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Variable Frames: Women Translating Cuba and (Afro-) Brazilian Women Writers for the French Literary Market

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Abstract

This article seeks to examine how contemporary works of fiction and non-fiction by women from Cuba and Brazil are translated and marketed for Francophone readers. It will focus on Wendy Guerra's novels, translated into French by Marianne Millon, and on contemporary Brazilian (non) fiction translated into French by Paula Anacaona, the head of *Anacaona Éditions*, a publishing outlet specialized in Brazilian literature for Francophone readers. The contribution will start with a brief presentation of the French publishing sector and some of the recurring patterns observed in what is often labeled as *littérature étrangère* or *littérature monde* (foreign literature and world literature, respectively), exploring various layers of intervention that appear in translated fiction. The article will then further explore the role of paratext in the marketing of Caribbean literatures for (non-)metropolitan French audiences, before it examines the translations of *Todos se van* and *Domingo de Revolución* by Cuban writer Wendy Guerra. Paratextual matter in Marianne Millon's *Tout le monde s'en va* and *Un dimanche de révolution* will be analyzed as a site of feminine co-production, in which the author and the translator's voices at times collide in unison and at others create dissonance. In the case of *Domingo de revolución*, the French translator's practices will be compared to Cuban-American Achy Obeyesekere's English translation (*Revolution Sunday*), in the hope of highlighting varying degrees of cultural appropriation and/or acculturation, depending on the translator's *habitus* and *trajectory* (Bourdieu) and her own background. These reflections will lead to a broader analysis of paratext as a site of further agency and potential redress as (Afro-) Brazilian history and literature are examined in works circulated by writer/translator/publisher Paula Anacaona. Ultimately, figures traditionally sidelined from hegemonic and patriarchal (his)stories, whose voices are restored in Anacaona's paratextual practices, will serve as illustrations of feminine publishing practices that challenge (phallo-)centric models from the metropolis.

Keywords: women translators, (Afro-)Brazilian literature, Cuban literature, French literary marketplace, feminine paratext.

Encuadres variables: mujeres traductoras de autoras cubanas y (afro) brasileñas para el mercado literario francés

Resumen

Este artículo se propone analizar cómo se traduce y presenta ante los lectores francófonos la (no) ficción contemporánea escrita por autoras de Cuba y Brasil. Se centrará en las novelas de Wendy Guerra, traducidas al francés por Marianne Millon, y en la ficción contemporánea brasileña tra-



ducida al francés por Paula Anacaona, directora de Anacaona Éditions, editorial especializada en literatura brasileña para lectores francófonos. El artículo se inicia con una breve presentación sobre el sector editorial francés y algunos patrones recurrentes observados en lo que suele catalogarse como *littérature étrangère* o *littérature monde* (literatura extranjera y universal, respectivamente), explorando diferentes capas de intervención que aparecen en la ficción traducida. El artículo explorará posteriormente el rol del paratexto en la comercialización de las literaturas caribeñas para audiencias francesas (no) metropolitanas, antes de examinar las traducciones de *Todos se van* y *Domingo de Revolución*, de la escritora cubana Wendy Guerra. Lo paratextual en *Tout le monde s'en va* y *Un dimanche de révolution*, de Marianne Millon, se analizará como lugar de coproducción femenina, en el que chocan las voces de la autora y la traductora, unas veces al unísono, otras creando disonancia. En el caso de *Domingo de revolución*, se compararán las prácticas de la traductora francesa con la traducción al inglés de la cubano-americana Achy Obejas (*Revolution Sunday*), con la esperanza de poner en primer plano los diferentes grados de apropiación cultural o aculturación, dependiendo del *habitus* y la *trayectoria* de la traductora (Bourdieu) y de su formación. Esas reflexiones llevarán a un análisis más amplio del paratexto como lugar de nueva agencia y posible compensación, mediante el análisis de la historia y la literatura (afro) brasileña en las obras distribuidas por la autora-traductora-editora Paula Anacaona. Finalmente, varias figuras que por lo general se omiten en las historias hegemónicas y patriarcales, y cuyas voces son restauradas en las prácticas paratextuales de Anacaona, servirán como ilustración de las prácticas editoriales femeninas que cuestionan los modelos (falo) céntricos de la metrópoli.

Palabras clave: traductoras, literatura (afro)brasileña, literatura cubana, mercado literario francés, paratexto femenino.

Cadres variables : Lorsque des femmes traduisent des écrivaines cubaines et (afro)brésiliennes pour le marché du livre français

Résumé

Cette contribution propose d'examiner comment les textes d'auteurs cubaines et (afro-)brésiliennes sont traduits et présentés pour des lecteurs francophones. Elle étudiera plus précisément le paratexte utilisé dans des romans de Wendy Guerra traduits en français par Marianne Millon, ainsi que dans des œuvres de fiction et essais (afro-)brésiliens contemporains traduits en français par Paula Anacaona, qui est également à la tête d'une structure éditoriale éponyme installée en région parisienne et spécialisée dans les littératures du Brésil. L'article commencera par présenter certaines tendances observées dans ce qui est souvent présenté comme de la *littérature étrangère* ou *littérature monde* sur le marché littéraire français, notamment en lien avec divers degrés et formes d'intervention que l'on peut observer dans la fiction traduite et qui prend souvent la forme de notes (infrapaginales ou de fin). Puis l'article explorera le rôle du paratexte dans les littératures traduites pour des lecteurs francophones, avant d'étudier certains aspects des traductions de *Todos se van* et *Domingo de Revolución*, deux romans de la Cubaine Wendy Guerra. Dans le cas de *Domingo de Revolución*, la traduction française de Marianne Million sera brièvement comparée à la traduction anglaise de la Cubaine-Américaine Achy Obejas (*Revolution Sunday*), afin de dégager différents degrés d'appropriation culturelle et/ou d'acculturation en fonction de l'*habitus* et de la *trajectoire* (Bourdieu) de la traductrice. Ces réflexions nous permettront d'analyser les espaces paratextuels comme de potentiels espaces de réajustement pour l'histoire et la littérature (afro)brésiliennes à travers les travaux publiés par Paula Anacaona. Nous tenterons de voir comment, à travers des figures de femmes traditionnellement écartées ou effacées des histoires hégémoniques et patriarcales du Brésil, leurs voix peuvent être restaurées dans les espaces paratextuels tels que les utilise Anacaona. Cela nous amènera à élargir nos réflexions à des méthodes de publication féminines qui interrogent les modèles (phallo)centriques depuis la métropole.

Mots-clés : traductrices, littérature (afro-)brésilienne, littérature cubaine, marché du livre français, paratextes féminins.

“De nada sirve ser leída, premiada, traducida a varias lenguas si no puedes ser reconocida en tu país, encontrar tus lectores originales, compartir tu obra con los tuyos.”

Domingo de revolución (Guerra, 2016, p. 58).

“Being read, honored, translated into several languages doesn’t matter if you’re not recognized in your own country, if you can’t find your original readers, if you can’t share your work with your own people.”

