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Gender, genetics, translation: Encounters in the Feminist Translator's Archive of Barbara Godard

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The article demonstrates the usefulness of textual genetics in corroborating the dynamic, process-oriented concepts of translation developed by feminist translation theorists. Focusing on the Canadian scholar and translator Barbara Godard, the paper examines her translation manuscripts of Nicole Brossard's L'Amèr: ou le chapitre effrité (1977) and Amantes (1980), published in English as These Our Mothers (1983) and Lovhers (1986). The author argues that genetic analysis has the potential to challenge conventional understandings of translation as a linear transfer of meaning in the exchange of equivalences and that genetics can supply evidence that translation is a multidirectional, recursive and dialogical process of thought and transformation, a creative combination rather than a transparent substitution of meaning. The graphic markings, layerings, and inscriptions on the archival drafts reveal complex intersubjective and interdiscursive foldings at the heart of translation and expose translation as a series of temporal re-readings. They bring into view different encounters and relationalities and reaffirm the view of translation as a cultivation of friendship and collaboration.

1. Introduction

Genetic criticism, which has been around since the early 1970s, has had a relatively slow impact in North America compared with other French intellectual imports such as poststructuralist critical theory and deconstruction.¹ More recently, textual genetics as a study of the creative process, focused on the examination of authorial drafts, notes, manuscripts, proofs, and other documents that have preceded the published text, has been associated with the revival of philological scholarship or its reinvention as “radical philology” as an antidote to the predominance of cultural studies approaches in Anglo-American literary studies (Kinderman, 2009, p. 8). Genetics occupies an interesting, if not slightly paradoxical, position: it marries a solid positivist science grounded in archival research with poststructuralist philosophical theories of the text as an endless proliferation of possibilities; it works from a double perspective of the text's production and its reception; it restores temporality to the text

while simultaneously refusing to privilege either strictly originary or teleological thinking about the text's constitution; and, finally, it demands that we immerse ourselves in and rigorously study verbal environments and contexts rather than merely reconstruct "the sequential history" of the text's creation (Bellemin-Noël, 2004, p. 31). As the interest in genetic criticism in Canadian and American universities seems to be steadily growing, encompassing interdisciplinary exploration of the genesis of works of art in literature, theatre, and music,² the theoretical and practical possibilities of textual genetics in translation studies still remain largely unexplored.

This article aims to demonstrate the usefulness of genetic methods in corroborating the dynamic, dialogical and process-oriented concepts of translation, put forth by feminist translation theorists. Drawing on the work of the Canadian scholar and translator Barbara Godard, I examine different drafts of her translation of Nicole Brossard's *L'Amèr: ou le chapitre effrité* (1977) and *Amantes* (1980), the former published in English as *These Our Mothers* (1983), the latter as *Lovhers* (1986). Godard's papers are preserved in the Barbara Godard Fonds in the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections at York University in Toronto, where Godard had worked as a professor until her death in 2010. Looking at the extant versions of her manuscripts, rough drafts, notes, and correspondence, I focus of necessity on a few selected passages of Godard's translation of Brossard's texts. In doing this, I freely adapt Pierre-Marc de Biasi's (2004) strategy of "internal" (p. 61) genetics that traces the modifications as they occur in a particular paragraph or passage. Figures 1 and 2 reproduce side by side the parallel fragments from Brossard's *L'Amèr* and *Amantes* and Godard's *These Our Mothers* and *Lovhers* in their respective French and English versions. I will return to the passages in Figures 1 and 2 in the course of my analysis and will juxtapose them with their earlier rough-draft versions in order to gain some insight into the genetic development of Godard's translation. I argue that the genetic approach challenges clichéd and conventional understandings of translation as a linear transfer of meaning in the exchange of equivalences and that genetics can supply evidence that translation is a multidirectional, recursive and dialogical process of thought and transformation, a creative combination rather than a transparent substitution of meaning. Working in the translator's archive brings to light the invisible confluence of creativity, collaboration, and research that inform Godard's project of literary translation.

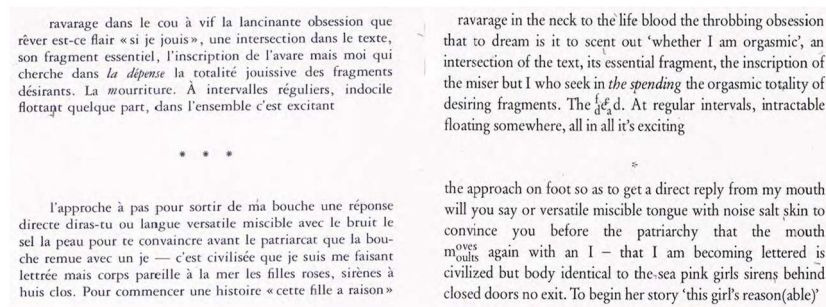


Figure 1. Two sections from *L'Amèr* (p. 83) and *These Our Mothers* (p. 85)

From the early 1980s, Godard was instrumental in making available to Anglo-Canadian readers radical feminist thought from Quebec. She practised and encouraged the translation and dissemination of francophone women's writing, through conferences and publishing venues such as the Coach House Quebec Translation Series and the bilingual feminist journal *Tessera*, which she co-founded in 1982. In particular, she tirelessly promoted the work of Nicole Brossard, with whom she developed a long-time friendship and collaboration. Godard began translating *L'Amèr* as early as 1979, and continued working on this project for three and a half years. Her work on *Amantes* took longer and was completed between 1981 and 1986. Over the years, she also published translations of Brossard's *Picture Theory* (1991; revised and reprinted 2006) and *Journal intime* (1984; translated as *Intimate Journal*, 2004).³ In addition to translation, Godard has authored several critical essays on Brossard as well as biographical entries in British and American encyclopaedias and literary dictionaries.

