

Translating the Poetry of Cécile Sauvage: Love and Creativity in Practice

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in

Translation Studies

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DECLARATION

I, Daria Chernysheva, confirm that the work presented in my thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

ABSTRACT

This project is composed of a critical discussion about translating the French writer Cécile Sauvage (1883-1927) and a creative translation of selected Sauvage poems into English. Informed by creative critical theories, this project examines the personal stakes residing within this academic framework. Chapter 1 takes up the concept of fannishness as a method of participating in a cultural product. I define fannishness as love for a text, imagine the translator as a fan, and analyze metaphors of spatial distance used to describe creation and criticism. In Chapter 2, I examine the reception of Sauvage's poetry, arguing that the historical treatment of Sauvage as a 'woman poet' has implications for translation. In Chapter 3, I examine how feminist theorists have dealt with Sauvage; drawing upon feminist and queer theories of translation, I connect translation to violence and love. In Chapter 4, I describe my approach to translating Sauvage on the formal level, drawing upon Jean Boase-Beier and Clive Scott to argue that a successful translation is one that embraces the translator's positioning and extends the source text's existence in a new way. In Chapter 5, I suggest that anthologizing or editing Sauvage means rewriting her. As I recount my trip to Sauvage's archives, I bridge translation and editing, arguing that a translation is an extension of a text's genesis. Chapter 6 discusses the reasoning behind the form, content and presentation of my translated collection, *A Sauvage Reader*. The *Reader* follows, interspersed with poetic commentary and quoted intertexts. The six themes that organize the *Reader* connect to creative critical vocabulary and to metaphors of translation. I conclude that my translation has given Sauvage's work a new narrative, chronicled a translator's experience, and brought to Translation Studies a novel articulation of how translators, like scholars, acknowledge relations of partiality, or what I call love.

IMPACT STATEMENT

Cécile Sauvage was an early twentieth-century French poet who has remained largely unknown since her lifetime. Where she has been discussed, it has frequently been in relation to her more famous son, the composer Olivier Messiaen. This is the first anglophone doctoral thesis to take Sauvage as its subject, and the second to do so globally. This thesis has therefore stimulated general awareness within the English-speaking academic community as to the place of Sauvage in the history of Western literature and in the history of writing by women. It is envisaged that other scholars working on early twentieth-century francophone and/or women's literature will use the arguments advanced in this thesis to inform their research.

These arguments about Sauvage's place in the literary canon, as well as the role that a translator plays in recreating the work of a writer across languages, have been disseminated in conference paper format before international audiences. These papers were delivered at the Society for French Studies Postgraduate Conference (May 2021), the 'Translation Memoir / Translation as Memoir Symposium' (July 2021), at conferences hosted by the University of Maryland (November 2021), the University of Warwick (May 2022), and Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3 (June 2022), and at the Society for French Studies Annual Conference (June 2023). The ideas presented in this thesis were likewise disseminated through publications in the journals *French Studies Bulletin* (2022) and *Textual Cultures* (2022). This research has been therefore made available in multiple forms and in open-access publications, raising the profile of a neglected writer and drawing attention to the role a translator's practice plays in this process. It is anticipated that this research will be useful for scholars working on translators' creative writing and memoirs.

General awareness of Sauvage and other early twentieth-century French women writers was increased through public-facing channels. My contribution to the UCL Europe blog drew the general reader's attention to recent developments in the rediscovery of neglected writers by academics and professional translators. My editing of the Wikipedia page on Sauvage means that the first port of call for a general anglophone reader seeking information on Sauvage has now been updated with the latest information about the writer and includes a comprehensive list of publications for further reading.

Finally, this thesis has prompted the processing of Sauvage's archives at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF). This is an encouraging sign that Sauvage's complete manuscripts and correspondence may soon be made available to library users, and, most importantly, visible to the public, as the webpages that display the library's holdings are updated and become publicly searchable. A long-term vision aims to see Sauvage's archives represented alongside those of Olivier Messiaen in the collection on permanent display at the newly opened BNF Museum. This thesis has been a step towards not only raising international awareness about a writer whose papers are yet to be fully catalogued and studied in depth, but also visibly increasing the diversity of the cultural objects available at a major public institution in France.

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INTRODUCTION

I will begin with Cécile Sauvage, although I am tempted to begin with myself. In a way, to speak about Sauvage is to speak about myself, because this project is about how Sauvage and I come together. This dissertation is composed of three interwoven subjects – Sauvage, creative criticism, and translation. In the following pages, I will introduce each of these parts in turn, although the ambition of this thesis is to demonstrate the significant overlap and mutual influence between these three subjects. Translating Sauvage has been a creative critical undertaking that has led me to reflect on subjective positioning in literary practice, on fannishness, on feminist translation, on usefulness and on use, on anthologies and archival research. But I will begin with Sauvage, with her biographical dates – although it may be questioned why a biography is usually taken to be the beginning. In the case of women writers, defaulting to the biography at the expense of the text is a common occurrence (Milligan 1996: 48-74; Dayan 2021: 164), and one of the goals of this project is to detach Sauvage from her biography, which has disproportionately defined her for more than a century. To supply biographical dates is a formality, because the Sauvage I want you, as a reader, to get to know will become knowable only by the end of this thesis, when you reach my translations of Sauvage's poems and encounter 'Cécile Sauvage' as the constructed, anglophone result of my argument.

