Mainstreaming Translation Studies, Developing Globally-minded Individuals: Sensitizing High School English Literature Students to the Fact of Translation

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ABSTRACT

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Raising awareness of the fact of translation in North American English literature classrooms will both extend the reach of Translation Studies, currently a marginal, university-bound discipline, and broaden the minds of students studying in a monolingual setting. The dangers of allowing translations to pass undetected include perpetuation of cultural narcissism and domesticated perceptions of foreign cultures. Advanced Placement English Literature is an example of a course where Translation Studies could be introduced effectively. The responsibility for sensitizing students is shared by teachers and translators, though a review of the literature suggests that teachers have been more active in the discussion about teaching translated literature than translation scholars have.

Lise Tremblay's 2007 novel *La Soeur de Judith* serves as a case study for a translation rooted in the reader response theory of Louise Rosenblatt and the foreignizing translation theory of Lawrence Venuti. The process of translation has been documented; examples of situations in the text highlighting patterns in the translation reveal challenges in the process of creating a text that is simultaneously foreign and aesthetic.

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Mainstreaming Translation Studies, Developing Globally-minded Individuals

Translation Studies, though a growing discipline, continues to be a marginal discipline, secondary to more traditional, better-funded areas of study.

This need not be the case. If Translation Studies wishes to enter the mainstream, what better place to start than in high schools, where young people are often introduced to separate disciplines as such?

Without the necessary growth of Translation Studies into public awareness, the risk of continued disciplinary marginality extends seriously beyond university walls. As Lawrence Venuti warns in *The Scandals of Translation*,

> the risk posed by the marginal position of translation is a cultural narcissism and complacency, an unconcern with the foreign that can only impoverish British and American culture and foster values and policies grounded in inequality and exploitation. (88-9)

I believe that it is socially and morally imperative to include basic awareness of translation in public general education. To develop our young people into more fully human, globally-minded individuals we must introduce them to foreign cultures. This introduction must be self-aware and non-ethnocentric.

Reading world literature has traditionally been one important broadening component of public education. Realistically, all North American children cannot afford to travel and experience other places and cultures in person. Public education's inclusion of world literature can mitigate the destructive impact of this isolation. If the domesticated foreign texts included in the curriculum pass unexamined, however,

students and the population to which they belong will suffer the loss of a critical opportunity to experience another culture.

I propose to combat this current and potential ignorance by promoting an awareness of translation that implicates translators, teachers of literature, and student and general readers of literature. First, translators must produce work that is self-aware and foreignizing and which contains enough supplemental material for readers to understand the foreign aspects without having to interrupt their aesthetic experience. Teachers must introduce their students to the idea of translation, legitimizing it while offering important critical tools. Once introduced to the fact of translation, students have the option of continuing their personal education through further readings of translations. It is my hope that general readers not formally initiated to Translation Studies in the classroom will be able to benefit from published translations which contain materials designed to facilitate the recognition and understanding of translation as a creative process and a gateway to the rest of the world.

This thesis focuses on the production of a translation that models this ideal of a self-aware, foreignizing text for the particular benefit of young adult readers.

Overview

I begin by introducing the Advanced Placement® English Literature course, an example of a good point of introduction for Translation Studies into mainstream pre-university education. This college-level course taught in high schools to the brightest students is the last chance for many students to study literature and its related components, including Translation Studies. Including elements of Translation Studies in the study of world literature is to sow a seed of awareness.

I continue with an account of my research into the topic of teaching translated literature in a monolingual classroom. The scarcity of available literature highlights the marginality of Translation Studies as well as how the discipline tends to remain self-contained and only present at the university level. It also reveals, perhaps not surprisingly, that it has been educators more than translation scholars that have considered the issues surrounding the teaching of translations.

The first sources I discuss, therefore, come from educators. Edward Jenkinson's teaching manual *What is Language? and Other Teaching Units for Grades Seven Through Twelve* offers several suggestions of classroom activities designed to give students an understanding of issues facing translators. *Les Actes de la DGESCO: Enseigner les oeuvres littéraires en traduction*, a compilation of presentations and workshop activities from the French Ministry of Education, reinforces the method of side-by-side comparison of texts as a way to reveal to students the [per]mutations of a text that may result from translation.

The next set of sources discussed are those from Translation Studies treating the study of how translations are taught in the monolingual classroom in varying degrees of relevance. Maier and Dingwaney's article discusses a specific work. Green's book could serve as a classroom resource. Bandia article from Maier's forthcoming collection is an example of the growing interest of translation scholars in how translations function in an educational setting.

The theoretical basis for my approach to translating Lise Tremblay's 2007 novel *La Soeur de Judith* comes from the writings of Louise Rosenblatt and Lawrence Venuti. Rosenblatt's Transactional theory of literature orients itself around the place of the reader in a literary situation. Venuti's self-aware translator/translation-centric approach combats the invisibility of the translator just as Rosenblatt's work focuses on the oft-forgotten reader.

Aware of the need to use a visible translation to influence the active reader's experience of the text, I will explain my choice of *La Soeur de Judith* as a case study. This coming-of-age novel uses an understated style and an adolescent narrator to paint a picture of small-town Quebec during the Quiet Revolution. It is both historically fascinating and appropriate for the high schoolers this study targets.

After introducing *La Soeur de Judith*, I will discuss my initial approach to its translation. This includes both my foreignizing approach and the way I initially planned to document the process of translation.

My translation of the novel's excerpts follow, prefaced by a provisional introduction, written with young readers in mind. Commentary on the text and my

experience translating it follows the translation. Where I use quotations in French without a translation in the body of the text I have included translations in footnotes to make this thesis accessible to English readers without an additional command of French.

AP® English Literature and Composition:

A Potential Point of Introduction for Translation Studies

The Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition course, "AP Lit" as it is known to most of its participants, is a high school course developed by individual high school teachers under the auspices of The College Board, whose most well-known product or service is the SAT®. Many high schools across the United States and a handful in Canada offer Advanced Placement Program® courses in various disciplines. After a year-long course, students take a standardized exam, part multiple choice (about elements of literature), part open-ended essay (where specific literary works are referenced and analyzed) graded by College Board juries composed of AP Lit teachers. If the test-taker scores high enough, he or she may earn university credit.

Teachers of AP Lit develop their own curricula; the College Board offers a teacher's guide but no set curriculum, no standardized reading list, and no specific requirements for the course. Lists of works that have been included in the essay portion of the AP exam indicate which works are most frequently tested. The teacher's guide, written by Ellen Greenblatt (2007), offers advice as well as several sample course syllabi from real teachers of AP Lit. For all the freedom in the curricula, there is usually some overlap in the reading materials as teachers shape their own courses to best prepare their students for the springtime AP Lit exam.

Although the course name specifies "English Literature," teachers often include foreign works (necessarily translations) in their reading lists. The College Board has regularly tested students on such translated works as *The Odyssey*, *Crime and*

Punishment, and *The Stranger*. In none of the official literature I have been able to find thus far for the AP Program produced by the College Board is there discussion of how to select a specific translation, let alone tips for discussing translations as such with AP Lit students.

The students who enroll in AP Lit come expecting a rigorous, university-level academic exercise. It is a course that is meant to challenge students as well as to prepare them for their eventual college experience. In most schools it is the brightest, most promising students who are enrolled, enticed by the promise of college credit (especially in the US where tuition fees are so high, taking college credit courses in high school is one way to make university education less expensive), a weighted grade to boost their GPA (an "A" grade, worth 4.0 points in a non-weighted grade class would be worth 5.0 points in a course with a weighted grade), and the prestige of the AP program. It is important to note that these students are not necessarily going to continue their study of literature after graduation. For those who will pursue Bachelor of Science or vocational training programs after high school, AP English Literature and Composition may be the last English course they ever take. It is vitally important, then, that these students be exposed to the fact of translation now, as for some of them it is quite literally the last opportunity they have to encounter literature in an academic setting.

Introducing the "fact of translation" to the North American English classroom

The invisibility of the translator and of translations as such in North America feeds a general ignorance of the fact of translation among students and non-student adults alike. Discussion of translation as an essential contributor to literature or otherwise, aside from the occasional mention of choosing one translation of a classic over another, is mostly absent from teachers' guides, with exceptions discussed below. Discussion of teaching translations as literature to monolingual classrooms is largely absent in North American Translation Studies, although interest seems to be increasing.

In both North America and Europe, it is by and large the community of educators, not the Translation Studies or literary theory communities, that has addressed the issues surrounding the teaching of translations. What little there is includes a teacher's guide (Jenkinson), an internet-based group dedicated to the promotion of world literature (Words Without Borders), and a collection of proceedings from a conference held by the French Ministry of Education (*Enseigner les oeuvres littéraires en traduction*).

What is Language? (Jenkinson 1967), a guide for English teachers, devotes an entire unit to translation. "Nothing Moves Without Translation" (its name derived from a passage in E.S. Bates's *Intertraffic: Studies in Translation* [1943]) acknowledges that students are unaware if not ignorant of the fact of translation but does not ask why this is the case. Instead it offers teachers of literature suggestions of classroom activities designed to sensitize students to issues involved in translation. These activities center around retranslation, or, rather, pluralities of translation, and the value in having students compare different translations (through time, and from translator to translator).

The introduction to the book, written by Philip B. Daghlian, recommends "Nothing Moves Without Translation," the final unit of *What is Language?*, for use at the beginning of the senior year (grade 12) of high school, supposedly before students have been presented with translated literature. As he puts it, "The unit presents enough evidence to show the student that reading a translated work presents esthetic and critical problems differing from those evoked by reading a work in the original." (4) In the unit he wrote Jenkinson reminds his readers, presumably teachers of high school literature courses,

> This is not to be construed as a negative unit–one that leads students to be highly skeptical of every major work they read in translation; on the contrary, its objectives are to make students aware of the problems of translation, of the superior works of art that able translators have given us despite those problems, and of the wide range of ideas and literature that we can enjoy because of the work of able translators. (193)

This positive, non-pejorative approach to the fact of translation uses comparison of different translations to suggest the complications of translation to potential students. First Jenkinson presents several translators' prefaces to Homer's *Odyssey,* each paired with the translated opening lines of the epic. He relates the style of and issues discussed in each preface to the translation itself, highlighting certain choices of the translators.

In the second activity Jenkinson presents, two literary translations of Alexander Pushkin's poem "I Loved You Once" appear alongside a word-for-word translation of it in order to demonstrate the range of interpretations that apply to translations. I find that this activity also highlights the degree to which interpretation of the word-for-word meaning of a source text is essential to the transmission of the text as an artistic creation. After comparing those three poetic translations, students are asked to judge three

translations of the first two paragraphs of *Crime and Punishment* and "decide which they think has the most merit, defend their position, and then decide which of the translations was written first, which second, and which third, and give their reasons for their answers." (205). Jenkinson's choice of the word "written" to describe the translations signifies the respect for translation and the work of translators that he brings to the discussion.

Further complexities of translation are introduced in the description of the process of translating Confucius's works whose format is drastically different from that of English writing, both in number and precision of words. This extreme example further illustrates the extent to which interpretation figures into translation.

The final activity that Jenkinson suggests is to "assign students who have had two or more years of any foreign language the task of translating one of the following passages into that language [and then] discuss the difficulties involved, pointed to specific problems of diction, syntax, and meaning." (210) The passages suggested come from "Politics and the English Language" by George Orwell (In *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays,* Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1950), "The Most Dangerous Game" by Richard Connell (©1952, the Macmillan Company), and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (1884). The suggested time limit for this activity is 45 minutes. The translational problems posed by the heterogeneity of language in Twain's work has been the subject of many academic papers and I doubt the ability of students being freshly introduced to translation to fully grasp the scope of issues, let alone the possibility that a student with two years of study of a foreign language could successfully translate the

work into this new language. The frustration of the task may bring the students to a certain sympathy with the translators, however.

Jenkinson does not suggest activities specifically related to single translations, cases where points of comparison are not available.

Despite a strong European interest in the study of the translation of children's literature within the North American Translation Studies community, relatively little energy or at least paper has been devoted to the subject of teaching translations in monolingual classrooms. Even articles such as Maier and Dingwaney's "Translation as a Method for Cross-Cultural Teaching"(1995), whose titles suggest a pedagogical bent, tend to take more of a sociological approach, examining the specific natures of specific works in translation rather than studying methods for teaching or the effects of the translated work on a monolingual classroom. For example, Maier and Dingwaney analyze the peculiarities of the case of *I...Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala* (Ann Wright's English translation of *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú: Y así me nació la concienca*, itself a transcription by Elisabeth Burgos-Debray of Menchú's spoken words) as an example of Third World literature (1995), but they fail to discuss how the fact of its translation impacts students.

Words Without Borders, an online magazine and organization for the promotion of world literature (necessarily translations), includes education among its outreach programs. Its goal is ultimately to "introduce exciting international writing to the general public — travelers, teachers, students, publishers, and a new generation of eclectic readers — by presenting international literature not as a static, elite phenomenon, but a

portal through which to explore the world." (http://wordswithoutborders.org/) The sample classroom units *Words Without Borders* provides focus on comprehension and exploration of the themes of certain works, treating their internationality but neglecting altogether the fact that the texts they promote are translations.