Together with *Le sens apparent* (translated as "Surfaces of Meaning"), *L'Amèr* and *Amantes* form the so-called lesbian triptych, in which Brossard rewrites female agency by inscribing political lesbian identity as a challenge to patriarchal institutions. In *L'Amèr* she coins the term *fiction théorique*, fiction theory, which has been embraced by other feminists in Canada as a creative-critical practice of revealing male-dominated representations of women and opening up the space for women's self-expression. As Godard (1994) explains, fiction theory is "a narrative, usually self-mirroring, which exposes, defamiliarizes and/or subverts the fiction and gender codes determining the re-presentation of women in literature and in this way contributes to feminist theory" (p. 59). Inspired by the deconstruction of patriarchal language in both Anglo-American radical feminism (e.g., by Mary Daly and Dale Spender) and French poststructuralist feminism (e.g., by Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray), Canadian second-wave feminist debates on women's exclusion from the patriarchal symbolic order and language have given rise to

metaphors of women as living in translation, forced to use man-made idioms and inhabit discourses that are not their own.

<p>Le Barbizon</p> <p>les écritures ont un sens qui commencent par l'aveu d'amour (<i>même</i>) fiché au coeur du siècle et des mythologies souterraines proliférantes et vociférantes des voix prises au cliché, des villes, (au jeu)</p> <p>the barbizon hotel for women</p> <p>une intuition de la connaissance réciproque femmes des courbes du feu de l'édredon à la peau neuve-----surface essentielle <i>tu flotes dans ma page</i> dit-elle et la femme aux quatre dimensions s'inscrit dans l'espace entre la lune et (ceinture de feu) de la découverte et des combats que l'écho tu persévères, ferveur flamboie</p> <p>la bouche diffuse, nocturne et intime pleine d'intervalles pour traverser les jardins du réel les tableaux anticipés du corps attentive toutes les régions du cerveau le temps se mesure ici aux eaux dans le vaisseau, à l'harmonie la précision des graffiti dans nos yeux fugitives (ici) les écritures in THE BARBIZON HOTEL FOR WOMEN les figures naissantes dans la roue la cyclique tendresse convergente</p>	<p>The Barbizon</p> <p>writings make sense that begin with the declaration of love (<i>itself</i>) fixed in the heart of the century and of subterranean proliferating and vociferating mythologies of voices caught in the cliché, cities, (<i>in play</i>)</p> <p>The Barbizon Hotel for Women</p> <p>an intuition of reciprocal knowledge women with curves of fire and eiderdown fresh-skinned—essential surface <i>you float within my page</i> she said and the four-dimensional woman is inscribed in the space between the moon and (fire belt) of the discovery and combats that the echo you persevere, fervour flaming</p> <p>mouth diffuse, nocturnal and intimate round with intervals to pass through the gardens of the real anticipated paintings of the attentive body all the regions of the brain time is measured here in waters into vessels, in harmony the precision of graffiti in our eyes fugitives (here) the writings in THE BARBIZON HOTEL FOR WOMEN nascent figures within the wheel cyclical tenderness converging</p>
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Figure 2. The opening passages of the section called “Le barbizon” and “The Barbizon Hotel for Women” from the published versions of *Amantes* (pp.62–66) and *Lovhers* (pp. 60–62)

2. Theorizing feminist translation in Canada

The emergence of feminist translation studies in Canada in the mid-1980s was an unprecedented phenomenon. The reasons why a powerful theoretical and practical interest in translation developed in this national context are related to the remarkable conjunction of favourable circumstances, such as Canada's official bilingualism and the government's support of translation programmes as part of its multicultural policies; the flourishing of experimental feminist writing in Quebec; the presence of academic cultural mediators; and the vibrant scene of feminist

cultural production, including feminist conferences and journals that sustained the anglophone-francophone exchanges. Godard pioneered early definitions and concepts of feminist translation in her talks at the Women and Words/Les femmes et les mots conference in Vancouver in 1983 and in the 1984 and 1986 conferences on translation in Montreal. She was not the only feminist translator working in Canada in the 1980s and 1990s. Other practitioners active in the field who either translated feminist texts or self-consciously identified as feminist translators included Linda Gaboriau, Marlene Wildeman, Patricia Claxton, Susanne Lotbinière-Harwood, Louise von Flotow, and Howard Scott, the only man who described himself as a feminist translator (Flotow, 1991, p. 71). Like Godard, Lotbinière-Harwood and von Flotow are also feminist translation theorists whose contributions, next to those of academics Kathy Mezei, Sherry Simon, and Annie Brisset, have helped to shape the discipline of Canadian translation studies. Godard has subsequently elaborated a feminist theory of translation in such essays as “The Translator as She” (1985), “Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation” (which first appeared in the 1989 issue of *Tessera*, “La Traduction au féminin/Translating Women”), and “Translating (with) the Speculum” (1991). In her approach to translation, she always takes a gendered, politicized angle and considers translation in its multiple modalities as theory, institution, process, and craft.

