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DARE (AGAIN) TO NOT SPEAK ITS NAME?

TRANSLATING "RACE" INTO EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY WESTERN ARMENIAN FEMINIST TEXTS

> Revolutions only snap dried branches, and trim old trees. Whatever has life and is good will remain, and if it too dies, it will regenerate. Today always has a claim over yesterday and tomorrow always on today.
>
> —Vartouhie Calantar, "A Response to *Hay Gin*'s Question" (1921)[1]

I

In an empty room with beige walls, a middle-aged woman with black skin and ear-length curly hair sits at a table set against a wall. Although her back is to the camera, her reflection faces the audience through the rectangular mirror that rests atop the table. Her eyes are cast down. "No one sees me," narrates the voiceover of a little olive-skinned tomboy who enters the frame. She fidgets uncomfortably in a pink dress. She's just escaped a moment of awkwardness among her peers and skips behind the woman in the mirror, "wait[ing] for a moment of belonging."[2] *They are in the kitchen of an Armenian church,*

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somewhere in North America, 1970s. The woman fixes herself in the mirror as the little girl watches, inquisitively. The voiceover continues, in English:

> I see too much. Words come in our direction, and I overhear them talk about the woman near me. I stand apart from mouths that slant slurs. That she doesn't belong here. Noses turn up at her. "Why is she here?" they say over again. "Black, *sevamort*, who has brought this black woman here, *inch gene gor hos*? This *odar*." Other, they call her. "*Sev e*." Why do they say that? . . . She . . . ignores . . . them . . . pretends this language is alien to her. She is silent and waits for the awkwardness to leave the room . . . No discrete gestures made by others, no welcomes uttered to the Sunday guest . . . lips suck words of hate against her. This is not the first time I have heard this before.[3]

So unfolds artist Tina Bastajian's short film *Pinched Cheeks and Slurs in a Language That Avoids Her* (1995); as the DVD jacket's epigraph riffs, it is "An Ethiopian blend." With its main protagonist played by an actor who, by the film's end, speaks flawless Western Armenian, the short tells the story of exclusion through a tedious, predictable, and well-weathered trope: nationalism. In the frame, the little girl's voiceover, expressing its own gendered discomfort as she gravitates toward the outcast woman, struggles to speak or remember the language of her ancestors. At the same time, the adults who chatter in the background cannot even consider how this woman with dark skin sitting in their church kitchen could be Armenian. She is *sev*, a Black; a foreigner-Other, *odar*, who has no legitimate place among their kin. The nameless woman is mocked, in a language the viewer later learns is all-too-much her own. Even during the film's various screenings, Armenian audience members were unconvinced: "How did you so perfectly synchronize the Armenian dubs with her lips?" viewers often asked the filmmaker.[4] We learn two things from this question: while the codes of normative gender are subverted by the (trans) actor who plays the woman (viewers don't cast doubt over the protagonist's status as a normative "woman"), her "race" remains unquestioningly fixed and unsubvertible. Due to the material-discursive practice of difference-making by the name of "race," in the film "race" is understood as inherited (through blood) and indelibly tied to visible somatic qualities like skin color. For the background voices, a black-skinned Armenian is a logical fallacy, lest the racialized boundaries of their normative or purified

Armenianness begin to blur. Thus, she remains an outsider; as a woman with black skin, she *cannot* "pass" as Armenian.

Once considered nonwhite in the United States, through what turn of events has blackness for Armenians stateside become a slur? That nationalist discourse is predicated on exclusion is not a new story; it is imperative, rather, to trace its contours.[5] Feminist scholarship in particular has shown that the imagined community of the nation, a collective extension of the domestic realm, is both a gendered and patriarchal construct, which defines belonging through the colonial-qua-capitalist reproduction of its members' heterosexuality and sociality. Women of color feminism and queer of color critique have further nuanced these approaches to include race as an integral yet oftentimes concealed category that intersects with class, gender, and sexual practices to "antagonize and/or conspire with the normative investments of nation-states."[6] Roderick Ferguson particularizes this phenomenon, calling it a "genealogy of the West" to further specify the nation as arising out of colonial taxonomies that, from their inception, locate whiteness, heteronormativity, and specific racial affiliations as the normative standards of belonging to national ideals. Writing from the purview of critical race studies and its objects in the United States, Ferguson identifies that the structures of nationhood emerge from the European Enlightenment and its civilizing/whitening mission—what scholars of Orientalism like Joseph Massad describe as "developmentalist temporal schema[s] whose telos is assimilation into Europe."[7] Thus, one becomes civilized and recognizably "human" in modernity through a rejection of "tradition" and adoption of rationality, objectivity, science, secularism, etc.

How, then, to read beyond heteronormative, colonial/nationalist, and racist frames, to translate and disentangle these genealogies in order to disarm their effects and (re)production in the present? Indeed, the silent orientalist telos of Armenian American racism depicted in *Pinched Cheeks* is not simply a diasporic phenomenon of assimilationist amnesia. What the trans body with black skin in Bastajian's film evinces, in a language often avoided, is that such racialization is not just a result of Armenians' assimilation to American whiteness but also, as I will show, an importation and translation of racial identity that was being constructed in texts written by Armenians across the ocean, hailing from their homelands from the banks of the Bosphorus to the Euphrates in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries.[8] The body with black skin

> ***. . . how might the narrative of Armenian racialization, which has gotten lost in translation, be revisibilized in order to critique those same racial ideologies still alive in the present?***

that speaks Armenian indexes and echoes an entirely different, non-U.S. centric history of the Armenian encounter with blackness. Retroactively attending then to co-constitutive racially and sexually deviant subjects whose silent exclusions become "commensurate with reality and suitable for universal ideals," how might the narrative of Armenian racialization, which has gotten lost in translation, be revisibilized in order to critique those same racial ideologies still alive in the present?[9] Disidentifying with the historical materialism of orthodox Marxism, which privileges class to the exclusion of the silenced yet nonetheless material realities of race, gender and sexuality, Ferguson suggests a revision of Walter Benjamin's historical materialist method, which focuses on history-writing as inhabiting the struggle in the present to *rewrite* the past. Instead of revision and attending to the opacities that haunt normative, fixed, and exclusionary histories, the work to be done is to render these hierarchies visible in order to *rupture* the universal ideals that they continue to normalize in the present. As an "Ethiopian blend," Bastajian's film poses a demanding question. My present objective, in thinking translation as an autotheory, is one attempt to offer up some answers.

