

Between agency and erasure: Translating Narratives of Sexual Violence in Latin America by Nuala Finnegan

Mediático is delighted to be able to present an entry focused on the important work on cultural narratives of sexual violence in Latin America by Nuala Finnegan, [Professor of Spanish and Latin American Studies](#) at University College Cork, Ireland and Director of the [Irish Centre for Mexican Studies](#). In particular, we are publishing the video recording of her recent plenary lecture at the conference of the Association of Hispanists of Great Britain and Ireland (thanks to the AHGBI), together with a short introduction to this lecture and a listing (with links, where possible) of the many references that she makes throughout it.

Prof. Finnegan has published in the areas of contemporary Mexican literary and visual cultural studies with a particular focus on gender. Interested in multi-disciplinary approaches and community engagement, she has worked collaboratively on many exhibitions, for example, [Entre Mundos/Between Worlds: Images from Life between Mexico and Ireland](#) in 2019, and [OUTPOSTS: global borders and national boundaries](#) in 2018-2019. Her major publications include [Cultural Representations of Feminicidio on the U.S.-Mexico Border](#) (Routledge 2018) and the essay collections, [Rethinking Juan Rulfo's Creative World: Prose, Photography, Film](#) (Legenda 2016), with Dylan Brennan, and [Ireland and Cuba: Entangled Histories/Irlanda y Cuba: Historia entretejidas](#) (Boloña, 2020) with Margaret Brehony.

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By Nuala Finnegan

The above embedded, deeply personal lecture focuses on my experience of translation of two performance-related pieces from Latin America on sexual violence, one about Ciudad Juárez, and the other from the extreme other end of the continent.

In the first set of reflections, I focus on the process of translating violence done to the bodies of women who I have previously described as figured, disfigured, fractured, fragmented, remoulded, reimagined, reinvented, revictimized and revitalized sometimes all at the same time (Finnegan 2018). The second half considers the problems of cultural translation of the term *feminicidio* in a collective performance and multilingual translation of *El violador en tu camino*, by the Chilean theatre group Las Tesis in February 2020 at University College Cork in Ireland. In the first section, I return to reflect on work already written and to re-imagine it in dialogue with the second set of reflections.

In this way, I go back but also forward, moving from the personal experience of translating *Women of Sand* by Humberto Robles to the collaborative translation of *El violador en tu camino* shifting through different affective registers. Drawing on insights from affect theory and translation studies, but also excavating my own positionality in both translation experiences, I contend that the cognitive, political and affective encounter with words that name deeply personal and traumatic experiences can activate a deep recognition of systemic and structural violence.

Taking this into consideration, I argue for an increased attentiveness to the potential of feminist translation and its generative energy as an ethical mode of entry into unlocking the traumas of other and charting a pathway of resistance against those structural violences that cross all our lives.

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Also see

Laura Hatry, “[EMA: A Premonitory Performance of Fire and Dance](#),” *Mediático*, October 26, 2020 – which also discusses *Un violador en tu camino*.

” Ema: A Premonitory Performance of Fire and Dance

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