In general, feminist theories of translation articulate the critiques of masculinist models and emphasize female agency. The special alliance between feminism and translation is apparent in their critical interrogation and rejection of universal standards of meaning and value; their common challenge of traditional gender roles and hierarchies; and their shared focus on language as an instrument of social construction, historically marked by sexism and exclusion. Feminist discourse is viewed as always already double and translative, both in its recuperative thrust to inscribe women’s experiences that have been erased or mis-represented within the dominant discourse and in its deconstructive thrust to expose patriarchal stereotypes and images of women’s lives. Likewise, feminist translators “foreground female subjectivity in the production of meaning” (Simon, 1996, p. 13) by challenging several traditional tenets of mainstream theories of translation. Thus the concept of fidelity to the original that supports the hierarchical relationship between source and target texts is replaced by a greater freedom of invention, inviting an active intervention into the text in the process of translation as “transformance” or dialogical re-writing (Godard, 1990, p. 90). In “The Translator as She” (1985), Godard launches her classic definition of translation as “creative transposition” or re-writing in the feminine and already insists on translation as a necessary betrayal or as fidelity to both languages. Consequently, the source-target duality is abandoned, opening up the intersubjective, interstitial and productive “in-between” space of translation. Flaunting her presence, “the translator as

she” is an active reader becoming a writer, a co-producer of meaning rather than a passive amanuensis.

In “Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation” (1990), Godard gives the fullest articulation of her critique of a mimetic theory of translation based on transparency and equivalence, premised on the erasure of the translator’s mediating presence and the assumption of a direct transfer of meaning from one language to another. “A poetics of transparency” suppresses “the translator-function” and renders invisible the translator’s “manipulative work,” or what she calls “womanhandling” the text (Godard, 1990, p. 94). By leaving the visible traces of the translator’s signature in the text, this “anti-traditional, aggressive and creative approach to translation” (Flotow, 1991, p. 70) reinstates difference as a positive value and redefines the translator’s agency. Passivity and self-effacement give way to the translator’s new authority as a co-creator of the text, its literary critic, cultural commentator, scholar, and artist. Similarly, a conscious, politically and ethically motivated intervention into the text replaces the traditionally assumed, ideological neutrality of translation.

The feminist translator’s political and ethical stance is manifest in such transgressive and controversial practices as “highjacking” the text (Flotow, 1991, p. 74), which may take the form of removing the misogynist content hostile to the translator’s agenda. Feminist appropriations of the text are consistent with the role of translation as ideological interruption, where translation theory complements fiction theory. In her discussion of the different strategies adopted by feminist translators, Luise von Flotow (1991, pp. 74–75) mentions the importance of prefacing and footnoting in addition to “highjacking” and supplementing, that is, compensating for the differences between languages. The translator’s preface accompanies every one of Godard’s translations of Brossard, offering theoretical reflection on feminist translation poetics to a wider audience. These prefaces perform several functions, such as situating the work within the author’s oeuvre; providing a philosophical context for the work; helping the reader to understand the translated text by offering an interpretation or a critical analysis that accompanies the translation; flaunting the visibility of the translator; and explicating specific lexical, semantic, or grammatical choices, especially given the fact that translation from French into English involves moving “into a framework that tends to impose a different set of discursive relations and a different construction of reality” (Godard, 1986, p. 7).

The challenges of translating from French into English are compounded in Brossard’s language-centred, experimental texts that call for innovative and creative solutions on the part of the translator, confronting her with “the limits of translatability” (Godard, 1986, p. 11). What contributes to the effect of mobility, multiplicity, and indeterminacy is Brossard’s frequent use of ellipsis, parataxis, wordplay, neologisms, and rich intertextuality, in addition to her rejection of linear narrative, anecdote, and “representational detail” (Godard, 1986, p. 9). Moreover, Godard’s

prefaces are usually self-reflexive, performative pieces, which situate the translator in relation to the text, or even theorize the role of the translator's preface as a genre, as she does in introducing *Lovhers*. I have written elsewhere that she endorses a theory of translation as an act of reading and interpretation that entails multiple pleasures stemming from a fascination with language, its infinite generative power, its rhythms and wordplay (Karpinski, 2011, p. 127). Indeed, echoing the way she ends her brief preface to *These Ours Mothers* with an exhortation to the reader "to make this the text of bliss it works to be" (Godard, 1983, p. 1), she concludes the preface to *Lovhers* (1986, p. 12) with "Reader, the pleasure of the text is now yours".

It might be useful at this point to engage polemically with Rosemary Arrojo's critique of "orgasmic" theories of translation proposed by feminist translation theorists such as Susan Bassnett, Lori Chamberlain, Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, and Godard herself, whom Arrojo accuses of perpetuating a similar form of sexualized violence that they expose in masculinist models of translation exemplified by George Steiner. How is Godard's experience of *jouissance* or "womanhandling" the text more innocent than Steiner's idea of "penetration" or "appropriative rupture" (Arrojo, 1995, p. 69)? In collapsing feminist and non-feminist manipulations of the translated text into generic violence, Arrojo adopts a gender-neutral stance and ignores the fact that power dynamics in translation mimic the social dynamics of gender inequality. Thus the feminist translator may justify her intrusive strategy of suppressing the overly sexist content as a politically motivated act of resistance. At the same time, she may conceptualize the "orgasmic" pleasure of feminist translation as collaborative and mutual, experienced not from the position of domination but rather as a respectful and/or playful approach towards an other.