Much like an artist's relationship to their canvas or stage, the translator's relationship to their work is not just subjective; it is creative, and tenuous. Translation is also an embodied experience.[10] A text in-translation is inhabited by a subject with an embodied knowledge of both the source and target languages, a position that uniquely constitutes their subjectivity intellectually, emotionally, and historically. Luring the "original" outside of its linguistic territory across borders and into a foreign tongue is a performative and interpretative process that reconfigures and reanimates the source text. As the agent of this reterritorialization, the translator also and equally speaks the text she translates.

In thinking translation through autotheory—and indeed imagining *what* autotheory itself might be as a theory or praxis in this groundbreaking special issue—we must consider translation as an art of the present integral to the intersection of the literary arts and its critique. Indeed, while translation theory

remains an ever-growing yet somewhat insular field that discusses praxis, it is less often conceptualized beyond its discipline as an *artform* in its own right. And yet translation finds itself at the intersection of the expression and application of creativity, imagination, skill, and social life. Translation is not just an art but also the method through which all artforms are produced: a translation of an idea through an embodied subject who creatively generates something new in the context of their times. Translation is a praxis of autotheory, and autotheory is a theory of translation. In what follows, I explore the possibilities of autotheory—taken up as a theory of the self—by examining the process of translation. As a result, I aim to show how translation as a contemporary artform made by a specific and politically aware historical subject (the translator) can contribute toward a working definition of autotheory.

This said, I begin with a series of inquiries—

II

What are the translator's ethical imperatives as responsible mediator of the past, creative fabricator and queer feminist resistor in the present, when called on to translate racist nationalist texts? How might the translator—a political subject who passes readers through the liminal threshold from one language and temporality to the next—*disrupt* the historical continuity of the racist structures upon which the texts she is translating are predicated while still rendering a careful interpretation of them? Such questions are the beginnings of what I imagine in order to understand translation as autotheory, and an autotheory of translation.

In 2016, I was invited to join my colleague Jennifer Manoukian on a (since dissolved) transnational team of Armenian-identified women from Armenia, Turkey, and the United States working as historians, literary translators, critics, and editors to translate prose for *Feminism in Armenian: An Interpretive Anthology* edited by Melissa Bilal and Lerna Ekmekçioğlu.[11] As a genealogic revival project reminiscent of the second-wave feminist imperative to unsilence marginalized voices, the anthology will feature the works of twelve women who wrote in Western Armenian from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. Many of these texts are leaving the archives for the first time, in addition to being translated. The book's target audience are lay readers in the Armenian diaspora,

as well as scholars of feminism, Ottoman and Middle East studies, the Global South, and within the largely patriarchal field of Armenian studies.

Each of the authors I translated imagine in different ways the "new" Armenian woman in the wake of the 1915 Armenian Catastrophe. Yet, while their texts espouse their own localized fervor of feminist revolution from patriarchal structures, they are also tinged with the anxiety of ethnic extinction, which informs their imperative to re/produce the traditional family structure, preserve the nation through the sacred calling of motherhood, or define ethnic identity through discursive practices of racialized othering. Certainly being Armenian ethnic minorities in postgenocide Turkey further contextualizes this tendency.[12] In short, as theory in postcolonial feminism has taught us, these texts illustrate the global double-bind of women's liberation struggles within national/izing and decolonial/izing contexts alike.

As an agent who embodies queer feminist political orientations that seek to go beyond heteronormative, colonial/nationalist, and racist frames, what options are there for the literary translator when confronted with such problematic texts?[13] Might a translation, which "passes on" through language transfer, fall into the genealogical trap of rearticulating, reproducing, and reinscribing normative/originary national history if the translator does not also find a way to critique those same racial ideologies still alive in the present? Walter Benjamin asks of translation, might the "deviant," the "copy"—that is, the "translation"—undo the "original"?[14] Instead, as theory in feminist translation suggests, perhaps it is not the translation but the *translator* who must herald such undoings.

For what was to be an iteration of *Feminism in Armenian*, I translated the works of four authors—Yevpime Avetisian (Anayis), Zaruhi Bahri, Vartouhie Calantar, and Hayganush Mark—over the course of one year as they accompanied me on my circular returns. In Istanbul, I translated Anayis and imagined her boat arriving from the island of Büyükada as I sat carelessly sipping tea in Kadıköy, her port of entry. I imagined what the vapors of the steamboat she was traveling on with Mr. Papazian must have looked like over the Bosphorus that day when flocks of frightened Armenians crowded the docks to leave the city, anticipating massacres as a fallout from Sultan Mehmed VI's constitutional reforms. What might their clustered footsteps have sounded like over the cobblestones now peeking through the pitted pavement I sat atop?

Through sheer physical proximity, could I resummon the pangs of guilt Zaruhi Bahri must have felt just meters from my walk home in the Armenian neighborhood of Şişli where she cared for some of the Armenian women who had survived the Catastrophe? So desperately did they want to abort the reminders of their rapes. Instead, they were sedated and forced to give birth by the Armenian Red Cross hospital staff. The Armenian nation couldn't bear to lose another soul, no matter if they were to be the half-breeds of genocide perpetrators; being half-Turkish, or half-anything, didn't matter so much then. Curious how belongings and exclusions change over time. . . .

In the neighborhood of Sultanahmet stands the luxury Four Seasons Hotel: the former central prison of Constantinople. Yesterday's prisoners of the empire, today's neoliberal globetrotters. If I stood outside the walls of this prison-turned-hotel, could I still hear the echoes of what Vartouhie Calantar recounts in her prison diaries: the sounds of the women from the room of the lepers, beating their hands like drums on the wooden floors of their cells, then cupping them over their mouths as they circle dance, eyes wild, rumbling cries of devilish laughter as they shout *yallah, yallah!* into the air? I'm encircled by their eyes, lined heavy with charcoal, as they dance to welcome the political prisoner and her mother. Can these tourists feel, as I bring it back to life, the ghost of Fatma the Arab who, right there where they sit each morning unfolding street maps of the old Byzantine capital, cast her magic love spell over İbrahim the prison guard? Fatma stood just there, ninety-seven years ago to the day, naked beside the blazing fire, "her lead-colored body only half lit through the midnight darkness, her curly hair lost in the smoke as she called out '*bismillah*' seven times."[15] Casting grains of pepper, seven-by-seven, into the c(r)ackling flames, she then reached "her arms out toward the door from whence, as if by a miracle, her love would come forth."[16] I'm the silent phantom from the future who will speak them into the present.

