

ARTICLES

Translating Femicide: Women of Sand and the Performance of Trauma

Nuala Finnegan

From the early 1990s onwards, stories about women who had been mutilated, raped, murdered and abandoned in the desert surrounding the US-Mexico border town of Ciudad Juárez started to insinuate themselves into local, national and international public consciousness. Since then, a light has been shone on the crime of femicide, or *feminicidio* as it is called in Latin America,¹ and the murders of women from Ciudad Juárez have become something of a global *cause célèbre*. More recent cases in India, Canada, Argentina, and elsewhere have ensured that the horrors of *feminicidio* and what is frequently its very public, excessive nature remain internationally visible.² Something about the murders in Ciudad Juárez, however, struck a chord both within and beyond Mexico for reasons that are difficult to define. Indeed, the city has come to represent a kind of “ground zero” for the crime of *feminicidio* and, as such, it constitutes the paradigmatic case study for a phenomenon that is now demanding global recognition and action. More than twenty-five years since the crimes were first reported, there have been numerous human rights reports, a well-documented media frenzy and an outpouring of cultural responses that seek to remember and to mourn the victims of violent death in the city at the same time as they interrogate the political, legal and societal structures that produce the crimes. Steven S. Volk and Marian E. Schlotterbeck argue that “it is precisely because the state has failed so abjectly in stopping these murders that ‘fictional’ narratives have become both the site where victims are mourned and the means by which justice can be restored.” (2010, 121–22). Taking this as a starting point, I argue that the cultural expressions about Juárez—including theatre—present us with a suggestive lens through which structural, systemic and historical patterns of violence can be best comprehended and challenged.

Theatre and Performance about Femicide in Ciudad Juárez

It is difficult to summarize the dynamic body of theatre and performance that exists about *feminicidio* in Juárez, and there have been myriad plays, performances, and theatre pieces staged as a response to the Ciudad Juárez outrages, both within the city and beyond. They have been performed at theatre festivals in Latin America and elsewhere, as digital interventions, and in avant-garde theatrical expression and what might be seen as more traditional dramatic approaches. The rich tradition of community and other forms of theatre about femicide in the State of Chihuahua and the region surrounding the city of Ciudad Juárez have creatively reimagined the horrors of femicide while attempting to stage public acts of commemoration. Durango playwright Enrique Mijares’s collection of theatre, *Hotel Juárez: Dramaturgia de feminicidios* (2008) amply showcases the range of techniques and expressive forms utilized when exploring the inhumanity, pain and injustice associated with the crimes. Mijares’s own play, *Jauría*, uses a cast of animals to depict Ciudad Juárez’s underworld, and playwrights Virginia Hernández (*La ciudad de las moscas*) and Demetrio Ávila (*Sirenas del río*) effectively employ mythical, biblical and topographical symbolism to convey the deeper truths that sustain

Nuala Finnegan is professor in the Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies at University College Cork, Ireland, and the Director of the Centre for Mexican Studies. Her research interests lie in Mexican and Mexican-American cultural studies, with a particular focus on gender. She is the author, most recently, of *Cultural Representations of Femicide at the US-Mexico Border* (Routledge, 2018).

structural, economic and symbolic violence against women. The work emanating from Perla de la Rosa's company Telón de Arena through the plays, *Antígona: las voces que incendian el desierto* (2004)³ and *Justicia negada* (2013), has also been significant in projecting the complex, lived realities for women in Ciudad Juárez to audiences outside the region.

Susana Báez Ayala's scholarly work on theatre from the US-Mexico border region (2006) signals the way in which the work of Chihuahuan playwrights exposed the culture of fear that had taken hold in Juárez. She pays tribute to the contributions of regional or state-wide theatre and its impact on local grassroots' organizations, on policy and policing, and on public discourse. Focusing on the playwrights Victor Rascón Banda, Edelberto Galindo and Antonio Zuñiga,⁴ she emphasizes their role as part of a broader, "insurgencia civil" (civil insurgency), drawing attention to theatre's powerful political charge (2006, 261). In all of these examples, the expressive terrain of the body on stage works to recalibrate understanding of questions of agency and subjectivity. Taken together, they might be seen as a kind of collective civil insurgency in the way imagined by Báez Ayala. Perhaps the experiential quality of theatre, as well as its formal versatility, lent it a particular urgency in bringing home the "truths" of *feminicidio* in Ciudad Juárez.

Humberto Robles invokes the Brechtian term, "useful theatre" (teatro útil), as a way of drawing attention to the place of theatre within activism and the struggle for justice for victims of femicide. Following this, he names theatre as the modality through which the concept of emergency (emergencia) can best be transmitted. As actor Itari Marta, who plays Bety in the Zuñiga play, *Estrellas enterradas*, explains, "Allí en el teatro, somos testigos y cómplices. Los muertos nos piden que indagemos, que preguntemos y que no guardemos el silencio [In the theatre, we are witnesses and accomplices. The dead appeal to us to investigate, to ask questions; to not be silent]" (cited in Báez Ayala 2006, 267). The complex and politically fraught positioning of actors/characters as complicit witnesses to the horrors they reveal signals theatre's particular role in foregrounding the bodily horror invoked by a feminicidal violence that is all too often characterized by dismemberment and bodily defilement as well as rape. This statement posits the dead themselves as agents in the revelation of their pain and suffering, a concept that is vividly taken up by Robles in his work that is the subject of this essay. It is also the reverberating presence of death that concerns Joseph Roach (1996) when he identifies surrogation as a process that attempts to fill the gaps and "cavities" left behind by death, trauma and displacement through the forging of a shared social memory, or set of memories. It is clear that Robles partakes in this idea of building memory through performance and story-telling rooted in an embodied local history.

Women of Sand

Mujeres de arena [*Women of Sand*] is an award-winning piece of documentary theatre by acclaimed playwright Humberto Robles. It is probably the best known theatrical response to the crimes and has been performed in multiple locations nationally and internationally. It was first presented as part of a suite of activities for the Day of Non-Violence against Women and Children [Día de no Violencia contra las Mujeres y las Niñas] in April 2002 in Mexico City's main square. Other activities that day included a performance by musical group Mitrigo, the presentation of Sergio González Rodríguez's book of investigative journalism, *Huesos en el desierto*, a video installation by Canadian-Colombian artist Claudia Bernal, and paintings and poetry from Maritza Morilla. *Mujeres de arena* has since played extensively throughout many of the Mexican states. Performances outside Mexico include Uruguay, Germany, Argentina, Australia, Canada, the United States, Spain, Cuba, Costa Rica,

Colombia, the United Kingdom, Peru, Italy, and the Dominican Republic. It is also available in digital format in both Spanish and German and appears on the excellent project website in French, Italian, and English translations.⁵ The play integrates the testimony of four different femicide victims and their families. Written as ten distinct scenes, it attempts to breathe life into four real victims of *feminicidio* in Juárez: Natalia (scene 2), Micaela (scene 4), Lilia Alejandra (scene 6), and Eréndira (scene 9). It intersperses these stories with commentary on the context and other narratives about the crimes.

