TABOO TRANSACTIONS:
AN INITIAL DIACHRONIC APPROACH TO TRANSLATION AND SEX WORK

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ABSTRACT: Translation is an ever-evolving form of transmission that carries with it ideas, hopes, politics, poetics, and desires. Building upon Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's assertion that "translation is the most intimate form of reading," the present paper explores translation as a form of labor that can be described as intimate through metaphor and history. This paper offers a diachronic perspective on translation and erotic labor through the lens of metaphor, theory and translation history, and proposes that the marginal nature of both sex work and translation reflects a cultural aversion to alterity or otherness. Situated within these overlaps, this paper will trace 1) erotic dimensions of translation depicted through theory and metaphor; 2) a discussion on the figure of the yoginī from Hindu Tantric religion as well as the colonial construct of "sleeping dictionaries" as translator/ consort figures; and 3) examples from the contemporary intersections of translation, global commerce, and sex work.
KEYWORDS: Translation and Intimacy, Translation Metaphors, Sex Work, Prostitution, Sleeping Dictionary, Yoginī, Globalization

1. Introduction

In her 1998 essay, "'Whether from reason or prejudice': taking money for bodily services," philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1998, p. 696) begins her treatise on the societal stigma facing sex workers by plainly stating, "All of us, with the exception of the independently wealthy and the unemployed, take money for the use of our body." She goes on to address the moral and legal arguments that are leveraged against sex workers and used as justification for their marginalization and criminalization. Nussbaum deconstructs each argument by comparing it to another profession that is deemed more acceptable by society but hasn't always been historically. She cites examples of the opera singer, domestic worker, philosophy professor, and so on, to demonstrate this point. On the comparison between "The prostitute[1] and the professor of philosophy", Nussbaum writes:

> These two figures have a very interesting similarity: both provide bodily services in areas that are generally thought to be especially intimate and definitive of selfhood. Just as the prostitute takes money for sex, which is commonly thought to be an area of intimate self-expression, so the professor takes money for thinking and writing about what she thinks—about morality, emotion, the nature of knowledge, whatever—all parts of a human being's intimate search for understanding of the world and self-understanding. It was precisely for this reason that the medieval thinkers I have mentioned saw such a moral problem about philosophizing for money: it should be a pure spiritual gift, and it is degraded by the receipt of a wage. The fact that we do not think that the professor (even one who regularly holds out for the highest salary offered) thereby alienates her mind or turns her thoughts into commodities—even when she writes a paper for a specific conference or volume—should

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[1] Nussbaum uses the work "prostitute" and "prostitution" in her treatise. I will use the terms "sex worker" and "sex work" in accordance with contemporary practices and to emphasize the labor aspect.

> put us on our guard about making similar conclusions in the case of the prostitute" (Nussbaum, 1998, p. 704).

If, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1993) asserts, "translation is the most intimate form of reading," then this comparison could also be applied to the translator. Some translation researchers may have heard the saying, "translation is the oldest profession in the world, you know, apart from the other one"; a sly equivocation to the longstanding history of both translation and sex work as intimate jobs done with minds and bodies. It has been noted that translators have been marginalized, undervalued, and made invisible within the global economy and circulation of texts and information (Duarte, 2000; Venuti, 1995; Bassnett, 1990). It has also been observed that the labor of translation is, at times, pejoratively gendered (Chamberlain, 1988). This paper tentatively proposes that the marginal nature of both sex work and translation has to do with a cultural aversion to alterity or otherness, and when testimony from both translators and sex workers is platformed, it can be viewed as a form of cultural resistance (Baldo and Inghilleri, 2018). Translators and sex-workers perform a sort of "border-crossing" in the liminal spaces they occupy, which can be seen as a threat to the status quo (Jaffe, 1995). As such, receiving money for these services can be seen as taboo or treacherous. By examining the metaphoric and material overlaps between translation, intimacy and erotic labor, we can develop a better understanding of what is at stake when we use metaphors to describe or compare these forms of labor.