In November 2006, the Séminaire national organisé par la direction générale de l'Enseignement scolaire (bureau de la Formation continue des enseignants) of the French Ministry of Education met to discuss issues surrounding teaching translated literature. The proceedings were collected by Yves Chevrel and published as *Enseigner les oeuvres littéraires en traduction* as part of Les Actes de la DGESCO (2007). Conference papers as well as details of workshops are both included. The first part, the conferences, opens with Michaël Oustinoff's presentation *La traduction invisible ? Problématiques actuelles de la traduction*, then goes on to cover presentations by others on theatre, poetry, and the importance of the history of translation. Oustinoff reveals that even in France, where translations into the dominant language are much more common than they are in the US, Canada, or England, it is not always clear that translations *are* translations.

The second part, "Comptes rendus des ateliers," includes the proceedings of five two-session workshops/ breakaway groups covering the topics of Children's Literature (Littératures de jeunesse), Classical Literature (Littératures anciennes), European Classics (Classiques européens), Translation, Retranslation, Comparative Literature (Traductions, retraductions, traductions comparées), and Rewriting and Translation: Pedagogical Perspectives (Réécritures et traduction : perspectives pédagogiques).

The activities presented in these workshops center around side by side comparisons of translations as key to teaching translation. This method, similar to the one proposed by Jenkinson, is practical only for those texts which have been translated more than once. Unfortunately, retranslation is common only to works which are "libre de droits," that is, in the public domain. To overcome this limitation in translations of current literature, translators may offer examples of difficult sections in the text or ones where they found multiple good solutions. During the process of my translation, I kept a record of these pedagogically rich instances for inclusion as supplemental materials.

Isabel Nières-Chevrel writes in her summary of the workshop she led about Children's Literature,

> "Lire une traduction, c'est garder à l'esprit que le traducteur s'est trouvé confronté à plusieurs types d'écarts culturels : les spécificités de chaque culture (*realia*), les compétences de lecture (intertextualité), enfin le travail effectué par chaque créateur sur sa propre langue et sa propre tradition littéraire. Enseigner les oeuvres littéraires en traduction, c'est amener les élèves à prendre conscience de ces jeux de transfert." (101-2)

Madame Nières-Chevrel reinforces the importance of transmitting to readers the factors that play into the creation of a translation. It is necessary to bring the reader to an understanding *about* the text rather than bring a foreign text disguised as a native one into the pre-established world of the reader. Translators must approach their work aware of the eventual readers' presumed competencies and their own role in shaping the transmission of the text and contributing to its context.

In *Thinking* Through *Translation*, translator and translation scholar Jeffrey Green describes the fundamental issues of translation using very accessible language. He does not directly address the issue of the invisibility of translation in the classroom, but his

book offers chapters that teachers could confidently present to their students as explanations of, for example why "word for word" translation does not work and how translators necessarily adapt.

A collection of articles edited by Carol Maier due to be published shortly will treat various aspects relating to the teaching of translated literature. I have access to Dr. Paul Bandia's contribution to the collection, "African Europhone Literature in Translation: Language, Pedagogy and Power Differentials." In this article, in short, Bandia recommends "thick translation," that is, self-evident translation, as a useful device to distinguish the Africanness of African texts and protect them from Euro-centric [mis]interpretations in monolingual settings.

While it is classroom teachers who have the most direct role in educating students about translations, the translator's own implication in the teaching process must not be forgotten. In order for a translation not to be mistaken for an original text it must present itself as a translation. The translation must, though in a new language, remain a foreign text.

I believe that is it much easier for a translator to produce a good, non-culturally narcissistic translation than it is for armies of teachers and other readers of translated literature to have to fight time and again against the effects of mediocre, domesticated translations. A popular translation may reach tens of thousands of readers at once but teachers are limited in how many people they can teach.

The Intersection of Rosenblatt and Venuti

The transactional reader-response theory of Louise Rosenblatt and Lawrence Venuti's theory advocating a foreignizing approach to translation have both influenced my approach to the translation of *La Soeur de Judith*. Together they have guided my formation of what I believe to be a pedagogically, literarily, and ethically sound theoretical base.

Louise Rosenblatt set out the framework of her transactional theory of literature in 1938 in *Literature as Exploration*, today in its fifth edition (1995). Readers of a text interact with it, shaping its meaning. The text becomes a lived-through *experience* for readers, one into which they inject elements of their own lives and from which they take away real, meaningful notions, emotions, and memories.

Just as translation scholars lament the invisibility of the translator, Louise Rosenblatt considers the persistent problem of the invisibility of the reader. Out of a total reverence for the text, and later in history, the author, the reader has generally been absent from literary discussion, and wrongly so.

Rosenblatt asserts – and I fully agree – that a text requires a reader to become activated. The reader is not, to use Rosenblatt's words, "a blank tape registering a ready-made message." Readers do consciously or subconsciously draw upon their own personal experiences in life and with literature to make sense of a text. In this way, the text is both a "stimulus" and a "blueprint," directing the reader's attention while recalling elements of their own lives. A translation, therefore, must somehow stimulate readers' awareness of its identity as a translation, whether through textual or paratextual markers.

Despite her dislike of neologisms in critical literary terminology, Rosenblatt introduces two key terms in *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* (1994) to differentiate between the two poles on the reading spectrum, terms which I will adopt for this thesis. *Efferent* reading (from the Latin *efferre*, to carry away) is reading for the sake of acquiring information. The essence of an efferent text is its message. A physics textbook, for example, or the instructions on a fire extinguisher are intended to be read efferently. On the opposite end of the spectrum is *aesthetic* reading, reading with a focus on the art of the words themselves with no explicit goal of retaining information. Rosenblatt emphasizes, "In aesthetic reading, the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text." (25) However, as students are taught to simply retain information about the texts they read in school, their attention may be drawn away from the aesthetic pleasures of the works, towards efferent readings where their main focus is on remembering the "objective" facts.

The discussion of efferent vs. aesthetic reading is particularly applicable to Translation Studies, especially in terms of choices that translators themselves must make. These polar terms add a layer, or at least offer useful vocabulary, to the dispute over the value of foreignizing or domesticating translation techniques. If a translation is to be a literary work of art its value must be primarily aesthetic. Various textual conventions and paratextual markers indicate to readers whether they ought to take an aesthetic or an efferent stance when approaching a new text. With this knowledge, translators (who, we must remember, are primary readers, pre-reading and thus pre-interpreting the source text for target language readers) can be more aware of the directions in which they are guiding their readers.

Jarring choices, such as the inclusion of undecipherable words or turns of phrase, may signal to readers to adopt an efferent reading style. Guided into an efferent mode, the reader may focus too heavily on intellectualizing the meaning of the words of the text as they struggle to follow the storyline. This calls into question the purpose of literary translation. A literary translation destined for high school students is a work of art, one of whose purposes is to foster an appreciation for the Other.

A purely efferent text translates easily, whereas culture- and word-bound aesthetics require certain creativity on the part of the translator. In situations where it is not entirely clear how the text is to be read, paratextual markers such as the words "a novel" on the cover of a book may also serve to signal an aesthetic reading, just as they may denote a translation (or the lack of them may contribute to the concealment of a translation).

The fact of translation is an efferent message (that is, it is asking the reader to learn and retain the idea that they are reading a translated text) but it need not block the reader's pleasure of this foreign encounter. Literary whispers such as the inclusion of some foreign words, stylistic elements, and plenty of paratextual clues ought to be enough, especially in conjunction with a contextualizing foreword.

The question of authorship, specifically authorship as it dominates literary studies and precludes discussions of other concerns, factors greatly into the works of both Rosenblatt and Venuti. Both find that the focus on (original) authorship detracts from essential discussion about the next interpreter/ mediator of the text: the reader or the

translator (who reads first for his or her eventual target-language readership). The reader is invisible as is the translator.

My goal is to include "clues" in the text that guide the readers toward an aesthetic appreciation of the text while at the same time maintaining its foreignness. One of the main rationalizations for domestication in translations is an aversion to the possibility of "jarring" or "interrupting" readers, or, in Rosenblatt's terms, provoking an efferent reading of the supposed-to-be aesthetic text.

Venuti warns of the consequences of allowing translations to be read as if they were originally English works:

> "the repression of translation in the classroom conceals the inevitable inscription of British and American cultural values in the foreign text, yet simultaneously treats English as the transparent vehicle of universal truth, thus encouraging a linguistic chauvinism, even a cultural nationalism. This is more likely to occur in humanities courses, where a translation of a canonical foreign text may be enlisted in domestic agendas." (1998:92 author's emphasis)

AP Lit is a prime example of a course that includes foreign texts, passing them off as part of an English canon. Venuti believes in the potential benefits of teaching the fact of translation. "Recognizing a text as translated and figuring this recognition into classroom interpretations can teach students that their critical operations are limited and provisional, situated in a changing history of reception, *in a specific cultural situation,* in a curriculum, in a particular language." (1998:93, emphasis mine) If a translation is not foreign, the Other has been lost as author and, at the same time, the role of the translator has been undervalued.

To both inform readers of the foreignness of the text and guide them towards an aesthetic reading of it, I advocate the inclusion of clear paratextual markers, pre-introduction of historical context, and inclusion of foreign words that the readers will acquire early on in their journey through the text, freeing them to continue the novel in a more aesthetically-oriented state.

La Soeur de Judith

Lise Tremblay's novel *La Soeur de Judith* (Boréal 2007) provides an excellent example of a text that could be multiply useful in the high school setting. Its literary style is simple, but it is deeply rooted in its sense of place, culture, and time.

In *La Soeur de Judith*, a summer in small-town Quebec is viewed through the eyes of a reluctantly gifted twelve-year-old girl, offering a sensitively nuanced image of life in Chicoutimi, a tradition-bound logging community slowly changing after the Quiet Revolution. The Catholic sisters (a specific religious order is not specified) are being driven out of the schools by unhappy parents after many years of providing poor education for the town's children. Meanwhile, a special track for students with great academic potential is about to open at the public high school, notorious for the poor behavior of its students. Over this summer of transition, the narrator jealously observes her best friend Judith's older sister Claire - the prettiest girl in town- as she prepares for a dance competition in Montreal and dreams of her eventual wedding to Bruno Blackburn, a doctor's son from the wealthy Quartier Murdoch. Simone, the narrator's mother, a former schoolteacher, can only criticize the girl for refusing an education and relying instead on her looks and an educated, higher-class man's money to get by in the world.

On the nameless narrator's side of town, virtually all the men work in logging camps or the paper mill. The women are either uneducated and shallow or educated and mentally afflicted. Simone (a nod to Mme de Beauvoir, perhaps?) suffers frequent depressive episodes that leave her daughter to do the housework and care for her younger siblings. Almost all the other respectable and educated women in town are alcoholic or

schizophrenic, marginalized and suffering because of their enlightenment. A few exceptions – Madame Leclerc, a kind, well-read nurse the narrator babysits for and Jacynthe Tremblay, a young schoolteacher who marries Marius, the most handsome man in the local baseball league – show the narrator that intelligence and education do not necessarily damn a woman to an unhappy life.

A car accident disfigures Judith's sister, dashing the family's dreams of her marrying a doctor's son, teaching the narrator that beauty is transient while highlighting the vicious realities of class and power. At the end of the book, just a few weeks into the school year in the gifted program at the new high school, the narrator herself has transformed from a child idolizing her friend's vapidly beautiful sister into a blossoming scholar with a new set of values and priorities and a group of new friends who share them.

About the author

Lise Tremblay, a literature teacher at le CEGEP de Vieux Montréal, has received two Governor General's Awards in Literature, most recently for her 2003 collection of short stories, *La héronnière*. Her novel *La Dance juive* (translated into English by Gail Scott as *Mile End*) won the honor in 1999. Tremblay's first literary honor was her 1991 win of the Prix de la découverte littéraire de l'année du Salon du livre du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean.

Born in Chicoutimi in the late 1950's, Tremblay writes from her own experiences and observations growing up in an era of great change for Quebec. Her works have been

set all over the province, from rural hunting communities (*La Hérronière*, 2003) to small logging towns (*La Soeur de Judith*) to the slippery winter streets of Quebec City (*L'hiver de pluie*, 1990). Authenticity shines through the voice of the narrator of *La Soeur de Judith*, a sort of freshly adolescent and not quite so innocent Scout Finch who describes the goings on in her town as she sees them. This carefully crafted narration balances the girl's opinions and biases with observations not always understood by the narrator that reveal another dimension to the town and its inhabitants to the reader.

In English translation, *La Soeur de Judith* would not only enjoy a larger audience in Quebec, the rest of Canada, and the United States but it would also offer Anglophone readers unfamiliar with Québécois society during some of its most formative years a personal introduction to this history. It is an honest story of self-discovery that resonates not only with adults, former adolescents as they are, but with young people themselves struggling with their own growing pains in a changing world. For young readers for whom this may be the first translation they encounter, their awareness of its foreignness will, I hope, couple with their enjoyment of the novel in a way that they will appreciate as enriching and will encourage them to continue reading foreign texts as a way to expand their worlds.

For this thesis, I have translated two sections of *La Soeur de Judith*: the beginning of the novel (9-25), which I had translated very roughly in partial completion of a course two years ago, and the pivotal middle section of the story (87-110) where the narrator is beginning to come into herself. Both sections are rich in Québécois words and expressions conducive to the creation of an effective foreignized translation.

Translation Strategy: Familiarization of Foreignness

My goal at the outset was to create a translation that was both foreignizing and aesthetic, that would give the target language monolingual reader the greatest possibility of success in understanding and *experiencing* the translation. In "How To Read a Translation," one article on the *Words Without Borders* website, Lawrence Venuti reminds us that it is impossible for translators to transform their readers into native speakers and members of the society in which a translated work was originally produced. I acknowledged this essential constraint as a challenge, that creativity may flourish in the face of limitations.