As Eugenia Muñoz points out in her extensive notes on the play, *Women of Sand* utilizes a variety of dramatic modes involving the insertion of poetic fragments, monologue, newspaper reports, letters, diaries, elegy, and music to create what she likens to an “orchestral score.” A series of leitmotifs and narrative devices are employed to crystallize the political messages, including a series of rhetorical “hooks” or words that signal entry into diverse scenarios that renarrativize the crimes. This happens, for example, when the audience is asked to “imagine” the horrors of the crimes inflicted upon Lilia Alejandra Andrade García. We see it too when the phrase, (“y si . . .”/“what if . . .”) is utilized as the opener in a repetitive cycle of questions to the audience that seeks to communicate the principal discourses of victim-blaming and neglect by both the authorities and society and that have surrounded the crimes from the outset. Through this use of the suggestive link “what if,” it is possible to discern how the text adopts a “subjunctive” modality, to use David Sterritt’s term in relation to Godard’s cinema (1999, 35) as a mode of access into other worlds and other experiences.

In this article, I concentrate on two of the testimonial sections of the play, and my objectives are twofold. First, I would like to draw out the ways in which the testimony and lament of Natalia’s mother (scene 2) synthesize certain key motifs which are central to any understanding of the discourses on *feminicidio* in Juárez as well as the representation of the crimes. These include the focus on darkness—both literal and figurative—with the scene’s multi-layered referencing of ethnicity as well as its engagement with the ontological nature of evil that pervades the crimes. Natalia’s mother’s lament also signals the play’s commitment to a process of rehumanization of the victim in order to counter the powerfully damaging victim-blaming narratives that circulated in society. Finally, the scene’s identification of the systemic nature of the femicidal violence in operation works to locate the crimes within wider narratives about neoliberalism, globalization, and rapidly changing gender roles. I argue that the foregrounding of certain motifs contributes to a particular way of framing the atrocities committed against women in Juárez.

In the second section, I turn my attention to scene 6 and the testimony of Liliana’s sister, Malú, which relates in raw, powerful terms the extent of Liliana’s ordeal at the hands of her three attackers. Here, I reflect on my own experience of translating the passage, arguing that the cognitive, political, and affective encounter with the words that name Lilia’s experience forces a recognition of the systems of violence foregrounded in scene 2. The play’s insistence on the connectedness of both subjects and systems then activates the imaginative potential for cross-cultural and transnational alliances that are pivotal in understanding and challenging these modes of violence. I will close with an argument for an increased attentiveness to translation as an ethical mode of access or entry into unlocking the traumas of others.

Darkness and Light: The Mother's Lament

The play opens with a brief introduction and contextualization. With this established, four actresses set the scene:

According to published statistics, since 1993 more than 900 women have been assassinated and more than 100 have been disappeared in Ciudad Juárez in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico. The climate of violence and impunity continues to grow until today and to date it is difficult to claim that any concrete actions have been taken to end the crime of femicide. The victims have been young, factory workers, migrants. The murdered women from Ciudad Juárez are more than a statistic. They have names, faces and stories that are often not taken into account.⁶

Four actresses then establish the geocultural and political scene in “real” terms, identifying the desert space as central to the emptiness (*la nada*) that permeates the crimes. The first scene of interest for my analysis concerns the lament of Natalia’s mother in scene 2:

FIRST WOMAN: ‘Bye my child, you weren’t one of those women, no way, get out of here.⁷ But the journalists told me that no, the majority of the victims worked in the assembly plants on the border, in the maquilas, that they were young things, even children as young as five. And when I saw the photos of those girls, I knew they were right. I saw my daughter’s face in the face of each one of them. Their dark, dark eyes. . . . Dark, dark hair. It was as though each one had a piece of Natalia inside them. Then yes, I said, my daughter is another case of the murdered women of Juárez. This truth came to me suddenly. For this reason, I’m here, to give voice to Natalia, to other voices that have been silenced by force. Sometimes I go up to my daughter’s portrait and look at her. And I stay there for hours looking at her dark, dark eyes and her dark, dark hair. *MUSIC*

I am a mother without her daughter.

I am a mother dispossessed of my daughter.

I am a mother whose daughter has been ripped from the garden in my heart. My daughter in the full bloom of spring, full of colour, beautiful, full of illusion, petals, fragrant, soft, loving, full of laughter, humour and grace.

I am a mother full of sadness, tears and darkness. Without my daughter, my friend, my companion, my hope, my pride, my light, my love.

I am a mother with muted lips unable to call my daughter, deaf to the music of her words, blind and unable to see the sparks of life in her eyes.

I am a mother, hollowed out, mutilated, paralyzed by the pain of having to live without my daughter, brutally, violently ripped from the garden in my heart. *MUSIC*

There are a number of elements worthy of further scrutiny in this passage. First, we should note the use of repetition (dark, dark) in reference to Natalia's hair and complexion. The physical profile whereby victims of femicide in the city were reported as similar in build and colouring led to the emergence of a certain femicide prototype and, indeed, tag-lines such as "las inditas del sur" (little "Indian" girls from the South) were commonplace in reporting about the crimes (Gaspar de Alba 2010, 2015). This idea—that the majority of the victims were physically similar and came from the poorer Mexican States in the south—became a powerful myth that contributed to the public's perception of the crimes as somehow not about them. In this way, the "othering" of the victims spawned a legion of other myths, like for example that all of the victims worked in the *maquilas* or the assembly plants that span the length of the US-Mexico border (a myth upheld here, it is interesting to note). The references to darkness are a telling reminder then of the pervasiveness of the myth around ethnicity that reinforced the idea that brown skin and dark hair were essential components of the crime scenes. They also gesture to the wider geopolitical context of migration, mobility and precarious existence of Ciudad Juárez's young population and contribute to the portrayal of Ciudad Juárez as a monstrous, dark place.⁸