2. Translation, Eroticism, and Intimacy Metaphors

There are erotic dimensions to the use of language itself as well as the act of translation. Considered from a process perspective, solving translation problems activates a place in the brain where creativity and eros coexist; "Some neurologists have put forward the hypothesis that creative thinking is closely connected with the anterior hypothalamus in the brain, which is the centre of libido and lust and motivates not only sexual fantasies but fantasies and daydreaming of all types" (Kussmaul, 1991, p. 48). After Spivak's well-known and aforementioned postulation that "translation is the most intimate form of reading," there has been some emerging work on intimacy and translation, stemming from scholarly streams in queer theory, postcolonial studies, and gender and sexuality studies (West, 2010; Larkosh, 2011; Santaemilia, 2017; Fisher, 2020; Arrojo, 1995). West (2010) offers erotics as a working metaphor for translation and explores connections between eros, language, and the act of translation. Basile (2017) writes of the erotic, queer, and subversive potentials of both translation and self-translation. Jaffe (1995) offers a reading of Puerto Rican author, Rosario Ferré's work and unpacks the connections Ferré makes between translation and prostitution. Namely, that both the translator and prostitute pass back and forth between worlds. The aforementioned works are varied in their approaches, and the existing literature on translation and intimacy is dispersed throughout different theoretical streams.

Returning to Spivak (1993), the first part of the quotation: "translation is the most intimate form of reading" is often reproduced. However, within the same quotation, she also writes, "I surrender to the text when I translate" and "the translator earns permission to transgress from the trace of the other" (Spivak, 1993). The words "surrender to the text" and "the translator earns permission to transgress" provide valuable clues about how Spivak is articulating intimacy in this instantiation. The act of translating can have an abductive quality on the translator, blurring boundaries between texts, between notions of "self" and "other." This intimate, and perhaps even violent process of worldmaking through translation is under-examined within the existing literature. This language also reveals a more nuanced perspective on notions of fidelity and betrayal—what does it mean to have permission to transgress? The intersections between translation and intimacy are in an inchoate stage of exploration—particularly in how intimacy is a part of the translation process and how translators themselves use metaphors to describe their work.

In an interview, Katrina Dodson, who has translated Clarice Lispector, highlights a tension between opposites, framing "translation as cultural cannibalism, an act that's both violent and intimate, in which you absorb the force of another textual body and render it in terms of your own textual body" (Chaffee, 2017a). This understanding of intimacy encompasses its violent potentials, and it frames the text as a "body." The idea of text as body is echoed in other discussions of translation, intimacy, and embodiment. Referring to both the body of a subject (translator) and the body of a text, Basile writes, "Languages and subjects 'come undone' in the sexual and in the translative encounter when the materiality of their intermingling passes a threshold of perception, such that they can no longer be governed by the ideational rule of transparent self-identity" (Basile, 2017, p. 30). Put another way, the process of translation has the capacity to disrupt binaries of subject/object, self/other, source/target, etc. From intermingling to commingling. Mihaela Moscaliuc cites Roland Barthes and Chaim Nachman Bialik and describes "translators and translated texts as lovers going through blissful times, hard times, and entanglements; lovers who may be committed, fickle, both self-centered and giving in their commingling" (Chaffee, 2016). María José Giménez writes that, for her, translation is like "being with a lover, all aspects of loving and being in love: physical, emotional, sexy, searing, tender, embodied, wondrous, frustrating, impulsive, all-consuming, maddening, painful, healing" (Chaffee, 2017b). These metaphors frame the process of translation as both reciprocal and intimate, giving presence both the translator experience and the animate body of the translated text.

In his discussion on Argentinian writer and intellectual, Victoria Ocampo's relationship to Nobel-prize- winning Bengali poet, Rabindranath Tagore's work, Larkosh maps the intersections of foreignness, spoken and written language, and translation by employing an intimacy metaphor for Ocampo's experience: "It all seems so close, pressing up against the tips of the fingers, against the skin, that most intimate boundary with the foreign, as the meaning hides behind the unfamiliar script of the Bengali language […]" (Larkosh, 2011, p. 113). He goes on to extend this metaphor in his interpretation of

Ocampo's own metaphor of a translation having gloves on which desensitize the reader; "This contact is imagined as one of 'undressed' physical touch with what is called 'materia prima'" (Larkosh, 2011, p. 113). In this sense the translation is a glove, or barrier, to direct and unmitigated intimacy with the source text. This metaphor points to the ephemeral and erotic experiencing of otherness present, and how longing for contact comes into play.[2]

In terms of a gender-based paradigm for translation metaphors and the topic of intimacy, Lori Chamberlain wrote that the labor of the translator has, at times, been pejoratively gendered (Chamberlain, 1988). Arrojo (1995) situates Chamberlain's gendered translation metaphorics within a feminist, postmodern, and poststructuralist tradition, emphasizing the translator's pleasure and "orgasmic" collaboration with the text. It has also been noted that the translation metaphors that Chamberlain discusses are "heteterosexed" (Santaemilia, 2017, p.18) as she speaks to how metaphors for translation reinforce binaries and certain notions about women. This aspect of historical translation metaphors can be identified in phrases such as "Les belles infidèles" (the beautiful, unfaithful ones)—coming from French writer Gilles Ménage implying that a translation, like a woman, can be beautiful or faithful, but never both (Polizzotti, 2018, p. 49), and the Italian "traduttore, traditore" (to translate is to betray, or, translation is treachery).