In Godard's translation of *L'Amèr* and in the archived documents, we find many examples of her loving interference in Brossard's text. There are translator's notes and footnotes identifying sources for quotations that remain anonymous in the source text or explicating the meaning of such words as *strix* or *promeneuse* used by Brossard. Figure 1 shows two instances of the translator's striking graphic intervention, intended to compensate visually for the polysemic character of the source text. Brossard's coinage *la mourriture* requires two words in English: "the feed/the dead", similar to *la bouche remue*, which becomes "the mouth moves/moult". In both cases Godard opts for an experimental, graphically "blended" representation of the doubled meanings, breaking away from linear print. On the other hand, the archival dossier contains one of the earlier drafts of the second passage on page 85 (Figure 1), which reveals her constant self-questioning and restraint. Before translating the sequence *la mer les filles roses sirens* into "the sea pink girls sirens", she toyed with inserting the graphic symbol that would allow her to sound out all the meanings one hears in *la mer* (*l'amèr*, *la mère*, and *la mer*), but decided to

remove it in the published version. Eventually, this symbol has found its way into the title page of the book (Figure 3). There is evidence in the archive that, contrary to Arrojo's stipulation, Brossard loved Godard's creative interventions. In her letter to Godard, written on January 27, 1983, Brossard declares: "J'aime le titre et je crois qu'un(e) bonne maquettiste devrait donner au S tout son déploiement" [I love the title and hope that a good page designer will give the S its full deployment]. One can judge the results of her expectations by looking at Figure 3.

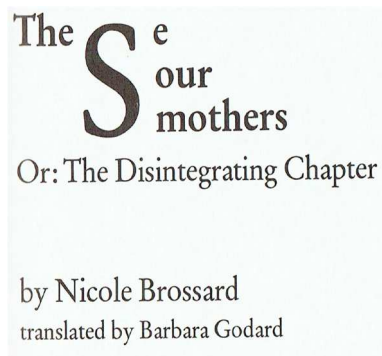


Figure 3. The title page of Godard's published translation of *L'Amèr*, Coach House Quebec Translations

3. The confluence of textual genetics and feminist translation

The programme of genetics to capture the movement of "textualization" or to show the text's multiple "becomings" resonates positively with language-conscious theories of textuality and representation that fuel feminist translation studies. Genetic criticism, which places the creative process at the centre of its inquiry, is compatible with feminist views of translation as creative generation. Feminist scholars reject the notion of a unitary language and of the text as a monolithic, self-contained whole, instead setting in motion an intertextual play of signification and, in a way, accepting "the idea of genesis as an open-ended aesthetic, or logic, of possibility" (Deppman, Ferrer, & Groden, 2004, p. 5). Unlike the poststructuralists, for whom intertextuality and the free-play of signifiers are synchronously present in every text, geneticists "privilege historical development and context" (Deppman, Ferrer, & Groden, 2004, p. 5) and, like the feminist translation theorists, acknowledge the importance of social, economic and cultural forces such as gender that influence the text's development. A genetic analysis of an *avant-texte* recoverable from the translator's archive requires that we change our understanding of the process of translation, which in terms of traditional translation studies

involves a transfer of meaning from the source text to the target text (S > T). Genetics amplifies the notation of translation by showing its multiple temporal unfoldings (S > T₁, T₂, T₃...). Figures 1 and 2 illustrate what a Translation Studies scholar can see when she puts the source and the target texts side by side and presents them as the “original” and the “translation”. What happens in between these two axes (of source-target) is mostly invisible. Flanked by the corresponding French and English passages from the published texts is the invisible scene of translation from which traces of performance, temporality, and process have been erased.

Applied to the translator’s archive, textual genetics can restore the dynamic visibility of performance and process that characterize translation as feminist transformance, and consequently deconstruct both source and target as self-contained and bounded entities. A critical construction of the *avant-texte* of a translated work can offer proof that translation is as much a product as it is a process of thought: not a unidirectional transfer of meaning but a series of transformations, not a direct substitution but a combination of meaning. As a “reciprocal implication of inside and outside”, translation involves “action on multiple levels” (Godard, 2000, p. 59). Both as theorist and as translator, following Deleuze, Godard (2000) embraces “the logic of AND, AND, AND” (p. 60), which displaces the linear movement of translation “proper” as conversion from a source into a target language/culture, with the transversal work of “reversion” yielding the possibility of multiple versions (Godard, 1997, p. 57). Supplying evidence of multiple drafts and multiple corrections on these drafts, textual genetics challenges the linearity of the translation process and the entire concept of translation as carrying over. Rather, it is an art of approach and many returns, circling, doubling or multiplying: “a reworking of meaning” (Godard, 1995, p. 73). The process is recursive, repetitive, dialogic, and full of “contra-diction[s]” (Godard, 1995, p. 72). One sense of contradiction relates to taking away the translator’s authority to fix meaning, temporarily to assign signifieds to signifiers, while simultaneously enhancing the translator’s visibility. The documents also show that as much as translation is revealed to be a form of creative genesis, the translator’s freedom is not absolute and her choices are bounded by the limits set by the earlier texts and by the receptor language and culture.

4. Translation as a temporal and relational process

Focusing on the development of one fragment, namely the Barbizon section of *Amantes*, which according to Godard (1986) contains “the emotional core of the sequence” (p. 10), and looking at Figures 4, 5 and 6, we can glimpse what kinds of actions and operations are involved in Godard’s translation praxis. She starts by drafting a handwritten rough version before typing it into readable print, using a mechanical typewriter. Both the handwritten and the typed-up drafts are re-read, re-marked, and

re-written several times, according to the textual traces visible on the reproductions.