Sauvage was a French poet who was born on 20 July 1883 in La-Roche-sur-Yon (Pays de la Loire) and who died in Paris on 26 August 1927. During her lifetime, she published two poetry collections with the Parisian publisher Mercure de France: *Tandis que la terre tourne* [*While the Earth Turns*] (Sauvage 1910) and *Le Vallon* [*The Vale*] (Sauvage 1913). These are extensive volumes, both containing subcollections, the most famous of which is *L'Âme en bourgeon* [*The Budding Soul*] (in *Tandis que la terre tourne*), a collection of poems about pregnancy and motherhood, inspired by Sauvage's son, who would grow up to be the celebrated twentieth-century composer Olivier Messiaen. Some of Sauvage's work appeared posthumously, most likely due to the efforts of the husband who survived her, Pierre Messiaen, in a volume titled *Les Œuvres de Cécile Sauvage* [*The Works of Cécile Sauvage*] (Sauvage 1929). The *Œuvres* contain incomplete reproductions of *Tandis que la terre tourne* and *Le Vallon* as well as the subcollection titled *Primevère*

[*Primrose*], a brief extract of a drama, and extracts of letters and life writing. Other posthumous Sauvage-related publications include a collection of laudatory essays about Sauvage, *Cécile Sauvage: Études et souvenirs* [*Cécile Sauvage: studies and recollections*] (1929), and a slim collection of letter extracts, *Lettres à Pierre Messiaen* [*Letters to Pierre Messiaen*] (Sauvage 1930), both edited and presented by Pierre Messiaen.¹

My dissertation is the first extensive anglophone piece of academic (and creative) literature that deals with Sauvage. English-language scholarship on Sauvage is limited to a book chapter (Dayan 2021), a section in an anthology (Shapiro 2008: 944-955), and a chapter in a monograph on Olivier Messiaen (Weller 2007).² In French, the showing is hardly much better: the most important recent work on Sauvage has been done by scholar and poet Béatrice Marchal (1995; 2008). Marchal's research has been indispensable in restoring and transcribing Sauvage's lost manuscripts of love poetry. Titled *L'Étreinte mystique* [*The Mystical Embrace*], *Prière* [*Prayer*], and *L'Aile et la rose* [*The Wing and the Rose*], these manuscripts now exist, with annotations, in the published volume *Écrits d'amour* [*Love Writings*] (Sauvage 2009). Despite Marchal's intention to right the apparent wrongs done to Sauvage's literary history and 'rétablir Cécile Sauvage dans sa vérité de femme' [reestablish Sauvage in her truth as a woman] (Sauvage 2009: 32), Peter Dayan observes that Marchal is nonetheless still too interested in Sauvage's relationship to the men in her life, too interested in Sauvage's biography (2021: 164). Sauvage's legacy therefore presents the image of a poet often obscured by her much more famous son, read in conjunction with a clandestine love affair (Sauvage 2009: 20-22), or else modulated by her husband, who introduced significant posthumous edits into her work as he prepared it for publication (ibid: 30-32). In announcing that my thesis seeks to tease Sauvage away from the influence of these relationships, I readily acknowledge that I cannot and do not present an objective image of Sauvage. In this case, it is my voice that modulates Sauvage. It is an act of the translator's possession: while such an act may be perceived as

¹ A full list of known works by Sauvage is provided in Appendix A.

² Dayan's chapter does appear to be part of a recent resurgence of interest in early twentieth-century French women writers. I discuss this expansion of scholarship in Chapter 2, 'Sauvage and her female literary contemporaries'.

transgressive or appropriative, I argue that it presents new ways of reading Sauvage, giving her another – but by no means exclusive – narrative.

The question that such a project would hope to answer at the outset is why Sauvage is worth reading and translating, or why she deserves to be given a new narrative. What is her importance among all the poets across the world who ever lived and published? Dayan puzzles over how to define such importance, and how that of Sauvage may be measured or defended in traditional academic terms:

What is importance, after all? Influence, actual or potential, on society, or what we might today call ‘impact’? I suspect Sauvage had almost none, and can never have much. A key place in the development of poetry? I cannot say I feel Sauvage might have had one; the history of French poetry in many ways bypassed her. A message of social or political value? An account of historically interesting events? No, none of that, really. (2021: 163)

And yet – to preempt the reader of this thesis before they despair of having fallen upon such an apparently lackluster subject – Dayan calls Sauvage ‘a great poet who deserves to be widely read and studied in universities [...]’. To me, Sauvage’s poetry is vastly superior to that of many male poets of her period whose names are much better known’ (ibid). My thesis will corroborate some of Dayan’s claims: I agree that Sauvage’s poetry was neither avant-garde in form nor what we might call socially or politically progressive in content. During her lifetime and consistently after, she was lumped together – perhaps by what Dayan terms ‘sexist social forces’ (ibid) – with arguably minor French mainland poetry movements, or else received as a representative of a homogenously imagined class of ‘women’s poetry’. But what interests me most among Dayan’s statements is the inclusion of ‘To me’ as a reason for Sauvage’s worth. To me, Sauvage’s poetry is great poetry: it is worth reading and it is worth sharing.

This thesis does not take traditional academic form throughout, because I have decided that I can best share Sauvage’s poetry by translating it. This translation is in the shape of a creative element titled *A Sauvage Reader*. Nor does this thesis take a traditional academic tone throughout. I am interested in precisely the value of ‘To me’, and what it means for how we speak of and for the subjects that fascinate us, the subjects that constitute our work, whether in the academy or in the professional field of literary translation. Therefore, I frequently seek to shed the

pretense of objective distance that may otherwise be, or traditionally has been, the standard in academic literature, and instead to foreground the 'me'. As feminist translation scholarship reminds us, there can be no neutral position from which one speaks – only a biased position hiding behind the veneer of professionalism. Full disclosure of one's interests is the only ethical solution (Ergun 2020).

This is not the direction this project would have taken, were it not written from within the Creative Critical Writing program at UCL. I did not know of creative criticism when I first considered embarking upon this PhD; but creative criticism, as an emerging area of study and practice, and in fact a new direction for the humanities, has ended up informing my approach and fueling my interest in creating a work of doctoral scholarship that questions the distinction between academic and creative forms of writing. My intention with this thesis was to create something more hybrid than a literary translation accompanied by critical commentary. I seek to show that the literary can successfully transmit critical arguments, and that the academic does not have to lack literary or creative qualities to be accepted as academic. Above all, I seek to constantly attend to the 'To me', because I believe it is by paying attention to the personal stakes that we can better explain the value of our work as scholars and writers. I wish to defend subjects mattering personally as much as subjects are defended for mattering globally, socially, interpersonally. Despite being wary of the biographical, as I mentioned at the outset, I am curious about the personal. What I stated at the very beginning of this introduction has proven to be true: even as I started out by speaking of Sauvage, I ended up speaking of myself.