> Fidelity and licence are the binary terms that perhaps most obviously reflect the damaging analogues that have long been established between the translator and the prostitute [...] The fidelity/license opposition, where fidelity has been positively valorized and license condemned, has traditionally been employed to celebrate or condemn the translator's work as well as to regard the prostitute as contemptible in contrast to the faithful wife. (Jaffe, 1995, p. 69)

The image of translation as taboo or treacherous can even be traced to Biblical depictions of the Tower of Babel, wherein humans are condemned to translate because of their hubris. Warren Weaver, in 1949, painted a view of machine translation having the potential to undo this linguistic scattering. Writes Michael Cronin, "His mind is on Babel but his images are those of the high-rise developments which would come to house countless numbers of immigrants in postwar Europe" (Cronin, 2006, p. 43). This vision of a neo-Babel by way of tenement housing brings together images of migration and close quarters. The underworld, or basement, is depicted as an ideal space where communication barriers can melt away; "Perhaps the way is to descend, from each language, down to the common base of human communication–the real but as yet undiscovered universal language" (Cronin, 2006, p. 43). I'll push back a little on the language of "undiscovered" which betrays a colonial attitude—that things must be "discovered" in order to be legitimized—however, the idea of descent is a valuable frame,

[2] Mihaela Moscaliuc's full reflection on Barthes connects with this longing for contact; "I'm not sure how Roland Barthes's metaphor fits here, but it captures some of my approach to the languages between which I travel: 'Language is a skin: I rub my language against the other. It is as if I had words instead of fingers, or fingers at the tip of my words. My language trembles with desire.'" (Chaffee, 2016)

especially when considering the relationship between translation and intimacy. Translation is a place where perhaps "meaning collapses" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 1), like the tower, and has the potential to be a site both of sanctity and profanity.

Fig 1.Tower of Babel,
Andreas Zielenkiewicz (2006).

Fig 2.The Whore of Babylon, Martin Luther
Bible (c. 1530).

The Whore of Babylon is a figure associated with revelation, evil, blasphemy, and excess. I offer the above Tower of Babel image in conversation with Martin Luther Bible depiction of the Whore of Babylon as potentially connected with how attitudes towards translation and sex work have developed over time—and, necessarily by extension, attitudes towards translators and sex workers, the bodies performing these forms of labor.

3. Abjection, the Yoginī, and Translation

Departing from Biblical references and moving to an example from Hindu Tantric streams, Kristeva's concept of abjection dovetails with the figure of the yoginī; a woman who crosses borders and challenges "the hegemony of the brahmanical tradition" (Vijaisri, 2013, p. 203). The physical and cultural space occupied by the yoginī is at once marginal and embedded. According to lore, some yoginīs occupied a dual role— as a dutiful wife during the day, and semi-divine witch by night (von Stietencron, 2013, p. 91). Shaman Hatley (2013) characterizes the yoginī as polymorphic, able to take different forms, even possessing the power of flight, and notes their position within an 'outside' space; "yoginīs have a strong association with cremation grounds: while a variety of liminal places are spoken of as their haunts, their primary locus is the charnal ground (śmaśāna), the preferred site for the radical practices advanced in Śaiva tantras of the Vidyāpīṭha." (Hatley, 2013, p. 7). This spatial consideration connotes the alterity of the yoginī — the space with which they are most strongly associated is a site with explicit connections to death and impurity. The cremation grounds can be seen as a border, a frame, and a reminder of the margins that hem both early and contemporary civilizations. I find it

noteworthy that, although these radical feminine practitioners are associated with these liminal places, they are not limited to them:

> The spatial shift from the hills, wilds and cremation grounds (all associated with the esoteric cult of the yoginīs) to the boundaries (the Mātāngi in the outcaste hamlet) where the yoginī assumes an extremely powerful locus is attenuated as it flows into the ordered space (the jōgatis in the temple complex). In the latter, where a woman's identity is defined by sexuality, the unfettered erotic identity unfolds as the divine spouse. And yet this identify is layered with normative connotations of non-marital sexuality and distinguished from the dichotomous model (wife versus whore) as the divine prostitute. (Vijaisri, 2013, p. 203)