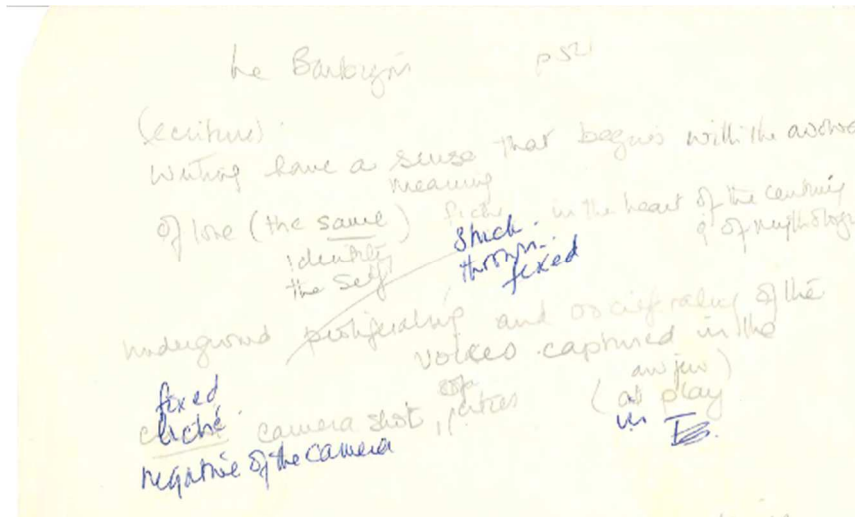


Figure 4. A handwritten draft of Godard's translation of "Le Barbizon" (Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, permission of Alexis Godard)

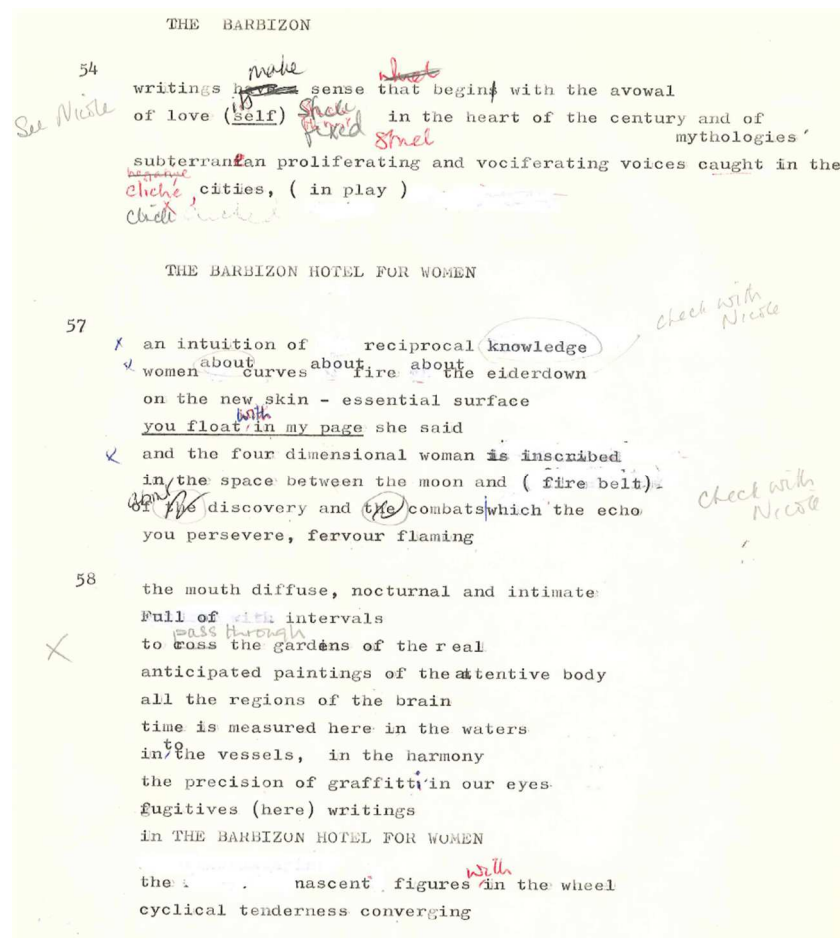


Figure 5. The typed-up version of “Le Barbizon” with the translator’s handwritten corrections (Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, permission of Alexis Godard)

In addition to revealing a sequence of shifting, hesitant movements of translation, Figures 5 and 6 include palimpsestic traces of the presence of intersubjective relationalities involved in the process. Such reminders as “Check with Nicole” and “See Nicole” scribbled in the margin (Figure 5) or comments in handwriting that is not her own show that Godard lets in other voices. These graphic markings, layerings and inscriptions are symptomatic of the shift from representational to combinatory economies of translation and represent visually the complex intersubjective foldings constituted through the process of translation. Taken together, these drafts expose translation as a series of temporal re-readings, with material evidence of corrections made by hand, in pencil and different ink colour.

Every time Godard reads, there is a record of some change: using white-out, typing over, pasting on or sometimes returning to previous versions. In this sense, textual genetics reinstates temporality to the process of translation by visualising the subjective time the translator needs to regulate distance and proximity in order to achieve “the detachment which comes from letting the text sit for a while” (Godard, 1995, p. 80). Here is how Godard (1995) concludes the journal that she kept during her work on translating *Picture Theory* (her comments are also pertinent to *These Our Mothers* and *Lovhers*):

No final version of the text is ever realizable. There are only approximations to be actualized within the conditions of different enunciative exchanges. As such, translation is concerned not with “target languages” and the conditions of “arrival” but with the ways of ordering relations between languages and cultures. Translation is an art of approach. (p. 81)

Genetic explorations in the archive confirm Godard’s (1986) earlier view that translation is always “an act of reading...an interpretation, one among many possible...a practice of reading/writing” (p. 7).