1. What is the creative critical?

A day-long event hosted by creative critical practitioners based in the United Kingdom being titled exactly so (Flynn and Karshan 2022) suggests that this is a name of a direction in scholarship still open to redefinition. The emergence of the creative critical has been accompanied by growing interest in interdisciplinarity as 'creative writing embeds itself in the academy, demanding fresh thought about the forms and languages of criticism' (*Welcome to the Creative Critical* 2021). Such emphasis on 'forms' in the plural is paramount. The diversity of what may be referred to as creative critical undertakings makes it difficult to prescribe one

particular way of doing creative critical work. Such projects may vary from theater performances to traditional prose commentaries, to works that integrate text and images of visual art installations. There are, however, identifiable characteristics that many creative critical works share: these include fragmentation, textual hybridity, non-linear progression of argument or narrative, the foregrounding of the personal, and even extensive use of quotation, or similar engagement with texts other than the one being composed by the creative critical practitioner. In this section I will survey these characteristics and indicate how they are applicable to my project of translating *Sauvage*.

The literature on creative criticism that has emerged out of the academic domain is frequently collected in anthologies and edited volumes, such as Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean's *Research-based Practice, Practice-based Research in the Creative Arts* (2009), Stephen Benson and Clare Connor's *Creative Criticism* (2014), Katja Hilevaara and Emily Orley's *The Creative Critic* (2018), and Florian Mussgnug, Mathelinda Nabugodi, and Thea Petrou's *Thinking Through Relation: Encounters in Creative Critical Writing* (2021). Many of the essays, play extracts, interviews, and visual art pieces within such collections strive to do creative criticism even as they attempt to articulate what creative criticism is; in other words, these scholars and artists apply to their texts the dimensions they observe to be the hallmarks of creative critical practice. In certain pieces, the practitioners maintain a distinction between the creative and the critical – for example, as in the case of a piece of performance art that is then engaged with by means of a written commentary (Hilevaara and Orley 2018: 241-247).

One common vein that runs through these anthologies presents creative criticism as an antidote to the current state of writing in the academic humanities. This is a position proposed in response to 'an uneasy awareness of the fact that established forms of scholarly presentation (the conventional monograph or peer-reviewed article) are no longer adequate to the needs of the contemporary academy, much less those of the world beyond it' (Bammer and Joeres 2015: 2). Creative criticism appears to emerge out of a climate of a 'growing sense of helplessness and cynicism within university arts and humanity [sic] communities' (Hilevaara and Orley 2021). Although space for creative criticism may exist in institutions, where structures are in place to foster creative critical work, creative criticism also 'points beyond prescriptive regimes of production and assessment,

disciplinary protocols and organizational structures' (Mussnug, Nabugodi, and Petrou 2021: 7).

Much like the tension that comes of trying to draw the line between author and translator (how much creativity do we admit to either party?), writing on creative criticism, in attempting to make out exactly what sort of creature the creative critic is, addresses the balance to be struck between institutional rigor on the one hand and licence, whimsy, and freedom on the other. Creative criticism advises to do away with the 'tone-lock' that characterizes contemporary academic writing and makes it stale (Benson and Connors 2014: 16), but neither is creative criticism permitted to be a 'free-play of so-called personal opinion' (ibid: 15). Bammer and Joeres observe that in creative criticism there still exists the requirement of 'mastery of the scholarly conventions and rules of evidence in a given field, and the confidence to know when to set them aside and rethink them' (2015: 15). There is clearly an expressed desire for creative criticism to work for academia. Despite the intention for academic works to permeate the world beyond academia, most creative critical practitioners are still forced to keep the two worlds separate for practical reasons, as Smith and Dean argue. For example, few publishers will issue both a monograph and a poetry pamphlet (Smith and Dean 2009: 13). However, the creative critical movement articulates a clear need for artistic and creative endeavors to be recognized as valid contributions by academics who are not necessarily working within a department designated as 'creative'.

Creative criticism is frequently described as performative, as aspiring to performativity – not in the least because a lot of creative critical work in fact moves from one art form into another, from space to text. Creative criticism often builds upon theater and visual art; many examples of creative criticism are textual reflections on art installations, art performances, architecture, walking, or otherwise moving through space and playing with space and form (Hilevaara and Orley 2018; Mathews 2022). The vocabulary surrounding installation art and the theater is imported into creative criticism. Creative criticism seeks to foreground the idea that 'criticism is, in some very crucial ways, *an act undertaken by the critic*' (Butt 2005: 11, emphasis in original). The creative critical becomes a way of describing action upon the page, and, in keeping with J. L. Austin's speech act theory, this new type of criticism also recognizes the written/spoken word as action itself (ibid: 10).

Creative critical showcases are replete with adjectives that signify ruptures, experimentation, fragmentation, and discontinuity, thus encouraging the use of non-cohesive structure and the non-linearity of narrative. Alongside Austin, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari often reappear as authorities, bringing with them concepts of the rhizomatic, of repetition and restarts (Hilevaara and Orley 2018: 110-111). Benson and Connors offer Roland Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse* as one example of what a creative critical work looks like, dubbing Barthes 'the arch-fragmenter' (2014: 40). Today's creative critics seek to draw upon established theorists while simultaneously acknowledging that 'postmodern criticism itself, replete with its theoretical orthodoxies, [...] is in danger of hardening into doxa' (Butt 2005: 5). There is therefore an emphasis on breaking away from established forms and 'the importance of an *experimental* writerly process in performing the tasks of criticism' (ibid:11, emphasis in original). In fact, 'criticism today may find itself turning away from some of the established procedures of critical practice *precisely in order that it remain critical*' (ibid, emphasis in original). There is a call for renewal with respect to the unquestioned observation of established procedures of critical practice; at least, there is an expressed wariness of the stale nature of unchanging, established procedures.

