TRANSLATING YVONNE MÉTÉ-NGUEMEU'S *FEMMES DE CENTRAFRIQUE: ÂMES VAILLANTES AU CŒUR BRISÉ* FROM A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

ABSTRACT

This article discusses some practical challenges encountered in the course of translating Yvonne Mété-Nguemeu's novel, *Femmes de Centrafrique, âmes vaillantes au coeur brisé* (2008) into English from a feminist perspective. To effectively tackle these challenges, the approach taken is that of a feminist translation because Mété-Nguemeu is a feminist writer. The grammatical differences between the two languages are major sources of challenge in translating Mété-Nguemeu's feminist discourse. The peculiarity of the African women's experiences is easily understood and immediately translated from, not only, an empathized perspective as a woman, but also as an African feminist translator in particular. A feminist translator translates better a feminist novel or a feminist author.

Keywords: Central African Republic. Challenges. Feminist Translation. Translator. Women.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article aborde quelques défis pratiques rencontrés lors de la traduction anglaise du roman d'Yvonne Mété-Nguemeu, *Femmes de Centrafrique, âmes vaillantes au cœur brisé* (2008) d'un point de vue féministe. Pour relever efficacement ces défis, l'approche adoptée est celle d'une traduction féministe parce que Mété-Nguemeu est une écrivaine féministe. Les différences grammaticales entre les deux langues sont des sources majeures de défis dans la traduction du discours féministe de Mété-Nguemeu. La particularité des expériences vécues par les femmes africaines est facilement comprise et immédiatement traduite non seulement d'un point de vue empathique en tant que femme, mais aussi en tant que traductrice féministe africaine en particulier. Une traductrice féministe traduit mieux un roman féministe ou une auteure féministe.

Mots-clés: République centrafricaine. Défis. Traduction féministe. Traductrice. Femmes.

Introduction

This article deals with the practical experience of translating Yvonne Mété-Nguemeu's novel, *Femmes de Centrafrique, âmes vaillantes au coeur brisé* (2008), which is still currently being translated into English. The feminist affinity and the

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conditions of women narrated in the novel are feminist dispositions that drew my attention in translating the novel. The peculiarity of the African women's experiences is easily understood and immediately translated from, not only, an empathized perspective as a woman, but also as an African feminist translator in particular. A feminist translator translates better a feminist novel or a feminist author. African writers writing in 'inherited languages' write from a multi-linguistic context which must be taken into consideration in translation. As an African, the mother tongue and other African languages cannot be wished away easily as transliteration becomes an integral part of African creative work, which has to be equally displayed in translation. As an African translator with an African language as a mother tongue, and English as the official language and means of translation, there is also a dual or multi-linguistic context, which is also the point of departure of the author. Africanisms are better understood and adequately interpreted by an African translator. The translator's audience includes not only the international audience, but must carry along the local audience, especially the African. The English translation, will keep the African and international audience in view by ensuring the local color is maintained, while broadening this knowledge and also exposing the plights of women faced with military violence and rape that is threatening to wipe out the female generation through HIV/AIDS. The African female translator is in a better position to transmit the cultural traits and loan words from the original version of a fellow female writer into the target language without necessarily losing the pragmatic essence of the source language.

Mété-Nguemeu, in this first book, narrates in an autobiographical manner the analysis of violence experienced by young girls and women in Central African Republic (CAR). Through a retrospective narration, and a feminist analysis, she writes about three generations of Central African women. The writer traces her radical feminism to her childhood and to her father. The author shows the bravery and courage of the women in the novel despite the sinister conditions they find themselves in.

Being a core feminist novel, based on her discourse, a feminist perspective is taken in the translation of the author's feminist disposition. The main aim of this article is to transmit and to popularize Central African women literature in the English translation by ensuring to retain the feminine discourse of the author through her linguistic and stylistic innovations in the book. Secondly, the translator seeks to ensure that the innovations found in the book are not only retained and reflected, but that the pragmatic feeling is equally attained if not retained in the translation. Majority of the characters in the book are of the feminine gender, as a result, their discourses are filled with feminist linguistic innovations. The translation of this work is strictly from a feminist perspective and perception. The perspective of the feminist discourse recognizes and reveals the feminist commitment of the writer in her use of feminization of common nouns, professions, titles, grades and functions.