THE BARBIZON

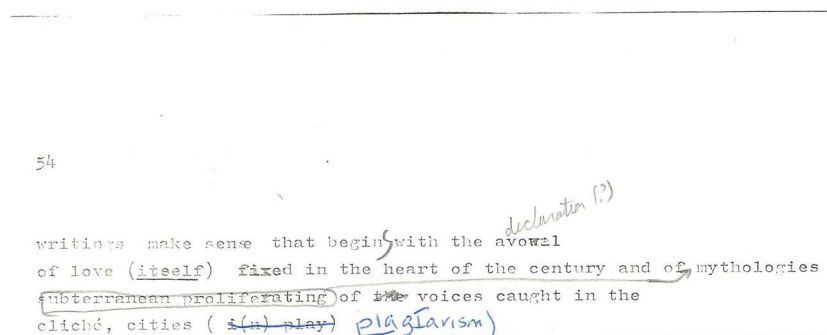


Figure 6. Godard’s early draft of “Le Barbizon” with Ray Ellenwood’s corrections in grey pencil and Godard’s modifications in blue (Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, permission of Alexis Godard)

Moreover, Figure 6 contains evidence of Godard’s important collaboration with Ray Ellenwood, her colleague and fellow translator, whose handwriting is discernible on the draft. He calls himself “her innocent reader” (Interview), admitting that she frequently consulted him for his alternative suggestions and editorial comments on the manuscript. While she tested on him her experimental coinages and notations, he lent his ear to her, always ready to catch any awkwardness or omissions and to smooth over literalness. Not being an “expert” on Brossard, he mentions

that Godard gave him her critical essays and preface materials to assist him in his reading. Indeed, in the dossier there is an extant copy of her paper called “*L’Amèr* or the Exploding Chapter: Nicole Brossard at the Site of Feminist Deconstruction,” with the inscription: “This should help you Ray in understanding *L’Amèr*.” On the verso of one of his edits of *These Our Mothers* he plays with different typographic arrangements of “sour”, “sea” and “mother.” At the bottom, he adds an encouraging note to her: “I think the idea of working out her [Brossard’s] puns in a concrete-visual way might be pursued more systematically (you do it with deed/dead [or something]).”

The significance of his contributions is further highlighted when one considers Ellenwood’s handwritten note to Godard on the verso of his proofs of *Amantes*, which shows that she got a little help from her friend in translating the title. He asks, “What do you think of LOVHERS? Is it a genuine coinage? I was delighted when I thought of it, but who knows upon reflection...” When he received this draft, the title was still a paraphrase, “Women loving women/writing.” However, comparing the draft in Figure 4 with the published versions (Figure 1), we can see that she did not always follow his suggestions. She made the final decision editing the passage, replacing “avowal” with his “declaration”, possibly for its associations with clarity and light, rejecting his verb (begins) to be consistent with the source text, and adjusting the word order in the sentence. Not surprisingly, on the copyright page of the published book there is a notice from Godard “gratefully acknowledg[ing] the work of Ray Ellenwood in editing the translation.”

In her theoretical considerations, Godard envisions the possibility of such a paradigm of translation that would enable the foregrounding of different forms of connectivity and interdependency, of translation as encounters at the borders of the self. For Godard the feminist translator, translation functions as a theory and method of contact, movement, as a machine for “interdiscursive production of meaning” (Godard, 1995, p. 69). An examination of her manuscripts adds yet another dimension to this *avant-texte*. Scribbled on the verso of different translation sheets one finds her son Alexis’s doodles, Godard’s lecture notes, and sketches for an academic essay on Marie Claire Blais that she was working on in 1981. The materiality of the archive yields such ephemeral traces of a life lived while working on the manuscripts, evidence that “life happens” all the while. The *avant-textes* of translation serve as a reminder that meaning-making occurs in a network of texts, relationships, and discourses as well as in the concrete social and material environments. By bringing into view different encounters and relationalities, textual genetics supports the view of translation as a material practice that is also a cultivation of friendship. It allows us to hear dialogue and conversation in many voices in the archival documents and reminds us that texts live in the world.

5. Textual invention: Translating gender

Analyzing the two drafts in Figures 5 and 6, we can also recognize the importance of sound and signifier in Godard's frequent search for interlingual assonance and consonance, typographic play, and neologisms. She reiterates her earlier observation about the translator as ventriloquist, drawing attention to the role of sound in Brossard's poetry: it is the sound of words that initiates "the associative drift" and generates new sequences (Godard, 1986, p. 10). To illustrate the primacy of sound over meaning, Godard discusses an example of mimicking the French assonance in her choice of "glaze and phrase" rather than "glass and verb" to translate "du verre et du verbe" in the "The Temptation" sequence of *Lovhers* (Godard, 1986, p. 69). She comments on Brossard's method of connecting "blocks of thought, words, by their sounds" (Godard, 1995, p. 71) that requires paying attention to the letter, or "translating for the signifier" (Godard, 1991, p. 118). It means following from signifier to signifier, carefully constructing and reconstructing each word "to build up the sonorous as well as syntactic, semantic chains for wor(1)ding" (Godard, 1995, p. 72).

One can find good examples of Godard's translating for the letter in comparing the earlier drafts of "The Barbizon Hotel for Women" to its published version (Figures 1 and 5). In the second section she keeps the alliterations between the source and the translated text, correcting the phrase "to cross the gardens of the real" in the draft to a better choice of "to pass through the gardens of the real" and thus achieving an interlingual consonance with "pour traverser". Another instance of following the signifier is her deliberation on how to translate "[la bouche] pleine d'intervalles" in the previous line. The obvious and easy choice would be "[the mouth] full of intervals", which appears in the draft (Figure 5). However, in the final version (Figure 1) Godard went with "[mouth] round with intervals". The reason why she opted for this variant has to do with the double repetition of sounds in Brossard's text: in the consonance between "pleine **d**'intervalles" and "round with intervals" and in the assonances of "bouche", "pour" and "tout" and "mouth", "round" and "through". On the other hand, after struggling with the translation of Brossard's word play in "au jeu" (Figures 4, 5 and 6), she decides to augment its effect using typography (italics) in the final "in *play*" and discards her earlier attempts to bring "I" into play in "**plagIarism**" (plagiarism). The last example I want to point out is a striking shift in the direction of her thinking in translating the lines "femmes des courbes du feu de l'édredon/à la peau neuve-----surface essentielle", where "eiderdown/on the new skin" in the earlier draft is replaced by the final "fresh-skinned" as a modifier for "women". This phrase constitutes Godard's single departure from the almost literal, alliterative translation of all the other lines in this section. One can read "fresh-skinned" as marking the *difference* of translation, a self-reflexive instance of the translator's agency through which the skinned text is reassembled in the new skin.