The creative critic abandons so-called 'critical distance'; the creative critic is intimate with their subject. In this manner the creative critic may be said to be postcritical, following Rita Felski's definition of postcriticism as a practice that abandons the hermeneutics of suspicion and attempts to approach text through recognition, response, and intimacy (Felski 2015; Felski 2020). Geoff Dyer writes in *Out of Sheer Rage*, 'We want the experience of reading [D. H. Lawrence] to be as intimate as possible' (Benson and Connors 2014: 151). In the eyes of some observers, however, such intimacy can quickly spill over into the too-personal: Hélène Frichot writes, 'To write is not to recount one's memories and travels, one's loves and griefs, one's dreams and fantasies. Writing always carries the risk of becoming too "personological"' (2018: 144). On the other hand, one's previous experience, made up of memories, love, and griefs, cannot be entirely dismissed when considering an encounter with a work of art. In Timothy Mathews' understanding, 'What makes criticism creative [...] is a heightened attention to the unique materialities of the work of art, but also to the serendipities of our encounter with it' (Mussgnug, Nabugodi, and Petrou 2021: 7). Tim Beasley-Murray likewise

suggests that a critic's attention to their positionality and the self-disclosure of such positionality, although a 'risky' endeavor, nonetheless has the chance to revivify a 'traditional critical practice [...] that now teeters on the brink of ritual [...] isolated from openness and risk' (2021: 67). Gavin Butt marries performativity and intimacy in drawing upon Michael Fried and Jacques Derrida, writing, 'I am taking Derrida's reflections upon intimate modes of address as instructive in thinking about the performativity of the critic's address to [their] objects' (2005: 7). Butt notes that the theatrical turn in Western art since the 1960s 'has highlighted the experience of art as a profoundly *embodied* experience' (ibid: 9, emphasis in original). The critic's presence – if not the critic's past, in the form of what Fricot calls 'memories and travels [...] loves and griefs' (2018: 144) – is therefore essential to the experience of art or text. Proximity, the paying of attention to the experience, embodiment: these terms emerge as important to translation, too, especially in the phenomenological theories of Clive Scott (2012a; 2012b; 2021) who posits literary translation as about the embodied 'experience of a text' (2012a: 11).

The goal of creative criticism appears to be a form of writing that strikes a balance between the philosophical or the theoretical, and the intimate or the proximate. In this regard certain creative critics take up the essay as an ideal form, citing Theodor Adorno who, in 'The Essay as Form' (1984), suggests that the essay is a mode of writing that is playful and unprescribed, shifting elegantly between the abstract and the tangible. The strength of the essay's form lies, in the words of Angelika Bammer and Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres, in the fact that

while the essay does not eschew argument, as a form that blends 'the philosophical, the particular, and the personal,' it cannot be reduced to 'an argument'. In an essay we are not told what 'the meaning' is by the author who holds the authority. Rather, meanings are created through a process of discovery in which both author and reader participate. (2015: 17-18)

The experience of an art object as one of a process of discovery involving both creator and audience participation is one to which the creative critic aspires. Rajni Shah stresses the importance of 'attempting to meet the audience *through* the work, to explore its process and thinking and meaning *with* them' (2018: 244, emphases in original). This invitation to the reader to participate is echoed by Joeres, who

observes that the essay is a good space in which to unfold 'something that we see as a vital but too often missing factor in academic prose, namely, a pronounced goal emphasizing the crucial importance of the communication between author and reader' (2018: 113). Joeres goes on to observe that a text has a specific meaning for a reader that is contingent only upon that reader; the reader is therefore brought into the text's meaning-making process.

Certain critics question the belief that contemporary academic prose lacks intimacy or does not foster readerly participation. They contest the perception of academic writing as ossified or inflexible. Instead, they argue on behalf of recognizing and accepting academic prose as a style in itself. Eric Hayot writes up a spirited defense of academic writing in his essay 'Academic Writing, I Love You', arguing against the attitude of contempt (coming from outside academia and from within) aimed at the kind of prose employed in the humanities. 'What if literary criticism were one of the major nonfictional genres of the twentieth century?' Hayot wonders. 'What if we were to write a history of that genre [...] as a history of experiments in structure, rhetoric, and style?' (2014: 61). Hayot argues that the intellectual ability required to understand dense texts should be celebrated, that there is beauty to be found in the complexity of the existing academic form, and that academic texts should be read for aesthetics in their own right. Bammer and Joeres express something similar when they ask, 'What would it mean [...] to take the aesthetics of scholarly writing seriously?' (2015: 2-3). Hayot and Bammer and Joeres share the assumption, or hope, that the aesthetics of scholarly writing, when executed well, would provide all that has been claimed above for the practice of creative criticism: communication, trust, generativity, generousness, intimacy, action, and the critic's being present in the encounter with the text rather than abstracted (or, indeed, reducible to an abstract).

The overarching issue appears to be one of style – writing style. Some of the creative critics in the surveyed anthologies present their writing *as* creative practice, while others merely write *about* creative practice (theater pieces and visual or performance art). But especially for the purposes of this project, it is writing that is key. Simon Piasecki makes evident the importance of writing, as well as the distinction between the words 'writing' and 'criticism', when he observes, in prefacing a few of his artworks, 'I have attempted [...] to conflate playfully the space between my writing and practice, since to me they feel very much the same' (2018:

213). Piasecki delineates not scholarship and practice, not criticism and practice, but *writing* and practice. In the same text he points out: 'In the research community, the written-up object is often regarded as the research, when of course it is actually the concluding product of that research' (ibid). Writing, in Piasecki's understanding, concludes, seals, imprints, and codifies. It is the end product of the thought process and leads a slightly different existence than a theater piece or a painting. Writing, as imagined through a creative critical lens, has a responsibility not merely to 'ask us to rethink *how* and *when* we write, but to reconsider *why* we write in the first place, instead of, say, producing images, streaming video, or recording sound' (Bammer and Joeres 2015: 9). Beyond articulating a desire for writing to be an effective form of communication, especially between academia and the public (ibid: 2), the creative critical approach also emphasizes paying attention to the way writing works on a stylistic and formal level, calling for scholars and their readers 'to take the aesthetics of scholarly writing seriously' (ibid: 2-3).