The fact of translation is first presented to the reader through paratextual elements, the cover (in this case, a sample title page) and a foreword designed to be read efferently in order to liberate the translator and the readers in the translation itself. Since *La Soeur de Judith* is as much a personal account of the Quiet Revolution as it is a coming of age story, the reader must have at least a basic awareness of the power of the Catholic Church and the severely marginalized role of women in Quebec to appreciate the significance of certain events in the novel. I offer an extremely cursory introduction to these topics and include suggested readings that students or teachers my draw on. Approaching the text with these ideas fresh in mind, readers will be more sensitive to the social struggles that Lise Tremblay has so artfully woven into her summer story.

Christine Sousa discusses the use of notes to convey historical background information to target-language readers (2002). Writing about the amplification in

Portuguese translation of author Joan Aiken's historically-based English novels, Sousa highlights the importance of aesthetic enjoyment of a text, cautioning,

> If [...] the reader does not possess the ideal background knowledge which will allow him to identify the text's anachronistic social and historical norms, the level of enjoyment reached is bound to be diminished. Consequently, the TL reader may not experience as high a level of satisfaction as the SL reader, as he is less likely to possess the background knowledge required to take on board all the elements at play in the translated text and would therefore be at a loss. (2002: 22)

This supports again my inclusion of a historical-informative preface.

Of course, it would be arrogant if not belittling to the source society to think that a few pages of introduction to a text could truly recreate the experience of a lifetime in its culture and customs. Foreign readers as they move through the text will create in their minds a world different than that which native readers would when confronted with the same text either in its original or in translation. Even from native reader to native reader, the images and ideas reflected back at them from the text will differ greatly depending on their own personal life experiences. My goal is not to attempt to inspire a uniform reading of the text but rather to inform the creative interpretations of the readers of the translation.

Textual indicators of foreignness, including place names, names and titles of characters, and names of typical Québécois dishes have been retained in the original Québécois French. They have not been highlighted with italics or quotation marks; these words are foreign to English, but not to Tremblay's novel. They should be treated by readers as any other unknown vocabulary word.

I initially planned to include a glossary following the translated text, but decided against it, as the untranslated words in the text are easy enough to understand. Readers may take the presence of a glossary as a signal that they ought to interrupt their reading to look up foreign words as they encounter them. Most of the words that will remain in Québécois French in the translation appear at least once in the beginning chapters. Bright readers will quickly have a command of words like *casse-croûte* that recur often in the text. Having added several foreign words to their vocabulary, they should be able to read the text more purely aesthetically by the end of the work.

My strategy of retaining some words in the source language is similar to that of Megan Backus, whose translation of Banana Yoshimoto's *Kitchen* Venuti highlights as a success:

> Instead of cultivating a seamless fluency, Backus developed an extremely heterogeneous language that communicates the Americanization of Japan but simultaneously foregrounds the differences between American and Japanese culture for an English-language reader. The translation generally adheres to the standard dialect of current English usage, but this is mixed with other dialects and discourses. There is a rich strain of colloquialism, mostly American, both in the lexicon and the syntax [...]. There is also a recurrent, slightly archaic formality used in passages that express the fey romanticism to which the narrator Mikage is inclined. [...] There are, moreover, many italicized Japanese words scattered throughout the text, mostly for food – "katsudon," "ramen," "soba," "udon," "wasabi" – but including other aspects of Japanese culture, like clothing ("obi") and furnishings ("tatami mat"). (1998:85)

Humans, it seems, take careful note of foreign foodstuffs. The narrator in *La Soeur de Judith*, a twelve-year-old girl, does not have a particular romantic way of speaking that would necessitate an equivalent "fey romanticism" in translation. The style is plain and straightforward, slightly juvenile but not babyish.

As an American who has lived out of country (in France, then Canada) for the past three years, I am particularly sensitive to the cultural hegemony of the United States. Since the United Statesian/Canadian cultural "exchange" is so lopsided, I feel that American spellings aren't foreign enough to justify their use for Canadian readers, despite American being my native language. I felt it inappropriate to translate a Canadian novel into my native American English when Canadian English is equally accessible. For American audiences, the subtle differences in spelling will be an extra, fully intelligible signal of foreignness.

Translation of **La Soeur de Judith**

La Soeur de Judith

(Judith's Sister)

a novel

written in Québécois French by Lise Tremblay

and translated into English by Claire Maryniak

Read this before you begin reading La Soeur de Judith!

About the translation

What you're holding in your hands is a translation of a novel by Lise Tremblay. It was published in Montreal, in French, in 2007. In 2010 I translated it with you in mind. The text you're about to read isn't simply Tremblay's text in English. That would be impossible, since her text is a French one.

This English translation of *La Soeur de Judith* is Tremblay's text passed through my mind. First I read it, then I read a second time (in French, of course, because it wasn't yet translated) while typing my initial English translation, then I went back and checked to see if what I did was accurate, that is, if the words meant the same things. Then I went back again to see how it felt to read my English translation. Did it sound awkward? Did it sound American? Did it sound Québécois?

Translators each have their own approach to translation, some of which is conscious and some of which is unconscious. The issues at work in translation are so varied and complex that there is an entire academic discipline devoted to studying translation called, appropriately enough, Translation Studies. Some translation scholars think that translations should be invisible, that you the reader shouldn't even notice them. Others believe that translations should be obvious and disrupt your reading so that you are sure to notice that the text you're reading is foreign. I tend to agree more with them.

As you read this translation, you might notice some peculiarities. Words for traditional Québécois foods, for example, haven't always been translated. I think you'll be able to figure out what they are, though, and will enjoy seeing the words in French. This *is* a francophone book after all, even though you see it in English.

To learn more about what happens in a translation read:

Venuti, Lawrence. "How to Read a Translation" *Words Without Borders*, [online] http://wordswithoutborders.org/article/how-to-read-a-translation/

Green, Jeffrey M. *Thinking* Through *Translation.* Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2001.

Jenkinson, Edward B. *What is Language? and Other Teaching Units for Grades Seven Through Twelve.* Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1967.

Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation.* 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2008.

About the setting

The story takes place in the town of Chicoutimi, in the province of Quebec, in Canada in the 1960s, a time known as the Révolution Tranquille (the Quiet Revolution). Chicoutimi, a town now incorporated in the Ville de Saguenay, at the confluence of the Saguenay and Chicoutimi rivers, north of Quebec City is an area where forestry is the major industry.

Because of the vast logging and pulp and paper activities, Chicoutimi attracted many labourers. In 1907 Abbé Eugène Lapointe organized Chicoutimi workers into the first Catholic labour union, the Fédération ouvrière de Chicoutimi. Unionization spread to the rest of the province from there.

During the Depression and World War Two, the Catholic Church was incredibly powerful and intrusive in the everyday lives of the people. Large families were common, good education, especially for women and the poor, wasn't. Schools were Church-run and some were good, but costs could be prohibitive and many lower-class families had to keep their children home to work.

For girls, secondary education was less available, as the classical college system was reserved for boys from privileged families. Privileged girls had the possibility of receiving a convent education, where some classical coursework could be included, but much emphasis was placed on learning domestic sciences. The only government and Church-funded schools were what came to be known as "Family Institutes," schools developed to produce "professional wives." Graduates from these schools, if they were deemed poor enough to need to make their own living, sometimes pursued careers in nursing or elementary school teaching.

In Quebec women were not allowed to vote in provincial elections until 1940 (they were allowed to vote in federal elections as early as 1917), and

even then they didn't have the same rights as their husbands. In 1964 married women were first allowed to own and administer property. Divorce was illegal in Quebec until 1968. It took seven more years until wives were officially recognized as equal to their husbands by the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms in 1975.

La Soeur de Judith takes place in a time when all of this is changing. The Catholic Church is in decline, feminism is slowly arriving, and public education is on the rise. The yet unbroken influence of previous decades of devout Catholicism, subordination of women, and poor education is strong in 1960s Chicoutimi, as you will see.

To learn more about Quebec and its history read more Québécois literature and also check out:

Dickinson, John and Brian Young. *A Short History of Quebec.* Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1993.

Mann, Susan. *The Dream of Nation: A Social and Intellectual History of Quebec.* Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.

Excerpt 1

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The paperboy threw the soggy Sunday paper onto the carpet in the entryway. As soon as I heard him close the door I got up running. I wanted to be the first one to see the photo of Claire. I took the newspaper and I started looking for it. The photo was on page 22 and you could see Claire framed by both of her parents. Monsieur Lavallée was wearing a suit. The article told the story about Claire, how she had advanced from the quarterfinals to the semi finals and to the finals of the dance competition. If she won, she'd be spending the year as a go-go dancer in the farewell show that Bruce et les Sultans were going to give all over the province. I couldn't get over it, if she won, my best friend's sister was going to see Bruce in person and maybe he'd come over to the Lavallées' house. Judith and me, we didn't talk about anything else and we spent a lot of our time helping her father finish the mini-putt before the start of summer. They had a big yard and their father had decided to build his own mini-putt. Judith and me, we were helping him stretch the green carpet over the cement forms so that the surface would be good and smooth. The camel had been the hardest. The carpet had kept a crease between the two humps and even though we forced it as much as we could, there wasn't

anything we could do. Her father had given up on it. He had said that at the mini-golf in Jonquière they had a special machine that cost a lot and he couldn't buy it for himself. The camel would stay creased, he couldn't do anything about it.

The mini-putt was practically finished. All that was left was to make the signs showing the names of the holes. Judith's father was painting them in his workshop that they called la boutique. All the Lavallées were proud of their mini-putt. They had the most beautiful yard. There were lawn chairs, tables, a fireplace, a Blessed Virgin, a swing. It was there that we spent most of our time. Sometimes, no one really knew why, Judith's father would come out on the porch and send us all home by threatening to put a boot in our ass, but that didn't happen a lot and he never followed through except for once. It was Martial Turcotte that got it. It should be said that he had stolen the baseball glove from Régis, Judith's sickly brother, claiming that he didn't know how to play and he'd never play anyway. Régis spent his life dragging around a cardboard box filled with all kinds of colored wires and his baseball glove. He also had an old leather wallet stuffed with cards of hockey and baseball players that he had christened with made-up names that sounded a little like English names. Judith said that Régis was like that because, when he was a baby, he had meningitis. At the hospital, they gave him medicines that were too strong and they burned his brain cells. Before that, he was normal.

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Régis wandered up and down the streets in the neighborhood all day long and in the evening, at suppertime, if we saw him, we were supposed to send him home. He was unbelievably ugly, but us, we were used to seeing him, we didn't notice anymore. One time, he appeared at Madame Bolduc's window. It was dark out and she was doing the dishes with her sister. Régis was crazy about sticking his face up against windows to look at the insides of houses. Her sister let out a huge scream and fainted. It was Madame Bolduc who told my mom about it but I never told Judith, I didn't want to hurt her feelings.

Judith and me, we often took care of Régis. We'd watch him in the boutique when Claire had visitors. Judith said that they had to take time to explain Régis's illness before Claire's friends could meet him. Afterwards, Claire would buy us a steamed hot dog at the Casse-Croûte du Nord and we could sit in the same booth as her and she would talk to us for hours about her nights out and the people she would see Friday nights at the discotheque La Pillule. Judith and me, it was like we knew them. Often, we would shut ourselves in the boutique with an old makeup bag and we'd spend the afternoon making ourselves up and telling each other stories we'd invent about our nights out at La Pillule. It was one of our favorite games but it was a secret game. We never left the workshop without having washed our faces with the pink dish soap that her father would use to wash his hands that were always stained with motor oil and grease.

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I leafed through the newspaper and I thought I'd be able to tear out the page with Claire's photo before my mother saw it, but I was afraid that she'd make a fuss and I left it in the paper. My mother explodes. She could explode at any minute without warning. As for Claire's photo, I told myself that maybe she wouldn't see it, but on Sunday she spends a part of her day studying each line of the newspaper. I swallowed three toasts in a row thinking about what she was going to say. One time, I don't know what came over me but I told her about how Claire was going out with doctor Blackburn's son and that, when he came back from university, they were going to get married. This upcoming marriage was all Claire's whole family talked about. Waiting for him to get back, she kept working at the cosmetic counter at the Duquesne pharmacy. Anyhow, Monsieur Duquesne taught her a lot of things about medications and sometimes, when he went to eat, it would be her that would fill prescriptions. But she was only doing that while she was waiting. I was unlucky enough to add that, when Claire got married, she would no longer be able to allow herself to talk to the people from rue Mésy anymore because all her friends would be other doctors' wives. That was when my mother exploded. She started yelling that Claire should have taken up her business classes like she had advised her and that she must have been totally crazy to believe that a doctor's son from the Quartier Murdoch was going to marry a daughter of a lawnmower repair man. And then, she started back on her moral tale that is the most important thing for

a woman because with men you never know and that in life you have to be able to make your own living. And most importantly, I needed to get it through my head that she didn't want to hear any talk of boys because I'd have to take it up with her. When she gets carried away like that, I end up going to my room to read or to think about Bruce. My mother scares me. Each time, I'd tell myself that I should've shut up, that if I'd paid attention it wouldn't have happened but, I don't know how, it happened all the time. As for Claire, my mother didn't understand that she was the most beautiful girl in town, that all the boys at La Pillule wanted to go out with her. Claire was going to leave for Montréal and maybe become a star or a model. We were going to see her on the television and in the celebrity newspapers that my mother bought sometimes when she had one of her meltdowns and said that she's going to leave for good and that we're never going to see her again. Times like these, she'd put her coat on over her old dress and she'd go to the Casse-Croûte to drink a coke and talk with Madame Ménard, the owner. She'd spend an hour or two reading her *Échos Vedettes* at the counter and she'd come back with a large Saguenay Dry and make us our favorite meal: *hot-chicken* sandwiches with brown gravy from a can and fries. The *Échos Vedettes* was always at the bottom of the bag and I'd hurry to take it to go read it in my room. Afterwards, my mother would give it to Madame Bolduc because she collects newspapers for her husband's fishing camp.