What these documents illustrate is “a concern for attention to the production of meaning in translation rather than for a re-recovery of meaning or an evaluation of the truthfulness of ‘copy’ to ‘original’” (Godard, 1991, p. 113). In particular, the issue of grammatical gender that Brossard’s writing deliberately disrupts in order to take a feminist political stance confronts the translator with the need to devise strategies that would allow for a creative transformation of language. In her preface to *These Our Mothers*, Godard (1983) explains Brossard’s practice of dropping the silent “e” from such words as *laboratoire* in order to signal “the absence of the feminine in the activities carried out there” (p. 1). Similarly, the word *l’amèr*, evoking associations with bitter, sea and mother, gestures towards a gender neutral grammar by dropping the “e” in *mère*. As part of “the critique of the masculine as a generic term” (Flotow, 1991, pp. 72–73), Brossard’s games with gender and grammar pose a great challenge to her English translators. We have already noted the closeness of Godard’s collaboration with Ellenwood and his help in solving the challenge of translating gender in the title of *Amantes*, where “The female presence in ‘*amantes*’... has been transformed into ‘*lovhers*’” (Godard, 1986, p. 11). Other subversive inscriptions of gender occur through the uses of paraphrase, for example, the pun on *délire* that has been paraphrased as “to read/delirium”. In Brossard’s text, *dé-lire* means both “delirious and uncontrolled expression of women’s realities and fantasies as well as the process of un-reading...or reading against the grain” (Flotow, 1991, p. 73). In Godard’s translation, the polysemic phrase “JE N’ARRÊTE PAS DE LIRE” becomes “I DON’T STOP READING/DELIRING”.

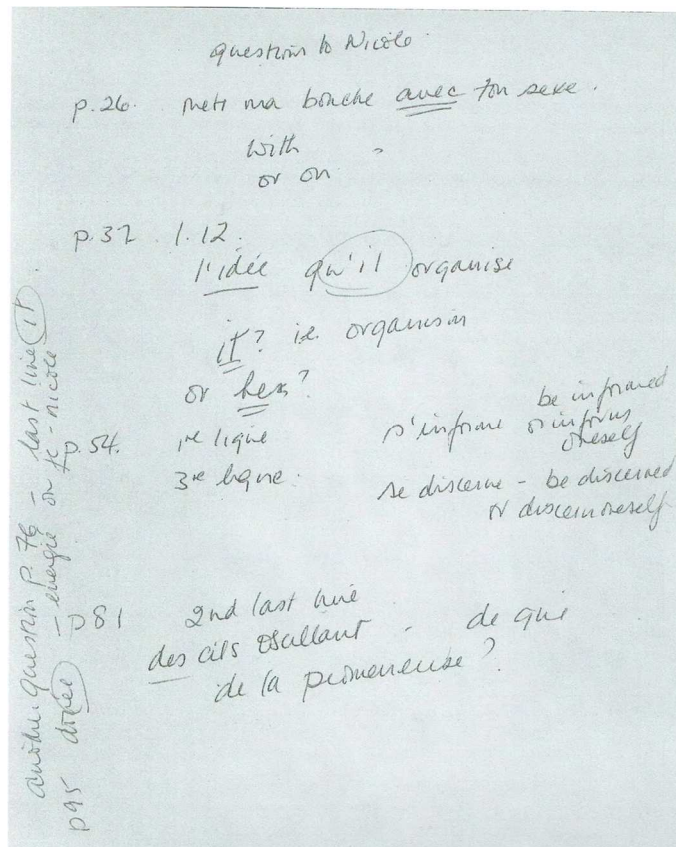


Figure 7. Godard's queries to Brossard concerning *L'Amèr* (Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, permission of Alexis Godard)

6. Collaboration with the author

The motif of translation as a cultivation of friendship finds its particularly intense form in the translator's collaboration with the author. Godard began exchanging letters with Brossard in 1979, after the publication of *L'Amèr*. She queries Brossard about specific word choices, often asking for clarification of meaning or grammar in the source text or requesting references for the citations used in the text (Figure 7). The archival folder contains Brossard's letters with meticulous responses to these questions (Figure 8)—a veritable testament to the reciprocity in their relationship. She not only answers Godard's queries but also reads and comments on the final draft (Mezei, 2009, p. 212). In her *Intimate Journal* (2004) Brossard affirms their collaboration in the February 3, 1983 entry: "I spent the entire day reading the English translation of *L'Amèr* for which Barbara Godard

sent me the final draft" (p. 197). The drafts reproduced here demonstrate that indeed Godard (1985) as a feminist translator has "been pushed into an active relationship with [women writers'] words" (p. 194). There is also a postcard from Brossard, sent from Padua on June 16, 1983, in which she refers to Godard's translation as "notre *L'Amèr*" [our *L'Amèr*]. This document gives a glimpse of the degree of mutual identification existing between the author and the translator.