The creative critic works at balancing writing's tendency towards closure with the desire to make writing open and generative. Writing is observed as being at once finite and infinite, as in the case of Benson and Connors who examine the concept of quotation: they affirm that quotations can be drawn upon liberally, even thieved, magpie-like, 'in the interests of an expanded notion of a responsible writing that knows no bounds, that stops at nothing' (2014: 27). Creative critics appear to know no borders: in importing, crossing, and 'sniffing an opportunity' (ibid), creative critics become 'something like burglars, or perhaps communists' (ibid: 34). The creative critic pieces other texts together, creating a new text, a heterogenous work, an anthology, for 'an anthology is a work made of quotations' (ibid: 27). Benson and Connors quote from Geoffrey Hartman's *Criticism in the Wilderness* in observing that a writer may productively work in/with a text other than their own, because 'quotations *can* be where criticism happens, which is why creative criticism is fully justified in sniffing an opportunity, the chance of making something of quotation's possibilities' (ibid, emphasis in original). However, doing so similarly 'require[s] playing seriously with the matter of authority and affiliation, of speaking of and speaking for' (ibid). Such border-crossing or trespassing behavior, throwing issues of authority and affiliation into question, is also to be found in the work of translators and fans, as I explore further in Chapter 1 of this thesis; likewise, Chapter 5 returns

to anthologies, and Chapter 6 embraces the idea of translation as working with quotations.

Translation, as this project will make clear, shares many parallels with creative criticism. Clive Scott has recently proposed ‘the translational model’ as one that moves texts from being understood as objects of criticism towards an understanding of texts as objects that are creatively worked on. ‘The critical translation’, writes Scott, ‘will naturally tend to act as a justification of the ST [source text] *as it is* [...]’. The creative approach to translation, on the other hand, considers that [...] translating for the monoglot reader actively prevents translation carrying out the tasks peculiar to it, which are principally twofold: to translate not the ST’s meaning but the experience of the reader of the ST; to project the ST into its possible futures, to break out of a past-relatedness’ (2021: 191, emphasis in original). Likewise, in describing what he sees as the aims of literary translation, Scott echoes the creative critical emphasis on forms of writing that resist cohesion and embrace heterogeneity, observing, ‘Critical translation still finds it necessary to suppose organic wholeness for the ST, or compositional integrity, which the translator must do their best to preserve [...]. Creative translation naturally brings into question an aesthetic which has achievedness, wholeness, as a criterion, or which makes a virtue of consistency to self’ (ibid: 194). Echoing the emphasis on personal stakes and the importance of the serendipitous aspects of an experience with an artwork, Scott observes that it is not ‘a life, or a coherent identity, or a point of view’ that a translator brings to the text, but rather ‘a gradually accumulated repository of particular knowledges, of reflexes and impulses, connections and memories’; such a repository then ‘[animates] sense and the senses in the reader-translator’s contact with a text’ (ibid: 197). Finally, parallel to an encouragement to pay greater attention to writing styles, including academic writing style, Translation Studies scholars have drawn attention to the individual literary styles of translators (Baker 2000), to how translators engage with source text stylistics (Boase-Beier 2020), and to how an identification of a translator’s ‘thumb-print’ (Hewson 2011: 19) can have implications for the critical appraisal of a given translation.

2. A note on translation in a thesis on translation

I have multiple reasons to translate Sauvage into English. As I stated at the outset, my translation will help increase the visibility of a poet who has much to offer and who has been overlooked. My translation will offer a much broader selection of poems in English than have been previously presented (Weller 2007; Shapiro 2008). It will create a new narrative arc for the poet and contribute to her being less defined by her biography.

Translating Sauvage also means emphasizing the creative aspects of translation. Translation as a form of creative writing has been widely defended and studied (Bassnett and Bush 2006; Perteghella and Loffredo 2008; Wilson and Gerber 2012; Malmkjær 2019). Such literature is covered in more detail at the beginning of Chapter 4. Yet, translations of Sauvage are not the only translations in this thesis. Because many of the French texts that I cite, especially from early twentieth-century literary journal articles on Sauvage, do not have corresponding existing English translations, I supply my own. The question arises of how these translations – ostensibly non-creative or non-poetic – differ from translations of Sauvage’s poems, if they do at all. There is a sense, even among expert scholars and poets, that poetry translations are somehow distinct from other types of translations. Josephine Balmer, a classicist and poet, hints at this distinction when describing her Ovid project: ‘My versions of *Tristia* were planned for a poetry collection, not a “standard” translation’ (2009: xv). Balmer follows with an observation that to make ‘poetry’ is to draw upon degrees of creativity inappropriate in a ‘standard translation’. She writes, ‘Ovid’s originals are often condensed in my new versions and/or some line order reversed [...]. Other poems represent shorter, more impressionistic visions of their source text’ (ibid). The idea of poetry translation suggests that the source text may be treated as having a degree of elasticity. Other possible qualities of poetry and/or ‘creative’ translation are discussed in Chapter 4.

Such a distinction suggests that that the translations in *A Sauvage Reader* may be different from the translations to be found in Chapters 1 through 6 of this thesis. I say that they mostly are – not out of an inherent difference in the level of literariness of the source texts, but due to the different ‘goals’ that I have set for translations in the chapters and translations in the *Reader*. Hans J. Vermeer writes that a target text’s ‘adequacy’ is defined by its orientation towards the target culture; different ‘goals’ may therefore be set for source text and any target texts that may be produced (2012: 193). A translator makes the call as to ‘what role a source text

plays in [their] translational action' (ibid: 192). Thus what matters is 'the purpose, the skopos, of the communication in a given situation' (ibid). I have treated translations in the chapters as having a different purpose from the translations in the *Reader*. The translations of citations in the chapters serve to illustrate the ongoing argument. Often it is not necessary to reproduce the entirety of a poem to do so. For instance, in the section 'Sauvage and her female literary contemporaries' (Chapter 2), I reproduce for the sake of succinctness only selected lines from the poem that begins 'Swift box of glass and leather'. The purpose of these lines and their accompanying translation is to illustrate a point about Sauvage's choice of imagery. My translation in this case does not have the goal of being literary, if literariness may be defined by qualities such as the reproduction of end rhyme in translation. Because corresponding end rhymes are not reproduced in this extract, it seems unhelpful to strive in this case for the kind of translation I perform in the *Reader*, where poems are considered in their entirety, meaning that I pay attention to the stylistic effect of the poem as a whole, as well as to the rhetorical devices present in individual lines. I would refer to the in-chapter translations as gloss translations; but it may also be observed that even a gloss translation undermines notions of equivalence, as I argue in 'The difference in a gloss' (Chapter 4). Additionally, I note that my in-chapter translations do not *always* differ from the translations presented in the *Reader*. I sometimes cite from the *Reader* to demonstrate what I have done in the *Reader*, or – to be very truthful – because I completed the poem translation prior to writing up the argument. In instances where an in-chapter translation of a poem does not differ from that provided in the *Reader*, such a translation is given in blue.