And how I felt filled with excitement, pride, cheeks tickled pink, that Hayganush Mark laid bare her idea of the Women's Cause in Constantinople in the first issues of her feminist journal *Hay Gin* [*Armenian Woman*] as early as 1922! In utter exasperation, she writes, "the word *feminist* is still completely misunderstood. . . . thus, it's not in vain that we again explain its meaning: '*Feminism is a cry for justice, which extends to the rights and duties of men and women.*'"[17] Justice. . . .

And then, *my* fingers, *my* voice, *my* emotions, give life in English to the following words in Anayis's 1921 sociological retrospective entitled "The Conditions of Women in Primitive Societies":

> Among the women [of the non-Christian white races residing in Asia]—there is no veritable ambition to progress. . . . The races that make up half-civilized societies are . . . the brown-skinned races of India, the non-Christian races of Asia, the brown-skinned races that live in the northern parts of Africa . . . and the Peruvian Incas of America and the Aztecs of Mexico / All the Christian branches of the white race [*ts'egh*] can be found where there is civilized society. . . . Our civilized society [the white race] has already passed through all the phases which still exist today among the savage and half-civilized races.[18]

How to make these words my own, imbibe them responsibly in order to ethically relay them to my reader without revealing my own disgust? A far cry from affective embodiment. Translation became regurgitation. How to translate in a way that *I* believe echoes feminism's *ongoing* cry for *justice*, and challenge the naturalness of racism, patriarchy, or heteroreproductivity, or any position founded upon violence or subordination? Is it also the translator's task to critique while responsibly passing words from one linguistic code to the next? In 1921, Anayis sets up the narrative of feminist progress in the European West through racial taxonomies. Seventy-four years later, in 1995, Bastajian's short exemplifies that we cannot avoid by writing (sanitizing) or explaining (excusing) away these systemic issues whose branches extend into the politics and power dynamics of today. Bodies are at stake at the heart of this ideological formation, *and they matter*. Among other things, Anayis's text illustrates an inherent ambiguity: she doesn't challenge the authority of the sociological accounts provided by European patriarchs. Instead, she uncritically bases her study on their gendered, racialized hierarchies to buttress her narrative of Armenian relative progress toward gender equality. In addition, gender and race are mutually dependent and constitutive of the paradigm of racial hierarchy that privileges the white Christian subject. Here, Anayis adopts the Western feminist progressionist telos of emancipation that is putatively universalist yet structurally relative. And so, translating into the colonial language par excellence while embodying Anayis's reality to orient myself as an historical subject within it became a necessary phase in perceiving the inheritance of one's historical position, diasporic hybridity, and toward a more ethical praxis of history-writing and representation in the

present. If we are to theorize from practice, then how to situate the translator as she reproduces these colonial models of naturalized, eugenicist claims for white, Christian, Euro-American superiority? Is it possible to mobilize alternative strategies through translation to not reproduce these same logics?

AUTOTHEORY: TOWARD A THEORY OF TRANSLATION

Autotheory as a theory of translation provides us a critical framework through which to begin imagining translation as both a necessarily creative and historically nuanced artform, in addition to a method that functions at the intersection of art and critique. As a theory of translation, autotheory—a theory of the self—emphasizes and reminds the translator of their embodied subjectivity in time and space while translating; in other words, of how their historical positionality affects what they write. On the flipside, autotheorizing translation—when the translation and translator theorize themselves—is a queer endeavor, as it asks the translation to both accurately depict what's written in the source-text while also providing a critique *of* that text. In this way, translation as an autotheoretical practice is a genre of the contemporary arts. Taken together, let us glance at translation as autotheory—quite literally, a theory of the self through the act of translation—at work.

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When I began to translate Anayis's text, my immediate impulse was to ease my discomfort in her problematic language through an albeit unwitting act of maintaining a level of neutrality in the present. In Armenian, the word *ts'egh* [ցեղ] most generally means "kind," with earlier variations like *ts'eghagan* [ցեղական] (changeable or variable), *ts'eghli* [ցեղլի] (unstable, transient), or *ts'eghapakh* [ցեղափախ] (subject to change, mutable, inconstant).[19] Entries in 1843 of *ts'egh* suggest "kind" or "species," while 1905 translations into English suggest "tribe, caste, race, branch (of a family), dynasty, stock."[20] The term can also be translated more broadly as a "people." Such a variety of English translations helps demonstrate the ideological morphology of the Armenian word over

time—like the Latin *genus*—to help us understand the changing ways Armenians thought about and projected their changing conceptions of "race" within their linguistic and political worlds. Fittingly, the term *ts'eghapakh*—"subject to change"—exceeds itself as an inherent reminder of this contingency: what comes to categorize "race" is never constant.[21]

Work by scholars across an array of fields has demonstrated that "race" is a functional category and a technology of hierarchical differentiation that, as Wendy Hui Kyong Chun describes, "has never been simply biological or cultural [but instead] has been crucial to negotiating and establishing historically variable definitions of biology and culture."[22] Race, then, has both a capacious and particular function. Through the false dichotomies of biology versus culture, it continually manages categories of difference and belonging over time and place—from religion to ethnicity, culture, lineage, bloodlines, class, geography, and genetics—in order to organize material and ideological power relations.[23] For medieval scholar Geraldine Heng, who has written against criticisms of being anachronistic when using the term "race" in her scholarship, she argues that the word "race" is important because it "bear[s] witness to important strategic, epistemological, and political commitments not adequately served by the invocation of categories of greater generality . . . [that thus] sustain the reproduction of a certain kind of past, while keeping the door shut to tools, analyses, and resources that can name the past differently."[24] There is much to glean from attention to such a critical perspective in light of ideological shifts that may be named differently throughout the epochs yet describe the same ideological technologies. In Anayis's case, we see that her conception of race is directly influenced by European (specifically British) colonialism. What does this suggest about the fashioning of "Armenian" "identity" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in relation to Armenians' geographic and linguistic neighbors, or in response or contradistinction to their political and cultural entanglements?[25] As any translation project exemplifies, such interconnected histories are integral when considering and accounting for the various entanglements of a global past in order to (re)write them in the present.