Revolution Sunday, (Guerra, trans. Obejas, 2018, p. 41)

1. Introduction

Translation remains of the essence for Caribbean texts to circulate beyond their original sites of production, be it in the region itself or, as is more often the case, outside its bounds and mostly from a metropolis—or literary hub or center—usually located in a former colonial power. Yet, as the opening epigraph suggests, global circulation might not always grant a Caribbean writer visibility, let alone recognition of their work in their own home region. This is all the more verified when literary circulation—and translation—operate under strict state control, as suggested by Cuban author Wendy Guerra in her fiction, and as has been shown in various academic works focusing on patronage in literary systems.¹ Women writers in particular tend to be marginalized and to enjoy late and limited recognition in the specific contexts of Cuban and Brazilian writing, which will serve as our two primary areas of study.² In Cuba, for instance, it has been

1 In the specific context of translated children’s literature circulating in the former German Democratic Republic, see Thomson-Wohlgemuth (2009). For a more general study of translation as a form of rewriting that is invariably subject to ideological framings and manipulation, see Lefevere (1992).

2 Although Brazilian writing is traditionally treated as a literary field of its own, separate from Caribbean

argued that women writers started to reach higher visibility in the 1990s only, during the “special period”, when a more significant body of their works—mostly short fiction—started to garner some attention, whereas a similar recognition had already taken place two decades earlier in other parts of Latin America (Vergès, 2011). When it comes to Brazilian literature, and to Afro-Brazilian women writers more specifically, their invisibility seems to be an ongoing struggle, as, to quote the country’s most prominent contemporary Black writer, Conceição Evaristo, cited here in translation: “On attend de la femme Noire qu’elle réalise certaines fonctions, comme très bien cuisiner, danser, chanter, mais jamais écrire. Parfois, on me demande : « Vous chantez ? » Je réponds : « Je ne chante pas, je ne danse pas. J’écris. »” [We expect a Black woman to fulfil certain tasks, such as cooking, dancing or singing, but writing, never. Sometimes people ask me: ‘Do you sing?’ and I reply: ‘I do not sing and I do not dance. I write.’] (Evaristo, 2018).³ If access to the works of some contemporary Cuban and Brazilian women writers can then doubtless be limited or altogether obstructed depending on their original milieu or background—whether it is social, political or ethnoracial—in their own home countries, does this inevitably condemn them to further invisibilization in the

writing, I have chosen to group together Cuban and (Afro-) Brazilian writing in this article to interrogate the limits of geographical demarcations in the study of literatures from the region, which often follow Eurocentric groupings based on linguistic continua (the so-called “French-, Spanish-, English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean”). My aim is to offer a remapping of the Caribbean that complexifies the power dynamics in the region, particularly where literary circulation is concerned, and to promote more transversal pathways of exchange.

3 Originally cited in French in the author’s biography in Evaristo (2018). All translations in brackets are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

global literary marketplace? Fortunately, the answer seems to be in the negative, thanks to the investment and dedication of both Caribbean and non-Caribbean cultural brokers who help those works resonate beyond their original shores. In fact, the original exclusion and marginalization experienced by some Cuban and (Afro-)Brazilian women writers can precisely be what independent publishers stress to reconfigure labels such as “mainstream” or “global” literature from an activist standpoint, as they carry those texts to other topographies, whilst operating from a metropolis. Commensurate with this objective, the various degrees and forms of framing that are used in the translation of works by those women writers often contribute to emphasizing their marginalization and lack of visibility in their original literary milieu to readers of the host culture. In that regard, the aim of this article is twofold. Looking at the contemporary French literary market, the contribution will interrogate, through its study of translational paratext carried out by women translators of works by Cuban and (Afro-) Brazilian women writers, how their use of footnotes and prefatorial matter can be identified as sites of fluctuating degrees of gendered agency that range from seemingly genderless to more feminine or even potentially feminist strategies. Secondly, the article will show how the variable framing strategies used by women translators will also be indicative of their respective positionings within the French literary marketplace. To do so, the paratext used in the translations of works by Cuban and (Afro-) Brazilian women writers will be studied in relation to their specific socio-cultural contexts of production. Here, Bourdieusian terminology will be used to explore how the translator’s own background and professional trajectory may inform her paratextual strategies. More specifically, Bourdieu’s concepts of *habitus* and trajectory will serve to identify potential patterns that complement

a purely textual approach to translational paratext. As for the study of translatorial paratext as a site of feminine agency, we will draw on various frameworks that have emerged in the field of Translation Studies (Arrojo, 1994; Dueck, 2014; von Flotow, 2009) to further explore the links between interventionism and intersectionality.

To explore those issues, the contribution will examine how Wendy Guerra’s novels, which have all been translated by the same translator, Marianne Millon, are in turn framed for Francophone readers. The translator’s footnotes in particular will be analyzed and compared with an English version of *Domingo de revolución*, one of Guerra’s novels translated by Cuban-American writer Achy Obejas for the North American market, to reveal how, from the margins and interstices of the text carried across in another language, the translator’s varying degrees of intervention at times aim to foster a sense of curiosity and acculturation for the reader, and, at others, rather seek to accommodate the original to the receiving culture. Bearing this point in mind, the contribution will then address works by Afro-Brazilian women writers that have been translated for Francophone readers by writer and activist publisher Paula Anacaona. Here, the paratextual material—mostly taking the form of footnotes and prefaces—deployed by Anacaona will be further examined as a site of intended redress for female voices that were long silenced or erased from Brazilian (hi)stories. Through her translational and publishing practices that aim to challenge dominant, (phallo)centric discourses and to translocate—rather than globalize⁴—forms of

4 By insisting on “translocal” rather than “global” pathways of exchange, this article seeks to complexify the North-South paradigm often found in gravitational models of literary circulation and to promote instead a

Afro-Brazilian feminism, Anacaona invites us to interrogate an otherwise partially “color-blind” French literary market, as this article will argue. But before these particular aspects of the paper are explored, a brief overview of the contemporary French book sector, some of the patterns observed in its segmentation and interventionist tendencies characteristic of its translated fiction will be provided.

2. Translating Caribbean literature for the French literary marketplace

When entering the global literary marketplace and the French publishing sector more specifically, translated Caribbean fiction is often labeled as part of the *domaine étranger*, in other words considered as “foreign literature”, and rarely, if ever, classified as “Caribbean” literature. This reality is particularly manifest when browsing the shelves of bookstores in mainland France, also known as the *métropole*, whether they are (inter)national chain stores owned by powerful media consortia or local, independent bookshops, even if the latter sometimes specialize in an easily identifiable portion of the literary sector.⁵ Such classifications, which are not specific to the French marketplace

alone, often divide up Caribbean literature into fluctuating categories that shift over time and place and generally tend to overlap with broader lines of demarcation that are usually drawn according to linguistic continuity. Authors from the Hispanophone Caribbean, for example, will be classified as part of the “Latin American” literary sphere, whereas writers from the French Antilles or Guyana are simply categorized as part of the French or Francophone canon, depending on their degree of visibility and recognition, but also their publisher and the imprint or collection in which their work is featured. This last point is of particular importance, as it raises the issue of the ghettoization of writers who are not primarily identified as Franco-French writers (that is from the *métropole*), but are marketed instead as part of the so-called “Francophonie”. This specifically—although not exclusively—holds true for non-white writers from the French overseas territories known as the DROM-COM⁶ who decide to publish their work in mainland France and, as such, may have to comply with certain categorizations that label them as “Black”, “African” or “writers from the Global South”, as Nadège Veldwachter argues:

Pour certains auteurs, la parution de leurs textes dans des collections spéciales, telles les célèbres « Encres noires » et « Lettres du Sud », se résume à une forme de « ghettoisation » littéraire de la part des éditeurs parisiens : « créer une collection spécifique à la littérature nègre revient à la parquer dans un espace précis, à cataloguer et à classer l'inclassable, à marginaliser la production littéraire hors du champ de la littérature conçue comme un tout indivisible ». Les labels

transversal approach that bypasses certain cultural roadblocks whilst stressing the situatedness of each context of reception as texts circulate beyond their original site of production. For a detailed analysis of a translocal approach to (feminist) translation (see Alvarez, de Lima Costa, Feliu, Hester, Klahn & Thayer, 2014; de Lima Costa, 2014, pp. 19-36; 20-21).