The darkness has other resonances too, however, and the way it literally colours the mother's remembering of her daughter alludes to what is a second motif central to discourses about femicide, and that is illuminated by the passage. This concerns what we might see as the figurative darkness at the heart of femicidal violence and the levels of cruelty, sadism and the abuse of power that haunt the narratives more generally. Indeed I have argued elsewhere that many of the cultural responses to the crimes preserve this metaphysical notion of evil as their underlying "truth."⁹ In this regard, it is pertinent to remember that the other major axes of death in the US-Mexico borderlands involve the deaths of migrants and of (mostly) young men trapped in a cycle of organized crime predicated on the international drug trade. These death axes are, in many ways, classic examples of neoliberal violence in the sense imagined by Žižek (2008) who would interpret the multiple and ongoing slaughter of people in this way as the logical consequences of actions that somehow threaten the giant businesses that subtend them (drug trafficking and the security industry that polices the border).¹⁰

With femicidal violence, it might be argued that there is no comparative causal or systemic explanation. Indeed the notion that the victims of femicide were somehow collateral damage caused by the ravages of globalization has been resisted fiercely by a leading critic on the femicides in the region, Rosa Linda Fregoso (2003). According to this criticism, any explanation seeking neoliberalism as its source needs to take account of other factors and contextual issues, not just those relating to late capitalist structures. In femicidal crimes, there are frequently no motives nor obvious rationales to detect even if they are often explained away as crimes of passion. In reality, the recognized femicidal pattern of abduction, torture (including rape) and death are rarely the result of rage or momentary losses of reason but rather the result of meticulous planning and ruthless, clinical execution. In this regard, the passage hints at this question of evil that stalks the crimes.¹¹

The third major discursive arc that the play reveals—rehumanization—is illustrated by the final section which displaces the femicidal darkness referred to earlier, to insert the mother's voice bearing witness to the love, goodness, beauty, and joy in her life with her daughter. No longer dark but "full of colour," her daughter is illuminated in the passage through the moving evocation of her mother's love. The rehumanization of Natalia here through a portrait that foregrounds her goodness and beauty further serves to present a counternarrative to the victim-blaming and other discourses and mythologies that worked to undermine societal interest in the crimes and contributed to their

neglect at the legal level. Even if it frequently takes refuge in an overly sentimentalizing language, the passage ends with a reminder about the enduring pain of feminicidal violence as experienced by their families and loved ones. This emphasis on pain is another way in which theatre texts like *Mujeres de arena*—with its multiple iterations nationally and internationally—actively intervene to forge a regional, national and global consciousness around the crimes.

Finally, and as part of this forging of consciousness, it is critical to note the emphasis in this passage on the connectedness of the crimes exemplified by the mother’s linking of the death of her daughter to the photographs she has been shown of other victims. Stating explicitly that a piece of her daughter is in each of those portraits of pain, we can interpret *Mujeres de arena* as part of a wave of cultural representations that inscribes the idea of structural violence, first articulated by Galtung (1969), that circumscribes and curtails the lives of women in the region. In this way, the performance genealogy, following the well-known ideas of Joseph Roach points to “the rootedness of contemporary local performative behaviors in deep historic structures” (1996, 43). Furthermore, by emphasizing the nature of the structures (of female beauty, of destructive labour practices, of toxic models of masculinity), the play energizes feminist theoretical work on the idea of *feminicidio* led by the activist and politician Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos. As is well known, Lagarde y de los Ríos was at the forefront of efforts to define and situate the crimes as systemic and ongoing, and she reminds us that *feminicidio* is not just a word, but a whole theory

about crimes that enjoy social impunity, that are incubated in misogyny, machismo in the disrespect for women’s lives, in brutal inequality, in low salaries, in exclusion. All of that is a theory, a theory of femicide. Femicide is not a word, it is an entire theory. [se trata de crímenes que gozan de impunidad social, que se incuban en la misoginia, en el machismo, en el desprecio a la vida de las mujeres, en la desigualdad brutal, en los bajos salarios, en la exclusión. Todo eso es una teoría, la teoría del feminicidio. El feminicidio no es una palabra, es toda una teoría.] (El universal.com)

While there are different views as to the definition of femicide (Fregoso and Bejarano 2010), the overwhelming emphasis on systems and structures, including the role and indeed the complicity of the state, is of paramount importance. In this way, the connecting of Natalia’s story to the other stories registers the structural and systemic nature of this violence against women as both predictable and inescapable. The trace of her daughter’s face in each one of the portraits inscribes powerful ideas of solidarity and communion, ideas that have been the bedrock of community resistance and grassroots organizing, including most particularly by the victims’ families. Other scenes from the play participate in this discourse too: the interlocking of Micaela’s story (scene 4) with that of victim Gladys Yaneth Fierro Vargas testifies again to the play’s commitment to the denunciation of femicide as systemic violence in Mexican society. The section ends with attention paid to the interconnectedness of the deaths with another list of real names: “Lilia Alejandra, Berenice, Airis Estrella, Alma Mireya, Elizabeth, Gloria, Leticia, Perla. . . . They are all our daughters, these deaths belong to all of us.” Echoing ideas about complicity and belonging seen earlier in the statements by actor Marta, the play triggers the personal stories, thereby ensuring that their connectedness to the whole of the feminicidal narrative becomes embedded in public consciousness.

Lilia Alejandra: Voicing Horror

We can see, therefore, how the play displays a political commitment to revealing the systemic nature of femicide, insisting on the rehumanization of specific victims and presenting a rigorous contextualization. It is in the scene testifying to the murder of Lilia Alejandra Andrade, however, that the femicidal darkness powerfully expressed in scene 2 receives its most explicit theatrical treatment. Building on the testimonial segments of Natalia and Micaela that invested in stories of rehumanization and the identification of points of coalition through which families could find solidarity and comfort, the segment on Lilia focuses on the slow process of doing violence to the body. It records the progressive, escalating steps of pain commencing with her abduction, taking the audience slowly through her beating and the tying up, through the burning, the raping, the biting, and the torturing, finally to reach the killing stage. *Mujeres de Arena* has been staged many times and there have been multiple performative interpretations. In some, an explicit or naturalistic approach is adopted whereby the rape and ordeal of Lilia is graphically enacted on stage either through the figure of the actress herself or with other actors on stage in the part of the perpetrators.¹² In others, a more conventional storytelling mode is adopted with the actress reading aloud Malú's testimony. This particular performance history, or set of histories, might be seen to represent an archetypal example of Diana Taylor's powerful concept of the repertoire (2003). In this sense, it functions as an unregulated, unstable space through which the experiences of those historically marginalized are filtered. In whatever rendition, however, it is clear that this scene about Lilia represents the climactic moment of the play. Moreover, and in the same way as the real case of Lilia prompted a reassessment of the discourses of *feminicidio* and society's reactions to it (of which more later), the testimony of Lilia in *Mujeres de arena* marks a shift in the play's register.