Obviously, my mother saw the photo and it surprised me, she didn't explode. All she could find to say

was: « Poor Claire. » Afterward, she got up and did what she did almost every Sunday. She tried to make sucre à la crème. She and my father stirred it for an hour and, as usual, she ruined it. She made a white cake and poured the grainy sugar on it. Every Sunday, it was the same dessert. You shouldn't waste sugar and butter. Sucre à la crème, it's the only thing my mother would ruin in the kitchen. Nevertheless, every week, shortly before she would start to stir, she always believed that this was it, that she'd gotten it right, that the sugar didn't have the same texture as usual. She was always sure of it, until she'd turned the wooden spoon for many long minutes and, worn out, she let the hot sugar set at the bottom of the pot.

I spent Sunday reading in my room. Madame Bolduc lent me a pile of Dellys and I had just about finished them. I didn't go out, it was raining too much. All day long, there were comings and goings at the Lavallée house. All of Judith's sisters came with their husbands. I imagined Claire in her gold *jump suit* that she had bought for the final round of the contest. Claire was lucky. Judith was right to be proud of her sister even if, sometimes, Claire hurt her feelings by calling her a pimple face. Me, I never dared really talk to her. I would just listen to her and I would disappear as soon as she showed signs of boredom. I knew perfectly well that she made fun of me too by calling me a fat Gumby, that character with the flat face. But I wouldn't miss one of her stories for anything in the world.

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The sister directress's face was violet. She was so angry that we didn't understand a thing she said. She walked through the aisles and pulled those who were wearing golf socks out of the line. I was one. We were having trouble not laughing. She finished her round and made all of the girls from the school go back to saying a dozen rosaries to ward off the devil and, finally, they were allowed to go back to class singing: «C'est le mois de Marie, c'est le mois le plus beau. À la Vierge chérie, chantons un chant nouveau. »[1] I got a smack in the back of the head. I was singing my head off. The directress let me know that a demon-possessed person like me had no right to implore the Virgin. Afterwards, me and the other «nobodies» had to go home for the rest of the week. The school would call our parents.

The weather was beautiful. Almost all of the girls wearing golf socks were in my class. We decided to stay until recess for the boys from the École Saint-Charles to tell them what was happening. While we were waiting, we rolled up our skirts and shirt sleeves to tan in the field across from the school. The sister directress spent her time going out onto the balcony

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[1] It's the month of Mary, it's the most beautiful month. To the precious Virgin, let us sing a new song.

to watch us. Finally, Roxanne Rondeau got up to give her the *peace and love* sign. That was all it took to get the rest of us doing it. The sister went back in and we didn't see her again. The boys of the École Saint-Charles were jealous. Three days off, just like that at the end of May, when we weren't doing anything but reviewing and it was hot in the classrooms. The others smoked. I don't smoke, it makes me throw up. Judith smoked, but no one in her house knew it. It was me who kept her cigarettes. I hid them under my father's in our basement freezer to keep them fresh.

I came home around three o'clock because I wanted to put on my shorts and my sandals. My mother was outside with Madame Bolduc. I saw them from a distance because Madame Bolduc was showing a red sequined fabric to my mother. It must have been for her dance show. Madame Bolduc was a ballroom dance champion and it was my mother who made her dresses. When I got closer, I saw that my mother's old dress was stained with mud and that she wasn't touching the fabric. She must have been working in the garden. At the end of May, she prepared the soil for her plantings. My mother was examining the Vogue pattern that Madame Bolduc held in front of her. I came up and looked at the pattern. My mother explained to Madame Bolduc that she couldn't make the little train as long because she could step on it while dancing. Madame Bolduc agreed, she hadn't thought of that. My mother said that the school secretary had telephoned.

She told the story to Madame Bolduc and they laughed together. I knew that my mother wasn't going to explode, not about the sisters. She was part of the committee that was calling for them to leave. Anyway, it had been decided, they were going to leave. The news would be official next week. My mother had to go to the school with the other parents about the golf socks incident. According to her, the sisters were too old: they had had their time. The Church too. My mother didn't go to Mass most of the time and, when she did go, it would be because my father insisted. She invented a vague story about menopause and cramps for the neighbors. She didn't say anything more about it but I knew that my mother thought the sisters and the Church were past their time and that anyway when we died, there wasn't anything. We were animals like the others and the best we could do, was fertilize the earth. All the stories about religion were false and most of the clergy were dishonest and thieves. She knew it, she had two cousins who stole from everybody in Abitibi. When she exploded about it, my father made her quiet down and repeated to her: «Look, Simone, you're going too far there.» Anyway, my father, you could say he had two sentences: one for my mother and one for me. Whenever I talked back to my mother and she pretended to fall ill and couldn't stop crying for rage in her bed, my father would end up coming to see me and asking me to be reasonable. «You have to be reasonable.» He repeated this sentence to me all the time, you'd think it was all he had to say to me.

We had off until Monday and it was beautiful out every day. All the signs for the mini-putt

were installed and, in the evenings, I played with Judith. I hate mini-putt, but that's all there was to do and Judith liked it. She had a little graph paper notebook where she would write the scores for each hole. She won all the time, I played badly and I didn't really know how to hit the ball. Plus, I didn't care, all I wanted was to be with Judith and to see Claire practicing for the dance competition.

On Monday I put my golf socks back on. The parents had let the sisters know that they supported us and the school board did too. Our teacher, Soeur Thérèse, practically ignored us all day long. She had prepared piles of mimeographed sheets full of exercises we'd have to do up till the end of the year. On the board she had written that she had decided to no longer speak to us. I wondered how long she was going to last. The directress must have made her life hard. Soeur Thérèse was her whipping boy, we'd known for a long time. That's why we could do anything in the classroom and she would never send us to see her. Soeur Thérèse was going through full-blown menopause and she was worn out all the time. She was fat and pearls of sweat constantly ran along her forehead. She taught with a fan on full blast. She had to talk louder to cover the sound of the motor and that wore her out even more. Everything she did fell in the water. At the beginning of the year, we had to say a prayer every hour. One of us was in charge of the bell and was supposed to ring it to let us know. But it quickly became impossible. The bell would fall on the ground,

we would forget the time, Roxanne Rondeau would ring it any old time, for nothing, to annoy the sister. Soeur Thérèse, one afternoon when a big snowstorm must have gotten us worked up, materialized on the bell that had just fallen on the ground and threw it in the bottom of one of her drawers. Finished were the invocations to the Virgin and our Guardian Angel. She had also instituted a points system to reward our good behaviour. Soeur Thérèse made a huge box where she hung doves with our names on them that could be slid up and down a thread. In the evening, Soeur Thérèse would raise or lower the dove that represented us. Obviously, Roxanne started to give sneaky little boosts to her dove. One Friday, her dove made it to heaven. The sister was so angry that she left and we stayed in the classroom alone for a large part of the afternoon drawing and going through her desk. The dove board spent the year behind the door. In the end, it had deteriorated so much that the birds were dangling in space at the end of their string.

Soeur Thérèse didn't last two days. One morning, she officially announced the sisters' departure from the convent to us but it everybody had already known for a long time. She said that us, the big grade sevens, we were going to help her to pack up the school library. The books that the sisters were going to be taking back to the mother house had to be sorted out. That's where I found the *Brigittes*. They weren't in the aisle of books for the grade sevens. The sisters

kept them behind the counter. They were almost new. There were even some pages that hadn't been separated. I was interested right away because they seemed like books for adults. I asked the sister if I could borrow them and, without even looking, she said she'd give them to me, it would be that much less to carry. I went and put them in my bag right away. There were seven of them. I started to read them that very lunchtime. They were the best books I'd ever read. They took place in Paris, and Brigitte was a beautiful woman who made an effort to not be vain and who was married to a very talented artistic painter who had suffered a lot in his life. He limped with one leg because of a war wound and he was a very sensitive man. Brigitte always had to take care of him. The first book told the story of how they met and how Brigitte had understood what the fate of a married woman was. She kept her house well, took walks in the Tuileries, a sort of park in Paris. She was calm, folded the household laundry in a large armoire and understood her husband's moods and, in the other books, her children's. I couldn't believe that such a mother could exist. Maybe it was because she was French. She never exploded, was always well put together, spent her time praying for everybody. Nothing like the mothers I knew, mine was a bomb, Madame Bolduc drank beer in secret and had a whole system so that her husband wouldn't catch her. It was my mother who explained it to my father. I was in

the basement but I heard everything. She'd been drinking like that since her mother's death because she never stopped talking about how she no longer had the right to live. My mother would often find her already drunk in the morning. She had the afternoon to sober up before her husband would come back from the factory. Our neighbour across the street was known for living with two women, the daughter and her mother. They never went out and spent their summers taking care of their plantings. They dressed the same, always in a dress and always with a flowered apron. They didn't talk to anyone in the neighbourhood but my mother. Judith's mother was old and spent her time yelling at Régis and cursing her fate. She never made meals except for Régis and her husband and the rest had to fend for themselves. Judith ate toast with cretons most of the time and Lipton soup. Her real feasts were the hot dogs Claire would buy her and the meals she would have sometimes at our house Sundays on the way home from Mass. Both of us sang in the choir and would come back famished. I knew that my mother wouldn't send her away even if she would give me the big-eyed look that meant that I was spending my time bringing one and all to eat at our house. Sunday lunch, my mother would always make the same menu: soup with rice, roast chicken, cabbage salad that I grated before leaving for Mass and mashed potatoes. For dessert, we would have a Shirriff lemon pie or a white cake topped with her failed sucre à la crème.

The sisters moved away before the end of the year. The part of the convent where they had lived had been emptied

and the teaching sisters came to work in a taxi from the mother house. One morning, Soeur Évelyne, the one who taught music and art, came without her habit. No one drew. It was Roxanne Rondeau who started asking questions, and then it didn't stop. Soeur Évelyne explained to us that the Pope, who was her father, had given them permission and that, since she taught music and art, her new suit was more practical. Roxanne asked if they were going to put on bathing suits. That made Soeur Évelyne laugh. At lunch, I told the story to my mother. She told me that in her opinion Soeur Évelyne was not going to spend her life in community and that she'd known it for a long time. She was too educated and too beautiful to end her days surrounded by old shrews.

Since the sisters moved, the part of the convent where they lived was always locked. Before, when there wasn't anybody in sight, Judith and me, we would adventure down the hall that led to the chapel and their residence. It was off-limits to the students, but we would hurry and we'd have an excuse all ready. We would want to pray in the chapel. What I liked the most, it was the smell that the floor would give off. Everything was clean, even cleaner than the house of Rose Lemay, my mother's enemy. In the neighbourhood, Madame Lemay had one of the most beautiful houses. It was also the cleanest. The table in the dining room was made of glass and always sparkling. It must be said that Rachelle, the Acadian maid, who had a

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funny accent and who everybody liked, even my mother, wasn't there for nothing. When my mother exploded against the Lemay woman, everything came out, her alcoholic brothers that were assholes, her husband that spent his life traveling and about whom it was said that he met women in motels. According to my mother, she had no reason to strut around like that. Me, I know that what drove my mother crazy, it wasn't as much the affectations and haughtiness that Rose Lemay took talking to her but the fact that she was able to send her daughters to the private school and that, next year, they wouldn't have to go to the polyvalente where the girls sleep with the boys in the bathrooms and get pregnant after three weeks. Not to mention the drugs that they sell all over the halls. Every time Rose Lemay would come up to the edge of the yard to talk to my mother, she always brought up the subject, and my mother ended up coming back in the house wanting to kill her.

One evening, Judith and me we went to the school yard to hang out with the others. Since the sisters left, it had become our meeting point. One of the guys from the École Saint-Charles found an open window on the side with the sisters' residence. We all went in. The residence had two floors. Judith and me, we went up to see the bedrooms. They were full of cardboard boxes holding the sisters' things. We were afraid of getting caught. My heart was beating fast, but I couldn't

resist wanting to open the boxes. There were clothes, skirts, yellowed veils. I dug through all the clothes just to see. In one of the boxes, there were all sorts of pictures with phosphorescent images where Christ had eyes bluer than I'd ever seen. I stole one of them. I couldn't help it. Judith and me, we were the last ones out. We had the time to see their kitchen and their living room. All that was left was furniture, all the things had been put in boxes. The boys had had the same idea as us, several boxes had been gutted, and their contents, dishes and food, were all over the floor. Once we got outside, we ran like crazy. I threw the picture in the garbage can in the playground cabin, I was too scared.

Then, there was a whole remue-ménage, even the newspaper talked about it, several individuals, probably youths, entered the convent and vandalized it. Soeur Évelyne gathered us in the great room and took the floor. We hadn't seen the directress for several days. She didn't yell, she explained that those that did that had violated their privacy and that was worse than the things that they had stolen. Judith and me, we had never been so scared in our whole life. Judith said that they were going to find our fingerprints like in *Les Enquêtes Jobidon*, her favorite old show, and that they were going to put us in the Institut Saint-Georges. I said that that couldn't be because there weren't girls at the Institut, just boys. I knew because

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my mother had just one worry for my brothers, that they would become juvenile delinquents like one of Martial Turcotte's brothers and that we'd have to place them in the Institut. That's why she signed them up for hockey and baseball and all sorts of sports that cost a lot and why we ended up selling our chalet because they were starting to grow up and we had to keep them busy. It's also why I spent my Saturdays alone doing all the housework while they were gone.