5 In Paris in particular, there are a number of such bookshops, the most specialized of which often act as a subdivision of a publishing outlet focusing on a very specific niche of the literary market. See, for example, Éditions/Librairie Coelacanthé, specialized in Comorian literature. In the French Antilles, Éditions/Librairie Jasor, based in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, also comes to mind as a structure focusing primarily on Caribbean literature.

6 The former stands for *Départements et Régions d'Outre-Mer* and includes Guadeloupe, French Guyana, Martinique, Mayotte, and La Réunion. The latter stands for *Collectivités d'Outre-Mer* and includes half of Saint-Martin, Saint-Barthémély, Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, Wallis-and-Futuna, French Polynesia, and New Caledonia.

de L'Harmattan ou de Karthala, même s'ils ont aujourd'hui acquis une reconnaissance internationale, ont équivalu à leur début à un réseau identifiable où l'adjectif « africain » prenait le pas sur le nom « écrivain » dans la psyché du lectorat.

[For some authors, the publication of their works in special collections, such as the well-known “Encres noires” [“Black inks”] and “Lettres du Sud” [“Literatures of the South”], amount to no less than a form of literary “ghettoization” on the part of Parisian publishers: “creating an imprint devoted to Black literature means to confine it within a particular segment, to label what is unclassifiable, and to place literary production at the margins of the field of literature conceived as an indivisible whole”. The imprints from L'Harmattan or Karthala, even though they have now acquired international renown, were at first easily identifiable as a specific network where the adjective “African” was more important than “writer” in the mind of the reader.] (Veldwachter, 2012, pp. 84–85).

If such classifications contribute to further balkanizing—if not inevitably dislocating—the Caribbean and its literary production, they also reinforce lines of fracture and roadblocks that persist not only in the transnational circulation of literature, albeit for a variety of reasons, but also within the logics of territorial continuity. This is most evident in Gisèle Sapiro's work on the global circulation of translated fiction in France and the US, in which she argues that “[d]enationalization does not mean deterritorialization” where the book market is concerned (Sapiro, 2010, p. 423). Needless to say that such categorizations further contribute to reinforcing the asymmetrical nature of the flows of literary exchange between North and South, which are at the heart of gravitational models. When looking more specifically at translated fiction in the French literary sector, one cannot help but notice a certain degree of interventionism. The late scholar Pascale Casanova spoke,

for instance, of the importation of foreign literatures as a form of “conquest” and cultural “appropriation” where France is concerned, a tendency she traced back to the Renaissance period known as “les Belles Infidèles” in the history of French translation practices (Casanova, 2015, pp. 68–69). If interventionist practices can still be observed nowadays in fiction translated into French, they do not necessarily imply forms of cultural appropriation, nor can they be systematically described as ethnocentric. When taking the form of prefatorial matter—prefaces or afterwords—and foot/endnotes, paratexts also provide the reader with “relevant information about the prevailing translation norms in a given culture (*doxa*) and at a given moment in time, as well as information about the images that translators have of themselves.” (Gil-Bajardí, Orero & Rovira-Esteva, 2012, p. 9). When comparing, for example, Wendy Guerra's novel *Domingo de Revolución* with its French and English translations, the French translation by Marianne Millon immediately stands out as the most interventionist, as she inserts a number of footnotes—sixteen in total—deemed essential for a Francophone reader.⁷ On the contrary, Achy Obejas's translation does not feature a single foot/endnote or glossary entry, although a close reading of the text reveals other forms of

⁷ During a phone interview conducted with Marianne Millon on 12 December 2019, she confirmed that the footnotes were for the most part her own choice, although they were sometimes the result of a discussion with the editor who sought more clarity on a specific aspect of the text (I shall come back to that point in part 3). Millon further commented that as a reader and translator she preferred footnotes over endnotes, which, to her, can constitute a roadblock in the reading experience. On the contrary, with footnotes, she feels that the reader is at liberty to decide whether or not to read the additional information provided at the bottom of the page.

in-text intervention in *Revolution Sunday*, a text clearly marketed for a North American readership, as will be argued. If, at first glance, those translations appear to be located in easily identifiable host cultures that obey two seemingly opposed logics of translation, whereby one would espouse an ideal of transparency and invisibility⁸, and the other would apparently lend more agency to the translator, both will be studied as non-centric textual sites of intervention where women translators raise issues of cultural appropriation and acculturation from their respective locations and *habita*. But if paratextual interventions act as sites of social norms and traditions, they can also be identified as gendered spaces of agency, as several translation scholars have shown. Luise von Flotow and Rosemary Arrojo have for their part identified feminist translation practices as experimental and provocative gestures that aim to create “a greater shock effect” than feminine strategies (Arrojo, 1994, p. 155, quoting Barbara Godard). In von Flotow’s terminology, feminist translation strategies consist in a higher degree of “hijacking” the text, whereas feminine translation strategies correspond to a lesser degree of experimentation with and violence to the text, something that would be more akin to “supplementing” it with a didactic apparatus taking the form of prefaces and (foot)notes (von Flotow, 2009, p. 2). Bearing these differences in mind, the article will now turn to a textual analysis of excerpts from Wendy Guerra’s novels alongside their French and English translations to examine the various degrees of (gendered) agency performed by each translator.

8 The ‘illusion of transparency’ in translations published in the United States has famously been criticized by Lawrence Venuti (see 1995).

3. Adjustable frames: feminine interventions on translated fiction from Cuba

To date, all five novels by Wendy Guerra have been published in France, the latter of which, *Un Dimanche de révolution* was published by Buchet/Chastel, an editorial outlet founded in 1936 that is now part of a consortium of presses known as Groupe Libella, whereas the four previous ones were all published by Stock, a well-established publishing house that is now part of the international conglomerate Hachette Book Group.⁹ All five novels were translated by Marianne Millon, a seasoned literary translator specialized in hispanophone literatures, who was initially commissioned for the translation of *Todos se van*, Guerra’s first novel to be translated into French. In the United States, on the other hand, only two of Guerra’s novels have been translated into English, *Todos se van (Everyone Leaves)*, 2012) and *Domingo de Revolución (Revolution Sunday)*, 2018). Both translations were done by Cuban-American writer/translator Achy Obejas, although they were published by different presses (AmazonCrossing for the former and Melville House Publishing for the latter). Millon, who is not from Cuba herself, has translated a wide range of authors from the Americas, which include Argentine writers Macedonio Fernández, Gabriel Rolón, Aurora Venturini and Natalia Moret, Mexican writers Paco Ignacio Taibo II, Fabio Morábito, Jorge Volpi, Eloy Urroz,

9 The French translations of Wendy Guerra’s first novels appeared under the following titles: *Tout le monde s’en va* (Guerra, 2008), *Mère Cuba* (2009), *Poser nue à La Havane* (2010) and *Negra* (2014). For more information on Buchet/Chastel and Stock, their editorial line and history, see, respectively: < <http://buchetchastel.fr/historique>>, accessed 30 January 2020 and <<https://www.editions-stock.fr/lhistoire-des-editions-stock>>, accessed 31 January 2020.