Yet, when I initially touched pen to paper, I sensed the nostalgic afterglow of my own pinched cheeks: the unspoken validation and time-honored pressure to be the self-disciplined, loyal daughter who had inherited these texts and their legacies, tasked with introducing her Armenian foremothers to the English-speaking

world. This is the insidious tension between the disciplinary force of nationalism that reproduces patriarchal genealogies and an autotheoretical translation praxis that seeks to disrupt them. I first drafted: "the black-skinned peoples of Africa," "the peoples of Oceania." This was a politically neutralized domestication of the original for a contemporary U.S. readership instead of writing the "Black" or "Negro" "races." However, I was *sanitizing* the slurs . . . *erasing* and *forgetting* . . . passing off the racist undertones that attended the rise of European modernism and narratives of progress as euphemisms in the interests of maintaining a seemingly transparent, normative, and reparative genealogy of recently unarchived Armenian feminist materials. Yet, if I didn't sanitize, redact out of refusal, and so in this case translate toward neutrality, wouldn't I (over)expose Anayis's racial biases, betraying her in this critical feminist revival project? Instead, such a decision would mean to expose nationalism's racist (and sexist) logics. I parsed through my options during the nights and days I sat before that text, swallowing words that have structured my privilege, that violate my politics, and yet have unavoidably inscribed my historical position: "[Unlike in Oceania,] it is rare that the negroid race of Africa is inclined to eat its women. Instead, they give women the most burdensome jobs"[26] And the words themselves kept haunting, insisting: civilized, uncivilized, primitive, half-civilized, white, black-skinned, Negro/id, blackamoors, yellow races, red, brown, they eat their women, those primitive *races*, *ts'egh, ts'egh, ts'egh* . . . not *peoples*. . . .

My aim was not to *reinscribe* injustice, but to responsibly interpret a text antithetical to my politics while providing readers with a framework disentangled from comfortable euphemisms in order to construct their own critical readings in the present. Reflecting on her recently published feminist translations of Homer's *Odyssey*, translator and scholar Emily Wilson suggests that such an aim may be accomplished through a praxis of visibility that works *against* the "silenc[ing] [of] critical impulses" through sanitization or obfuscation, or providing politically correct readings for contemporary audiences. Visibility, Wilson argues, invites readers to make "critical and engaged response[s]," and in the case of *ts'egh* above, it does just that.[27] From "kind" to "race," *ts'egh* is a construct. It is changeable or variable (*ts'eghagan*), always unstable (*ts'eghli*), and constantly mutable (*ts'eghapakh*). In this case, translating this word as "race" instead of a politically euphemistic "people" in order to save the text from itself offers the possibility for a more robust reading of the political dimensions of Armenians' performative alliances with racial ideologies of Western Christian whiteness. In

his translations of Anayis's male contemporaries of the *Mehyan* literary movement from 1914–1915 Istanbul, Marc Nichanian chooses a similar strategy not to "edulcorate the Armenian texts . . . [from] overtly 'racialist' thinking" in order to "elucidate the conditions under which this degeneration came about."[28]

And so, do we dare (again) not to speak its name? To avoid, naturalize, and thus excuse language—past and present—that subordinates Others? To not resist the oft-repeated exoneration, "She is a product of her time"? Such a dismissal speaks from a position of unthreatened power and privilege because it refuses to acknowledge how those legacies oppressed and still operate, or how—as they oft remind—Armenians have "suffered by the sword" of similar logics.

Yet should a praxis of visibility be applied in all cases? To what extent might the approach of "visibility" reinforce the familiar logics of recognition, which tends to presuppose a hegemonic framework that can grant this recognition? Queer diaspora scholar Gayatri Gopinath reminds us that "visibility" is also reminiscent of the "violences of colonial modernity [in] the consigning of gendered, sexualized, and racially marked bodies to hypervisibility and/or invisibility within a hegemonic visual field."[29] To this end, I am intrigued by the critical, aesthetic, and political practices of deconstruction toward which queer writers, translators, and scholars like Shushan Avagyan, Roderick Ferguson, and Gopinath gesture—practices that, as Gopinath explains,

> enact and produce a queer optic that allows us to apprehend the intertwined nature of the historical forces that produce this in/visibility; [a] queer optic [that] . . . enables us to grasp the unanticipated intimacies between bodies, temporalities, and geographies that are the product of overlapping histories of racialization and diasporic dislocation, settler colonialism and empire, war and nationalism.[30]

In ruminating on alternative ways to disrupt language while *decentering* a politics of visibility, transparency, or oppositionality, *translation as autotheory* brings a "queer optic" to a method of translation. As a deconstructive approach in its inversion, *autotheorizing translation* does not merely mean to provide literal translations or desanitized euphemisms of the source text to make them visible; instead, it refuses the depoliticized neutrality of the target language *while also* gesturing toward the unanticipated intimacies of its regulatory regimes through a genealogical mapping in the translation. Beyond the logics of edulcoration or

making the invisible visible—obeying a hegemonic framework that rejects the "right to opacity"—such an approach resignifies language both *appositionally* (in the target language) and *from within* (the source language) to communicate the layered and overlapping temporalities, histories, and geographies that constitute it—a redaction of genealogies.[31] In the example below, an autotheoretical praxis of translation comes into even sharper focus in order to note the distinction between greater visibility versus mapping the unexpected intimacies through a word or concept's ideological genealogy through translation.

Cultural hegemony, as it goes, does not flow in just one direction, and British colonial texts were certainly not the only ones informing Armenians' developing conceptions of race at this time. In her essay "The Conditions of Women in Primitive Societies," Anayis compares the social conditions of women in African and Oceanic societies. She explains that hunting meat is plentiful in Africa unlike in Oceania, and so "it is rare that the African *khapshig* [Ափրիկեցի խաբշիկը] has a tendency to eat his women."[32] I'd heard the term *khapshig* before. Embodied knowledge told me, *derogatory, yes, but connotes a Black person nonetheless*. My first drafts read "the black-skinned Africans," "the negroid race of Africa," or the "black African." *A Practical Dictionary: Armenian-English*, published in Constantinople in 1905, fifteen years before Anayis writes her text, offers "negro" and "blackamoor" as translations.[33] "Blackamoor" echoes English travel narratives dating back to the fifteenth century, which uniquely conflate blackness with Islam, distinguishing between the "whyte moors" and "black moors" of the African continent.