In some ways, the questions posed by the showing and telling of Lilia's ordeal epitomize the ethics of representation of femicidal discourse in Juárez and resonate in a wider frame. How can the experiences of bodily pain be conveyed through voice and movement? And how can the gulf between showing and telling—the time-honoured tension between the indexical and the iconic—be properly excavated? In an implicit acknowledgement of the difficulties, the author, Humberto Robles, makes the text widely available through assigning copyleft for any group/individual to utilize as part of a project of activism and the pursuit of justice. In this way, Robles sanctions any or all approaches to the showing of his text even if he demands that practitioners remain faithful to its original telling. This textual access ensures that a global audience can read the script even if they do not have access to its performative interpretations. In many ways, with its method of thick description, it foreshadows Roberto Bolaño's forensic style expounded in his 2004 novel, *2666*, in its famous section, "The Part About the Crimes" and which details the murders of more than one hundred women over an excruciating three hundred pages.

Mujeres de arena pre-dates *2666* by two years, but both texts draw from the forensic language of reporting and that flat police-mode of narrative used to reconstruct the horrors of the crimes. The limitations of such a form of storytelling have been well documented in relation to *2666* as well as in other arenas.¹³ Following Adorno's much-misquoted statement about writing poetry after Auschwitz,¹⁴ suffice to say, the debate about the limitations or the complete redundancy of language to mediate, translate or represent atrocities such as femicide is wide-ranging and is thrust into sharp relief in this passage. Mexican artist Teresa Margolles's exhibit on violence, "de que otra cosa podríamos hablar" [what else can we talk about?] at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009 aptly pointed to the aesthetic and political challenges posed by the current wave of violence in Mexico. Her title

captures the all-pervasiveness of violence, its diffuse and expressive nature, to borrow from Mexican writer Rosanna Reguillo's perceptive analyses (2011), as well as the challenge of naming it. In this regard, her display embodied the failure of words, of aesthetics, of representation, strikingly illustrated by her recourse to the use of the word, "cosa" or "thing," as allusive if wholly elliptical description.

In order to situate the analysis that follows, it should be emphasized that I have never been at a performance of *Mujeres de arena/Women of Sand* and it has never been performed in Ireland where I live and work. Instead, my experience of the play consists of viewing online performances of it in Spanish. My encounter with the text, therefore, involves a negotiation, a mediation, and a traversing of the necessary distances that lie between me and the narrated subjects and that are shaped by different lines of class, geography, ethnicity, language, and history. This is critical in the context of an aesthetic experience that occurs between a first world spectator and a subject from the "elsewheres of the world" (Butler 2011). It is not my intention to rehearse arguments around the ambiguities of transnational witnessing here in depth¹⁵ but simply to point out that the construction of any kind of empathic encounter is fraught with tensions around agency, victimhood, and the helplessness of a first world witness, also positioned as consumer. What follows, therefore, is an attempt to think through the negotiation of these tensions via the process of translation.

As a way of probing the nature of my own need to negotiate the distances that the text engenders, I commenced a process of translation without looking at the excellent translation of the text that is available online.¹⁶ My translated version shares many features with the published version, and though it differs from the published translation in terms of certain lexical and syntactical decisions, it is not presented here as some kind of superior version. Rather, I would like to examine the encounter with a description of violence done to the body by reflecting on my own bodily and affective experience during the process of translating that description. Through this, I would like to test the ways in which translation, seen through the lens of Spivak's famous description of it as "the most intimate act of reading" (2000, 398) projects you into an encounter with the source experience in a way that is different to spectatorial experience and in a way, to quote Nicole Brossard, "force[s] us on to the scene" (1989, 133, cited by Basile 2007, 7). For clarity, I will reproduce the translation of the scene in its entirety and commence the analysis immediately following.

Scene 6: Lilia Alejandra

ACTOR: Among many surprising aspects of the Juárez cases, even though many people have been detained and jailed for the murders, normally with fake evidence and confessions obtained via torture, not one single case of the 900 murdered women in Ciudad Juarez since 1993 has been solved. Not one. And now it has become the norm that the state government and local businessmen accuse those who seek justice of being unpatriotic and of trying to sully the good name of CIUDAD JUAREZ, a city that for two years running was declared to be the most dangerous city in the world. PAUSE. What follows is a letter written by Malú García Andrade,¹⁷ Lilia Alejandra's sister, disappeared on the 14th of February and whose body was found on Feb 21st, 2001.

SECOND WOMAN: I want you to imagine your daughter or your sister, or your cousin or your girlfriend or your wife. Imagine that they leave home to go to work

or to school. Imagine how nice they look as they go on their way, with their faces full of innocence. The light in their eyes reflects their desire for life but also their happiness. Imagine that on the way home, a car blocks their path and three men get out. One pulls her by the hair, the other by the feet and they push her into the car to kidnap her. Imagine that they take her to a house and force her into one of the rooms. There they throw her to the floor while the three men look at her terrified face. Imagine that one of the men ties her up and forces her onto a table. Imagine that she tries to resist, to defend herself. He raises his arm, clenches his fist and hits her on the nose. Then he raises his arm again to hit her on the mouth so that she can no longer say:

FOURTH WOMAN: “Enough, please!” “Mamá. Papá. Help me.” “HELP! Help, someone help!” God, why me? Please! No more. No. No. No!

SECOND WOMAN: Imagine this young woman saying these words while she is being beaten and raped, saying them in a voice that is broken and with tears rolling down her face. And imagine that when the rape stops, it doesn’t stop there, no the suffering continues because in the bedroom there are two more men. . . . One of them comes over to her and burns her arms with his cigarette. He starts to bite her breasts, to rape her and the three men torture her. When they finish, they throw her to the floor and start to kick her. After that, they leave her on the floor, covered in blood, raped and degraded in the cruellest most sadistic way you can imagine. She remains there in pain and agony for a day, two days, three days until they realize she can take no more and they decide to kill her. Imagine that one of them puts his hands around her neck and strangles her. In spite of everything that has happened to her she tries to resist but has no strength left and he achieves his goal: he kills her. But this is not enough for the other two men and one of them takes her roughly by the face and breaks her neck. And so there she lies, her nose broken, her lips swollen, her eyes bruised and beaten, her arms burnt with cigarettes, her legs full of scars, her wrists bearing marks from where she has been tied and her breasts gnawed as if by animals. They roll her body in a blanket and take it to the car. They drive to one of Ciudad Juárez’s many deserted wastelands and throw her body there. But the suffering and pain do not end there. Now her family must find out what she has suffered. Imagine what follows. No, no, we’re not looking for consolation or false government promises. We don’t want statistics or numbers that tell us nothing about the reality of women’s experience in Ciudad Juárez. No. Civil society and the NGOs implore the Mexican State to end the impunity around the deaths of women in the city. What is more we demand an end to the hostility that we the families continue to suffer as we seek justice and human rights. We ask for respect and we demand that they let us live our lives.