A distinction must be made between a translation's purpose or goal – for instance, an unrhymed translation is presented with the goal of emphasizing something other than its rhyme scheme – and the level of literariness that a reader discovers in that translation. In the case of what is understood to be 'translated literature', goal and perceived literariness may of course overlap: the subject of Wright's investigation into translation (2016) and that of Boase-Beier (2020) is precisely how the literariness of a source text is made manifest (or not) in a target text. But even a translation furnished without the goal of being literary may reveal itself to the reader as having literary qualities. For example, in supplying translations into English from Simone de Beauvoir's *Le deuxième sexe* [*The Second Sex*] (1949), I consulted both available English translations (Beauvoir 1993; Beauvoir

2009). I was struck – as a reader, not as a translator – by the translations’ poetic quality and variety. For instance, to translate ‘[L]a future mère se sent humus et glèbe, source, racine’ (Beauvoir 1949b: 315), H.M. Parshley supplies the line, ‘The mother-to-be feels herself one with soil and sod, stock and root’ (Beauvoir 1993: 529). I cite Beauvoir in Chapter 3 to give evidence of how she reads Sauvage’s poetry as reproducing patriarchal myths; my intention in supplying the quotations both in French and English is to draw attention to the similarity of the French vocabulary between Beauvoir and Sauvage. I did not intend for the translation of the citation to do any work at this point in demonstrating anything about translation as a process – and yet it does: it is evident that Parshley displays creativity and a cultural heritage of Anglo-Saxon prosody by translating the end of the sentence in alliterative hemistichs. Difference and creativity in translation are made visible. For my citations of Beauvoir, I ultimately decided to alternate between the Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier translation (Beauvoir 2009) and the Parshley translation, because even this space can be used to demonstrate how translation is a version-generating process. *Le deuxième sexe*, when the totality of its translations is considered, amounts to more than the French text or any one translation.

Another important instance in this thesis where translation matters beyond what I do in *A Sauvage Reader* concerns my use of the French term *poésie féminine*. Because I am proposing – notably in Chapter 3 – that this term has been externally imposed upon literature written by women, and is therefore a phenomenon that can be observed in practice among readers of such literature, I keep the term in French. In doing so I emphasize that the term is a readerly construct that has identifiable characteristics (see Chapters 2 and 3). To translate the term into English as ‘women’s poetry’ would be to lend *poésie féminine* the sort of essentialist credence it desires for itself. In some cases, when referring to works composed exclusively by women, I refer to this as ‘poetry by women’, ‘literature by women’, or ‘literary production by women’. I use these English terms to translate the titles of the French anthologies I survey in Chapter 5. I anticipate that my translation choice, as well my use of the untranslated term, will contribute to the deconstruction of a term that has gone largely uninterrogated in its French incarnation.

I summarize my translation practice in this thesis as follows. I provide the original French citations where I believe the French language is of importance to the argument *or* where there is no published English translation of the text in question

readily available. Attributions to English translations other than my own are indicated in brackets or in the bibliography. Otherwise, unattributed translations from the French, including translations of Sauvage, are my own. My translations of Sauvage's poems may differ between the chapters and the *Reader*, owing to the different goals I set for these translations. Finally, when referring to a particular poem by Sauvage (which are largely untitled), for ease of reference I give the first line of the English translation, as well as in parentheses the section of the *Reader* in which that poem may be found.

3. Chapter outlines

I open Chapter 1, 'Prelude', with a confessional, attempting to answer the question of why I am working on Sauvage by other means than the usual set of criteria by which a writer's importance may be measured (Dayan 2021). My 'Prelude' aims at delivering a text that stylistically blends the creative and the critical; in other words, it attempts to be essayistic by moving between anecdote and analysis. I describe how I came to Sauvage and developed possessive feelings towards her poetry, appointing myself as her English-language representative. I relate this reflection to fan studies, outlining how Henry Jenkins, inspired by Michel de Certeau, defined fans as 'textual poachers' who trespassed on property and 'sat too close' to their beloved cultural objects (1992). I point out that Translation Studies is well-positioned to further consider the status of translator as a fan, given that significant scholarship has already been dedicated to the activity of fansubs. I define a fannish engagement with a text as one infused with emotional investment. Moreover, fannish engagement is generative: fans' loving manipulation of cultural objects results in their creating new texts. Such engagement differs from how criticism and critical thinking have been traditionally understood, where a critical approach is imagined as having a degree of figurative distance from the text (Felski 2015; Felski 2020). I demonstrate that similar metaphors of distance were used to describe cultural production by women during Sauvage's time, and that Sauvage and her contemporaries were ultimately deemed to be 'too close to life' to engage in good criticism or creation. Finally, I draw upon Matthew Reynolds' argument that metaphors are not only ways of describing, but also doing things, notably translation

(2011), in order to address how the metaphors of spatiality and trespass I have been discussing relate to my approach to translating Sauvage.

The remaining chapters of the dissertation contain less of the confessional tone and instead present the results of my research in a more academically conventional manner. In Chapter 2, 'The Contexts of Cécile Sauvage', I provide an overview of the historical and literary circumstances in which Sauvage's work was composed and received. I argue that Sauvage did not work in a vacuum and that there are similarities between her poetry and that of her contemporaries. Certain observers have connected Sauvage to the contemporary literary movements of *jammisme* and *naturisme*, classifying Sauvage with poets such as Francis Jammes and Anna de Noailles. I instead connect Sauvage to other contemporary women writers, pointing out that Sauvage's corpus shares significant thematic overlap with the work of writers such as Marguerite Burnat-Provins, Marie Dauguet, and Valentine de Saint-Point. I argue that it is not enough to refer to such overlap as *poésie féminine*, a term used to describe and homogenize women's cultural production by assigning it gendered, essentialist traits. Rather, the reception of Sauvage's work should be understood with reference to social constructions of womanhood at the turn of the twentieth century, as well as to the efforts by Sauvage's readers and editors to find evidence of such constructions in her poetry. It is important to acknowledge such readings and see them reflected in reeditions and translations of Sauvage's poetry down the line.