Finally, it ended up calming down and we didn't get caught. Except we were scared for a long time, because with the police you never know.

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My mother looked at me, sighing. She was angry because I wouldn't stop staring at Madame Bolduc. She was having trouble putting on her red lamé dress because she had drunk too much. She was lamenting her fate. Monsieur Bolduc had gone for the weekend to his fishing camp and he wouldn't be back until Sunday afternoon, in time for the dance soirée, but they weren't going to have practiced, and in dance, her instructor said it and said it again, you have to practice, practice, and practice. She was disappointed because she thought that they had had a chance to win it. Then she went back to her favorite subject: her mother's cancer. I knew all the details, her mother raised nine children and the moment she was going to be able to enjoy life, she fell ill. Madame Bolduc took her into her home because it was closer to the hospital, she took care of her, prayed, did novenas, but her mother ended up dying. She repeated for the hundredth time: «When she died, didn't weigh more than eighty pounds. Do you know what that's like, Madame Simone, to see a woman who weighed a hundred sixty pounds her whole life die like that? »

Madame Bolduc turned around. The little red tulle train was exactly the right

length. My mother was talented. She had had to modify the pattern because Madame Bolduc wasn't tall. She checked the back, made sure the fabric didn't bunch. According to my mother, the worst thing on earth was to wear a beautiful dress that bunched up in the back. My mother made her walk in front of her, back up, watched the back of the dress. Everything was straight and everything hung perfectly. Madame Bolduc went into the bathroom to look at herself in the mirror. She said that the dress was perfect as always and that, everyone said so, no one sewed as well as Madame Simone. My mother rushed her to take off the dress to put it back in its plastic cover, you can't be too careful with lamé.

Madame Bolduc changed in front of us. She wore a white slip under her dress, because with a slip the dress doesn't stick to the skin and it hangs better. My mother sent me into the kitchen to make some coffee. As usual, she'd left thread everywhere and there were cuttings from clothing and bits of pattern flung all over the house, even on the refrigerator. I knew I was going to pick all of it up before going to bed because if I waited for my mother, she wouldn't do it before Friday. She only cleaned on Fridays before my father arrived. He would come back from the work site, after his week of work. I always tidied up before bed because I couldn't get to sleep if the house was a mess and I always had to start over. Sometimes it got me down. I knew that, when I'd get home from school, it would be the same

story. The dishes from lunch would be left out on the counter and there would be thread everywhere. Whenever I got upset, my mother would say that housework, it wasn't important. She would rather sew and go talk to Judith's mother on the swing. Otherwise, she was in the garden. I was always afraid that someone would come over before I had the time to clean. Anyway, I knew that people in the neighbourhood talked and I was ashamed of it.

Madame Bolduc held her cup out to me and told me to go get her more hot water. She could stay a while, it was still early and one of her sisters was at home. She talked for the hundredth time about the disappointment of not going to Germany with her mother, it had been their plan. She added: «I don't know how I can accept to go on living, anyway one thing's for sure, I won't die any older than my mother, I don't want that, I don't have the right to. »

Right then, Judith arrived and said that softball had started and that instead of playing mini-putt we could go there. My mother didn't like me going to the Parc de la Colline at night too much but she was busy for a while with Madame Bolduc and, exasperated, she said I could go but I couldn't be out past nine o'clock.

The park was pretty far, we had to walk fifteen minutes or so. Summer evenings, it was always full of people because of the ball games. Judith and me we sat in the bleachers and, pretending to do nothing, we watched the high school boys. It was that night we saw Marius the barber for the first time.

But we didn't know he was a barber. He played for the team from the Quartier Saint-Luc. The forbidden neighbourhood where it's better my mother never know I've set foot. It was, according to her, the worst neighborhood in town. It was full of little bums and thieves who were going to spend their lives on unemployment insurance. But, the guys on Marius's team were no different from any others. It was me who saw him first, even if Judith claims it was her. It was also me who discovered the place he worked. My father would often take me along to do last minute errands Saturday afternoons because he said I was efficient and didn't dawdle like my mother. But he'd only say that to me once we were in the car. Sometimes we'd leave without even telling her, when my mother's back was turned. It would put her in a goddamned mood but my father'd always repeat that it was starting to get late and that the store was going to be closed. I saw Marius on a Saturday, about two weeks after the ball game. My father had gone into the Commission des liqueurs to buy a jug of wine for his mother. My grandmother Fernande said that the Commission des liqueurs, it wasn't a place for women. Well, I'd only ever seen men go in and out. My father would always run into somebody he knew and would spend some time chatting in front of the door. Last winter, before Christmas, I waited until my father was in the store and I went in. I stayed close to the door and when he saw me, he got angry and waved at me to leave. Everybody was waiting in line to give their orders. The

clerk disappeared behind a door and you could hear him yelling. The men were laughing together and making jokes about the holidays and drinking. My father said that children weren't allowed to come in and that we could have been arrested by the police. I knew it wasn't true, he was exaggerating. My father, there's nothing he likes better than to talk with the guys from the logging company that he runs into in town. He says that in the woods they never have the time to talk and that, in the camp at night, they fall into their beds, worn out.

While my father waited for the jug, I walked up to the pâtisserie to pick up the cake that my mother had ordered. The pâtisserie was above the Chez Pierre barber's salon. Going up the stairs, I saw him. He was shaving the neck of a little boy. I stayed right there. I couldn't believe it. I knew where the most handsome guy I'd ever seen worked. I went to get the cake. The girl at the counter showed me the writing « Bonne fête grand-maman Cécile. »[2] It surprised me, I didn't know that my mother had ordered writing, especially because we don't ever call her mother that. After, I went back to the car and my father was still talking with the guy from the company. It seemed like it would never end. I really wanted to tell Judith everything. I ended up honking but, seeing his expression, I stopped right away. In the car he grumbled telling me I'd been impolite. I spat back that we had to put the cake in the fridge as soon as possible. Looking at the box, he sighed his usual sigh that came any time there was a question of my mother's family.

[2] Happy Birthday Grandma Cécile

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When we got back, I ran to Judith's. All her sisters had left and we could go in the boudoir in the basement with no fear. Judith and me would sneak in there. We weren't allowed. It was Claire who'd decorated it like a real nightclub that she had seen on her trip to Percé with Bruno Blackburn. There were candles, 45s she didn't listen to any more hanging from nets, cushions on the floor, and her record player. Judith always put on Charles Aznavour. It's not my favorite, me I like Alain Barrière better, he's better looking. I told Judith about how I'd seen Marius, the place where he worked, what he was doing. She said that when school was over for real, one afternoon, we would go and see him. I said OK. The salon Chez Pierre was at the bottom of two old hills, in the middle of the Quartier Saint-Luc but I didn't care, I liked him too much.

My mother curled her hair, she put out the new tablecloth and the dishes we only use at Christmas. She was in a good mood. We were waiting for her mother to arrive. It was starting to get late and we were starving. At one o'clock, my father said that we were going to start lunch, we'd wait for them for the cake. My mother got up from the table. I knew exactly how all of this was going to end. My father let out his « my mother's family » sigh. My mother decided to phone. Her mother had gone to eat at my uncle's. She'd decided that at the last minute. My mother yelled, she could have called. Afterward my mother disappeared into her room. At five o'clock, my father went to bring her some coffee. I knew that my father

would have me telephone chez Viau to order hot dogs and a big bag of fries for supper. One time doesn't make a habit. We would go pick up the order and we would eat without my mother. He would bring her a Lipton soup around seven when she would have woken up. My mother would spend the rest of the evening in bed. She would get up tomorrow morning, her eyes swollen from having cried too much. The stories with her mother always end up like that. It makes me sad. I never tell these stories to anyone, not even Judith, I'm ashamed of them. I hate my grandmother and on top of that her smell makes me sick to my stomach. She puts on too much pink Avon powder that my mother gave her as a gift. My father helped me with the dishes. He didn't talk even though I told him that my grandmother was mean, that it always ended badly and that with my mother's family it was always like that. There was always a disaster. It was nothing like what I'd read in my *Brigittes*. In her family, everyone got along well and they would have their Sunday breakfasts in chic restaurants after having gone to Mass where everyone had been sanctified by God and by communion. They were full of life. In my mother's family, it always ended badly. If it wasn't one of her brothers who'd come over in the middle of the night completely drunk and cry in her arms, it was my grandmother who would go off saying that if this continued she was going to kill her daughter-in-law because all she wants is to steal the family's money. If I talked back, my father would say that they were like that, that we had to accept it and that for my mother, her mother

is her mother and that we'd better not talk because it hurts her even more. Well, I would never talk in front of my mother, I'm not crazy, I knew full well that she would explode. The next day, my father woke me up at five o'clock in the morning, before leaving for work. Normally, my mother got up and prepared his clothes for the week and his toiletries. He told me not to go to school, to stay with my mother because she wasn't well and above all else to be reasonable. I couldn't get back to sleep. I was afraid of oversleeping and that the others would be late for school. I set the table for breakfast and I took out my favorite *Brigitte*. It was the one about little Marie and the miracle. Brigitte has a daughter that's called Marie and who, she's sure, will go into the convent because she's so spiritual and because she was saved by a miracle from a serious illness. Brigitte and her husband had gone to Lourdes to pray and ask for the healing of their little saint. Afterwards, they understood that God had kept her alive so that she would be able to take the veil.

I woke up the rest of the family and got them ready for school. My sister didn't want to go, she wanted to stay with me. We heard my mother yell that she didn't need anybody. My sister left and I stayed like my father had asked me. Around eleven o'clock my mother asked me for a coffee. I was afraid to go into the room, even though I'd seen her like that often, each time I was afraid. She was sitting in her bed with a roll of toilet paper in

her hands. She was still crying. I gave her the coffee and I picked up the balls of paper that were laying next to the bed. She told me to make spaghetti with tomatoes for the others and to make them take off their clean clothes so that they don't get stained. I had to watch them carefully and see to it that they left for school with clean faces and hands. I said OK and I left.

My mother spent another part of the afternoon in her room then I heard her get up and take her shower. She took out a piece of beef from the fridge and prepared the supper. She told me to turn off the television and she got angry saying that she didn't need me and that I should have gone to school. I didn't say anything. I thought about Brigitte, about the little Marie, about miracles, and I left to wait for Judith on the corner of the lawn.

Excerpt 2

Judith told me I had to come quick. She had left Régis alone and she had to go back home. Her parents had left for the hospital and she was too scared. Claire had had an accident a couple minutes ago, it was her cousin that came to tell her parents. He saw her lying on the ground and, as soon as he recognized her, he rushed to warn them. My mother heard some noise and came up from the basement. She asked Judith questions while I got dressed but she didn't know much. The car rolled in the middle of the Côte Sainte-Geneviève. Claire was thrown from the vehicle. She didn't know more. Her parents were going to call. She said that she would have liked to go to the hospital but that someone had to watch Régis and it's been like that since she was very little, all she ever did was watch the idiot. Judith was angry, I had never heard her call Régis an idiot before. I brought my robe because I was going to sleep over with her if her parents didn't come back. I ran down the street after her.

Régis was in his mother's chair and his hands and earlobes were bloody. Judith hit him on the arms:

-- Goddamnit, you scratched yourself up, you know it, Papa is going to punish you.

When Régis gets upset or if his father goes somewhere in the car without him and no one is watching him, he hides and scratches himself bloody. He spends days with scars and sometimes they get infected and you have to treat him with peroxide and you can hear him screaming all over the neighbourhood. I told Judith to calm down and I started to clean Régis up, we couldn't leave him like that. There was blood on the chair and on his pajamas. After his fits, Régis would cry big quiet tears. It could last for hours. I spoke to him gently and I asked Judith to make him a Quik. Régis loved Quik and it was what his mother would serve him when he was like that. Judith gave me clean pajamas and I changed him. He sat back down in his mother's chair and I held his cup out to him, he took his spoon and stirred it without stopping. Judith said that it got on her nerves when he did that. She went to the medicine cabinet in the bathroom and came back with Régis's medicine. It was to calm him down. From time to time, in the evening, if he was too worked up, he'd take a pill and he would fall asleep. The next day, he'd spend the whole day seated and he wouldn't spend his time talking to himself and getting mad at everything for no reason. The whole house was calmer.

We went into the living room and watched a film with Doris Day. I had already seen it. On channel 12, on the late movie, they would often replay the same old films. We fell asleep on the sofa because when Rollande, Judith's oldest sister, arrived with her husband, we didn't hear them come in. They didn't know much. Claire was unconscious in intensive care and you could only see her for five minutes every

hour. She had a fractured skull and serious injuries on the side of her face. The doctors couldn't say anything more. It was certain that she would have scars. They went to go sleep a little and, in the morning, they would take the parents' place. According to Rollande, they weren't coping very well. She added that, for a while, it would be necessary to place Régis, they wouldn't be able to take care of him. She would call Social Services as soon as she could.

They left and Judith and me we went to lay down in her room. We started to talk. It was sure that Claire wouldn't be able to go on tour with Bruce. Judith asked me if I thought that Claire was going to become ugly. She was afraid that her scar would be as big as the one that the girl at the post office has on her chin. For me, it was impossible. It was true that, right after the fact, it's always the worst. When my brother had a hockey accident, at first, we thought that his eye was going to come right out of his head. Now, you can't even see anything. Judith continued to talk about Claire and her marriage that would fall into the water. Bruno Blackburn wouldn't be interested in marrying a girl with a face full of scars. He would be ashamed around the other doctors' wives. I didn't know what to do to console her. In my head I heard my mother. What she was going to say about the accident. She always talked about how Claire's group was a gang of spoiled children and most of all that they weren't from her world and that she would pay dearly to understand that.