An autotheoretical approach to translation, however, calls for further attention to the word's naturalized and seemingly innocuous roots *in the source text*. For fifteenth-century English travelers, the "black moors" referred to the people "black of colour" of sub-Saharan Africa, paired with descriptions of their laziness, unsophistication, and physical deformities.[34] These terms index the interconnected genealogies of blackness (not Blackness) and orientalism that contributed to a racial ideology of religious-race that came to center the white Christian European subject as the legitimate, God-ordained colonial force morally called on to civilize, enslave, and convert Blacks in the South, and dominate putatively despotic, morally perverse oriental rulers in the East. Perhaps it is no surprise, then, that such violent histories were also indexed by my body through irrepressible spasms of discomfort, a muscle flinch, or a constant hesitation as I

translated—the tremors of an invisibilized dilemma that affectively looms over the translator. . . . The body senses the phantom limbs of oppression.

For the English, like for many Europeans, the term "Ethiopian"—another unconvertable trait—later carried similar tropes of indelible blackness (color), aptitude for servitude, and religious infidelity. Incidentally, *khapshig* is likely the Armenized version of the Arabic *Habash* [حبشي] or *Habashi*, meaning "Ethiopian" or "Abyssinian." As Anayis's text bears witness, the 1905 usage of the term denigrates blackness rather than neutrally connoting a person from Ethiopia, as does its Arabic equivalent. Incidentally, Hrachya Ajarian (1973) discusses the etymology of the Armenian *khapshig* alongside Greek references that link the use of the Arabic *Habashi* to the Greek *kampsikízō* [καμψικίζω] or *barbarízō* [βαρβαρίζω] to behave or speak "broken" Greek, i.e., like a barbarian.[35] Further inquiry here is needed, yet I speculate to what extent it can be coincidental that the root *khap*, spelled with the same p [փ] as *khapshig*, also connotes "hindrance, impediment, obstacle; [something] encumbering; [or indicating] inactivity, idleness [and] sloth" (see *khapan* [խափան]). However, it is beside the point whether the equivalence of these words can be verified philologically. That all of them reference one another, and that their meanings overlap over the centuries, demonstrates that the concepts of barbarity, otherness, and blackness share historical, auditory, and linguistic continuities that circulate/d *outside* of a Eurocentric frame, ideologically informing language communities in geographies across the Mediterranean and beyond.

And so, an autotheoretical praxis of translation is slightly askew from the praxis of making visible. It does not seek clarity and exposure. Instead, it works from within the possibilities of the language itself to bring forth the various and layered dimensions of its meanings in order to gesture toward particular ideological genealogies in a specific cultural, historical, and geopolitical context; ones that intimately mark the source-text yet can remain ambiguous in them through their naturalization or equally euphemistic renderings in translation. Indeed, such alternative methods have also informed the more radical voices of contemporary queer feminist artistic production and scholarship in the Armenian milieu. In Armenian translation theorist Shushan Avagyan's estimation, translation *is* queer because it "enlists the foreign text in the development and *revision* of domestic values . . . to expose that what we come to understand to be 'real' or naturalized is, in fact, a changeable and revisable reality."[36]

Perhaps it is impossible for the English translation to hold the varied meanings of *khapshig*. However, with the creative license of the autotheoretical translator, I chose to infuse, with a nod to Bastajian, something of "an Ethiopian blend." Instead of the "black-skinned African," the "sub-Saharan African," or the "blackamoor," I rendered instead the "Ethiopian sambo-coon." I footnoted the text here to explain the wider usage of "Ethiopian" from Arabic to Farsi to Armenian to Turkish to Hindi. Disambiguating "African *khapshig*" by steering away from a literal translation to provide a more culturally specific reference to the use of "Ethiopian" signals attention to the localized history and usage of *khapshig* in the greater Ottoman territories. Similarly, the addition of "sambo-coon"—a mix of two contemptuous terms for a Black person that connotes slyness, slavery, and being either of monkey-yellow appearance or of mixed race—further modifies Ethiopian, linking the denigration used in the Ottoman Empire to the colonial histories of Spain, Portugal, and the United States. The choice, I believe, highlights *khapshig*'s problematic connotations more so than "Negro," "negroid," or "Black" could. Together, both are my creative attempts as a translator in the United States to signal to the contemporary English-language reader a very different yet interconnected nexus of exchange and history of knowledge production from the genealogy of the English "blackamoor." Finally, mixing the hybrid racialized concepts of "Ethiopian" and "sambo-coon" traces a geographic flow from east to west that mirrors the historical migration of the Armenian diaspora in the United States today—the same one that constitutes Bastajian's audience, which cannot imagine the existence of a Black Armenian.

I'd hoped in this way that the translation would have offered a refreshed, historical, and more critically engaged interpretation for readers today. I'd also hoped that translating autotheoretically, with an optic toward opening up the interconnected histories that constitute the word from *within*, would incite discussion regarding how particular ideological and epistemological conceptions of race were being used in Armenian as they were shared across languages and territories beyond, yet also being shaped alongside the West. Perhaps these kinds of slurs *cannot* be avoided. Such a lens invites us to think about the racial and colonial logics that overlap and come to bear on how Armenians, and other ethnic constituencies of the Ottoman Empire, began to situate themselves globally by negotiating identity and power, in both Anayis's time as well as in our own. This lens also rouses the questions: how did Armenians exchange in the discursive

and material economy of race; or how and why did their own self-fashioning mobilize around logics that oriented them away from their Ethiopian coreligionists and instead toward white, Christian Europe, aided by the specter of "blackness" circulating in the Mediterranean, Arab, and Ottoman worlds, especially in the very period of Armenians' own dispossession in postgenocide Turkey?[37]

If language is considered as one of the carriers of national identity, then translation—the interruption of language's "purity," as Susan Sontag describes—may be considered the "equivalent of an act of treason."[38] Yet against whom or what does the translator transgress? In so doing, does the translator threaten infidelity to the source-text, or does she act as a creative agent who regrounds the stakes of her present? Translating autotheoretically—with a nod to one's own positionality—the translator mediates an embodied site of transformation. By providing readers with more politicized and historically charged language instead of softer euphemisms, I had hoped to open a space for the varied meanings of *ts'egh*, *khapshig*, and their critique. My aim remained to disrupt a narrative of Armenian feminism as inherently emancipatory or universally inclusive. Perhaps the paradox of "Armenian feminism," or any feminist movement under a national banner, is itself room enough for pause. It was my hope that these translations would have highlighted the texts' nationalism, which privileges an "Armenian" subject, encouraging its readers to consider the exclusionary boundaries of Armenianness; that is, who is "in" and who is "out" of the "civilized" Armenian community at any given time and place—both then and now. As Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari remind us in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, even the "most individual enunciation is a particular case of collective enunciation. . . . The [subject/the artist] and the virtual community—both of them real—are the components of a collective assemblage."[39] If these structural oppressions have informed Armenian feminisms, then how do "we" work on them and how do they still work on "us"?