Example 1

Leandro llega con tremendo «espendrum». No sé cómo se escribe esa palabra, pero es un peinado con el pelo redondo y alborotado hacia arriba. Como él es mulato se le pone *jíbaro* de verdad. (Guerra, 2006, p. 105; emphasis mine)

Leandro est arrivé avec un incroyable « espendrum ». Je ne sais pas comment on écrit ce mot, mais c'est une coiffure avec les cheveux en boule et crépés jusqu'au sommet du crâne¹. Comme c'est un mulâtre, ça lui fait une vraie tête de sauvage.

¹ Coiffure afro.
(Guerra, 2008, p. 102 ; emphasis mine)

Ignacio Padilla and Cuban writers Senel Paz and William Navarette, in addition to Wendy Guerra. As such, Millon enjoys a certain visibility and recognition of her work as a literary translator in France: she is regularly invited to literary events that celebrate translation, delivers workshops on translation at various academic institutions across the country and takes an active part in the promotion of literary translation through her engagement with various organizations that vindicate translators' rights.¹⁰ For her work on Guerra's novels, Millon met with the author in Spain and has exchanged regularly with her since, particularly on literary and religious aspects of her novels for which the translator felt she needed more information. This is especially the case for *Negra*, which abounds with references to Afro-Cuban religious beliefs and practices and remain, on the whole, very little known in mainland France.¹¹ In *Todos se van*, although the majority of footnotes aims at clarifying

cultural references, particularly those pertaining to Cuban writers and artists whose works remain either untranslated or fairly unknown in France, one footnote in particular is of interest as it lifts ambiguity on a hairstyle, the “espendrum”, which is described in Example 1.

Although Guerra provides a description of the hairstyle in the excerpt, which Millon reproduces in the French version, the translator adds a footnote that further confirms that this is an “Afro hairstyle”. Interestingly, this extract associates the Spanish term “jíbaro”, whose meaning in Cuba differs from that in Puerto Rico and refers here to an unsociable, gruff person, but takes on an added meaning in French, as the term becomes “sauvage”, which means both uncivilized and nongregarious.¹² In turn, the Cuban term that designates a person from the countryside, “guajiró/a”, is kept as such in several instances of the novel and subsequently explained in a footnote either as “someone from the countryside” (“originaire de la campagne”) or as a “country bumpkin” (“paysanne”) depending on the tone of the passage, as shown in the two excerpts in Example 2.

In the first extract, *guajiro* directly refers to singer Gilberto Noda. The term is associated with a type of traditional, popular music that is further described in the passage and ex-

10 See in particular <<https://tradabordo.blogspot.com/2009/09/entretien-avec-une-traductrice-marianne.html>>, <http://www.atlas-citl.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/viceversa_ESP_30.01_04.02.2017_ok.pdf> and <<https://webtv.univ-rouen.fr/permalink/v1251774c0f60vvggj95q/>> that testify to her various professional commitments.

11 During our phone interview, Millon confirmed that the resources she found online on *orixas* and Afro-Cuban religious practices were limited and that her exchanges with Cuban writer William Navarette, who lives in France and some of whose works have been translated by Millon, provided her with a wealth of “insider” information for her translation of *Negra*.

12 For the different meanings of *jíbaro/a* in Spanish, see the online dictionary of the Real Academia Española <<https://dle.rae.es/jíbaro>>, accessed 31 January 2020.

Example 2

Se murió Gilberto Noda, el cantante guajiro. Era ocurrente y decía malas palabras en las décimas. También tocaba el guayo en Los Naranjos, el conjunto que apadrina mami. Ha venido Luis Gómez, el viejito poeta que siempre anda con la botella en el bolsillo de atrás. Ellos vienen aquí y el apartamento del Palomar, comen, toman, cantan y se van. Mi madre les graba en la emisora sus cintas para ponerlos en los programas. A muy pocos les gusta este trabajo. Ya no los dejan salir en vivo porque siempre dicen lo que les da la gana. Luis Gómez dice tonadas trinitarias y la trillaré. Me dormía en la emisora cantándome una tonada que me aprendí de memoria [...]. (Guerra, 2006, p. 28)

Gilberto Noda, le chanteur *guajiro*¹, est mort. Il était spirituel et disait des gros mots dans les *décimas*². Il jouait aussi du *guayo*³ avec Los Naranjos, le groupe dont Mami s'occupe. Luis Gómez, le vieux poète qui a toujours une bouteille dans la poche arrière de son pantalon, est venu. Ils viennent ici et à l'appartement de Palomar, mangent, boivent, chantent et s'en vont. Ma mère enregistre leurs cassettes à la radio pour les passer après dans les émissions. Peu de gens aiment ce travail. On ne les laisse plus jouer en direct parce qu'ils disent toujours ce qu'ils veulent. Luis Gómez chante des airs de Trinidad⁴ et la *trillaré*⁵. Il m'endormait à la radio en me chantant un air que j'ai appris par cœur [...].

1 Originaire de la campagne.

2 Chanson improvisée à partir d'un thème populaire paysan.

3 Instrument de percussion en bois comportant des entailles sur lequel on frotte une petite baguette.

4 Ville de Cuba connue pour ses chanteurs populaires.

5 Référence au « tralala » qui ponctue les chansons populaires.

(Guerra, 2008, p. 28 ; emphasis mine)

En la escuela me dicen guajira, porque vengo de otra provincia. Pero los guajiros son ellos, que no saben pronunciar correctamente las palabras, se comen las eses y todo lo terminan con ele. (Guerra, 2006, p. 124)

À l'école, on me traite de *guajira*¹, parce que je viens d'une autre province. Mais les paysans, c'est eux, ils ne sont même pas capables de prononcer correctement les mots, ils mangent les -s et ils finissent tous les mots par un -l.

1 Paysanne.

(Guerra, 2008, p. 121 ; emphasis mine)

plained in a series of four footnotes that were added to the translation, all of which aim to make the reader more familiar with Cuban culture, albeit at the risk—some may argue—of turning Cuba into a “scenography” attuned to the (putative) tastes of French readers (see Jameson, 1986, pp. 65-88). At the same time, those choices allow the translator to keep Cuban specificities intact in the translation and “move the reader towards the writer”, as famously recommended by Schleiermacher (1992, p. 42). In a way, one could then argue with von Flotow that Millon’s “feminine” presence can be felt in the French version through her explanatory footnotes. Although the first passage quoted above might read like a musico-ethnography of Cuba, it should be

noted that it features as an exception compared with the rest of Millon’s translations of Guerra’s works, which tend to restrict the number of footnotes to one (or two) per page. Moreover, on the whole, Millon’s translation-paratext further serves to introduce French readers to socio-historical events that characterize Cuba and which, to her, remain largely unknown in mainland France¹³. Millon recontextualizes, for example, the Padilla case in *Un dimanche de révolution*, whereas the English

13 During our phone interview, Millon also stressed the fact that she does not intend for her interventions to read like dictionary entries, though. To her, footnotes are optional and the reader may or may not wish to conduct further personal research of their own.