Montréal, le 20 octobre 82

Chère Barbara,

Je m'empresse de répondre à ta question concernant la citation de Virginia Woolf. Elle est en effet extraite du livre Les vagues. J'ai pris la citation dans Virginia Woolf, collection Ecrivains de toujours, no 35. Le passage qui est cité des Vagues est intitulé La mort d'un héros et il commence par "Il est mort, dit Neville. Il est tombé de cheval..." Dans les Vagues la citation devrait se situer 3 ou 4 pages plus loin.

Concernant L'amèr

p. 26 m'èto ma bouche avec ton sexe
with.

p. 37 l'idée qu'il organise
it (le sujet est organisme)

p. 54 1^{er} ligne: imform oneself
3^e ligne: discern oneself.

p. 81 2^e last line: "des cils oscillant"
ce sont les cils en général
les cils de personne

Je n'ai pas eu le temps de regarder la traduction de Qu'il et la mer.
Je vais essayer de le faire d'ici au Colloque.
J'ai hâte de voir L'amèr et Amanter en traduction. J'aime beaucoup tes traductions d'Amanter.

A bientôt et amities

Barbara

Figure 8. Brossard's answers (Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, permission of Alexis Godard). The last sentence reads: "J'ai

hâte de voir *L'Amèr* et *Amantes* en traduction. J'aime beaucoup tes traductions d'*Amantes*." [I look forward to seeing *L'Amèr* and *Amantes* in translation. I love your translations of *Amantes*.]

Finally, for Godard (2004), whose ethics of translation mirrors her professional ethos as scholar and academic, "translating, like writing, is research" (p. 18). In her own practice, she not only talks about the thrill of recognizing and locating quotations in the source text, that is, of reading intertextually as integral to the translation process; she also describes herself as reading along with the author. She mentions in her translator's journal that while working on *Picture Theory* (1991), she read the same theoretical texts as Brossard, including Wittgenstein and Derrida, as well as Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, and Djuna Barnes. Similarly, her Preface to *These Our Mothers* identifies the influences of Derrida and Deleuze on Brossard through such keywords as difference, erasure, deployment, intensity, and repetition. Mezei (2006) comments on the role of chance in the translator's work: "For Godard, there is a serendipitous but consciously developed interaction between Deleuzian deconstruction, the act of translating Brossard, and the articulation of her own particular position on translation" (p. 210). In her essay "Deleuze and Translation", Godard (2000) recalls that while translating *L'Amèr*, she attended Constantin Boundas's lecture on Deleuze, which allowed her to make connections between Deleuze's ideas and Brossard's exploration of "new configurations of sense in an unsettling movement of 'deterritorialization'" (p. 58). In her letter of January 27, 1983, Brossard confirms that she is just reading Deleuze's *Logique du sens* because "il y a là des chapitres qui touchent mes préoccupations actuelles comme sens & non-sens, paradoxe, etc." [there are chapters that touch my current concerns such as sense and non-sense, paradox, etc.]. Retelling this anecdote, Mezei (2006) asks if it is mere "coincidence, serendipity, or the translator's intuition" (p. 210).

7. Conclusion

Textual genetics allows the researcher to delve deeper not only into the mechanics of translation as a craft, but also into the affects it produces. I was struck by both the personal emotions generated by touching the archival materials and the impact that the physical organization of the archive has on the genetic theorizing of translation. Through creating a palimpsestic layering of meanings, the very contiguity and co-existence of multiple versions of the text support Godard's leaning towards metonymy rather than metaphor in her approach to translation. These pieces of a larger whole literalize the process of translation as growth by means of metonymic accretion. She admits in her journal that she's been "interested in exploring a metonymic or contingent theory of translation focusing on these networks ordering or relating signifiers, a theory in which languages,

texts, social texts, touch each other” (Godard, 1995, pp. 72–73), interanimate and contaminate each other. In many ways, textual genetics helps to explore the synergistic relationship between Godard the translation theorist and Godard the translator. Insisting on the positive valorizing of difference, her praxis of translation is “an art of approach to an outside involving a repetition with a difference” (Godard, 2000, p. 56), each time opening herself to an intimate relationship with the text. With the translator viewed as the reading subject becoming the writing subject, the process of translation necessitates approaching alterity or, more radically, “becoming-other” (Godard, 2004, p. 23), discovering the unknown within the self. It is also a process of composition “through recombination, re-configuration” (Godard, 1995, p. 74).

What genetics confirms, by revealing multiple choices, substitutions, and corrections, is that translating entails not only “pleasure in the play of language” but also confrontation with the arbitrariness of language, turning translation into “a disorienting act of rewriting” (Godard, 2004, pp. 12–13). The graphic markings, layerings, and inscriptions on the drafts reveal complex intersubjective and interdiscursive foldings at the heart of translation and bear witness to a contingent theory of translation as languages and forms in movement. To engage in a feminist translative praxis means engaging in a politics of assemblage, finding evidence of heterogeneity, heteroglossia, and multilingualism, taking a bold, active, interpretive stance.

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- 1 The first major introduction of genetic criticism in the United States occurred in 1996, through the publication of a series of representative essays by French practitioners, when Michel Contat, Denis Holler, Jacques Neefs, and Alyson Waters were invited to guest edit a special issue of *Yale French Studies*.
- 2 One must note here the important role of the many international collaborations sustained by the Institut des Textes et Manuscrits (ITEM/CNRS) with Canadian and American scholars.
- 3 For a detailed trajectory of Godard's translations of Brossard and other Québécoise women writers, including selections published in feminist journals, see Alessandra Capperdoni's essay (2014).