III

In a response to the question posed by Hayganush Mark's feminist journal *Armenian Woman* in September 1921 about who is more preferable from the perspective of the Armenian national revival, the old or the new woman, political activist and writer Vartouhie Calantar tersely concludes: "Revolutions only snap

dried branches and trim old trees. Whatever has life and goodness will remain, and if it too dies, it will regenerate. *Today always has a claim over yesterday and tomorrow always on today*."[40] While hopeful for change in what she understands as a hypertraditional, patriarchal Armenian society, Calantar neither celebrates nor claims that the new woman is the woman of her today. Instead, the "new" woman belongs to *tomorrow*. She will never have been fully accomplished, she is always *becoming*, always to come.

Presciently reminiscent of an historical materialist approach to history-writing, Calantar's is not an unfulfillable promise but an ongoing provocation: attend to the constant dynamism of the present's influence on the past by questioning how the events of past-present-future are relational; then, ask how they might lead to radical change, knowing that we too have always yet to arrive. Like Calantar, Deleuze and Guattari also turn to the metaphor of a tree to describe the West's obsession with roots, origins, and hierarchies. They warn that we shouldn't confuse a retracing of the past, or a genealogy, with a radical act.[41] The Foucauldian practice of writing genealogies is essential. But after mapping the tree, how to start the revolution? How to radicalize the roots? How to take the past and understand it as *actively* and simultaneously re-forming the present; that our ghosts still haunt us; that racism among Armenians persists, slurring "*sev*"; that race, unlike gender after performance theory, is still seen as an *immutable* category tied in the neoliberal era to identity politics; and to see how, as trans★ theorist Susan Stryker writes of transgender subjects, the "trans" prefix, as body and discursive act, "call[s] attention to the operations of normativity . . . [and] the structuration of power."[42] There is no beginning or end to this task, no original or copy in this practice. There is relationality, and it has always to be reworked.

TO NOT PASS ON: IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

And so, what is implied in "passing" a text from one language to the next, to "pass" as a "race," to "pass" as a gender? I do not put these categories together to conflate them, but instead to highlight their shared structural logics. As both critical race studies and trans★ studies have argued, "passing" is predicated on a very material dichotomy of privilege that assumes unequal access to resources. "Normativiz[ing] . . . the acceptable and recognizable subject," as Jasbir Puar contends, the act of passing is an act of becoming legible, concealing

its deviance by approximating the hegemonic (and not necessarily Ameri- or Eurocentric) norm.[43] As such, passing is a process that privileges the concept of an original: an original text, an immutable or normative "race," a normative or "biological" gender.[44] Subordinating to the terms of the hierarchy, a passing slips silently and transparently under the radar in order for its agent not to risk destruction. But as the Latin prefix demonstrates, trans- is never a full-fledged return. Instead, it is a movement across, over, and beyond.[45] As a process of throughness, trans- transforms; it is a form of nonreturn to an origin that never was, so as to look back on it, changed. For translation and trans★ studies, as Puar contends, trans- is a striving for *new* bodily relationalities, *not* a striving for wholeness that "*reproduces* [Western] liberal norms of being."[46]

Rejecting the notion of the difference between a hegemonic original and a subordinating imitation—one that "passes" or "poses"—the Black queer/trans★ subjects of Ferguson's *Aberrations in Black*, or of Bastajian's *Pinched Cheeks*, unsettle the naturalized narrative of a "genealogy of the West," whose roots run geographies wide and centuries deep. Ferguson and Bastajian both call for disquieting the normative terms of recognition through a queered translation of the familiar. This unexpectedly gives rise to the hauntings that continue to reanimate subjects who silently "pass" within the in/visible binary as a matter of survival (much like the Armenians in Turkey have done to varying degrees since 1915). Thus, a renewed poetics of translation as autotheory is necessary as a method for a creative, genealogical disruption of the concept of the original and its normativizing tendencies, a disruption of the structure that necessitates passing by *not passing on*. Perhaps it is at this juncture that a queer praxis *adds to* a feminist one—not working within or against the structure but finding ways to refuse and work in apposition.[47] By *not passing on*, the translation betrays its expected place of arrival, refusing our own horizon of liberal expectation in order to seek new possibilities for justice.

"As creative fabricator in the present, I chose a translation praxis that attempts to reorient that destiny."

As creative fabricator in the present, I chose a translation praxis that attempts to reorient that destiny. In queer feminist scholar and activist Sara Ahmed's words, it is the practice of the "backward glance . . . an openness to the future, as the imperfect translation of what is

behind us . . . not [to] reproduce what we follow, but instead create new textures on the ground."[48] In refusing the individualizing, identitarian, and homonormative frames of neoliberalism that operate through the logics of transparency, visibility, multiculturalism, colorblindness, and a neutralization of difference, I read such a praxis—of translation as autotheory—as a site of struggle that seeks to both disorient and reorient emerging Armenian feminist historiographies.

I hope that through such autotheoretical approaches, readers are jolted. I hope they also contribute to renewed translations, viewings, and rewritings of situations like the one in Bastajian's short film. I envision this autotheoretical method as a hope for a community of readers who, reflecting on the past, enact a hopeful, more just vision for the future of Armenian feminisms. If, as queer of color theorist José Esteban Muñoz contends in *Cruising Utopia*, art and critical imagination help us to see the "not yet," then translation as a creative art—when it is embodied by the translator and not yet materialized on the page—also thinks "beyond the moment and against static historicisms."[49]

"Today always has a claim over yesterday and tomorrow always on today." I read Calantar's vision for what is still to come—one that is simultaneously influenced by the past and the future—as a prescient, possible iteration of this revolution. . . . If we are radical enough to arrive.

Notes

[1] Vartouhie Calantar, "A Response to *Hay Gin*'s Question," *Hay Gin [Armenian Woman]* 2, no. 21 (September 1921).

