wave, as Olga Castro has argued. For her, a new paradigm would enable to explore new grounds, to strengthen the links with third-wave feminism and to differentiate better the movement from the Canadian School (2009). However, it can be suggested that opinion today appears somewhat divided when looking at recent calls for papers: *Mutatis Mutandis* will release a special edition on transnational feminist translation studies, the forthcoming Translating Women Conference will be on 'breaking borders and building bridges in the English-language book industry'; and *De Genere* will publish an issue on the different implications of gender and translation. One could argue that the plurality of feminist translation praxes may have resulted from the plurality of feminisms today.

Conclusion

The intersection of feminist theory and translation studies has drawn attention to gendered constructions of meaning and the place of women's writing. Feminist translation was developed as a way to transgress phallocentric discourses and make women and translators visible in language through explicit and radical interventionism. With roots in post-war feminism and Western literary feminism influenced by French Feminists and écriture *féminine*, translation has participated in the development of feminisms. Through the translation flux, this approach has contributed to the circulation of feminist ideas and strategies and in the establishment of women's voices. With an active political stance, it has rejected traditional views on translation within and outwith the field, on authorship, visibility, power struggles and faithfulness. It has also contributed to linguistic and cultural revolutions by, for instance, translating the body and creating new words, grammatical structures and images. From the Canadian School, feminist translation has expanded its areas of research and moved towards a more inclusive approach of gender and minority literatures and languages and focused on historical and cultural backgrounds. Time will tell if feminist translation continues to produce work that will lead to the '*orgasmic theory of translation*, in which elements are fused into a new whole in an encounter that is mutual, pleasurable and respectful' as Susan Bassnett called for in 1992 (Bassnett 1992, p.72).

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