Example 3

Dijo ser un funcionario. ¿Un funcionario? ¿Alguien que se durmió en la época del caso Padilla y despertó hoy? (Guerra, 2016, pp. 21-22)

He said he was a civil servant. Civil servant? Someone who fell asleep around the time of the Padilla Affair and woke up today? (Guerra, 2018, p. 9)

Il prétendait être fonctionnaire. Un fonctionnaire ? Quelqu'un qui s'est endormi à l'époque de l'affaire Padilla¹ pour se réveiller aujourd'hui ?

¹ Heberto Padilla (1932-2000), poète et romancier cubain accusé d'avoir écrit des textes subversifs, emprisonné en 1972 et contraint à une autocritique publique. Soutenu par des intellectuels tels que Cortázar ou Sartre, il fut rapidement libéré mais placé en résidence surveillée jusqu'en 1980. (Guerra, 2017, p. 21)

translation does not add any further information (Example 3).

In this example, the footnote allows the translator to present a transnational literary genealogy between three writers allied against censorship, one of which is traditionally considered as a canonical French writer, whilst Obejas's translation leaves such possibilities completely open for the reader to discover at his/her own leisure, shunning any form of paratextual intervention. One way of interpreting such interventions—or seeming lack thereof—in the French and English translations is to look at them as socially informed practices that obey different marketing trends and strategies. Richard Philcox, for one, readily admits that his translations of Maryse Condé's works in English promote an ideal of transparency that is more “market-oriented” than his wife's original works in French, which, to him, tend to entertain a certain opacity and to be more demanding on the part of the reader (Kadish and Masardier-Kinney, 1996, p. 751). Considering the translator's own social trajectory within each literary field as well as the reader's own *habitus* further helps us identify potential patterns that complement a purely textual approach to translational paratext. Pierre Bourdieu coined

the concepts of *habitus* and trajectory, which both refer to the conditions of circulation and reception of cultural objects, and books more specifically, within a given social environment (Bourdieu, 1998). The former presents, within the French literary field, the social norms and institutions in place that contribute to creating a specific cultural setting for the production and reception of cultural goods, whereas the latter insists on the social journey and evolving positioning of various individuals who are part of a given *habitus* (see Bourdieu, 1998, p. 351 and p. 486). Both concepts have in turn been conceptualized in works by translation scholars to insist on the importance of social norms and the role of institutions in the production and praxis of translation. Such is the case in *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*, in which Michaela Wolf aptly reminds us that

[a]ny translation, as both an enactment and a product, is necessarily embedded within social contexts. On the one hand, the act of translating, in all its various stages, is undeniably carried out by individuals who belong to a social system; on the other, the translation phenomenon is inevitably implicated in social institutions, which greatly determine the selection, production and distribution of translation and, as a result, the strategies adopted in the translation itself. [...] The social function and the

Example 4

<p>La Habana para mí ya no es una capital, se hace pequeña, mediocre, su belleza no va a impedir que se extinga; una ciudad la hace su gente, entre las ruinas y la diáspora la estamos liquidando. Desconozco a sus habitantes, tienen acento de la costa norte o del sur de Oriente o una conducta tribal que no se parece en nada a la de la ciudad que me presentaron en la infancia. Hay como una <i>haitianización</i> en la conducta de los seres que llegan a habitarla. Se come de pie, con el plato en la mano, o se camina masticando cualquier cosa en las calles de Centro Habana, La Lisa, El Cerro; las malas palabras y los golpes forman parte del paisaje, las aguas albañales abren una zanja entre dos aceras, y la música percute compitiendo y ganándole al silencio o las buenas maneras. (Guerra, 2016, pp. 18-19; emphasis mine)</p>	<p>Pour moi, La Havane n'est plus une capitale—devenue trop petite, médiocre, sa beauté ne l'empêchera pas de s'éteindre ; une ville repose sur les gens qui y vivent et, entre les ruines et la diaspora, nous sommes en train de l'achever. J'ignore qui sont ses habitants, ils ont l'accent de la côte nord ou du sud d'Orient ou bien adoptent une conduite tribale qui ne ressemble en rien à celle de la ville qu'on m'a montrée dans l'enfance. Il y a une sorte d'<i>haitianisation</i> dans le comportement des êtres qui la constituent. On mange debout, l'assiette à la main, ou on déambule en mâchant n'importe quoi dans les rues du centre de La Havane, La Lisa, El Cerro ; les insultes et les coups font partie du paysage, les eaux usées ouvrent une tranchée entre deux trottoirs, et la musique tapageuse l'emporte sur le silence ou les bonnes manières. (Guerra, 2017, p. 18; emphasis mine)</p>	<p>To me, Havana is no longer a capital city. It feels small and mediocre, and its beauty won't keep it from extinction. A city is made of its people, and between the ruins and the diaspora, we are wiping this place out. I don't know the people who live here anymore; their accents are from the northern coast or the south-east, they act tribally, in ways that have nothing to do with the city I discovered as a child. People eat standing up, plate in hand, or chew and walk on the streets of downtown Havana, La Lisa, or El Cerro. Foul language and violence have become part of the landscape, open sewage flows between the sidewalks, and banging music competes with silence and good manners, always emerging victorious. (Guerra, 2018, p. 6)</p>
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socio-communicative value of a translation can be best located within the contact zone where the translated text and the various socially driven agencies meet. (Wolf, 2007, p. 1)

In this light, if paratextual matter can be considered as the meeting point or “contact zone” between textual and social influences—as is the case in the French translations of Guerra’s novels—interlinear, in-text interventions should also be taken into consideration, as they can also be indicative of what Wolf calls “socially driven agencies”. A passage from Obejas’s English translation of *Domingo de Revolución*, read alongside the original and the French translation, helps bring this point into focus (Example 4).

A parallel reading of the extract in the three languages allows us to note right away that the English version is truncated. Whereas the original and the French version explicitly equate

societal changes that the narrator observes in La Habana with a “Haitianization” of the city, this element is expunged from *Revolución Sunday*. The text marketed for the North American audience therefore presents us with a compelling instance of textual erasure for which, at the time of drafting this contribution, it was not possible to ascertain whether this sanitization of the text had been conducted at the hand of a third party editor, by the translator herself, and/or in compliance with the author. What this example goes to show, however, is that, even if the paratextual interventions found in the French translations of Guerra’s works remain unparalleled in the English translations, both Millon and Obejas contribute to setting parameters through which non-Hispanophone readers access contemporary Cuban literature. Obejas’s filtering of the text is hardly detectable without a parallel close reading of source and translated versions, whereas Millon’s interventions are

much more visible, inviting the reader to learn more about Cuba and Guerra's fiction, without any specific feminist agenda. When asked indeed about whether being a woman translator might have had an impact on her translation process, Millon simply speaks of "common sensibilities" that she may share with Guerra as a woman. Yet, she promptly adds that, to her, what remains of prime importance is her deep connection with the text itself and with the world created by the writer, regardless of their gender¹⁴. If the questions of gender and race are therefore not part of Millon's reflections on her work as a translator of Guerra's works for the Francophone reader¹⁵—at least not consciously or insofar as the constraints of a socially-constructed phone interview may allow us to assert—, it goes without saying that both her and Obejas's presence in the liminal and interstitial spaces of the translated text confirm gendered practices of translator agency¹⁶, which, as the next section will argue in the context of (Afro-)Brazilian literature, may generate new forms of trans-local feminism.