[2] Tina Bastajian, *Pinched Cheeks and Slurs in a Language That Avoids Her* (KINOStudio, 1995), film, 10 min.

[3] Bastajian, *Pinched Cheeks*, 3:58–5:06.

[4] This anecdote was shared with me by David Kazanjian, who attended an early screening of Bastajian's film, noting, apparently, that such reactions happen(ed) repeatedly. For further commentary on Bastajian's film regarding the nexus of gender, sexuality, race and genocide discourse in the Armenian diaspora, see David Kazanjian, "Re-flexion: Genocide in Ruins," in "What Remains?" ed. James Leo Cahill and Akira Mizuta Lippit, special issue, *Discourse* 33, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 367–89.

[5] I should note from the outset that I do not intend to indict Armenian nationalism over any other nation's exclusionary nationalist expression. Instead, I engage one example of

nationalism to challenge the rhetorical expressions of identity, nation, and power at large. As such, this critique does not minimize the tragic historical and political circumstances that have come to characterize the specifically Armenian brand of nationalism, particularly in regard to Turkish (and by consequence, Azerbaijani) people, especially in light of the most recent (2020) forty-four-day war between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

[6] Roderick A. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 3.

[7] Joseph Massad, *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 17.

[8] Admittedly, it was only in the editing phase of this paper that I read Marc Nichanian, *Mourning Philology*, in which he makes a similar observation about the writing of early twentieth-century writers in Istanbul, pre-1915 Catastrophe. Consequently, he provides an intellectual history regarding the emergence of (Armenian) nationalism in tandem with the discourse of Armenians' "racialist ideology"—an effect of what he calls "philological orientalism." Such racialist thinking is what Nichanian identifies as part and parcel of a "national-aestheticism" being sculpted by the writers he studies, and as he laments later, it is either "despite or perhaps because of its naïveté, [that such thinking has] enjoyed great success with the Armenians." Marc Nichanian, *Mourning Philology: Art and Religion at the Margins of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 24.

[9] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 5.

[10] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Translating into English," in *Nation, Language and the Ethics of Translation*, ed. Sandra Bermann and Michael Wood (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 94.

[11] The anthology, *Feminism in Armenian: An Interpretive Anthology* (former working title) forthcoming from Stanford University Press, is an expansion of a compilation by Melissa Bilal and Lerna Ekmekçioğlu entitled *Bir Adalet Feryadı: Osmanlı' dan Türkiye'ye Beş Ermeni Feminist Yazar 1862-1933* [*A Cry for Justice: Five Armenian Feminist Writers from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic (1862–1933)*]. The team for the expanded English-language project included the editors and scholars Bilal and Ekmekçioğlu, prose translators Jennifer Manoukian and this author, Shushan Avagyan as the poetry translator, and Maral Aktokmakyan as the translation editor. This collaboration has since dissolved, and the prose translations for the book have changed hands. I wish the editors a successful publication.

[12] Anayis (Yevpime Avedisian), "The Conditions of Women in Primitive Societies," *Hay Gin* [*Armenian Woman*] 2, nos. 8–11, 13 (1921). For an extensive (though selective) discussion of Armenian feminism in postgenocide Turkey and its service (or deference) to the Armenian national revival project, see Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016). For a discussion and critique of the internal contradictions of "national reconstruction" and its gendered dimensions in postgenocide Turkey, see Vahé Tachjian "Gender, nationalism,

exclusion: the reintegration process of female survivors of the Armenian genocide," in *Nations and Nationalism* 15, no. 1 (January 2009): 60–80.

While Turkish nationalist rhetoric sought secularization through a distancing from Islam, Anayis's texts mobilize nearly two thousand years of Armenians' religious affinities with Europe in order to, as an internalized Orientalist gesture from the "East," align Armenians closer to it. Race is thus mobilized through religion to secure Armenians' civilizational superiority and kinship with Europe compared to their secularizing Muslim "co-nationals." Even as European political discourse continued to promote the ideal democratic state as a secular one, in orienting Armenians toward "secular" Europe vis-à-vis Christianity, Anayis intuits what Marx frustratedly reminds readers in his 1843 critique of the German philosopher Bruno Bauer: "the so-called Christian state is the Christian negation of the [free] state." Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (New York: Penguin, 1992), 223.

[13] I am most drawn to art historian Alpesh Patel's concise explanation of the use the term "queer feminist" in *Productive Failure* to underscore the important interventions of each model, drawing attention to feminism's intersectional approach that "demands attention to visual identification as always already raced, sexed, classed and gendered" and queer's operative function to, in the words of Amelia Jones, "indicate the impossibility of a subject or a meaning staying still." Alpesh Kantilal Patel, *Productive Failure: Writing Queer Transnational South Asian Art Histories* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 190; Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently: A History of Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts* (London: Routledge, 2012), 174–75.

[14] See Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1968), 11–25.

[15] Vartouhie Calantar, "The Women's Block of the Central Prison: The Room of the Lepers," *Hay Gin* [*Armenian Woman*] 1, no. 12 (April 1920).

[16] Vartouhie Calantar, "Fatma the Arab," November 1, 1920.

[17] Hayganush Mark, "What Is the Women's Cause," *Hay Gin* [*Armenian Woman*] 3, no. 3 (December 1921). This honeymoon phase, however, was short-lived. In a critique of selective historical narrations of Armenian feminisms, Vahé Tachjian references an overlooked problem in Mark's sentiments on race and propriety in an article she wrote on "fallen women" (*angyal giner*). Purportedly referencing rape, sex work, exogamy and/or Islamization during and postgenocide, Mark argues that Armenian women's blood had been poisoned: "the war . . . poisoned our race's present and many successive generations. The Armenian women who returned from the deportations are morally and physically dead. In their veins most of them carry bad and disease-inflamed Turanian blood. They cannot scientifically provide a healthy generation for the nation" (see "The question of fallen women [Անկեալ կիներու հարցը]," in *Hay Gin,* no. 9 (1 March 1920), Istanbul). Vahé

Tachjian, "Mixed Marriage, Prostitution, Survival: Reintegrating Armenian Women into Post-Ottoman Cities" in *Woman and the City, Women in the City: A Gendered Perspective on Ottoman Urban History*, ed. Nazan Maksudyan (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014), 86–104, footnote 20.

[18] Anayis, "Conditions of Women."