No known critic has actually worked on the book, apart from the author of this article, who has been doing some research on Mété-Nguemeu (Iloh 2013, 2015a, 2015b,

2016, 2018). Touati (2010) is the only one who had carried out an earlier interview with Mété-Nguemeu in French. Who then is this feminist writer or author?

The author in question here is Yvonne Mété-Nguemeu, a dual national from Central African Republic (CAR) and France. The author is not only from Africa but she is also 'black'; this distinguishes her from 'white Africans'. She was born on the 10th of December, 1956 in Sibut, which is about 185km from the capital territory of Bangui. Having schooled in Catholic Primary School and College in Lycée Pie XII in Bangui, the capital of CAR, she obtained her baccalauréat B (Advance Level) in 1979 and a scholarship to study in France where she obtained her first degree in Food and Nutrition. She shuttles between Besançon, where she lives in France and Central African Republic (CAR), her country of origin. She has two surviving children out of three due to the civil war in CAR in 2014. She is the Founder and President of the Non-Governmental Organization *Centrafrique Sans Frontières* with headquarters in Besançon, France. She is a radical feminist, philanthropist and writer. The current novel is her only published book. Others are in the offing according to her.

Mété-Nguemeu was encouraged to write by penning some of her numerous experiences in the course of her humanitarian work in CAR. She knows very little or nothing about the Central African literature. This notwithstanding, the literature of her African country, CAR is not well known to the world. Usually, there is always confusion in both English and French when the country is mentioned. There is always that confusion distinguishing the country CAR or République Centafricaine (RCA), its equivalence in French, from the Central Region of Africa! Central Africa as a region that should not be misunderstood as Central African Republic, which is a country located in Central Africa. The same goes for the region and the country in French. This must have contributed to the poor knowledge of the country.

If the country is hardly known, the writers are also hardly known. The country, which was formerly known as Ubangui-Chari, was situated in the former French Equatorial Africa and obtained its independence in 1960. It is a country that has passed through innumerable political and socio-economic turbulence especially civil wars since independence. The first and only female president was Catherine Samba-Panza (2014-2016). Today, the current president is Faustin-Archange Touadéra who came into power in March 2016. The country is still struggling to stand on its feet. This constitutes the first and primary audience of the writer. One can understand the author's concentration on the conditions of the women in the country that is bedeviled with socio-economic and political crises.

Author's audience/target

The author of the book in question is first an African and secondly a Francophone; it is expected that her primary audience will also be Francophone and African. By virtue of her dual nationality, her audience equally extends to France

and may not necessarily be the entire Francophone world, which should have been the case. Living in a global village which the world has turned out to be, from the interview carried out with her, she equally targets the international audience; not just the Francophone International world, but meeting her through internet facilities established her desire to get across to the Anglophone world.

A writer, despite the current trend of events world-wide, targets a local, national, regional and continental audience, thus attaining an international and multinational audience. As part and parcel of a society, her representations from that same environment must consciously or unconsciously portray the society. This is not far from what Mété-Nguemeu has done in her book. One can say that her audience is limited or restricted because of her language, but the French language is a major international language. This limitation has necessitated the translation of the book in order to access a wider audience.

The African female writer is a translator in her own right by her multiple linguistic disposition and context. Following this, writing in an "inherited colonial language" is a double-bind, for the writer, as well as the translator. Reaching out completely to the readership or audience involves getting to the level of understanding as Africans and secondly as women. Communicating the native plight of the characters to an international audience is a commitment on both author and translator. By multiple audiences, one implies both the metropolitan (colonial masters) of both Anglophone and Francophone and the new world represented by America. It also opens the channel for future translations into other languages.

Translator's audience/target

Much as the author wishes to reach out to the world, as the translator of her book, I maintain a similar goal as well. The affinity between author and translator usually most often merge mission and goal. The choice of translating this author, for me, is borne out of the admiration of the feminist strategy and style of the author. Apart from just broadening people's knowledge of the situation in CAR, this translation of local women issues will also serve to situate the existence of feminist tendencies among the uneducated as portrayed by the author, which contradicts the opinion that feminism is only a modern issue.