As can be immediately discerned, this passage attempts to narrate in testimonial, realist mode the horrors of the experience endured by real-life victim Lilia Alejandra García Andrade, as recounted by her sister, Malú. Returning to the subjunctive mode of engagement mentioned earlier (“Imagine if . . .”), some of the key motifs that characterized the framing of the narrative in scene 2, already examined, are mobilized here including, for example, the intense reconstruction of the darkness of feminicidal violence. According to Nancy Piñeda-Madrid (2011), the case of Lilia represented somewhat of a turning point in the narratives around femicide. Her body was found wrapped in a

blanket in an empty lot next to the Centro Comercial Soriano directly across from the headquarters of the Maquila Industry Federation, thus solidifying in the public's mind at least, the connections between the assembly plants and the deaths of young women in the city.¹⁸ She had been strangled to death, and her body displayed signs of torture and sexual violence including rape. Following this crime, her mother, Norma Andrade de García, along with the mothers of six other victims, founded the organization Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa to demand justice. A few weeks after the discovery of Lilia Alejandra's body, on International Women's Day, March 8, 2001, several women from Ciudad Juárez and El Paso carried wooden crosses and life-size photos of the murdered girls and women with them as they marched to and stormed the office of the Special Prosecutor for the Investigation of the Homicide of Women. Marisela Ortiz, one of the most internationally recognized of the activists associated with femicide in Ciudad Juárez, was Lilia's former teacher. With an unprecedented media furor surrounding the case of Lilia, the details around the condition of her body when discovered became of paramount importance. In other words, the specific nature of the violence enacted on her body became central to Lilia's story. As Lilia's mother noted, "when we found her, my daughter's body told of everything that had been done to her" (2003, 2, cited in Schmidt Camacho 2004, 36). Many audiences in Mexico were attuned to the details surrounding Lilia's case at the time, a case that seemed to epitomize the darkness and evil that lay beneath the crimes, and thus the approach taken in the play of revivifying Lilia's experience acquires a particular affective and political charge.

Trauma Words and Painful Encounters

We have seen how *Women of Sand* is located in a rich tradition of theatre that engages with the trauma of *feminicidio* as it is visited on the victims' bodies as well as focusing on the wider impact on family, community, and nation. The turn to trauma in the humanities has been well documented, and there is a body of work about the translation of trauma narratives (Parker and Mathews 2011) and indeed about the inherent theatricality of trauma itself (Duggan 2012). Parker and Mathew tease through some of the ethical dilemmas inherent in the translation of trauma narratives and consider "not only what is lost but what is traumatized in and by translation" (2011, 20). There is always a subject position in translation as Catherine Boyle reminds us (2015, 157) and, as Elena Basile asserts, the field of translation studies has witnessed an unprecedented foregrounding of the translator's subjectivity in both translation practice and theory (2007). According to Basile, given these recent shifts in thinking about translation, the translator has become "a self-conscious agent of cultural change, thoroughly aware of his/her political responsibilities and ideological positioning *vis-à-vis* both source and target languages" (2007, 1). As she points out, much emphasis has been placed on the visible signs of intervention in the process of translation, strategies for foreignizing, approaches to gender difference, and para-textual apparatuses (2007, 1).

Following Basile, however, and if I am to recognize that my position involves my solidarity with the content and message of the play as well as an appreciation of its politics, then it also involves grappling with what she evocatively names the "affective vicissitudes" that accompany the "*traumatic temporality* of the translator's defining acts of (re)reading and (re)writing the *message of the other* in an *other language/culture*" (1–2). According to her thinking, the affective work of the translator becomes akin to a process of "working through" trauma (to use LaCapra's terms),¹⁹ and "which constitutes the translator's inaugural mode of engagement with the other's text" (Basile 2007, 4). Thinking about my translation in Basile's terms as an inaugural mode of engagement with the other (the body of Lilia) positions me as an active agent in the process of meaning-making. Ultimately,

Basile says, the boundary between the text and its meanings when filtered through the translation process might “always need to be negotiated on the translator’s own thinking body” (2007, 7). If we take this as a point of departure, I wonder about the effect on my own thinking body when faced with the challenge of translating lines like,

En ese momento él termina de violarla; al acabar aún no termina el martirio de la joven, pues en la habitación hay dos hombres más. . . . Se acerca otro de ellos; está fumando y apaga el cigarro en uno de los brazos de ella. Él empieza a morder sus senos, empieza a violarla, y así los tres hombres la torturan.” [And imagine that when the rape stops, it doesn’t stop there, no the suffering continues because in the bedroom there are two more men. . . . One of them comes over to her and burns her arms with his cigarette. He starts to bite her breasts, to rape her and then the three men torture her.]

As a diligent and committed linguist, I spend time with these words, I look up the various ways that I might translate “él empieza a morder sus senos” (he starts to bite her breasts) or more abstract phrases like “aún no termina el martirio de la joven.” “Martirio,” meaning in its literal sense, martyrdom, interpreted here to mean suffering and pain. I also wonder about how my translation “he starts to rape her” can convey any of the weight of the experience and have similar concerns about the flat description “y así los tres hombres la torturan” (and then the three men torture her). We might reflect further on the ways in which the telling of the story of Lilia already participates in her erasure through the flatness of the pronouns, the third-person narration among other elements. In this regard, the translator further participates in this process of making her invisible, making her (more) dead, and perhaps it is here that we most acutely perceive the wisdom of Spivak when she talks about feminist translation “bludgeon(ing) someone else” (1993, 192). I continue to grapple with the text’s multiple challenges:

Ella, a pesar de estar golpeada, trata de defenderse pero no puede y él cumple con su objetivo: matarla. Pero a los otros dos no les parece suficiente, así que otro de ellos, la toma de la cara para girarla bruscamente y desnucarla. [In spite of everything that has happened to her she tries to resist but has no strength left and he achieves his goal: he kills her. But this is not enough for the other two men and one of them takes her roughly by the face and breaks her neck.]

I investigate the various translation possibilities for the verb “desnucar.” In the Spanish, the prefix “des” is already aggressive signalling the way the “nuca” [the neck] is violently broken away from the body. In comparison, “breaks her neck” seems a rather tame interpretation of the concept in English. This process also involves the translator looking at the positionality of these words in the sentence; at the way they make meaning on the page. I consider two, three, sometimes four different alternatives, checking in the dictionary, reading and (re)reading.