Here, Vijaisri provides illustration on how danger and impurity translate to power and an identity that transcends spatial and social dichotomies in the case of the yoginī. Her ability to move between abject and orderly spaces. This gives her role a transcendent quality—it dissolves binaries. Not bound by ordered space, her erotic freedom imbues her identity with formidable power. She is able to inhabit, or haunt, the cremation grounds as well as participate in more ordered, patriarchal spaces. Kristeva also connects what is abject with an impossibility of assimilation. She writes "There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated" (1982, p.1). I find this theoretical framework useful for examining the spaces in which the yoginī is depicted. The cremation grounds, the hills and the wilds, are all associated with the yoginī. The yoginī occupies a liminal space, neither subject nor object, dancing around the edges of civilization and occasionally occupying the role of divine consort.

The alterity and impurity of the yoginīs are aspects that make them marginal, but also give them power. Törzsök (2014) writes, "[Women's] dangerous impurity can make them menacing and powerful, in the way in which tantric goddesses and yoginīs are depicted" (p. 363). The yogini both transcends and participates in normative space. She acts as a midwife or mediator, bringing chaos to order and order to chaos. She imbues profanity with sanctity and vice versa. Her liminality and ability to move between seemingly disparate spaces make her a bridge. We may imagine the yoginī as a translator, inhabiting two worlds and the multiplicity of consciousness that comes with hybrid identities.

This section has offered some initial forays into the realm of translation metaphors and intimacy. We've seen how translation metaphors can reinforce harmful gendered notions, and also how they can be a space for evocation, creativity, and erotic expression. The figure of the yoginī offers a grounded look at abjection, intimacy, translation, and sex work. The next section will look a bit more closely at a metaphor tied to the history of colonization, violence, translation, and intimacy.

4. Translation as betrayal— La Malinche and the living metaphor of "sleeping dictionary"

The term, sleeping dictionary, in and of itself is a metaphor. But instead of being a metaphor for the translation *process*, it is a metaphor for the translator herself. Naming a figure as a sleeping dictionary objectifies the subject and implies passivity. "Sleeping dictionary" is a British slang term which emerges from the historical practice of British colonial officers taking indigenous African women as concubines and interpreters (West, 2010; Weatherston, 1997; Spurr, 1993). These figures carry both historical prominence and cultural significance in how they served as bridges between cultures. Their translation labor demonstrates the consequential elements of translation and shows how translation is not a neutral activity, but it can change the landscape, the people, the language, and much more for generations to come. Within their interstitial position, they had the power to betray, disrupt, uphold, and accelerate colonial processes. So who are these figures in translation history? What are their stories, and what sorts of choices did they have to make?

One of the most famous and polarizing of these figures is the Nahua woman known as La Malinche, interpreter and lover to Hernán Cortés. Despite the paucity of archival material on La Malinche's translation work and methods, she remains a polarizing historical figure and symbol— situated in different texts as "Mexico's Eve" (Paz, 1985) and "feminist prototype" (Candelaria, 1980). These narratives, however, do little to emphasize her agency, choice, and the profound impact that her labor had on the course of history:

> [...] Her paramount value to the Spaniards was not merely linguistic, for her interpreting went beyond translating from idiom to idiom, though that was difficult enough given the foreignness of the respective tongues. She was an interpreter/liaison who served as a guide to the region, as an advisor on native customs and beliefs, and as a competent strategist". (Candelaria, 1980, p. 3)

Existing literature and interpretations on La Malinche points to how communication conventions, nonverbal behavior, and social institutions affect linguistic behavior and shape the translation activities that then, in turn, impact the formation of a cultural context. Her role was one of a "native informant" (Spivak, 1988), and her work was situated within a nexus of translation, power, and intimacy. Writers on translation and alterity through a postcolonial lens have theorized on how desire, projections, and colonial notions serve to conflate the "Other" with inferiority (Spurr, 1993; Weatherston, 1997; Spivak, 1988). I am less interested in how the "Other," is constructed within a colonial mindset, and more in an explanatory approach to the history of translation that considers these women as early translators, and "effective social actors" (Pym, 1998, p.6) who made choices and did translation work amidst uneven power relations, victimization, and complex historical conditions.