4. Introducing the metropolis to (Afro-)Brazilian literature—by Anacaona *et aliae*

Compared with Stock and Buchet Chastel, Anacaona Éditions is a very small publishing out-

let composed of one permanent member, its founder, Paula Anacaona, and a few freelance collaborators hired *ad hoc* for specific projects. Anacaona Éditions is an activist press that was created in 2009, has the status of an Ltd., and is specialized in Brazilian literatures, in the plural form, a point that the publisher insists on in her editorial line, which she defines as "activist, plural and diverse"¹⁷. Nearly all of the literature published by the press therefore consists of translated texts all carried out by Paula Anacaona herself who also wrote her debut novel, *Tatou* (2018), a graphic novel, *Anacaona, l'insurgée des Caraïbes—1492* (2019), and a children's book, *Gaïa changera le monde* (2020), all featured in the publisher's catalogue. In addition to publishing contemporary Brazilian fiction, Anacaona Éditions has also diversified its catalogue to essays by major voices from the Afro-feminist movement in Brazil, among which Djamila Ribeiro and Joyce Berth. Of mixed ascendancy herself—"her French mother is white and her South American father is of African descent"¹⁸—Anacaona translates "from the Brazilian"—and not from "Portuguese (Brazil)", as most title pages of translated texts traditionally indicate in France. This detail might seem anecdotal to the reader, but it seems to us, rather, that it is indicative of Anacaona's editorial activism, which is encapsulated as follows on their website:

À leur création, fin 2009, les éditions Anacaona étaient axées sur la littérature marginale—une littérature faite par les minorités, raciales ou socio-économiques. Le talent littéraire est ici mis au service d'une cause politique ou sociale.

14 "Ce qui prime, c'est le rapport au texte et à l'auteur." ["What matters most is [my] relationship to the text and with the author."] Phone interview conducted on 12 December 2020.

15 Françoise Wuilmart, a French translator of German texts, differs from Millon on that point, and speaks of the "femininity" or "masculinity" of the "voice"—rather than "content"—of some texts. (Wuilmart, 2009, pp. 23–39).

16 Barbara Godard's "*womanhandling*" comes to mind here: "Womanhandling the text in translation means replacing the modest, self-effacing translation. The translator becomes an active participant in the creating of meaning." (Cited in Arrojo, 1994, p. 151).

17 See the publisher's catalogue and motto: <<https://www.anacaona.fr/wp-content/uploads/Catalogue-2020-pour-site-Web.pdf>>. Accessed 01 February 2020.

18 See <<http://www.ipsnews.net/2015/05/je-suis-favela-bringing-brazilian-books-to-the-french-2/>>. Accessed 03 February 2020.

[When they were founded at the end of 2009, éditions Anacaona focused on marginal literature—a literature written by minorities, be they racial or socio-economic. Literary talent is meant to serve a political or social agenda.]¹⁹

From that perspective, most of Anacaona's work as a translator contains paratextual elements that aim not only to present aspects of Brazilian socio-historical, linguistic and cultural realities deemed to be most likely unknown to Francophone readers, but also, within the configuration of its own peripheral positioning onto the page—as most of her translational paratext appears in the form of footnotes –, to provide a decentered space of expression for heretofore silenced female voices and their marginalized (hi)stories. This can be observed, for example, in *Insoumises*, a collection of short stories by Conceição Evaristo, in which the author presents the portraits of thirteen women who share aspects of their lives with an itinerant story collector who performs, in turn, the role of witness-narrator for the reader. The last story of the collection opens with the eponymous character's introduction to the narrator. As she says, "My name is Régina Anastacia¹". the following footnote appears:

Anastacia, esclave africaine du 18^e siècle d'une grande beauté, refusa les avances sexuelles de son maître. En guise de punition, elle fut forcée de porter un masque de Flandres pendant toute sa vie. Défigurée, elle mourut dans d'horribles souffrances. Elle est vénérée au Brésil et en Afrique.

[Anastacia, an eighteenth-century African slave of great beauty, resisted her master's sexual advances. As a punishment, she was forced to wear an iron, muzzle-like facemask for the rest of her life. She died disfigured and in atrocious

pain. She is worshipped in Brazil and in Africa.] (Evaristo, 2018, p. 143)

The translational paratext added by Anacaona here first provides some background information for the reader to understand the connotation behind the character's name. It also serves to inscribe Régina Anastacia within a genealogy of Afro-Brazilian women celebrated as key figures who fought against slavery and oppression, which is immediately confirmed in the short story itself, when the narrator comments that she is in the presence of a legendary queen ("reine"). This, in turn, brings back to life a long series of other queens in the narrator's mind:

Le souvenir d'autres reines me revint : mère Menininha de Gantois, mère Meninazinha d'Oxum¹, les Reines de Congadas²—majestés que j'avais célébrées pendant mon enfance dans l'État du Minas Gerais –, Clementina de Jésus, Dona Ivone Lara, Lia de Itamaracá³, Lea Garcia, Ruth de Souza⁴, madame Laurinda Natividade, la professeure Efigenia Carlos, dona Iraci Graciano Fidelis, Toni Morrison, Nina Simone... Et d'autres femmes, mes sœurs de l'autre côté de l'Atlantique, celles que j'ai vues au Mozambique, au Sénégal, dans les villes et les villages ... Et encore d'autres, beaucoup d'autres...

1. Mères de saints, prêtresses dans la religion afro-brésilienne.
2. La *congada* est un spectacle culturel et religieux afro-brésilien, composé de chants et des danses, représentant le couronnement d'un roi du Congo.
3. Trois chanteuses afro-brésiliennes et revendiquant fortement leur héritage.
4. Deux actrices afro-brésiliennes, faisant figure de précurseurs.

[The memory of other queens came back to me: Mother Menininha do Gantois, Mother Meninazinha de Oxum¹, the Queens of Congadas²—all of whom I had celebrated during my childhood in the state of Minas Gerais—Clementina de Jésus, Dona Ivone Lara, Lia de Itamaracá³, Lea Garcia, Ruth de Souza⁴, Ms. Laurinda Natividade, professor Efigenia Car-

19 <<https://www.anacaona.fr/les-editions-anacaona-une-passerelle-de-diffusion-de-la-litterature-bresilienne-en-france/>>. Accessed 30 January 2020.

los, dona Iraci Graciano Fidelis, Toni Morrison, Nina Simone... And other women, my sisters from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, the ones I saw in Mozambique, in Senegal, in cities and villages... And many others, so many others...