In Chapter 3, 'Sauvage's Feminist Usefulness', I turn to Sauvage's most famous reader – Simone de Beauvoir – to demonstrate ways in which the label of *poésie féminine* and essentialist readings of Sauvage endured well into the twentieth century. With the development of feminism in scholarship and society, political motivations helped redefine *poésie féminine*, but did not fully deconstruct the concept. This led to Sauvage, among other women writers, being perceived as 'unusable' for certain feminisms (Johnson 1991). The development of interventionist strategies as a way to achieve feminist, ideologically motivated translation, notably by the Canadian School of the 1990s, drew attention to the power dynamics between text and translator and increased the translator's visibility. Recent developments in feminist translation theory encourage transnational, localized approaches and betray a tension between the articulation of violence and an articulation of love. I investigate how Sauvage, as an ostensibly 'unfeminist' subject,

may be squared with the aims of what is today defined in Western scholarship as feminist translation. If feminist goals include increasing the profiles of work by women writers and being transparent about the translator's ideological positioning (Susam-Saraeva 2005; Ergun 2020), I suggest that this project fulfils those goals. I then turn to the sex/ualization of translation, as imagined by academics working in queer scholarship (Santaemilia 2018), as a way of acknowledging that translation can be both a scene of intimacy and violence. I draw upon my translations of *Sauvage* to demonstrate – without arguing against the validity of earlier readings of *Sauvage's* work – that she may be read as feminist and even queer, especially once translated. It is through translation that texts such as *Sauvage's* remain relevant, in circulation, or what Sara Ahmed terms 'in use' (2019).

Chapter 4, 'Translating *Sauvage*', considers theoretical precedents from within Translation Studies that view translation as a creative act. Translation has been presented as rewriting by Lefevère (1992b), Gentzler (2017), and Loffredo and Perteghella (2008). Bassnett and Bush have emphasized translation's creative nature and have conceded significant authorial power to the translator (2006). Emmerich calls translations 'originals' and points out the significant editorial agency translators wield in their practice (2017). Scott emphasizes the importance of a phenomenological approach that translates an experience, not invariants (2012a; 2012b; 2021). I balance these analyses with an investigation into what is approximated in translation, drawing upon Jean Boase-Beier's understanding of literary translation as a process which creates approximate stylistic effects in the target language (2020). I survey the specific challenges of poetry translation and possible solutions, particularly between French and English as a language pair. I offer examples of how I deal with metaphor, meter, and rhyme in *Sauvage*, indicating that in my intention to approximate style I end up creating texts that behave in novel ways. Finally, I observe the results of two other translations of *Sauvage's* poetry, executed by Norman Shapiro (2008) and Phillip Weller (2007), and compare these versions with mine. I conclude that the variety of results supports Scott's observations regarding the importance that a translator's experience and reading autobiography have on the translation of a text (2021). I indicate that it is desirable for literary translations to maintain, per Boase-Beier, as much ambiguity as possible, so that readers of the translation are able to extract new textual meanings from the text in turn.

Chapter 5, 'Editing Sauvage', first looks closer at the creation of anthologies and surveys the anthologies of poetry containing Sauvage's works. I argue that Pierre Messiaen's 1929 presentation of his late wife's *Œuvres* may be read as an anthology constructed from a position of partiality, in which Messiaen uses Sauvage's words to say something about himself. I note that many anthologists are overt in their understanding of an anthology as a personal project, the intention of which is to make other readers 'love' the selected works as much as the anthologists themselves do. In doing so, these compilers create, by replicating Sauvage's texts in new configurations, opportunities for her work to be read and understood in new ways. I then discuss how a translator may play an editorial role vis-à-vis translations. I discuss my trip to Sauvage's archives to consult her manuscripts, suggesting that these manuscripts, which constitute unstable texts, are like the printed anthologies in which Sauvage has been featured: all constitute the ongoing and unfinished genesis of Sauvage's work, thus rejecting the idea of a stable source text to which the translator can be faithful and with respect to which a measure of equivalence may be established. What remains possible is the figuring of translation as an extension, a projection, or what Scott terms a 'futuring' (2018; 2021). Manuscripts, anthologies, and translations all form part of a 'total text' (Scott 2021) which cannot be reduced to a single fixed incarnation.

Chapter 6, 'Making a Book of Sauvage', explains the reasoning behind the construction of my collection – my contribution to the 'total text' – which I call *A Sauvage Reader*. Following my analysis across the preceding chapters of translation, editing, and anthologizing as kinds of co-authoring in which the translator or compiler produces veritably new versions of a text, *A Sauvage Reader* is imagined as a little book in which the translator and author share the same space. I draw upon Theo Hermans' concept of translations as quoted text (2014) to destabilize the traditional relationship of translation as main text and commentary as paratext, thereby placing the translator and the translated on an equal footing. Moreover, I discuss my original inspiration for the *Reader* as residing with the ethos of the commonplace book. I present quotation, or misquotation, as furthering the topic of textual trespass and poaching discussed in Chapter 1. I draw upon Frank Kermode (2006) to demonstrate that misquotation, often pleasurable, may be, like Ahmed's idea of 'use', a way of keeping texts new, keeping them relevant, and keeping them in circulation. Finally, I lay out my defense of why *A Sauvage Reader*

is not presented as a bilingual collection and why I wish for it to be experienced monolingually.³

The title of *A Sauvage Reader* may be understood two ways. Firstly, as the kind of ‘reader’ offered in literature courses, an anthology of prescribed scope whose intention is to be informative and pedagogical. Secondly, the title refers to myself as a reader of Sauvage and indicates that this collection will be a subjectively inflected presentation of Sauvage’s work. Like many of the anthologies surveyed in Chapter 5, the *Reader* is organized by theme. These themes are *recueillement*, *mélancolie*, *mystère*, *correspondance*, *possession*, and *chant*. They are all concept terms that I identify as frequently appearing in Sauvage’s poetry; in this sense, the *Reader*’s organization may be read as pedagogical, as a guide to how Sauvage can be understood. But the selected terms can also be used to describe translation and literary practice more broadly. The accompanying commentary in the *Reader* is not so much a defense of specific translation choices as it is a creative investigation into how these terms can open up to become prompts for reflecting on the processes of reading, writing, and translating.