I heard Régis get up and I went to make him

his breakfast and get him dressed. When Judith's parents got back, he had finished eating and I had just given him his cigarette. Régis always smoked a cigarette after his meals and he had to smoke it at the table. You had to watch him so that he wouldn't start a fire. Judith was still sleeping and I went to wake her up. I left to go back home because Judith's mother was crying so much I didn't know where to put myself any more.

-- It was bound to happen, a crazy-headed girl like that.

My mother hung up. Since Claire's accident, she spent her time on the telephone with her family. Me, I stayed sitting on the porch and I pretended to read but I kept watching what was happening at Judith's house. Her sister came to get Régis to drive him to a group home. Judith left every morning with her father and mother to go to the hospital. I didn't see her anymore and even in the evening, when I would wait on the corner of the lawn, she didn't come to see me. She barely even waved. It was as if she was angry. My mother went one evening with Madame Bolduc. When she got back, she exploded but I was expecting it. I stayed in my chair not saying a word until she had finished. Obviously, what had happened to Claire was her own fault, going off with a crazy guy like that. Since the beginning of the summer, everyone said that, if he kept it up, he was going to kill himself. What's more, everyone knows, crazies like him don't kill themselves, in general, it's other people who get it. As for me and my sister, may we never get the idea to ride off with just anybody, she would see to it. She ended up calming down and, when I was certain that she wasn't going to start back up again, I asked if there was

any news. There was nothing new. Claire was in a semi-coma, she had a fractured skull and the doctors couldn't say anything for the moment, not if she was going to stay handicapped, not if she was going to lose her memory, not anything. On top of that, the left part of her face had scraped along the asphalt and she would have marks on her for the rest of her days. That, that was certain. I thought about the accident often. Claire wouldn't be going on tour with Bruce, we wouldn't be seeing him on their lawn, she wouldn't be marrying Bruno Blackburn. Judith always said so, Bruno wanted to marry Claire because she was the prettiest girl in town. Everything was falling in the water.

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It was hot for days. My mother raged against the heat and didn't come out of the basement any more. It was so hot that on the playground they brought the children to the pool at the Parc de la Colline every afternoon. Me, I stayed in the basement reading the books that I took from Madame Leclerc's library. I went to babysit often, even on weeknights. She and her husband went out a lot. It was the best place to watch children in the whole neighbourhood. I didn't have to do anything except to clean the bathroom sink that her husband would always leave dirty and arrange the toiletries. The boys would already be asleep when I arrived. On top of that, before leaving, Madame Leclerc, who was always ready before her husband, would put out, along with the Windex and the Comet, a big bag of vinegar chips on the counter for me and would tell me that there was coke in the fridge. But what I loved the most, it was their basement. It was there that Madame Leclerc had her library. There was a real office with a typewriter and books all over in shelves. One evening, I found the best book of my whole life : *Un certain sourire*. At first, I thought that it was a funny title but I started to read it anyway. It was the story of a girl who fell

in love with her friend's uncle. He even invited her to take a trip with him. Afterwards, he acted like nothing happened, and he never called her back. The girl stayed in bed crying for weeks. In the end, she got herself back up and started to go out in Paris. She said that it was as if she was seeing the city's beauty for the first time.

I could borrow all the books I wanted, it didn't bother Madame Leclerc. She had a lot of them because, when she worked nights at the hospital and it was calm, the nurses read to stay alert. They had subscriptions to *Reader's Digest*. I started to read as soon as they had left and, even if they got back late, I would still be up reading. I told Judith about *Un certain sourire* but she found the story boring. Me, I couldn't stop thinking about it.

Claire ended up waking up. She hadn't lost her memory but, according to the doctors, she would stay fragile her whole life. They had explained that Claire would have strange moods and even fits of rage. It was one of the aftereffects of the skull fracture.

Judith and me, we went back to going to the ball games in the Parc de la Colline and watching Marius. It was better than nothing. Claire's accident had made the front page of the newspaper. There was talk of a trial against the driver of the car. It was a cousin of Bruno Blackburn and his father was a doctor too. My mother believed that the Blackburns were going to organize themselves

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to take care of that and she would stick her hand in fire if it did go to court. The doctors would buy the Lavallées out for a mouthful of bread.

My mother was right. Claire hadn't even gotten out of the hospital when the Gagnon et Frères store truck started coming to the Lavallées'. They changed out all the furniture in the house: from the living room, from the kitchen, and from Claire's room. They also replaced the carpets, even the one from the living room that was practically new. My mother said to my father:

-- What did I tell you, they bought them out for furniture. Do you ever have to be backwards! It's not a flowery sofa that will bring back your health. She may never be able to work again. They'll be stuck with two invalids!

My father muttered like always:

-- Simone, you're going too far there.

My mother stayed angry all week, it hit her every time the furniture truck was parked on the street. She kept on talking about ignorance and instruction. I wasn't listening, I knew her speech by heart.

Me, I went over to Judith's to see their new living room. I had never seen anything as beautiful, even at the Leclerc's who have one of the most beautiful houses in the neighbourhood. The living room was just like the page from an American decorating magazine that Claire had flipped through in the hospital. It was her who picked everything out from the catalog and, as Judith agreed, Claire had a talent for decorating. Anyway, she was probably going to take a course when she got out of the hospital. We went down to the

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basement to see Claire's new room. She had white furniture and the curtains, the carpet, and the bedspread were dark pink. She would leave the hospital next week and the room would be ready. Judith showed me another magazine photo and everything was the same except for the pictures, but that was normal. When I got back home, I was ashamed. The family room was ugly and no one in the neighbourhood had furniture like ours. On top of that, my mother's sewing patterns were scattered all over the floor again.

Since Claire had gotten back from the hospital, we took Régis everywhere we went. That let her rest. She found she couldn't stand hearing him talk to himself all evening long. Régis spent his time in the rocking chair across from his mother, telling himself stories. Sometimes, exasperated, Madame Lavallée yelled at him to shut up and then she'd be the one monologueing about the lot that life had given her bringing into the world an invalid that she'd have on her back until she died. Régis followed us to all the games, a baseball glove glued to his hand. From time to time, he'd stop to mime the catchers' moves. It irritated Judith who would push him on the back to make him move on. Judith and me, seated in the bleachers, we would watch Marius. Since I'd known him, I thought less about Bruce and Pierre Lalonde. I told myself that the same thing that happened to the girl from *Un certain sourire* could happen to me. At night I would imagine that I took a trip with Marius to Québec or even to the Île d'Orléans were we had gone one time with my father to pick strawberries. I didn't talk to Judith about it, I was too scared she'd laugh at me. Claire had gotten out of the hospital, but I hadn't seen her up close. I couldn't go into Judith's

house, it was forbidden. Anyhow, for a while, no one was allowed to go there, not even her sisters and their husbands. Claire spent her day on the sofa in their new living room reading photo books and watching the television. She permanently wore a bandage on her left cheek even though it would have been better to leave the wound out in the fresh air to speed its healing. Judith's other sisters had talked secretly with their mother and they believed that Claire was in a depression. Bruno Blackburn had sent a card but Claire didn't show it to anyone. Everyone thought he'd broken it off. Me, I knew that he had come back to town. Madame Bolduc took dance classes with one of his aunts and she reported it to my mother. I didn't know how to talk to Judith about it. Anyway, Claire would end up finding out.

My mother and Madame Bolduc kept going back to the accident and the scars. Madame Bolduc explained that the skin on Claire's face had been burned when it scraped along the asphalt. Her forehead and upper cheek would be marked with black patches for the rest of her life. They couldn't do a graft because that would have been worse. Her skin would be full of cracks. For her, all the Blackburns' money wouldn't give her her face back. A woman disfigured like that, her life was over. Madame Bolduc affirmed that there was no justice and she started up again about her mother's cancer and the trip she was going to take to Europe without her. She wouldn't be going if not for her brother. He was dying of boredom in Germany. He wanted so much

for her to come and, on top of that, her husband had gotten it all set up. She had no choice, she had to go.

I did everything to avoid the subject of Claire with my mother. But I couldn't stop myself from listening when she was talking on the telephone. It was always the same song with her, over and over. Claire was a bird brain and she should have kept her job at the pharmacy or taken her business classes. She had even been accepted. But two years of professional school, that was too long for Madame. Disfigured as she was, even with a good secretarial program, she would have trouble finding a job. Nevertheless, she believed that Monsieur Duquesne was going to take her back at the pharmacy, out of charity. Monsieur Duquesne was a good man, he sold prescriptions on credit. When the guys from the logging company were on strike, he even gave away medication for the children. Since then, my mother venerated him even though he had a bad reputation. It seemed that he would often come into the pharmacy totally doped up on Valium. My mother also glorified herself for giving charity. She had made the dresses for Madame Bolduc's sister for free. She knew that she didn't have a penny and she couldn't go work in private houses with her big belly sticking out. Madame Bolduc was very good to take her in, otherwise she would be on the street.

One morning, Claire went out on the porch. She couldn't stand to stay stuck inside anymore with the heat. I went to go talk with her with Judith. She was wearing a black headband

and her hair was tied back in a ponytail. She had put makeup on her scars but it just made grey marks on the edge of her forehead. You might have said it looked like clay like at the edges of houses under construction. Even though I didn't want to, I couldn't stop looking at her scars. She talked about the hospital, about her gift for decoration and makeup. She had given advice to the nurses and one evening made one up to show the others. In the autumn, she was trying to decide between an aesthetician's course or a decorator's course. She did not pronounce Bruno Blackburn's name. Before, all Claire talked about was him, the wedding, the big house near the hospital they would have built, a house as big as the round house we would see on Sundays when we would take a car ride to admire the properties in the Quartier Murdoch. Judith and me, we did like we did before the accident, we listened to Claire. She was planning to have a big party to see her friends again. It would go all night long. It was out of the question that Judith and I would be among them. We were much too young and badly dressed. She would be embarrassed. Me, I wasn't bothered to not be going to her reunion with her gang from La Pillule, but I was disappointed. Because of the accident, we would never meet Bruce. We would never see the picture of Claire and the other dancers surrounding Bruce in the *Échos Vedettes* either. For once, I could tell my mother that she had been wrong.

-- To have so much voice and to massacre it! You have once again sung totally out of tune. If you continue, I shall remove you from the choir.

Monsieur Fortin was speaking loudly, he was all red. I hung my head and I held myself back to keep from crying. Though, last week, he had told me that if I continued like that, he was going to take me for weddings and funerals and I knew that that paid two dollars each time. During the sermon, the members of the choir went into the room next to the sacristy. There was coffee and ham sandwiches and doughnuts prepared by the sister who took care of the rectory. Everyone spoke quietly to not disturb the Curé. I stayed in my pew even though I was starving and I really liked the sister's doughnuts. At the end of the sermon, the Curé made the announcements. He named the dead, he acknowledged births and weddings. In general, I didn't pay attention because, anyway, I had to bring the bulletin back to my mother who would read it to my father. But, then, when I heard the name Marius and his occupation of barber, I lifted my head. The Curé was announcing his wedding for the last Saturday

of August. The bride was Jacynthe Tremblay, a schoolteacher at the École Saint-Charles. I knew who she was, she had short hair and wore glasses. She was a hundred time less beautiful than Claire even with her scars. I couldn't get over it. Marius was going to get married. Her, I couldn't remember seeing her at the ball games one single time. When Judith came and sat back down beside me and we started to sing the *Credo*, I whispered in her ear that Marius was going to get married. She continued to sing as if nothing was happening because Monsieur Fortin had an eye on us. I pretended to sing but all I did was move my lips. I was too scared of messing up again. Once Mass ended, we left right away. I forgot to take the bulletin. Judith and me, we were silent. She didn't come have lunch at my house because there were already people coming, my grandmother Fernande and my father's brother and his fiancée were coming to eat with us. I was happy because, with my grandmother, I never did the dishes. She would send me to play outside with my friends. She was the person that I loved the most of all my family. Before I started babysitting for the neighbours, I would often go to her house on the weekends. My father would come and drive me there when he got back from work on Friday, and would come back to pick me up again on Sunday. My mother always said that it suited him because it gave him a reason to go see his maman. Me, all I wanted was to get there as quickly as possible so that we would have to the time to go to chez Woolworth before it closed. It was my favourite store and my grandmother

knew everybody. We would sit at the lunch counter and I could order fries and an orangeade. My grandmother said that coke was a dark soda and it was bad for children. Afterwards, we would walk back to her house. She lived above the bus station and I would spend hours at the window watching people as they waited. There were lots of people. Just across the street was the Hôtel Picardie. I knew that there were terrible things that happened at that hotel, things worse than the dancers from the Saloon but I didn't know what. When my grandmother wasn't doing housework, she prayed. She prayed all the time. Often, when I got up, she was in her orange plastic rocking chair listening to Connie Francis or even Tino Rossi running her rosary through her fingers. The table was always set the night before and she waited for me for breakfast. She would buy Kraft's Velveeta cheese that my mother would never buy because it was too expensive and anyway we would eat the whole package in one single meal. My grandmother would cut me two thick slices of it that I would divide into little bites.