1. Mothers of patron saints, priestesses in the Afro-Brazilian religion.
 2. The *congada* is an Afro-Brazilian cultural and religious ceremony composed of songs and dances meant to enact the crowning of a Congolese king.
 3. Three Afro-Brazilian singers who strongly assert their heritage.
 4. Two Afro-Brazilian actresses who are considered as pioneer figures.
- (Evaristo, 2018, p. 144)

When read together, the four footnotes create a transnational lineage of Afro-descendant women who have left their stamp on important aspects of Brazilian culture and religion and serve as role models for future generations as the last note indicates (“faisant figure de précurseurs”). This sense of genealogy can also be felt in the publisher’s hybrid catalogue, which mixes together classics of Brazilian literature—which include some (re)translations of Rachel de Queiroz and Conceição Evaristo’s canonical texts—with works by a new generation of emerging and more confirmed activist Afro-women writers²⁰. Anacaona’s catalogue features, for example, Jarid Arraes’s first novel, *Dandara et les esclaves libres*, in which the publisher inserts a biographical note placed at the end of the volume to highlight the editorial

20 In a phone interview conducted with Paula Anacaona on 22 September 2019, she admitted that she enjoyed having a hybrid catalogue that brings together classic Brazilian fiction in her collection Terra, which features for example works by writers from the *Nordeste*, the Northeast region of Brazil, and more contemporary works by writers from the favelas for whom “writing becomes a weapon”, as the collection Urbana specifies. See <https://www.anacaona.fr/roman_favela/>. Accessed 05 February 2020.

process the book had to go through to reach Francophone readers, whilst revealing some of the intricacies of the book circuit in the Caribbean and Latin America:

Prenant de plus en plus conscience des problématiques de race et de genre, elle publie en 2015 au Brésil en édition indépendante *Dandara et les esclaves libres*, son premier roman. En moins d’un an, le tirage est épuisé et l’œuvre est rééditée en 2016 par une grande maison d’édition brésilienne.

[Becoming increasingly aware of issues of race and gender, she published her first novel, *Dandara and the freed slaves*, with a Brazilian independent press in 2015. In less than a year, the print-run was sold out and the book was reprinted in 2016 by an important Brazilian publisher.]

(Arraes, 2018, n/a)

The novel’s original success in Brazil, which is confirmed here by its passage from a small, independent press to an established publishing house due to its first print-run being sold out in a short time span, further justifies the translation of the work for the Francophone market, whilst lending higher credit to the emerging writer. Seen in this light, the biographical note can be read alongside Casanova’s aforementioned arguments on compensation or enrichment for the French literary market, although it should be noted that the intent here is not one of cultural appropriation, quite the opposite.²¹ Most, if not all of Anacaona’s paratextual interventions—particularly as a translator—rather aim to deconstruct imperial and colonial narratives from the margins of the page and the center of the metropolis. This is particularly manifest in the feminist essays by Afro-Brazilian women writers that Anacaona translates and publishes. In *La Place de la parole*

21 On the specific topic of cultural appropriation, see Anacaona’s presentation of Rodney William’s *L’Appropriation culturelle* (Anacaona, 2020b).

noire, by Djamila Ribeiro (2019), presented as one of the leading voices of the Afro-Brazilian feminist movement by Anacaona²², there are two levels of footnotes: some are authorial, translated directly from the original Brazilian version, and others were added by the translator herself and are clearly signposted in the French through the use of a systematic “(N. d. T.)” that comes after each of Anacaona’s liminal interventions. Here, Evelyn Dueck’s classification of paratext, which she divides up into four categories, can be useful to study the dialogue initiated between interventionism and intersectionality in Anacaona’s translations. Dueck’s framework has been summed up as follows by Kathryn Batchelor:

Like Deane-Cox, Dueck argues in favour of creating additional categories in order to study the paratexts of translated texts—though rather than one additional category, Dueck creates four. These are the *péritexte traductif* [translatorial peritext], the *péritexte traduit* [translated peritext], the *épitexte traductif* [translatorial epitext] and the *épitexte traduit* [translated epitexts] ‘see Dueck (2014, 213)’. The distinction between ‘traductif’ [translatorial] and ‘traduit’ [translated] is made on the basis that the former encompasses peritextual elements signed by the translator or publisher, while the latter

refers to translated source text paratexts (see Dueck 2014, 213). (Batchelor, 2018, p. 31)

Following Genette’s terminology (1987), Dueck distinguishes between a third-party paratextual apparatus that directly frames the text within the book—what is called “peritext”—from more peripheral interventions—the “epitext”—that are traditionally located outside the book proper and deemed more commercial. Drawing on Dueck’s distinction between translatorial paratext and translated paratext, this article now wishes to turn to the following extract to gain further insight into the pairing of authorial and translational footnotes in *La Place de la parole noire*:

La penseuse [Gonzalez] confronte également le paradigme dominant, et utilise dans un grand nombre de ses textes une langue qui n’obéit pas aux règles de la grammaire normative, donnant ainsi une visibilité à l’héritage linguistique des peuples réduits en esclavage. [...] Le langage, selon la façon dont il est utilisé, peut être une barrière à la compréhension, et peut créer davantage d’espaces de pouvoir au lieu de partage, en plus d’être un obstacle parmi d’autres à une éducation transgressive¹.

Gonzalez a réfléchi à la façon dont les personnes qui parlaient « mal » ou « de travers », selon ce que l’on considère comme la norme érudite, étaient traitées avec mépris et condescendance, et a appelé « *pretugais* »² la valorisation de la langue parlée par les peuples noirs africains réduits à l’esclavage au Brésil.

« C’est drôle comme ils [les membres de la société blanche élitiste] se moquent de nous quand nous disons que nous supportons l’équipe du *Framengo*³. Ils nous qualifient d’ignorants et disent que nous parlons de travers. Mais ils ignorent que la présence de ce *r* au lieu du *l* n’est rien de plus que la marque linguistique d’un idiome africain, dans lequel le *l* n’existe pas. Alors, qui est l’ignorant ? Et en même temps, ils affirment adorer la langue dite brésilienne—cette

22 The blurb on the book cover presents Ribeiro as follows: “maître en philosophie politique, [Djamila Ribeiro] est la référence du mouvement féministe noir, antiraciste, pro-lgbt et antimachiste au Brésil. Chroniqueuse pour la presse et la TV, elle donne aussi des conférences dans le monde entier. Avec un demi-million de suiveurs sur les réseaux sociaux, c’est une activiste de poids.” (Ribeiro, 2019, n/a). Anacaona is also very active herself on social media and has promoted Ribeiro’s work, with her frequent visits to France and meetings with her readers during literary events via several channels. See, for instance, <<https://www.anacaona.fr/blog/podcast-feminisme-noir-afro-decolonial-djamila-ribeiro-joyce-berth/>>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

langue qui avale les *r* des verbes à l’infinitif, qui raccourcit *você* en *cê*, *está* en *tá*, etc.—sans voir qu’ils parlent le prétugais. »⁴

1. Voir plus dans : HOOKS, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education As the Practice of Freedom*, 1994.
2. Jeu de mots, contraction de preto (signifiant noir) et portugais. (N. d. T.)
3. Prononciation erronée selon la norme érudite, l’équipe s’appelant Flamengo. (N. d. T.)
4. GONZALEZ, Lélia. *Op.cit.*

[The thinker [Gonzalez] also confronts the dominant paradigm and uses, in many of her texts, a language that does not obey grammatical norms, thereby lending visibility to the linguistic heritage of enslaved peoples. [...] This language, depending on how it is used, may however hinder comprehension and generate more instances of power rather than equality in addition to being one more hurdle to a transgressive education¹.

Gonzalez thought about how people who used a “bad” or “distorted” language, when measured by the yardstick of what we consider the erudite norm, were treated with contempt and condescension. She talked about “pretuguese”² to describe the valorisation of the language spoken by the peoples of Black and African descent who had become slaves in Brazil.