[19] Rev. Matthias M. M. Bedrossian, *New Dictionary Armenian-English* (Venice: S. Lazarus Armenian Academy, 1875–1879), 306.

[20] Soukias Somalian, *A Pocket Dictionary of the English, Armenian and Turkish Languages*, vol. 2 (Venice: Press of the Armenian College of San Lazarus, 1843); Zakaria D. S. Papazian, *A Practical Dictionary: Armenian-English* (Constantinople: Press of H. Matteosian, 1905), 477.

[21] Indeed, as Immanuel Wallerstein writes, "maybe . . . peoplehood is not merely a construct but one which, in each particular instance, has constantly changing boundaries. Maybe a people is something that is supposed to be inconstant in form." He then goes on to ask, gesturing toward the legal and political realities such definitions are responsible for constructing and so, silenced: "But if so, why the passion? Maybe because no one is supposed to comment on the inconstancy. If I am right, then we have a very curious phenomenon indeed—one whose central features are the reality of inconstancy and the denial of this reality." Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism, Ethnicity," in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, by Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (1988; London: Verso, 1991), 77.

[22] Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "Introduction: Race and/as Technology; or, How to Do Things to Race," in "Race and/as Technology," ed. Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, special issue, *Camera Obscura* 24, no. 1 (2009): 8. For further discussion on my understanding of "race" as a material-discursive practice of difference-making that entangles institutions, laws, and science by way of technology for the purposes of producing, reinstituting, and patrolling the borders and mobilities of bodies and geographies, see my cowritten paper with Katia Schwerzmann, "'One Unique You': Affective Attachments and DNA-Testing as Ethnotechnological Apparatus," *Social Text*, forthcoming.

[23] See Ania Loomba and Jonathan Burton, eds., *Race in Early Modern England: A Documentary Companion* (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2007), 2.

[24] Geraldine Heng, "The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages I: Race Studies, Modernity, and the Middle Ages," in *Literature Compass* 8, no. 5 (May 2011): 322.

[25] See Veronika Zablotsky, "The Making of Anglo-Armenian Law in Colonial India," in *Governing Armenia: The Politics of Development and the Making of Global Diaspora* (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Cruz, 2019) for an extensive discussion about the Armenian colonial encounter and the fashioning of the secular and landless Armenian "nation" vis-à-vis Armenian's adoption of an internalized colonial gaze.

[26] Anayis, "Conditions of Women."

[27] Emily Wilson, "Epilogue: Translating Homer as a Woman," in *Homer's Daughters*: *Women's Responses to Homer in the Twentieth Century and Beyond*, ed. Fiona Cox and Elena Theodorakopoulos (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 284, 286.

[28] Nichanian, *Mourning Philology*, 265.

[29] Gayatri Gopinath, *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 170.

[30] Ibid.

[31] In his essay "For Opacity," Édouard Glissant calls for the consideration of the absolute irreducibility of each and every human for their right to opacity. Beyond the right to difference, the right to opacity is the right not to be categorized and identified; it is the prospect of arriving at "subsistence within an irreducible singularity." Glissant contrasts opacity with transparency, a tenant of multiculturalism in the secular, (neo)liberal state, which requires from the subject to become transparent in order to be understood and thus subsumed under a universalist totality, read usually as white, (male,) and Western. Édouard Glissant, "For Opacity," in *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (1990; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 190.

[32] Anayis, "Conditions of Women."

[33] Papazian, *Practical Dictionary*, 185.

[34] See, for example, Shakespeare's descriptions of Othello and Caliban in *Othello* and *The Tempest*, in addition to a wide range of scholarship on this topic.

[35] Hrachya Ajarian, *Armenian Etymological Dictionary*, vol. 2, *E-G* (Yerevan, Armenia: Yerevan State University Press, 1973). Reference to use of *Habashi* found in Müller SWAW 42, 253 as meaning καμψικίζω according to Lag. Arm. Stud. sec. 983: Lag. Gr. Agath. 152.

[36] Shushan Avagyan, "Queering Translation," in *Queered: What's to Be Done with X-centric Art*, by Queering Yerevan Collective (Yerevan, Armenia: Samizdat, 2011), 69; emphasis added. Avagyan calls this a process of defamiliarization. In taking this defamiliarization one step further (and thinking through Lawrence Venuti's famous "foreignizing effect"), I have elsewhere called the foreignizing effect that the translation has on the original a double de-domestication: a translation praxis that estranges the text *in English translation* beyond the comfortable ambiguity of the original (Armenian), so that the translation becomes a renewed reading of the source-text over, against, and beyond it. That is, the translation itself also seems excessively strange, bringing further attention to the source-text's obvious ambiguity. See Deanna Cachoian-Schanz, "Deviations: A Translator's Note on Shushan Avagyan's *Book-untitled*," in "Queering Armenian Studies," ed. Tamar Shirinian and Carina Karapetian Giorgi, special issue, *Armenian Review* 56, nos. 1–2 (Spring/Summer 2018): 114–22. See also Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

[37] For a discussion on Ottoman-Armenians' relation to rising European colonial hegemony and subsequent shifting ideological positions regarding centuries-long relations

with Ethiopians, see James de Lorenzi, "Caught in the Storm of Progress: Timoteos Saprichian, Ethiopia, and the Modernity of Christianity," *Journal of World History* 19, no. 1 (March 2008): 89–114.

[38] Susan Sontag, "Being Translated," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 32 (Autumn 1997): 15.

[39] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (1975; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 83–84.

[40] Calantar, "Response."

[41] See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "Introduction: Rhizome," in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (1980; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3–28.

[42] Susan Stryker, "Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity," in "Queer Futures," ed. Kevin P. Murphy, Jason Ruiz, and David Serlin, special issue, *Radical History Review*, no. 100 (Winter 2008): 149.

[43] Jasbir K. Puar, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 42.

[44] For the function of racial "passing" in a legal sense, see Cheryl I. Harris's formative essay, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (June 1993): 1709–91.

[45] *Merriam-Webster Online*, s.v. "trans," https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trans.

[46] Puar, *Right to Maim*, 49; emphasis added.

[47] The Queering Yerevan Collective refers to such translations as translation drag, complicating and disrupting the given (hetero)normative frames of the nation and aesthetic practice. See Queering Yerevan Collective, *Queered*.

[48] Sara Ahmed, "Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology," *GLQ* 12, no. 4 (2006): 570.

[49] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 17.