The main target of the translation being done is an international audience, but the choice of the English variety depends not only on the translator but on the publishers as well. However, my choice of the variety of English is determined by the mission of attaining a wider coverage. My primary concern is the activity or the intervention of the translation since my disposition is equally multi-linguistic in context, given the colonial experiences of assimilation and association, despite the existence of the African languages, which form the basic mother tongues for both author and I as the translator. The similarities of historical experiences make the

African feminist translator better equipped historically, linguistically and culturally. The difference between the writer and the translator is the linguistic differences of the languages of expression. The writer may not be able to read her work in translation, but she would have acquired a wider coverage in the dissemination of her literary commitment. It is important at this juncture to state that the translation of the book is still on-going. I started translating in 2013 but health challenges slowed down the work. I have resumed the translation of the book but the theme of the call for paper from this journal made it imperative to share some practical experiences acquired in the cause of the translation. Just like the British Dorothy Blair, as a university scholar combining teaching and research, so am I combining to produce an English translation of Mété-Nguemeu's novel. The translation is being carried out in Nigeria, in Africa. I cannot talk of its publication until after the complete translation.

Representation of Black African female voices in the translation field

It is worthy of note that the works of African female writers have come to stay, even though despite being late in entering the literary world. Before the entrance of African female writers on the scene, which had been pre-dominated by the men whose numerous works were read in translations without the readers having any strange feelings because they were good translations, there were very few female translators. It is however worthy of note that, among these male authors, their works were majorly translated by the male folks. One really got fascinated coming across two female translators among them that were equally outstanding. They are Dorothy Blair and Katherine Wood.

Dorothy Sara Blair (née Greene), a British, is a renowned female translator who had earlier caught my attention since I have read translated works of African authors either from French to English or vice-versa. Among her numerous translations are the Senegalese Birago Diop's *Tales of Amadou Koumba*, translated in 1966, the Guinean Alioum Fantouré's *Tropical Circle* (1981), and the Beninese Olympe Bhely-Quenum's *Snares without End* (1981). But of paramount interest to me are her translations of the African female authors of which are notably three from Senegal: Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggars' Strike* (1981), Nafissatou Diallo's *A Dakar Childhood* (1982) and Mariama BÂ's *Scarlet Song* (1995). I have restricted myself to only African authors.

The Scottish, Katherine Wood (née Kostenuk) translated the Senegalese Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *Aventure ambigu* as *Ambiguous Adventure* (1963) and could be said to be Blair's contemporary. Despite not being Africans, these two female translators must be commended on their translations.

Of paramount interest in this article are African female translators of African female writers. African female translators are on the rise. However, the likes of Irène A. D'Almeida (Beninese) and Olga Mahougbé Simpson's (Beninese) translation of the

Nigerian Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* as *La Flèche de Dieu* is worthy of mention. Interestingly too is Modupe Bode-Thomas' (Nigerian) translation of Mariama Bâ's *So Long a Letter* (1980). Of all the female translators' works, I had searched for an African feminist translator, but have not found one yet in Africa. It is pertinent to note that feminist translation is a new discovery that is yet to be explored fully in Africa. It is amazing that feminist translation studies have advanced in other parts of the world. The Australian female translator Alison Anderson's question in 2013 had been a great challenge when she asked, "Where are the women in Translation?" And I ask, "Where are the African women in Translation? And where, specifically, are the African feminist translators?"

The female translators so far mentioned above did not necessarily set out to translate because of feminist inclinations, but were out to do justice to their knowledge intellectually. However, two African female writers had attracted my attention with their feminist discourses: the late Ivorian Fatou Fanny-Cissé and the Central African, Yvonne Mété-Nguemeu, whose' book is being translated into English. As a trained translator and a passionate feminist, my empathy for Mété-Nguemeu's book was borne out of the desire to ensure her feminist discourse, which was one of the attractions, is reflected in the translation. Without necessarily trying to search for documentation on feminist translation, I had written an article on Mété-Nguemeu's feminist discourse (Discours féministe dans *Femmes de Centrafrique: ?mes vaillantes au cœur brisé* de Mété-Nguemeu), which is my primary attraction to justify the choice for translating the book.

This article is therefore hinged on literary translation and specifically on prosaic translation of an autobiographical narration of the author's childhood and humanitarian service to her country, Central African Republic. The said country is on the brink of extinction as a result of socio-economic, political exploitation and oppression.

Eugene Nida's definition of translation (1964:10) is retained here that translation "consists in producing in the receptor language (also called the target language) the closest natural equivalent of the message of the source language, first in meaning and secondly in style". The three main types of translation, which are intra-lingual (has to do with reformulation); inter-lingual (translation from one language to another) and inter-semiotic (the use of signs and symbols in communication), have been classified by Jakobson (1959:233), Kelly (1978:19) and Nida (1964: 3-4). Of interest to us is inter-lingual translation or what some other translation specialists classify as inter-linguistic translation. In Newmark's (1988:5) definition, translation is "rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text".

