

## **Announcing the Final Examination of Emek Ergun (LLC Cohort 9)**

*Date and Location:* April 17, 2015 at 11:00 a.m.  
LLC Conference Room, 422 Sherman Hall

*Title:* Doing Feminist Translation as Local and Transnational Activism: The Turkish Translation and Reception of Virgin: The Untouched History

Feminist theories travel across the globe, activating political trans/formations on their multidirectional routes across geopolitical and historical borders. Yet, the geohistorical and textual specificities of such global mobilities have not received much scholarly attention. By offering a renovated form of Edward Said's traveling theory, so that it attends to the feminist translation and reception factors, this dissertation offers a theoretical and analytical model on global translational flows of feminist discourses in the hope of reducing the gap in the literature and encouraging more research on the subject.

The dissertation investigates the praxis of "feminist translation" conceived as a form of local and transnational activism drawing its ethical stance particularly from the feminist notions of self-reflexivity and interconnectedness. Built on an analysis of my Turkish translation of Hanne Blank's *Virgin: The Untouched History*, a popular feminist historical account of western virginites, the dissertation examines two key aspects of cross-border traveling of feminist discourses: 1) the interpretive processes of feminist translation and the role of the translator's agency in these processes (as well as other major agents involved in the production of the Turkish book), 2) the receptions of the translated text in Turkey by feminist readers, studied both through a media discourse analysis and a complex reception study composed of reading diaries, focus groups, and in-depth interviews.

Comparing the U.S. and Turkey, two unevenly positioned cultures with different configurations of virginity, the dissertation discusses how a western book on women's sexuality was crossculturally mobilized to unsettle Turkey's virginity codes and what kinds of effects it generated within the country's feminist community. In doing so, the study illustrates that feminist translation has trans/formative power to intervene into the gender/sexuality (in this case, particularly virginity) discourses of the reception culture and reinforce the existing feminist endeavors against gender oppression. It also reveals that feminist translation facilitates the production and dissemination of feminist knowledges across borders and the creation of imagined transnational feminist communities by connecting writers, translators, and readers through such translational/transnational epistemological projects.

*Dissertation Committee:* Carole McCann, Chair  
Jessica Berman  
Patrice McDermott  
Christine Mallinson  
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*The public is welcome to observe.*