My mother didn't give me time to come back. She told me to hurry up and she added that for once I hadn't brought the whole neighbourhood for her to feed. I sat next to my uncle's fiancée, they were going to get married at the beginning of the autumn. She was wearing a psychedelic *jump suit* with multicoloured dots of different sizes and big black plastic rings that she

took off all the time because they pinched her ears. She was the most fashionable woman I knew. She and the actress from the *Mademoiselle de Paris* interlude that you would see on channel 12 just before the last movie looked the same like two drops of water. She and my uncle spent their time kissing and that bothered my grandmother who would lower her eyes each time. My future aunt was a professional seamstress and worked in a men's suit shop on the rue Racine. It was waiting for the bus that she met my uncle. My mother found her uneducated. She made the same comment about my father the first time that she met him. Me, I found her normal. She was nice and helped my grandmother with the dishes. It was a good meal. My mother even made an angel food cake with whipped cream. I was happy because I could go right over to Judith's to talk about Marius's wedding. I took two cigarettes out of the freezer, because Judith often wanted to smoke when things weren't going well, and I left. As soon as she saw me she asked me to go get her her cigarettes, I opened my hand and we went straight to the steps of the school. On the way we saw Pat Soucy battling with his lawnmower. Him and his mother had come back and the lawn was up to their knees. Judith lit her cigarette with the lighter that she had stolen from the Quincaillerie Brassard. She was with her father and no one saw her. She had put the lighter in the bag of nails that had already been paid for and, once they were in the car, she stuck it in her pocket. I was the only one who knew it, afterwards she was scared to death and if her father

knew about it, he would kill her. Once we were on the steps, Judith smoked and, I don't know why, we didn't have much to say except that Jacynthe Tremblay wasn't even beautiful and we knew from the boys that she had a way of pinching the skin just below the elbow that could hurt a whole lot. She had already had a complaint from parents. We counted the time that was left before school started. For Judith it was five weeks, but for me four and a half. Because of my special class, we had to show up two days earlier than the others. It had been the worst summer of our lives. Everything went wrong: Claire's accident, Marius who was going to get married and getting to meet Bruce that had fallen into the water. On top of that, I knew that my mother wasn't finished exploding. She was starting to bust my ears with the start of classes which was a disaster because it was getting more and more expensive. With one in high school, she didn't know how she was going to get by. I'd replied that I was babysitting a lot and I'd saved my money. I had enough to buy my books and my shoes. Obviously, she just shrugged her shoulders. My mother would rather die than admit that someone else was right. Judith and me, we didn't talk about the polyvalente much. The closer it got the less we talked about it. Although, last year, in Soeur Thérèse's class, that was all we dreamed about: finally having classes with boys. There would be no more backwards sisters. No one to force us to go to confession and make us participate in novenas. Before Christmas and before Easter, the sisters

would take us to novenas led by retired missionaries. Once, the old man was so dirty that it smelled like vomit when you walked into the confessional. Luckily for the new students, the sisters had left and in the autumn the school would be mixed.

We went back past the Soucys' house and we saw a for-sale sign planted in front of the house. The whole rest of the afternoon we helped Judith's father clean the mini-putt because, since the accident, he had neglected it. He had taken out the vacuum and we cleaned each hole. Me, I picked up the little rocks and Judith swept. On one of the carpets, we found lots of ants that we misted with Raid. The ants scattered and Judith chased them with her hose. She announced to me that he was cleaning like that because Claire had decided to have her party next Saturday night. She hadn't gone out since her accident and her new doctor said it was important that she not close in on herself. Claire was going to invite her whole gang and Bruno Blackburn too, but just as a friend because that one couldn't allow himself to go out with a girl seriously. He was going to study for two years in Boston in the biggest university in the world to become a specialist doctor. Judith thought that it wasn't Bruno who decided that but his father. He was going to be a gynaecologist like his uncle. Judith was convinced that he still loved Claire. When he finished his studies, it was certain, they would get back together. Judith and me, we would watch Régis Saturday, and that would

work out well, it was the evening of the night ball tournament at the Parc de la Colline. I knew that I'd be able to go with no problem because the whole family was going to be going to l'Anse-Saint-Jean to my father's cousin's new campsite. I had lied to my mother and said I had to babysit for Madame Leclerc. For my mother, going to babysit was sacred, it was forbidden to refuse. Judith, she didn't babysit. She found it boring. She earned her pocket money running errands for Claire. Sometimes she would go up the street to the Casse-Croûte four or five times a day to keep Claire in penny cigarettes and *cream soda.*

After supper, Pat Soucy came over to the house and my mother kept glaring at me. Twice she told me to go out and get some fresh air because school was starting soon and there was no way I was going out at night. Anyhow, the big nobody Claire was out on the porch. She had just seen her come outside with Judith who, she was sure of it, wasn't going to do any better than her sisters and was going to find herself married to a guy from the paper factory and spend her whole life pulling the devil by the tail. I knew the song by heart. But I wanted to know what Pat Soucy was going to say too much. He gave a thank you card to my mother. There was a bouquet of flowers on the front and inside text was printed. I had the time to read *Vos témoignages de sympathie nous ont soutenus à travers cette épreuve.*[3] There was a handwritten note but my mother closed the card and I didn't dare open it back up. Pat Soucy hadn't changed. He was wearing his

[3] *Your words of sympathy sustained us in this trying time.*

wine red suit and vest. Pat Soucy always wore a tie. In the neighbourhood everybody made fun of that. He walked all over telling his latest news. He and his mother had spent three weeks at his aunt's in Richiboucto in Nouveau-Brunswick. He went boating with his uncle and, once, they sailed to l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. Over there the women make all kinds of dishes that we don't know here, like clam chowder. Along shore, he saw jellyfish that his uncle called «soleils» that can kill you if they sting you.

The bosses at the garage had kept his job for him and he would go back to work starting the next day. He was still going to get married and Nathalie would live with him and his mother in their new house in Chicoutimi. They would sell the old one and set up house in the Quartier des Oiseaux just behind the new polyclinic. It was the new chic neighbourhood, in a few years it was going to be as nice as the Quartier Murdoch. Just before leaving, he turned around and said that the people from the rue Mésy were all disgusting for having said all kinds of things behind their backs. His father killed himself because he was sick and he knew that he only had a few months left to live. He didn't want to die suffering terrible things. His mother and him would be happy to get out of this hole. I came out of nowhere to follow him. I was happy to have stayed behind, I had just heard the biggest lie Pat Soucy had told to this day.

(109)

Claire was making her list of guests for the party. It was complicated because we had to find the addresses in the phone book and Claire only had the last name and the street. She didn't know the names of her friends' fathers. Judith and me, we looked at the proper names that corresponded to the streets. We spent the night working on it and we found almost all of them. Claire would send the cards the next day. We were going to help her with the Chinese lanterns and setting up the record player. I went back home. They had all gone to chez Viau to buy soft serve ice cream cones. I went to my room and I started to read a new book that I had taken from Madame Leclerc's library. It surprised me because the book took place in Montréal. It was the first time that I read a book that happened in Canada, usually it was always in France. At first I had trouble following it. Madame Leclerc had funny books. I ended up understanding that it was a woman who was talking, telling about how her husband had left with one of his students. He was a professor at the university. The girl was blond and didn't wear a bra under her hippie tunics. I kept on reading even after everyone had gone to bed. The woman told her life's story, about meeting her husband, the little village she came from, her naïveté, and she kept insisting on the beauty of this girl that she had followed in the street for several days. No one knew she was following her but she couldn't help it. For six months, she didn't do anything else. She said that following this girl in the streets of

Montréal made her free. She felt light and happy for the first time in her life. In the end, her husband wanted to come back and live with her, but she refused. Afterward, I turned in my bed. I kept thinking about Claire's accident and the two big black and bluish spots she had on the side of her face. When I talked to her, I couldn't stop looking at them, it was stronger than me. I lay down on my stomach to play fireworks. I pressed on my eyes very hard and I saw all sorts of dots exploding. Sometimes it would get me to sleep. When my father got up with my mother to leave for work I was still awake. I heard them talking. My mother was telling him again that she couldn't stand him leaving every week. She spent her time reprimanding him. I would rather not've heard them because I was ashamed for my father. He wasn't able to go to school for a long time because his family was too poor. That's why he had to work in the woods. He always said that at least he didn't spend his life in the heat and in the nauseating stink of the paper pulp. Sometimes, when the wind came from the south in the summer, it smelled like the Kénogami factory all the way to rue Mésy. My mother would say the mill was stinking up the place and we'd close the windows.

Translating La Soeur de Judith*: Observations and commentary*

Documenting the translation process

Rainer Schulte suggests a process-oriented approach to translation dissertations to document the creation of a translation through drafts and subsequent theoretical observations. He says of this approach, "translation promotes the merging of the creative with the critical, the practice with the theory. The paradigm shift that becomes clear in this context is the shift from a content-oriented way of interpretation to a process-oriented exploration of texts and situations." (1998:41) Schulte seems to be advocating, to apply Louise Rosenblatt's terms, an aesthetic rather than efferent approach to the text as it is translated.

Although theory preceded my translation in this thesis, I will include excerpts from my drafts that highlight key moments in the translation process. To record these as I work, I had three documents open on my computer when I translated. The first was the translation itself, the second a glossary with columns to hold the French word or phrase, the definition (if necessary), possible translations, and my final choice of translation. I originally intended to include a glossary at the end of the translated text, but found it to be unnecessary in the end. I did not use the glossary during the translation, as I found when I was stuck on a word or had a word that I wanted to keep in French I wanted to do more than just note the word in a list.

The third document was a journal to hold thoughts, comments, and discussion of the text that exceed the scope of the glossary. For example, Simone, the narrator's mother, is an avid gardener. On page 16 the narrator sees her covered in mud and figures

she must have been in the *jardin.* In French, though, *jardin* can mean either *garden* or *yard.* My journal entry read:

> (16) *Elle devrait être en train de travailler dans le* ***jardin****. À la fin mai, elle prépare la terre pour ses semences.* Was she working in the **garden** or the **yard**? She's getting ready to sow seeds, but that could be in a garden in a yard. I think garden is more apt.

In her review of *La Soeur de Judith* for *Le Devoir* Danielle Laurin commented:

> Jamais l'écriture de Lise Tremblay ne nous a paru aussi sobre, minimaliste, épurée. Et concrète. Jamais le regard lucide, et ironique, qu'elle pose sur le monde de livre en livre ne nous a paru aussi authentique.[4] (2007)

Indeed, part of the beauty of the novel is its simplicity. Presented with such an elegant text, I felt my translation should be as close to Tremblay's French writing as possible, erring on the side of the literal rather than imposing any of my own flowery interpretive speculations. I believe that some texts call for the translator's hand to be heavier, particularly texts rich in dialogue and dialect where a translator may make analogous choices in the target language. *La Soeur de Judith* is unmistakably Québécois, but it is not written in"ungrammatical" French nor does it emphasize local dialect except for light slang.

This choice by the author afforded me, as the translator, an excellent opportunity to highlight the Québécitude of her work. In my translation's basically Standard English the French words and sentence formations stand in sharper relief than they might if I'd

[4] "Never before has Lise Tremblay's writing come across so sober, minimalist, purified. And concrete. Never before has the lucid, and ironic, perspective she has on the world from book to book come across as so authentic." (my translation)

felt forced to adopt, say, Black Vernacular English, as the language of the translation. Rather than wonder why children in Quebec sound like the ones in inner city St. Louis, the reader of the translation will not notice the language of the text except for the French words.

Unlike Backus in her translation of *Kitchen*, the example Venuti gave of a successful foreignizing translation, I have chosen not to call extra attention to the French words by italicizing them. I would like the reader to think, "Of course there are French words in this novel! This is a francophone work from a francophone region." The words that are italicized are the ones that were italicized in the original text either because they were in English or because they were titles of books or magazines.

There is the potential to alienate readers by keeping words or sentence structures that are unknown to them, but I believe that my choices are not disruptive enough to put them off altogether, just to offer an occasional reminder that *La Soeur de Judith* is a novel written in French. I believe that if the reader feels strange or distant from the text at times that that is not a bad thing. As a traveler, I have experienced moments where I felt particularly displaced. Monolingual English-language readers are outsiders approaching a francophone text and if at moments they are aware of this their awareness of the translation will be heightened. In particular, monolingual English readers who have not had the opportunity to travel to foreign countries or interact with non-English speakers will for once find themselves on the outside. This could be a rare and valuable humanizing experience for North American high school students.

In the sections that follow I highlight recurring situations in the translation, offering examples and explanations of my solutions. First I will cover instances where I made decisions with regards to grammar, followed by formal choices relating to capitalization and punctuation. After that I showcase euphemisms and idiomatic expressions in the text. In the final section the discussion moves to other points of interest, including tricky vocabulary choices.

Grammatical choices

Verb tense

Like many other French texts, literary and historical, *La Soeur de Judith* is written primarily in the present tense. As foreignizing as it would have been to keep the text in the present tense, it would have been painfully awkward to read, so I chose to translate in the past tense, which is the English convention. At certain points, however, this decision became more complicated.

The narrator's mother suffers from bouts of debilitating depression. On pages 32-33 the narrator describes what is going to happen in the household and how she feels when her mother has a breakdown after her own, perpetually disappointing mother has failed to call to say she's not coming over for a special birthday dinner.