Much as the African Canadian, Bandia (2006: 8), in his paper, "African European-Language Literature and Writing as Translation: Some Ethical Issues", while explaining the translation between "colonial" European languages and theorizing African translation practice, is of the opinion that, "the theorizing of African translation practice is still quite undeveloped, probably due to the fact that a

comprehensive history of translation in Africa is yet to be written". This shows that many critics still look at African writers as translators due to their multiple linguistic backgrounds. The Nigerian, Timothy-Asobele's *Translation Studies in Africa* is handy but not comprehensive enough as it does not really cover the whole of Africa as it appears in the title and, also, it lacks historical grounding. Perhaps, the practical experiences of African translators would have gone a long way in distinguishing between African writers as translators and the literary translators. Our emphasis is from a translator's view-point.

African feminism and feminist translation

Yvonne Mété-Nguemeu is a feminist and does not hide it. In the interview[1] we had, she affirms that she is a feminist whose wings were clipped too early and as a result, got frightened and did not know how to take off in order to write about the happenings in her country; she believes that the courage will come from the women folks. She believes that women from her country are great feminists on their own, especially given their fighting spirit in trying to combat the ills of their society, and especially fighting to get them liberated from the jaws of masculine chauvinism characterized by exploitation and oppression.

Themes explored by Mété-Nguemeu include: female genital cutting-otherwise known as female circumcision, everyday domestic lives of the average Central African woman and girl-child marriage, bride price syndrome, repudiation, widowhood practices, rape as a weapon of war, which all make up the practical experiential narration of Yvonne (narrator) and the Central African girl-child and women.

What type of feminism is Mété-Nguemeu talking about? Much as I will not like to prolong this write-up, it will however be pertinent to expound a little on feminism here since there exist varieties or variants of feminism.

Davies (2007) recognizes the existence of African feminism that examines the societies and various institutions of importance to the African women. This is the feminism that will be explored and the variant of radical feminism that insists that women should not be hidden and the feminine social gender should not be subsumed in masculine or neutral genders. This is because notable African female authors have in the past denied being feminists. In this group fall writers like Ken Bugul (Senegalese), Aminata Sow Fall (Senegalese), Flora Nwapa (Nigerian) and Buchi Emecheta (Nigerian) (see Umeh, 1996). I recognize Werewere Liking (Cameroonian) and D'Almeida's (1993: 49) 'misovire', Clénora Hudson-Weems, Alice Walker and Chikwendu Okonjo-Ogunyemi's 'Africana Womanism' (see Hudson-

1 Interview with Mété-Nguemeu in Mété-Nguemeu & Iloh (2013: 15), *Je suis une féministe dont les ailes ont été brulées trop tôt et qui a eu peur de prendre son envol afin d'écrire un pan de l'histoire de son pays. [...]. Mais je continue à croire en la force des femmes....* (I am a feminist whose wings were clipped too early and as a result got frightened from writing a little of my country's history. [...]. But I still believe in the power of women...). (The English translation is mine).

Weems, 1993), Komguem et Samin's (2005) French Senegalese's 'famillisme', which is an equivalence of 'African womanism' propagated by the likes of Kolawole (1997) or Ogundipe-Leslie's (1994) Stiwanism.

Luise Von Flotow, a Canadian specialist on Translation and Gender (cited by McRae, 2006), attests to the fact that feminist translation is characterized by "the practice of prefacing and footnoting, among other approaches that increase the visibility of the translator". Flotow (1991) highlighted four major trends in feminist translation as supplementation, prefacing, footnoting and hijacking. I actually supplement but to an extent the African audience can tolerate. Prefacing for me is a welcoming idea, as I plan to write a preface in the translation and possibly maintain a repertory of glossary with explanations. A glossary takes the place of footnoting, because I don't believe in distorting an original work to suit my taste. Hijacking is therefore completely out of the way. Much as I believe in the translator's visibility, it does not call for hijacking of an author's creativity. Just like Gentzler (1998), I believe in the documentation of the translation process.