There is more: moving in, through, and around the words as they evolve on the page involves a certain kind of relationship with the experience they name (and contain). The conventional distance between words and the way our brains receive and mediate them is distorted, remapped. The distance remains but is configured differently. Like a series of cognitive synapses—or sparks inside my head—I am compelled to find ways to talk about the biting of breasts, the strangling, the multiple enduring rapes, the torture. The translator, forced to find suitable formulas of words, is inserted into a relationship with Lilia, not into her experience, but into a relationship with the words

that name that experience. The words resonate for me in a powerful way as I search for ways to render the experiences of Lilia Alejandra as legible but also bearable, in my own tongue. Throughout this time, my heart races and my body experiences the quintessential goosebumps: I feel sick and have to pause. Remembering Brian Massumi's words, "the skin is faster than the word" (1995, 86), I am conscious of an emergent irony in that my body's affective responses, though they are expressed in preverbal and prelinguistic terms (Stewart 2007) are caused by my proximity to as well as my engagement and encounter with words.

Boyle says of translating words, "naming them (in another language) makes them appear in our world and they start to come into focus" (2015, 156). Inspired by the process described by Boyle, I can attest to the ways in which the encounter with the words of Lilia's trauma manage to "make them appear" in my world to force a recognition of my own vulnerability and openness to the possibility of sexual violence. I say this not because the deep structures of patriarchy suddenly became apparent through the unveiling of their most extreme despicable practices (rape, torture, murder). Rather, I see how the words function as "end products" in the way Peter Brook imagines them and through which they begin as "an impulse" to become, "a small visible portion of a gigantic unseen formation" (1990, 15 cited by Boyle 2015, 157). I interpret this gigantic formation as the system that produces violence on Lilia's body which, following Boyle, comes powerfully "into focus." In this way, through the cognitive connections with the words that provoke the body's affective responses, the very systemic violence that begets feminicide, made up of its many complex factors including misogyny, hegemonic masculinity, and the grotesque extremes of late capitalism emerges into view and is felt on the surface (goosebumps) and interior of my body (heart-racing). This systemic violence is part of Lilia's story, but it is also part of mine. Indeed, connectedness is enhanced through considering this continuum of violence against women, which, of course, happens over "here" as well as over "there," a point made by Mary-Ann Franks in her discussion of Adorno's work. (2006, 198). I do not mean to suggest in any trite or problematic way that our worlds are the same nor to collapse those lines of difference delineated earlier that separate us. Rather, I argue that through the forced proximity to the words that name Lilia's erasure and degradation, the concept of violence against women as systemic, embedded (in both language and the body) comes into focus and is activated by and through the translation process.

This forced encounter with systemic violence and the bodily affects it produces in turn provokes fear, guilt, and indeed a certain paralysis. This paralysis is a feature of many cultural responses to feminicide in Juárez, explained by the simple, devastating realization that the subjects of which the art speaks are no longer with us. This fear surrounds the task of translation itself, the fear of what the words will do to you, expressed by Brossard when she says, "How am I to believe for a single moment that the landscapes in you won't erase those in me?" (1989, cited in Basile 2007, 6).²⁰ The fear of obliteration when one talks of gender violence is commonplace and unavoidable. It is the logical consequence of contemplating a body that is no longer there and, what is worse, bears the hallmarks of the attempt to erase it. The fear of erasure through immersion in the source text, however, makes us think about how translation hastens the merging of these verbal landscapes: "Because true landscapes loosen the tongue in us, flow over the edge of our thought-frame. They settle into us" (Brossard 1989, 133, cited in Basile 2007, 6).

Through this loosening of tongue, the experience of the mutilated othered body settles into the translator's body and effects an awakening, a new realization of that experience through the cognitive, bodily and affective process of transmission. It seems particularly appropriate to invoke Brossard here, given that she speaks also of desert landscapes (of Arizona) that are geographically as

well as emotionally contingent to the narrative being examined here. Through the tongue-loosening then, an encounter is enabled that, through the weight of the words that sustain it, somehow ruptures, if just a little, the distance between us as I am forced to use words that also apply to me; that also mean that I too am a vulnerable female subject to threats of sexual violence.

While it might be exaggerated to call this process of awakening a dialogic transformation, it is certainly akin to a dialogic shift through the forcing of intimacy with the words that name the trauma experienced by Lilia Alejandra. In this way, the process of translation itself forms part of what Diana Taylor (2003) famously termed the repertoire, that domain of shifting potential that here functions as a dynamic of exchange and transference of experience, words, and meaning. Following this, and returning to the point made earlier, translation does indeed “force” me “onto the scene” (Brossard 1989, 133) bludgeoning me—to use Spivak’s term again—to participate in a reframing, rereading, and rewriting of Lilia’s traumatic experience in a manner that positions me as an actor in that process. We might see this forcing onto the scene synthesized through Patrick Duggan’s idea of “being there” in his conceptualization of how trauma works in performance (2012, 115–50). Or, we might view it as a process of becoming co-owner of the traumatic event in the same way as memorably imagined by Doris Laub when she speaks of “the vicissitudes of listening” (1992). Perhaps it might be likened to the complicity felt by the actor whose words I quoted earlier, “en el teatro somos todos cómplices” [in the theatre we are all accomplices]—a theatre that also includes the role played by the translator as the wordsmith who determines the modes of naming.

While not wishing to overstate the power of translation to compromise or modify the spaces between first world subjects and the blood-stained bodies of feminicidal victims from Ciudad Juárez,²¹ it does enable us to be attentive to the political urgency of translation as a mode of entry into the experiences of those other bodies “made for violence” (Schmidt Camacho 2004). Judith Butler has written about the challenges of cultural translation in contexts such as this one when she says that, “We have to consider the demands of cultural translation that we assume to be part of an ethical responsibility . . . as we try to think the global dilemmas that women face” (2004, 49).²² In thinking through these global dilemmas and our own ethical responsibility, we can see the political importance of enabling connectedness as a pathway towards the creation of transnational and translanguistic alliances. The feminist potential of translation and both its method and process in enacting these alliances should not be underestimated.

Appendix

Extract from *scene 2: Natalia*

MUJER 1: ¡Adió, mi hija no era de esas, qué va, ni Dios lo mande! Pero los periodistas me dijeron que no, que la mayoría de las muchachas asesinadas eran trabajadoras de la maquila, jovencitas, hasta niñas de 5 años. Y cuando vi las fotos de esas muchachitas supe que era cierto. En la cara de cada una de ellas, vi la cara de mi hija. Los ojos negros, negros . . . el cabello negro, negro. . . Era como si todas tuvieran un pedacito de Natalia. Entonces sí, les dije, mi hija es un caso más de las asesinadas de Juárez. Así me cayó la verdad, de golpe, de repente. Por eso estoy aquí, para darle eco a la voz de Natalia, a otras voces que fueron calladas por el silencio, a la fuerza. A veces me arrimo al retrato de m’hija y me pongo a verla. Y así me quedo horas, viendo sus ojos negros, negros, y su cabello: negro, negro.