In the case of La Malinche, also known as Dona Marina, the strategic choices she made led to her being typecast in particular ways. As Octavio Paz writes:

> Dona Marina becomes a figure representing the Indian women who were fascinated, violated or seduced by the Spaniards. And as a small boy will not forgive his mother if she abandons him to search for his father, the Mexican people have not forgiven La Malinche for her betrayal. (1985)

There are two significant aspects in my reading of Paz's interpretation of the figure of La Malinche here that I would like to highlight. First, the way that Paz clusters fascination, violation, and seduction resonates with Katrina Dodson's metaphor of translation as cannibalism— at once "intimate and violent" (Chaffee, 2017a). Second, the emphasis on La Malinche's betrayal brings us full circle back to the phrase "traduttore, traditore." Translation, then, is seen as an act of betrayal, whether we are considering La Malinche as a historical amalgamation, cultural symbol, or early translator. In the absence of direct testimony from La Malinche herself, flattening metaphors such as "sleeping dictionary" rob her of her subjectivity and ability to dream.

Art historian Tere Romo (2005) traces the transformation of La Malinche into five metaphors: La Malinche as *Lengua* [Tongue]/Interpreter, La Malinche as Indian-ness, La Malinche as Seductive Traitor, La Malinche as Mestizaje, and La Malinche as Chicana. Each of these metaphors could also be seen as a way of describing translation, particularly the metaphor of Seductive Traitor, which can be connected to "Les belles infidèles." This sparks curiosity towards to what extent colonial and patriarchal attitudes have shaped popular translation metaphors, and how much the history of sleeping dictionaries has also informed attitudes towards translation and translators.

5. Sex workers rights, globalization, and translation

Venuti frames faithful translation as "self-effacement, a vanishing act" (cited in Jaffe 1995, p. 69) and Jaffe equates this to sex work: "The work of prostitution also involves self-effacement as the prostitute submits to the demands of the client" (*ibid.*). This equivocation enacts a kind of violence and points to the dangers of utilizing sex work as a metaphor for translation. There is danger, precarity, and risk involved for both the sex worker and the translator (and those aren't necessarily mutually exclusive categories) but framing the sex worker as someone who "submits to demands" in this way is a flattening analogy and reveals a profound lack of understanding of the industry and the matrices of power present within it. As the sex work activism adage goes, "nothing about us without us." In this spirit, I will include a few different examples documented intersections of sex work, translation, and globalization.

Sex work and globalization are interconnected, and border-crossing is a phenomenon shaped by macroeconomic and geopolitical forces. As Inghilleri (2017) writes:

> Social and political contexts vary but today, as often in the past, human migration and commercial sex are frequently found in tandem, where a person's body can become a primary source of their sexual capital, transferable across many cultural contexts.

> Globalization has not only facilitated the translation of commercial sexual practices across national borders, it has also encouraged the development of international consensus in ideological and legal responses to its existence. (p. 96)

The aforementioned "translation of commercial sexual practices" across borders refers to more of a cultural translation than a necessarily textual one. The body of the migrant sex worker is also a site where meaning is projected. Ideological responses can include moral panic and the insistence on viewing sex workers as victims and the refusal to recognize the complexities of their situation. Inghilleri cites the 2012 *Empower Foundation* report on Thai sex workers in discussing how translation can serve to further marginalize workers; "Where migrant sex workers were involved, issues of translation frequently contributed to the violation of these women's rights" (Inghilleri, 2017, p. 99). According to the findings (published in Thai and English), anti-trafficking NGOs used untrained volunteer translators who harmed, rather than helped, the migrant sex workers: "Women felt that the volunteer translators often had inadequate language skills and brought their own attitudes and agendas about sex work to the interviews" (*ibid.*). In this case, translation is harmful to the sex workers, and can seriously impact their lives when instances of mistranslation happen in high stakes situations, for example, the filing of a police report.

Translation can impact the way that migrant sex workers are portrayed in both local and international media. Take, for example, the 2003 Time Magazine article on the presence of migrant Brazilian sex workers in Bragança, Portugal. The story, titled "When the Meninas came to Town" discussed the stories of the sex workers as well as the group of mothers and wives who created a petition to drive them out of town. The wives/mothers— dubbed The Mães of Bragança—accused the sex workers of using witchcraft and spells to seduce their husbands (Ripley, 2003; Pais, 2011). This is an example of where encountering the "other" gives way to fear, fetishization, and misunderstanding. In this case, the Brazilian women, or *meninas*, brought aspects of their own culture across borders to a conservative small town, disrupting the social order and status quo. Miki Tanikawa writes "The media's ability to understand and engage proactively with various 'others' – rather than framing others to fit their pre-existing understanding and self-serving narratives – has poor records, despite what might seem a changing global milieu towards greater social, economic and cultural integration of the world" (2022, p. 63). In other words, even with greater access to different cultures via global media, journalists often continue to perpetuate their own biases and stereotypes. In the case of Ripley's journalism, particularly where the Brazilian migrant sex workers in Bragança are concerned, she sacrifices nuance and curiosity in service of a narrative that paints the "meninas" in a way that reinforces existing stereotypes about Brazilian women. This has been examined from cultural, sociological, and gender and ethnic studies standpoints (Queiroz, 2016; Pais, 2011; Pontes, 2004; Normande, 2009), particularly in respect to how Brazilian women are portrayed in Portuguese media.