Mété-Nguemeu is not just a female writer but a feminist writer who displays her feminist tendencies in her discourse. Due to this affinity, it is not enough to be a female translator but one who also believes in feminist discourse. I believe that women should be heard and seen as indicated in the article published in 2011 on the need for the feminization of the French grammar, which previously did not have words for certain female gender like, 'écrivain', 'médecin', 'auteur', 'professeur', etc. (see Iloh, 2011). Today, a female writer can be addressed to as 'une écrivaine', author as 'auteure', professeur as 'professeure' but médecin as 'femme médecin'. The translator of a feminist writer must have the same affinity for the feminist discourse, and hence should also be a feminist, not simply a female translator.

Translation experience

The translation activity is interesting but full of challenges, which form part of this study. I will highlight the major challenges which cut across the book in question. What English? If one may ask. Meanwhile, the work is currently being translated into British English which could subsequently be adapted or rendered into American English for a wider coverage. Mété-Nguemeu is a radical feminist, who chooses not only to fight for the liberation of the women in Central African Republic, but practically displays it in the choice of her vocabulary. This will be examined in this paper. We shall take a look at the feminist vocabulary and the author's linguistic innovation through the use of proverbs and metaphors as well as specific feminist discourse. Most African female writers are blunt and go straight to the points without mincing words. As a female African translator, I will maintain the same strategy of bluntness.

Feminization of vocabulary

To be able to translate Mété-Nguemeu, one must take time to read and understand her selective choice of vocabulary, which displays her feminist position. The feminist vocabulary is filled with an abundance of feminist lexis, especially what I call feminist creation or feminist neologisms. Thus, Mété-Nguemeu's choice of vocabulary is what I call a collection or selection of researched repertoire or inventory or vocabulary. Thus, the novel displays influence from current feminist trends, especially the use of feminized grammatical gender seen in the author's choice of profession/vocation, titles, proverbs, metaphors, etc. It should be noted that the writer most often puts her neological creations or the neologisms in inverted commas. These creations will be cited in italics. Let us begin from the title of the book.

Translation of the title of the novel

The title of Mété-Nguemeu's novel reveals to a great extent her feminist posture. The title, *Femmes de Centrafrique, âmes vaillantes au cœur brisé* borders on the courage of women of Central African Republic and exposes the feminist discourse of the author. Mété-Nguemeu believes that her mother and grandmother and other Central African women are feminists in their own merit. "Women of Central African Republic: Valiant Souls with Broken Hearts". This translation is not the final as one is exploring the word *valiant*, which could also be translated as 'Brave', Bold', 'Fearless', 'Gallant', and the word *brisé* is such that they cannot gather their pieces again – this results in 'Shattered lives or broken hearts'. The title speaks about the women and must be retained.

In the translation of a literary work, it is always better to translate the title last. Much as I have temporarily penned it as 'Women of Central African Republic, Valiant Souls with Broken Hearts", this is not the final translation, especially given Peter Newmark's (1988: 57) classification of titles, which are either 'descriptive' or 'allusive'. The title is descriptive and must be so in the target language. In contemporary literary translation, the title of a work is an essential part of the translation. The original version of the title of a work must be considered in correspondence with the principles of empirical analysis of the translation so as not to encounter shifts, alterations or changes. This is so because the title of a text gives the readers clues to the contents of the work. There could be a shift in the meaning of the title of a literary work that could necessitate a renovation of the translation, especially as translations get out dated after a period of time and as language continues to develop. At the moment, Mété-Nguemeu shows her feminist inclination, which must also be displayed in the target language. A noun is either masculine or feminine in French. The gender sensitivity is higher in French. This enriched the work of Mété-

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Nguemeu that it is such that her linguistic exploitation of feminism is extraordinary. The challenges are such that I have to keep up with the pace of feminist creation in the translation by compensation as the English language has no such grammatical gender at all. Only personal pronouns show gender like *he/she/it*. This is where the main challenge is in translating feminization of common nouns from French into English.

- *La défenseuse des causes perdues* (23) – The defender of lost human rights

It can be seen that the defender in French has a feminine gender, which is lost in the translation. I equally jotted down "human right activist" and also 'women human right activist' to reflect the French feminine gender. The entire narration will definitely show the feminization of the characters.

Female circumcision is a theme of paramount interest to most African writers, especially the female writers. Gordon (1997) traces its origin to over 2,500 years. Mété-Nguemeu can be compared with many writers like Kourouma in *Les Soleils des indépendances (The Suns of Independence)*, who narrates Salimata's harrowing experience, but Mété-Nguemeu succeeds in explaining to her audience without giving any specific case. According to Gordon (1997), female circumcision is practiced in most African countries and some other countries of the world.