> Ma mère crie, elle aurait pu appeler. Après ma mère a disparu dans sa chambre. À cinq heures, mon père est allé lui porter du café. Je sais que mon père me fera téléphoner chez Viau pour commander des hot-dogs et un gros sac de patates frites pour souper. Une fois n'est pas coutume. On ira chercher la commande et on mangera sans ma mère. Il lui apportera une soupe Lipton vers sept heures lorsqu'elle sera réveillée. Ma mère passera le reste de la soirée au lit. Elle va se lever demain matin, les yeux

> enflés parce qu'elle a trop pleuré. Les histoires avec sa mère finissent tous le temps comme ça. Ça me rend triste. Je ne raconte jamais ces histoires à personne, même pas à Judith, ça me fait honte. Je déteste ma grand-mère et en plus elle a une odeur qui me lève le cœur. Elle met trop de poudre rose Avon que ma mère lui a donnée en cadeau. Mon père m'a aidée pour la vaiselle.

We see in this passage the range of verb tenses in French, but they are not all included in the English. The most difficult choice I had to make with my verb tenses was in this passage, deciding how to translate *Ça me rend triste.* Because English doesn't use a literary present tense, I had to make a decision about when the narrator is speaking. If it's her twelve year old self writing during or at the end of the summer, then the mother's family is still causing trouble and the verbs should be present-tense, the same if the narrator is writing in the present day looking back and family members are still alive. If, however, it is present day and the mother is gone, past perfect is fine.

I believe *La Soeur de Judith* is narrated as it happens, rather than looking back from adulthood or even from the end of the summer. On page 37 Tremblay writes "Ça fait deux semaines que l'école est fini."[5] While the format of the book is not explicitly a journal, it does seem that the narrator is reporting from the end of the day, describing her activities.

> My mother yelled, she could have called. Afterward my mother disappeared into her room. At five o'clock, my father went to bring her some coffee. I knew that my father would have me telephone chez Viau to order hot dogs and a big bag of fries for supper. One time doesn't make a habit. We would go pick up the order and we would eat without my mother. He would bring her a Lipton soup around seven when she would have woken up. My mother would spend the rest of the evening in bed. She would get up tomorrow morning, her eyes swollen from having cried too much. The stories with her mother always end up like that. It makes

[5] "It's been two weeks since school ended." (my translation)

me sad. I never tell these stories to anyone, not even Judith, I'm ashamed of them. I hate my grandmother and on top of that her smell makes me sick to my stomach. She puts on too much pink Avon powder that my mother gave her as a gift. My father helped me with the dishes.

[Subject], [Subject pronoun] [Verb]

One easy-to-do, difficult-to-read choice I made was to transfer the very Québécois formation of doubling the subject with its pronoun before the verb in a sentence, for example *Judith et moi, on s'occupait souvent de Régis* (11), translated as *Judith and me, we often took care of Régis.* This formation is one that I often hear Anglophone Quebeckers, especially of the welfare and working classes, use when speaking. By keeping the [subject] [subject pronoun] [verb] formation intact in translation, I hoped to preserve the rhythm of the adolescent narrator's speech.

The particular case of *Judith et moi, on* has textual significance in *La Soeur de Judith.* In the first half of the novel, when the narrator and her friend Judith are closest, it appears regularly. Later, it drops off altogether, only to reappear, altered, in the penultimate chapter as the narrator has started her advanced courses in school and has made new friends with whom she can share her academic interests. On page 164 we see *Gyslaine et moi on a regardé nos horaires et ils étaient identiques.* The dynamic and intelligent classmate Gyslaine has replaced the stagnant small-minded childhood friend Judith.

Count vs. mass nouns

It is common knowledge that languages are not identical systems simply with different vocabulary. Take the linguistic conceptualization of dishes to be washed, for example. On page 33 we see *Ma père m'a aidée pour la vaiselle.* The dishes are singular in French and plural in English. In this case (*My father helped me with the dishes*) and most others in *La Soeur de Judith* I translated according to English norms about the number of the noun(s) in question without hesitation.

However, on page 12 of the novel the narrator is anticipating her mother's explosive reaction to a newspaper article about Judith's vapid sister. We have the first glimpse of her as an emotional eater: *J'ai avalé trois toasts de suite en pensant à ce qu'elle allait dire.* I translated this sentence as *I swallowed three toasts in a row thinking about what she was going to say.*

Toast is a common food across North America but it is conceptualized differently in English and French. In English we typically say *pieces of toast*, or at least we do outside of Quebec. *Toast* the bread product is a not a count noun. *A toast*, singular, is what the best man gives at a wedding. My choice of *toasts* was intentionally foreignizing for American readers. At the same time, in its Québécois context it is culturally precise. As one who enjoys going for a plate of bacon and eggs on the weekend, I have noticed that on bilingual breakfast menus here in Quebec meals come with *toasts*, rather than two *pieces* or *slices of toast.*

Formal elements

Capitalization of titles

The decision of whether or not to capitalize titles such as *monsieur*, *madame*, and *soeur*, which are lowercase in the French text, was one where I changed my mind twice, eventually ending up at my initial choice. My first impulse was to capitalize the titles, but then I thought that perhaps they would be mistaken for part of a given name. Of course, that would be absurd. Then I decided to keep the titles lowercase because they were lowercase in the novel and did not necessarily have to be changed to be understandable. My first journal entry relating to this was

> p. 11
>
> *madame Bolduc*
>
> Madame is lowercase. I'd initially changed it to uppercase to indicate that it was a title, but I wonder if an uninformed reader would think that Madame was a common first name in this town. I hope not, but I'll err on the side of caution, of familiarity, and respect for one of the formal conventions of the text.

In the end I decided to go back and capitalize them all. I think this is a good compromise between English and French. The titles remain in French but the English capitalization pattern ensures that their function will be recognized by monolingual readers, especially in the case of *Soeur*, a title they are unlikely to have encountered previously (unlike *Monsieur* or *Madame*, which are both commonly known).

Comma usage

The comma usage in this translation is not the same as my own. I have respected Tremblay's commas and did my best to use each phrase as the unit of translation. In some cases a comma joins what in my mind would normally be two complete sentences, for example, the one that begins page 11: *Régis arpentait les rues du quartier à la journée longue et le soir, à l'heure du souper, si on le voyait, il fallait le renvoyer chez lui.* I would have split the sentence after *soir*, if not with a period than at least with a semicolon. I find that in cases like this the comma, the continuation of the sentence as one whole, reflects the adolescence of the narrator.

Quotation marks

Another foreignizing choice I made with regards to punctuation was to keep French quotation marks rather than convert them to ones we use in English. There is not much dialogue and what dialogue there is is straightforward enough that the readers' not being familiar with French typographical convention will not affect their understanding. It will, however, affect their interpretations.

It is my hope that the foreign punctuation marks will convey a French accent to the dialogue. Initially, I considered leaving the dialogue in French and using footnotes to convey the translation as textual subtitling, if you will, but I think that that would be too disruptive. My choice amounts to dubbing over with a French accent: accessible but obviously non-native, without the inappropriate cheesiness that transliterating an actual Québécois accent would impart.

Euphemism and Idiomatic Expressions

Cases with near-literal English equivalents

As with any translation, there were cases, as *Lorsqu'elle s'emporte comme ça* on page 13, where there is a potential English solution that is very close to the French, but may not be ideal. I translated as *when she gets carried away like that* although the languages use different actors in these expressions. In the French, she is carrying herself away. It could potentially be phrased as *when she works herself up like that* but that changes the action in the expression away from the more similar literal carrying away, which I prefer.

Trickier cases – to calque or not to calque?

A few times in the text, when the narrator is misbehaving but her mother is not in a socially permissible position to correct her, the narrator describes what her mother is doing as *faire des gros yeux*, as on page 107 : *ma mère n'a pas cessé de me faire des gros yeux*. On my first pass through the translation, I translated this literally as *my mother kept on making big eyes at me* thinking it would be a case where although the expression was a bit odd-sounding in English, it would be understood for what it was.

Upon further reflection, however, I decided to change my translation to *my mother kept glaring at me*. In English when you *make big eyes* at someone, you're flirting or attempting to seduce. Since clearly the mother was not trying to seduce her daughter, the strangeness of the expression in this situation was just too great; a calque would have been inappropriate.

Tremblay uses the expression *tomber à l'eau*, meaning to fall through, fail, or go wrong, regularly throughout *La Soeur de Judith.* I went back and forth many times in the translation process on whether to use a non-literal adaptation or to translate it as *fall in the water*, which is not an English expression at all. I tried out using *flop* as in *Everything she did was a flop* for *Tout ce qu'elle fait tombe à l'eau* (18) and felt it was an acceptable decision until I came to the expression again in the second excerpt I translated for this thesis, and then again three pages later.

I had initially accepted the idea of domesticating the expression but later a memory of reading Berman or Venuti advocating literal translations of figures of speech like this came to mind and I began to reflect more deeply. Yes, the expression is definitely not English, though we do have the expression *to be all wet.* It doesn't have the same sense, though. While earlier in my process I thought that something like *fall apart* or *fall through* would be good for this expression, I decided that it was important to keep a literal translation of *tomber à l'eau.* It's weird, yes, but essential in its literary context.

There are enough other interactions with water in the novel (discussions of the quick death of those who fall into the Saguenay, a suicide in the river, and a religious festival with a miraculous fountain) that I think that removing this notion would be more disruptive to the text as a whole than keeping it in its incidental awkwardness.

How should we talk about Régis?

Judith has a brother who suffered a terrible allergic reaction to a drug for meningitis as a baby and is "terribly ugly" and, to use politically correct modern-day terminology, developmentally delayed. As a modern translator, and one that has worked closely with disabled adults and children in the past, my political correct-o-meter starts clicking wildly around dated terminology surrounding handicapped people, but in the case of *La Soeur de Judith*, the author's non-PC choices support the message of the novel and highlight its historical setting.

On page ten, when Régis first appears, it is as *Régis, le frère infirme de Judith*. How should this be translated? *Judith's disabled brother* sounds awful and artificial. The direct cognate would give *Judith's infirm brother*, which just sounds stuffy. I started out by trying *Judith's ill brother* in my first pass through the translation. *Sick* didn't come across as chronic enough.

Régis appears often in the novel with Tremblay exposing the unsympathetic care he receives from his overwhelmed family. On page 45 we learn that

> les fois où le père de Judith n'emmène pas Régis avec lui dans la voiture et que Régis en a connaissance, il se fâche et se mord les paumes de la main et se gratte les oreilles jusqu'au sang. On doit lui attacher les mains derrière le dos et lui donner une pilule pour le calmer. Lorsque cela arrive, la mère de Judith hurle tellement qu'on l'entend dans toute la rue et elle boude son mari pendant des jours.[6]

[6] "when Judith's father doesn't take Régis with him in the car and Régis knows it, he gets mad and bites the palms of his hands and scratches his ears until they bleed. They have to tie his hands behind his back and give him a pill to calm him down. When that happens, Judith's mother yells so much that you can hear her all down the street and she nags at her husband for days." (my translation)

Later in the novel, following Claire's car accident, her modern, university-educated therapist from Montreal, Gilles, convinces her parents to enroll Régis in a *centre de réadaptation* come September.

> Régis changerait du tout au tout. Il partirait le matin en autobus et rentrerait vers cinq heures. Selon Gilles, il allait progresser à pas de géant, du moins dans les premiers temps, et au centre il mangerait de façon plus équilibrée. (131)[7]

Along with the narrator, who always treats Régis tenderly, Régis progresses with the times into a more enlightened environment.

The ignorant starting point for this progression calls for the transfer of the dated terminology from the French into similarly "incorrect" terminology in English, not an up to date politically correct sanitization for the sake of putting readers at ease. The novel is set in another time and place, one whose treatment of people with differences may push readers out of their comfort zones. For the example of *infirme* from page 10, I chose *sickly* for my final translation. The English word is similarly dated and equally euphemistic.

[7] "Everything will change for Régis. He'll leave on the bus in the morning and come back around five o'clock. According to Gilles, he'll progress in giant's steps, at least at first, and at the centre he'll eat more balanced meals." (my translation)

In Conclusion

In this thesis I have offered a model of a translation that can be offered to classroom teachers, their students, and to a general readership that moves translation gently but boldly into public awareness.

Educators like Jenkinson have given some attention to the way they teach translations in their monolingual classrooms. Translation scholars have made some preliminary efforts to discuss the way the fact of translation is brought into the discussion of world literature in the classroom but much remains to be done. All agree that providing different translations of the same work to students to study effectively demonstrates some of the challenges and effects of the translation process.

In a situation where the text being studied has only one translation, it is impossible to provide other comparisons; the fact of translation must be highlighted in a different way. I have suggested the use of ample paratextual markers and supplemental material in addition to an aesthetic foreignizing translation strategy. The translation is clearly marked as such by a title page that notes the original language and author as well as the language of translation and the translator's name. My inclusion of a foreword discussing translation in the most basic terms offers the reader an approachable, understandable introduction to the fact of translation. The historical information in the foreword provides the reader with context essential to understanding *La Soeur de Judith*. Teachers, students, or other readers interested in learning more about Translation Studies or the history of Quebec may use my suggestions for further reading.

The translation itself keeps a foreign rhythm while some of its words remain in the source language, offering readers a sense of foreignness to which they are may not accustomed. Some of the text's expressions have been calqued to further preserve its foreignness, but it is not a chore or a struggle to read. It is foreign while remaining accessibly aesthetic. This enhances the value of the reading experience by simulating cross-cultural contact and, hopefully, stimulating interest or at least appreciation of novel and the culture from which it came.

Now is the time to bring Translation Studies into the mainstream. If translation remains invisible, dangerous "cultural narcissism and complacency" will prevail. Moving Translation Studies into public awareness can start by teaching the fact of translation at the high school level when students encounter translated literature in the "English" classroom.

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