Música

Soy una madre sin su hija.

Soy una madre despojada de mi hija.

Soy una madre con una hija arrancada del jardín de mi corazón.

Mi hija en florecida primavera: colorida, bonita, llena de ilusiones-pétalos, fragante, suave, amorosa, llena de risas, gracia y encantos.

Soy una madre llena de tristezas, lágrimas y oscuridades sin mi hija, mi amiga, mi compañía, mi esperanza, mi orgullo, mi luz, mi amor.

Soy una madre con labios mudos para llamar a mi hija, con oídos sordos para oír la música de sus palabras, con ojos ciegos para ver las chispas de vida en sus ojos.

Soy una madre vaciada, mutilada, naufragada en el dolor de vivir sin mi hija brutalmente, violentamente arrancada del jardín de mi corazón.

Extract from *scene 6: Lilia Alejandra*

ACTOR: Entre otras cosas sorprendentes, aunque se ha detenido y encarcelado a gente por los asesinatos, normalmente con pruebas inventadas y confesiones obtenidas mediante torturas, no se ha resuelto ni uno solo, no ya de los 100 casos de asesinato en serie, sino de las más de 900 asesinadas en Ciudad Juárez desde 1993. Ni uno. Y ahora se ha vuelto habitual que el gobierno estatal y los empresarios locales acusen a quienes piden justicia de “vende-patrias” y de “ensuciar el buen nombre de Ciudad Juárez,” ciudad que en dos años consecutivos ha sido declarada la urbe más peligrosa del mundo. (*Pausa*) La siguiente es una carta escrita por Malú García Andrade, hermana de Lilia Alejandra, desaparecida el 14 de febrero y cuyo cuerpo fue encontrado sin vida el 21 de febrero del 2001.

MUJER 2: Quisiera que imagines a tu hija, o hermana, a tu prima, a tu novia, o a tu esposa. Imagina que sale de su casa para dirigirse a su trabajo o escuela. Puedes imaginar lo linda que se ve al caminar, con un rostro inocente. Refleja el deseo a la vida con un brillo en sus ojos que demuestra su felicidad. Imagina que de regreso a casa un auto le cierra el camino, se bajan tres hombres. Uno de ellos la toma del cabello, el otro de sus pies y la meten adentro del auto para secuestrarla. Imagina que llegan a una casa y entran a una de las habitaciones. Ahí la tiran al suelo mientras los tres hombres miran el rostro de ella que ahora refleja terror. Imagina que uno de los hombres se acerca a ella, la ata de las manos y la recuesta en una mesa. Ella trata de defenderse; él levanta su brazo, cierra el puño y le da un golpe en la nariz. Después extiende nuevamente su brazo para darle otro golpe en la boca, para que así ella no siga diciendo:

MUJER 4: ¡Ya basta, por favor! Mamá, papá: ¡Ayúdenme! ¡Auxilio! ¡Alguien que me ayude . . . ! ¡Dios, ¿por qué mí? !Por favor ¡Ya no! ¡No, no, no!

MUJER 2: Imagina a esta joven diciendo estas frases mientras esta siendo golpeada y violada, diciéndolas con la voz quebrada y con lágrimas que recorren su rostro. En ese momento él termina de violarla; al acabar aún no termina el martirio de la joven, pues en la habitación hay dos hombres más. . . . Se acerca otro de ellos; está fumando y apaga el cigarro en uno de los brazos de ella. Él empieza a morder sus senos, empieza a violarla, y así los tres hombres la torturan. Al terminar la tiran a el suelo y la empiezan a patear para después retirarse y dejarla en el suelo bañada en sangre, violada y ultrajada con la mas profunda saña y crueldad. Ella sigue sufriendo por un día, dos días, tres días, hasta que sus atacantes se dan cuenta que ella no resiste más y deciden matarla. Imagina que uno de ellos se acerca, pone sus manos alrededor de su cuello para estrangularla. Ella, a pesar de estar golpeada, trata de defenderse pero no puede y él cumple con su objetivo: matarla. Pero a los otros dos no les parece suficiente, así que otro de ellos, la toma de la cara para girarla bruscamente y desnucarla. Ahí esta su cuerpo sin vida, con la nariz fracturada, los labios reventados, los ojos

golpeados, los brazos con quemaduras de cigarros, las piernas con cicatrices, las muñecas muestran huellas de ataduras y sus senos están carcomidos. Ellos envuelven el cuerpo en una cobija la suben a el auto, se dirigen a un terreno baldío para dejar su cuerpo ahí. Pero el martirio y el dolor aún no terminan pues falta que la familia se entere de lo que acaba de sufrir la joven. . . . Imagina lo que sigue. . . . No, no venimos a buscar el consuelo, ni las falsas promesas por parte del gobierno. No queremos estadísticas, ni números que no reflejan la verdadera realidad de la mujer en Ciudad Juárez. La sociedad civil y las ONG's exhortamos al estado mexicano a que frene la impunidad en torno a los asesinatos de mujeres en Ciudad Juárez y que cese el hostigamiento que sufrimos familiares de las víctimas y defensores de derechos humanos. Pedimos respeto y sobre todo les exigimos que nos dejen vivir.

Música.