Below are some examples of the author's innovations of the feminist language or discourse, which became major challenges to me in the course of the translation.

- *Quelques jours avant l'opération, les exciseuses professionnelles, femmes mûres du village, passaient régulièrement de maison en maison pour sélectionner les fillettes prêtes à subir l'ablation* (27).
- Some days before the *operation*, the *professional female circumcision practitioners, matured women* from the village, were moving from house to house selecting *young girls* ripe to undergo ablation (mutilation, amputation).
- *Les exciseuses* (27)
- Female circumcision practitioners

Is it necessary to insert the qualifying adjective 'female' since the context of the narration already shows that the female circumcision requires female practitioners, as the circumcision of the males is carried out by only the male folk? But, in order to feel the presence of the women, I had to insert 'female'

- *Avant d'arriver à notre maison, il y avait deux familles avec des filles, et mes sœurs et moi, la mort dans l'âme, suivions la progression de ces recruteuses du mal* (28).
- Before we got home, there were already two families with their daughters, then my sisters and I, holding our hearts in our hands, we followed the advancement of these *recruiters of evil/bad omen*.

Although the context already shows that it's about female practitioners of circumcision, the African audience will not accept the superfluity. I will settle for the most conventional.

Recruteuses and *visiteuses* both refer to *exciseuses*. The absence of grammatical gender in English makes it hard to see the beauty of what Mété-Nguemeu portrays. The author's play on feminization of noun is evident here but may be superfluous in English. My major challenge is the pre-mature existence of a feminist translation in Africa. Supplementation in feminist translation is necessary but must not be seen to be superfluous.

- *Pendant qu'elle tentait de convaincre mon père, je me mis à genoux dans un coin de la maison, cachée de nos visiteuses,* **...** (30)
- While she was making effort to convince my father, I knelt down at one corner of the house, hidden from our *visitors*, ...
- *Visitors* is applicable to both the masculine and female genders.
- *La coresponsable* (30)
- Co-team leader (It is all about female group, no need to specify)
- *La maîtresse du culte* (31)
- The *Matron* of Operation
- *Ses coéquipières* (32)
- Her team mates
- *Le malheureux (ou la malheureuse)* (67)
- The *unfortunate boy or girl*
- *Le petit livreur (ou de la petite livreuse)* (67)
- *the bearer/(S)he*

The literary commitment of the author, which must be kept in view, is to see that female circumcision is discouraged. She made a lot of jest out of her deliberate use and choice of feminized vocabulary, which gives the book a feminist outlook. Much as in French, gender is mandatory because of the language grammar. It is impossible in French to talk about women without feminine words but where I commend the author in her choice of words is where she goes beyond the generic use of some nouns and 'creates' a non-existent feminine gender. She also capitalized on that by her deliberate choice of aggressive words that portray and show the pains, agony and suffering girls undergo in the process of circumcision such as: *Ablation* (27), *opération* (27), *douleur* (30), *acte d'amputation* (30), *souffrance* (32), *épreuve* (32). These, I translated respectively as: *Ablation, operation, pain, act of amputation, suffering, test.*

Similarly, the following words all end with the suffix *euse*:

Exciseuses (27)	-	Circumcision pratitioners
Recruteuses (28)	-	Recruiters
Visiteuses (30)	-	Female visitors
Réveilleuse (35)	-	Alarm (waker)
Voleuses (41)	-	Thieves

Livreuse (67) - Messenger
Preneuse, lépreuse (102) - Taker, Leper
Meneuse (111, 112) - Undertaker
Menteuse (143) - Liar
Mangeuse - Eater
Prétencieuses (51) - Pretenders, hypocrites
Agresseuses (57) - Aggressors, Assailants, Provokers, Invaders, Attackers, Trouble makers
Guerisseuse (81) - Healer, Priestess
"*Provoqueuse*" (54), *Provocatrice* (54) - Ringleader in the instigation, lead initiator of trouble

The author's juxtaposition of *provoqueuse* (54) and '*provocatrice*' (54) shows her linguistic exploration and exploitation in her play on words and feminization of words. There is no equivalence for '*provoqueuse*' in my translation for now because it's simply a mockery of the inconsistency of French feminization of words: the speaker as well as the learner could be confused with the suffix '*euse*' or '*trice*'. This is what I consider as a feminist writing or discourse where the author selectively plays on the gender formation in French. It is a bit difficult attaining the same equivalent play on words and getting the same pragmatic effect. This is one of the major challenges in the course of the translation. The musical rendering and the beauty of *–euse* in the formation of the feminine gender, which the author uses as a play on words, could not be maintained in the English translation for now because that beauty is a major challenge in the English translation.