“It’s funny how they [the members of the elitist white society] are making fun of us when we say that we support the *Framengo* team³. They describe us as ignorant and say that we don’t speak properly. But they don’t know that the presence of this *r* instead of the *l* is nothing more than the linguistic feature of an African language in which the *l* doesn’t exist. So, who’s the ignorant one? At the same time, they claim that they love the Brazilian language, this language that gets rid of the *r* on infinitive verbs, that shortens *você* into *cê*, *está* into *tá*, etc.—without realizing that they speak pretuguese.⁴”

1. See more on that point in: HOOKS, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education As the Practice of Freedom*, 1994.

2. Pun, contraction of *preto* (Black) and Portuguese. (*Translator’s note*)

3. According to the erudite norm, erroneous pronunciation of the team that is called *Flamengo*. (*Translator’s note*)

4. GONZALEZ, Lélia. *Op.cit.*] (Ribeiro, 2019, pp. 23-24)

In this extract, footnotes 1 and 4 correspond to bibliographical references inserted by Ribeiro herself in *O que é lugar de fala* (Editora Letramento, 2017) to crucial works by Afro-feminist thinkers bell Hooks and Lélia Gonzalez. The second and third footnotes were added by Anacaona and both consist in elucidating language points for the reader: “pretugais” is explained as a portmanteau pun between “preto” and “portugais” (“Portuguese” in French), in which the former is introduced as “meaning black”, while “framengo” is described as a variational pronunciation of “flamengo”. Interestingly, Anacaona speaks of an “erroneous pronunciation according to an erudite norm” in footnote 3, which, in the history of the Caribbean and the Americas, bears specific resonance (Gentzler, 2008). Similarly, in her own graphic novel, *Anacaona, l’insurgée des Caraïbes—1492*, the translator/author (re)inserts a number of indigenous names in her history of Ayiti and its native peoples and makes a point, for instance, of explaining Taino terms to the reader in almost all of her twenty-five footnotes. On the contrary, Christopher Columbus—traditionally known as Christophe Colomb in French history books—becomes Cristobal Colón in *Anacaona, l’insurgée des Caraïbes—1492*, potentially inviting the reader to re-assess and deconstruct (phallo)centric and nationalistic approaches to history on the one hand, and resist linguistic assimilation on the other. Much in the same vein, Anacaona’s paratextual interventions in Ribeiro’s feminist essay further testify to her activism as a trans-

lator/publisher seeking to promote marginalized knowledges. When exploring the title she chose for her essay and when defining what she means by “place de la parole”, Ribeiro argues the following:

[...] il n'existe pas d'épistémologie spécifiquement déterminée sur l'expression « place de la parole » ; en fait, l'origine est imprécise. Nous pensons que ce concept a surgi à partir de la discussion autour du *feminist standpoint*², de la diversité, de la théorie raciale critique et de la pensée décoloniale.

[...] there is no specifically determined epistemology for the “location of the spoken”; as a matter of fact, we cannot trace back its origins. We believe that the concept was born out of the discussion around the *feminist standpoint*², diversity, critical racial theory and decolonial thinking. (Ribeiro, 2019, p. 56)

In turn, Ribeiro's reference to the “feminist standpoint” leads to the insertion of a footnote by Anacaona that re-positions the expression within a non-centric space of expression, in which the production of feminist knowledge is concomitant with forging more intersectional solidarities:

2. Dans une traduction littérale, le féminisme du point de vue. Nous préférons « féminisme de positionnement ». La théorie du positionnement affirme que le savoir produit dans les marges et formulé de façon collective est potentiellement plus fiable et susceptible d'accroître l'objectivité du savoir traditionnel. L'accent est mis sur la reconnaissance des femmes comme sujets connaissants. (*N.d.T.*)

2. A literal translation would be “standpoint feminism”. We prefer “position feminism”. Positioning theory argues that the knowledge produced in the margins and formulated collectively is potentially more reliable and can be more objective than traditional knowledge. Here, the emphasis is laid on the recognition of

women as knowledgeable subjects. (*Translator's note*)
(*Ibid.*)

Here, Anacaona's definition of the “feminist standpoint” not only echoes Ribeiro's own positioning as an Afro-feminist thinker, it amplifies her voice and further aims at deconstructing central (white) narratives within feminist theories from the very margins of the text. In that sense, Anacaona's translatorial peritext does not merely supplement the (authorial) translated peritext found in Ribeiro's essay, neither does it aim to hijack the original in a provocative way. Rather, her paratextual strategies remain faithful to the author's original Afro-feminist agenda, inasmuch as they extend—whilst never displacing—the author's original intersectional feminist discourse. Anacaona's paratext is therefore less feminist (in the provocative sense of the word, as highlighted by von Flotow and Arrojo) than it is activist. In that regard, Anacaona's work offers a unique trans-local²³ platform from which minoritized stories and theories from the Americas can travel through the Global North/Global South axis of cultural circulation without having to wear a white mask²⁴ or sound French. At its own level and within its specific location, Anacaona's work therefore comes to embody “the critical role of translation in the trans/formation of feminist movements, locally and transnationally, diachronically and synchronically.” (Castro & Ergun, 2017, p. 2)

23 The term is preferred to “global” in an effort to preserve and respect the specificities of each original geo-historical and political site of knowledge production. It also aims to echo the work conducted by Gil-Bajardí et al. (2012) on the glocality of paratextual elements in translation.

24 In reference to *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Fanon, 1952).

5. Conclusion

As this article sought to show, Caribbean literature—or any literature, for that matter—is inevitably situated, and even more so when it is written by women. Its original “location”, be it Cuba or Brazil, within the global traffic of cultural goods may vary according to national, regional or local classifications as well as to social constructs such as gender and ethnicity, to name but two. Each time a text circulates in translation, it enters a new geohistorical arena whose access may at times be facilitated, at others obstructed depending on a number of variables. In the case of the Americas, Claudia de Lima Costa observes the following about the cross-border journeys of feminist theories:

In the context of the Americas, in the interactions between Latina and Latin American feminisms, the travels of discourses and practices encounter formidable roadblocks and migratory checkpoints when they attempt to cross borders. This is in part due to the existence of certain dominant and exclusionary institutional configurations but also to the fact that different historiographies have excluded subjects and subjectivities from both sides of the North-South divide (and within each side), making the possibility of productive dialogue a daunting political and epistemological challenge. (de Lima, 2014, p. 21)

Arguably, and as seen through the various paratextual strategies deployed by activist publisher/translator/writer Anacaona, the transnational circulation of (Afro-)feminist theories towards the metropolis may not always entail caving in to hegemonic narratives and ethnocentric, fetishizing tendencies. If, in the main, the French literary marketplace remains centripetal and tends to favour interventionist practices on the part of translators and publishers, it nevertheless shows that feminine translational paratexts are not simply meant as spaces of compensation, let alone cultural appropri-

tion. Rather, as the translations carried out by women like Marianne Millon or Paula Anacaona have shown, it seems that interventionism increasingly comes to meet up with intersectionality in a combined effort to disrupt (phallo)centric discourses of subservience and invisibility. Although a parallel study of feminine paratexts observed in the translation of marginalized voices from the various (non-white) francospheres aimed at the specific Cuban and Brazilian literary marketplaces falls outside the scope of this article, it would certainly constitute a much-needed, long-awaited echo from alternative sites of knowledge production and praxes. Perhaps one might even be as bold as dreaming to hear such an echo performed in *Tumbao Cubano* or *Pretoquês*.²⁵

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²⁵ I wish to thank Marianne Millon and Paula Anacaona for having so kindly accepted to be interviewed for the purpose of this reflection paper.

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