Notes

1. The debate on terminology around the murder of women in the region is extensive and beyond the scope of this study. Feminist scholars, most notably Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos (2014), have argued for the use of the term, *feminicidio*, or feminicide, as a more appropriate cultural translation of the English term, “femicide.” This term takes account of the systematic nature of the crime but also factors in the responsibility and complicity of the State whose neglect, it is argued, enables the crime to continue. Taking my cue from this theoretical work, the article names the crime as feminicide. For further discussion on nomenclature, see Fregoso and Bejarano (2010).
2. The case in India involved the gang rape and murder of Jyoti Singh on a Delhi bus in 2012, which garnered global headlines. In Argentina, the brutal murder of sixteen-year-old Lucía Pérez in 2016 attracted similar revulsion.
3. This play was selected for the National Programme of School Theatre [Programa Nacional de Teatro Escolar] and toured extensively around Mexico. See also my overview of theatre relating to Ciudad Juárez in Finnegan (2018).
4. Other examples include *Los Trazos del Viento* [Traces of the Wind] by Alan Aguilar; *Las muertas de Juárez* performed by Grupo Sinergia during V-Day celebrations in Texas in 2004; *Rumor de Viento* [Sound of the Wind] by Norma Barroso (2004); *La ciudad de las moscas* [City of Flies] by Virginia Hernández; *Sirenas del Río* by Demetrio Avila; *Justicia light* by Ernesto García and *Tlatoani* by Juan Tovar; *Antígona* by Perla de la Rosa; *Gritos de Justicia* [Cries of Justice] from Leopoldo Ibarra Saucedo; and numerous dance pieces including Rossana Filomarino’s *Ni una más*. In addition, the most acclaimed feature film to explore feminicidio in Ciudad Juárez—*El traspatio* [Backyard]—had a screenplay written by established playwright Sabina Berman. For a good overview of Mijares’s anthology, see Misnemer (2009). Another dramatic work performed to national and international acclaim was *Mujeres de Juárez*, a one-woman show written and performed by Cristina Michaus. It was translated by Jimmy Noriega and began its production in 2011 with Teatro Travieso from 2014 onwards.
5. <https://mujeresdeareateatro.blogspot.ie/p/woman-of-sand.html>. There is an excellent website dedicated to the project which is frequently updated. See <https://mujeresdeareateatro.blogspot.ie/>.
6. All translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own. The original is accessible at <https://mujeresdeareateatro.blogspot.ie/p/woman-of-sand.html> and the relevant extracts from the original are reproduced at the end of this article.
7. The evidence for the systematic victim blaming was overwhelming in media reportage, oral histories, testimony from the victims’ families, and statements and pronouncements from Chihuahua government, the mayors of Juárez, and nearby towns. It was perhaps most effectively illustrated through the prevention campaigns that circulated in two local newspapers, *El Diario* and *Norte*, in Ciudad Juárez in 1995 and that

exhorted women not to dress provocatively (Tabuenca Córdoba 2010, 101) as well as through oral testimonies by the families that exemplify the moralizing, judgemental and in most cases wholly inaccurate assumptions brought to bear on the cases of the young victims. Activist Esther Chávez Cano, who accompanied many of the family members to meet with police and demand police action, summed up the attitude: “The police say the dead women and girls were hookers, or that they were heroin-users. Their whole point is that it’s somehow the fault of these girls. . . . We are supposed to believe these women are responsible for their own deaths” (cited in Wright 2011, 714).

8. See, in particular, Tabuenca Córdoba (2010).

9. See chapter four, “The Possibilities of Mourning: Resilience and Renewal in Documentary Film about *Feminicidio* in Ciudad Juárez” in Finnegan (2018).

10. There is a dynamic body of scholarship about the geopolitical complexities of the borderlands and extensive theorizations of feminicidal violence there. I explore many of the frames through which this violence has been conceptualized in *Cultural Representations of Feminicidio on the US-Mexico Border*. For illuminating analyses of the phenomenon, see Segato’s work on transcultural masculinity (2006) and Monárrez Fragoso whose pioneering work has tracked the patterns of globalization, precarity and poverty through the bodies of feminicidal victims in the city. Schmidt Camacho has also produced important reflections (2004) on the notion of denationalization insofar as it plays out on the vulnerable bodies of the urban poor in the borderlands.

11. I have argued elsewhere about the pervasiveness of nature references and presences in responses to *feminicidio* precisely as a way of drawing attention to its enigmatic, ambiguous nature. See Finnegan (2018), chapter four

12. To cite just three examples, see the “acting out” of the violence by the female actor in the performance by Teatro de Bolsillo, Santiago de Chile (2015). In the version performed by the Maru-Jasp Teatro from Alcalá de Henares at the Casa de la Cultura de Albolote, Spain (2012), there is a graphic performance of the rape and torture of Lilita with three male actors. The Compañía Desierto Teatro in Coahuila, Mexico (2016) conveyed the multiple rapes through the use of strobe lighting, along with a sound-track of screaming (victim) and grunting (perpetrator).

13. A large body of scholarship exists on the figure of Bolaño, much of which focuses on the significance of *2666*. Some of this locates his work specifically within the framework of “world literature” including Burns and de Castro (2017). I have found Sharae Deckard’s work on Bolaño to be particularly insightful; see Deckard (2012) and her contribution to Burns and de Castro (2017). On the place of Latin America within the paradigm of world literature, Ignacio Sánchez-Prado (2006) is indispensable. A special edition of the *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies: Travesía* (2009, Vol. 18: 2–3) was devoted to the work of Bolaño, gathering studies by Alice Driver, Gareth Williams, Jean Franco, and Brett Levinson among others.

14. “to write poetry after *Auschwitz* is *barbaric*” (Adorno 1983, 34)

15. See, for example, excellent work by Oliver (2001), and on the specific context of Ciudad Juárez among others, Swanson Goldberg and Schultheis Moore (2011).

16. <https://mujeresdeareateatro.blogspot.ie/p/woman-of-sand.html>.

17. Malú García Andrade, an activist since her sister’s murder, was relocated by the federal government in 2017 following multiple death threats against her. See <https://www.sdnoticias.com/nacional/2017/05/12/trasladan-a-activista-malu-garcia-a-sitio-seguro>.

18. *Ni una más* is a documentary film directed by Alejandra Sánchez (2002) which features wideranging coverage of this particular crime. Lilita Alejandra García Andrade’s case remains open and continues to be the subject of attention. See, for example, <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2003/11/29/038n1soc.php?printver=1&fly=>; <http://vocesporlaesperanza.blogspot.ie/2013/02/lilia-alejandra-garcia-andrade.html>.

19. A reference to the well-known work of Dominick LaCapra (2004) on trauma.
20. *Mauve Desert* by the Québécois writer Nicole Brossard is long considered a classic of Canadian and feminist fiction. Categorized as an experimental “fiction-théorique,” it comprises three parts. The first section follows fifteen-year-old protagonist Mélanie as she crosses the Arizona desert in her mother’s car, fleeing the awkwardness of life at her lesbian mother’s motel. The middle part (“Un livre à traduire”/A Book to Translate) chronicles the experience of Maudes Laures, who finds Mélanie’s story in a second-hand bookshop and charts her emotional journey through the translation process. The final section is Maudes Laures’s translation of *Mauve Desert*. In addition to Basile (2007), see Wheeler (2003).
21. For an introduction to work in translation studies that looks at practices of ethical translation and the relationship between First World translators and texts produced from within the Global South, see Bassnett and Trivedi (1998). For an examination on translation and emotion from a psychological perspective, see Hubscher-Davidson (2018).
22. There is an extensive debate about cultural translation within the field of translation studies. For a useful overview, see Buden et al. (2009) with input from major scholars in the field.

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