This echoes the aforementioned pious wife/treacherous sex worker dichotomy articulated by Jaffe (1995) and contributes to social stigma; "Migrant sex workers, rather

than being recognized as genuine labor migrants, are pejoratively labelled cross-border criminals, illegals, disease spreaders, prostitutes or trafficking victims" (Baldo and Inghilleri, 2018). The insistence that migrant sex workers must be victims of trafficking or treacherous lawbreakers robs them of both their agency and subjectivity. We see documented examples of this happening with Thai sex workers' documented testimony in the *Empower Foundation* report and in the media coverage of sex workers in Bragança, Portugal.

If translation also, as Baldo and Inghilleri (2018) articulate, can be an act of self-determination and capacity-building, what role does translation play in international sex worker activism? The Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) is a sex worker-led membership organization that connects regional advocacy networks and operates according to the following values:

- Acceptance of sex work as work.
- Opposition to all forms of criminalization and other legal oppression of sex work
- Supporting self-organization and self-determination of sex workers (NSWP, 2021)

The website is available in 21 languages, accessible via a dropdown menu. In an effort to share resources between international and regional networks, and make information more widely accessible, the project Sex Workers and Allies Translate, Edit + Design (SWAT) was launched in 2016. This initiative, founded by Katherine Koster of Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP)-USA and Matthias Lehmann from Research Project Germany, endeavors to "become a network of sex workers and allies able to translate, edit and design reports, briefing papers, academic, blog and news articles, presentations, posters, or even photo captions to share sex work knowledge across cultural and language barriers" (NSWP, 2016). This kind of peer-led initiative is an example of the sex work community demonstrating its capacity to organize and create solidarity across national, regional, and linguistic borders. Koster underscores this importance as one of the motives for the formation of SWAT:

> We've noticed that advocacy literature from certain parts of the world, especially in languages that aren't French, English, or Spanish, often isn't read or used by the global movement, which is unfortunate because there is amazing, important information in German or Hungarian or Polish or Korean or Hindi [...] We hope this project will increase information-sharing across languages. (NSWP, 2016)

A noteworthy aspect of the structure of SWAT is that, in their mission, they emphasize the fact that they pay their translators (translators are not volunteers). Even more, they prioritize paying translators who are also current or former sex workers, which helps uplift the community and build bridges between localized pockets of activism and organizing. As Baldo and Inghilleri (2018) point out, "Linguistic translations open up a space between

individuals and groups, while cultural translation facilitates the merging of information and sentiments across societal and national borders'' (p. 297). This project does both, if we consider sex work as its own culture that is also embedded within the particular cultural contexts in which it occurs.

Future work on the intersections of translation, sex work, and globalization should continue to platform sex worker organizing that demonstrates how sex workers should not be framed as trafficking victims or dangers to society, but rather change agents and translators making meaningful contributions to global thought and information sharing.

6. Conclusion

This paper has offered an overview on translation and intimacy over different moments in history framed within the context of sex work, and translation. By employing a diachronic approach to theorizing on translation and intimacy, we can connect the dots between depictions of border crossers— like the yoginīs and the colonial construction of "sleeping dictionaries" and the stigma, taboo, and matrices of power that impact these areas. Exploring popular and recurring translation metaphors offers insight into how translation is viewed as both intimate and also pejoratively gendered at times, reinforcing harmful notions of translators, women, and sex workers. By focusing on places where translators speak about their own process, and sex workers are translating themselves, these metaphors can perhaps be repurposed and recuperated for a more progressive and liberated contemporary era that values intimate labor in all of its instantiations. Future research could delve more deeply into the linguistic origins of translation metaphors and how these metaphoric expressions themselves are translated (or remain untranslated). Another future direction could be to perform a textual analysis of the translation of the contents of the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) website, translator compensation, and the translation choices employed within the multiple languages.

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