The context of the narration may not require the gender visibility, as it is also implied with the following examples:

- *Une responsable* (35) - Leader
- *gardienne des chaussures* (40) – Shoe keeper
- The composition of words could be ambiguous in the choice of words in the translation of:
- *Jeune mère-célibataire* (129) - Young single/unmarried mother

The use of proverbs

The author was also creative in her choice of proverbs which she builds around the feminine gender. For instance:

- *Une bonne calebasse ne traîne jamais sur l'eau ou une bonne calebasse ne dérive pas longtemps sur la rivière sans trouver preneuse* (74)
- A good calabash never stays long in the river or a good calabash is never neglected in the river without attracting attention.

The French ends with *preneuse*, which is implicit in the English version. It is believed in the African culture that it is women or girls who need calabashes for fetching water or for keeping their jewelries. This is well taken in the French, but it's hidden in English which seems to be more generic and patriarchal. The author took pains to narrate in the novel. The example below confirms that:

- *Aucune femme censée ne songerait à se débarrasser d'une calebasse encore utile* (75)
- No sensible woman would think of getting rid of a useful calabash.

Metaphors

The author's use of metaphors is worth noting too.

- *Elles étaient devenues des « mères courage », se battant pour la survie de leurs enfants* (94).
- They became "Mother Courage", battling for the survival of their children
- *Lionnes en fureur* (112)
- Furious lionesses
- « *Fille prodigue* » (130)
- "Prodigal daughter"
- *Femmes vaillantes* (177)
- Brave/Gallant/Bold/Courageous/Valiant women (only one will be selected)

Conclusion

Translating a feminist writer is challenging but very interesting, as the writer's feminist creativity is better admired when exposed to translation. The emergence of women literature does not necessarily make it a feminist literature. There are traits in a feminist write-up that one can look out for. Translating a feminist text is another ball game. It is as challenging as translating poetry because it is an innovation yet to be appreciated. Feminism is a commitment. African Feminist translation is a mirage for now given the historical development, and as such, is still being operated under post-colonialism. Being a feminist translator is not acquired by reading but by one's disposition and revolutionary challenges that go on in one's mind. It was not until recently that I discovered that there is truly feminist translation. I have often challenged the absence of the feminine gender in some French nouns like *chauffeur (driver),* now *chauffeure or chauffeuse or can be modeled after un professeur/ une professeur; un chauffeur/une chauffeur.* The conventional use of the generic is still in vogue especially in French France. The major challenge comes from the fact that most writings in Francophone Africa are modeled after the French in France, so also the French in Anglophone Africa.

I have always wished that translators of the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s of African literature, either from English to French or vice-versa, took cognizance of the feminization of language. African radical feminist translations like that of Calixthe Beyala's should be studied to ascertain the level of feminist rendition they portray.

Yvonne Mété-Nguemeu is not only a writer; she is feminist writer with a specific mission. Her novel is not just autobiographical in nature; it is a novel that displays feminist discourse reinforced with feminist vocabulary, enriched and embellished with innovations in her choice of metaphors, comparisons and proverbs. From the title to the epilogue, the narratives and descriptions are all feminist discourse. The author displays a linguistic and stylistic creativity. Translating a feminist author requires empathy and feminist activism.

As a feminist translator, more space should be given to translators. Their names should appear on the cover page of the translated work in a conspicuous corner, but not necessarily hijacking the work of the author. The idea of searching for the translator's name in the title page is demeaning. Feminist translation should not be mixed up with feminist interpretation. There should be a clear-cut distinction between translation and interpretation.

African feminism will come of age but should be given time. Africa has always been 50 years behind in many developments. As African feminism is taking shape and translation is fast developing, languages are being challenged with current trends in globalization, as feminist writings improve and increase in Africa so will feminist translation begin to take shape and take its rightful place. With the emergence of African feminism, I wonder what future holds for African feminist translation.

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