In the brief conclusion that follows the *Reader*, I weigh the results of my intention – and the intention of creative critical practitioners, alongside Translation Studies scholars such as Scott – to present translation and writing as open-ended processes. I consider whether the *Reader* succeeds in presenting itself as an uncircumscribed piece of work. If the *Reader* and this thesis exist, at the moment of submission, as the fixed and typeset culminations of a thinking process, their coming into being nevertheless speaks to the generative nature of reading, especially when such reading is performed with devotion. To make a *Reader* for Sauvage was to build a concrete edifice in honor of the object of my affection. To write the rest of this dissertation was to chronicle the avenues of thought down which the drafting of the building plans invariably tempted me – avenues radiating into research about Sauvage’s context, into feminist and queer translation theory, into scholarship on creative translation, into archival research and genetic criticism. I hope to have demonstrated by the end of this dissertation that there is creativity in

³ The French source texts are provided alongside my translations in a table in Appendix B, but these are not meant to be part of the *Reader* experience.

such critical pursuit, and that the creative does not take place without critical reflection.

CHAPTER 1 PRELUDE

1. Confessional

How did I get here? By accident. Kate Briggs observes that most translators come to their work accidentally (2017: 82). An email is misdirected, a friend of a colleague of an acquaintance crosses your path, the stars align. Much depends on whether the wind is blowing in your favor that day or not. Translations are ship-projects: too many are often left in port for lack of a navigable breeze, or else for lack of coin in the company's coffers.

I am therefore very lucky to have had the opportunity to pursue this project. If I had not obtained the chance to work on Cécile Sauvage in a professional (more or less remunerated) capacity, I wonder what would have come out of this relationship between myself and her texts. Doubtless Sauvage would have hung around in the back of my head, puzzling and tempting. I would have occasionally and half-heartedly worked on translating her poems purely for the amateur (unremunerated) participation of it. It is possible I would never have started at all, the most perfect text always being the unwritten one. The dissertation deadline and viva, however, provided excellent motivation to finish a collection of translations.

The reasons I gave for studying and translating Sauvage in my Impact Statement and Introduction remain valid. This project aims to shed more light on an obscure female literary figure and to contribute towards the bank of cultural knowledge that is literature written by women. Equally, this project is motivated by a degree of affection, even obsession. Such loving proximity to my subject is difficult to translate into terminology that traditional literary criticism may have at its disposal, because, as Felski demonstrates, literary critics are trained to operate with 'professional detachment' and 'sangfroid', to '[carve] out a distance from the impressionist judgements of ordinary readers' (2015: 48-49). Felski, after surveying the practice of literary criticism as it is currently understood, calls instead for 'postcriticism', or a critical practice that moves away from a suspicious interrogation of a text and towards another, more emotive manner of relating to the literary object of study (ibid: 12). Like the creative critical practitioners surveyed in the Introduction, Felski observes the need to be able to account for the 'why' behind a given project:

literary critics may be good at explaining how they do things, but less so why they do things (2015: 13). What kind of vocabulary would elaborate on Dayan's claim, 'To me, Sauvage's poetry is vastly superior' (2021:163)? As I will suggest over the course of this chapter, this requires working through metaphors of proximity and territory that exist to describe engagement with texts (and other cultural objects) by readers. It also requires an investigation into the distinction between 'professionals' and 'amateurs' and what such a divide says about how criticism and creativity are perceived. Of course, this is also a project about translation: the translator, I suggest, can be both professional and amateur, and the inquiries into situatedness and love taking place within literary criticism and creative criticism apply to translation as well.

I confess I first came across Sauvage in Norman Shapiro's anthology, *French Women Poets of Nine Centuries: The Distaff and the Pen* (2008). I was in the second semester of my freshman year of college and (it seems funny to think back on it now) I hadn't attempted to translate anything by that point, although I was taking a poetry writing workshop. A professor of French circulated an announcement about a translation competition and I, always game to undertake a new project, set off towards the French literature stacks on the quest for something to translate. I must have decided that Shapiro's massive anthology – its weight made more impressive by having to shimmy it down from the topmost shelf – would give me a broad enough survey and that I would choose my bearings from there on in. In this respect, Shapiro's work admirably fulfilled its function as an anthology. There was a level of arbitrariness in my reaching for Shapiro's volume (what if I had reached for another anthology?), even as I mentally reasoned that I would like to translate a woman poet. There was even a level of arbitrariness in my pausing over Sauvage: I could not have possibly read the entire contents of the anthology – covering as it did nine centuries of French verse – and then evaluated Sauvage to be the best among the surveyed writers. The encounter was half-accidental. I was struck by one of Sauvage's poems, also translated by Shapiro, in which she describes her soul as an aproned servant walking through the house, wringing her hands as dead leaves piled up on the doorstep; I found it very moving, slightly gothic, intimate. It seemed to generate a connection between myself and Sauvage. I had the thought that I wanted to get to know her better.

Using Shapiro's translation of the poem as a crutch, I tried to cobble together my own. The result was wanting: my French was only college-level and, when I showed the English result to the professor leading the poetry workshop, I was advised to practice writing rhymed couplets 'as one does squats', to get the verse warm and flowing. I did not win any competitions then, but neither did I forget about Sauvage after this first attempt. Perhaps the proof of her poetry's worth is precisely this capacity to linger – although this is an anecdotal type of proof. In my head, Sauvage's poetry lingered.

A year and a half later, when I first went to France, I chanced across a second-hand copy of *Œuvres complètes* (Sauvage 2002). It felt like unexpectedly running into an old friend; I had the sensation of recognizing someone in a crowded bookshop that others had no reason to recognize. I took possession of the copy. Flipping through it, I found the collection *Primevère* most interesting, not only because of its playful, yet mournful erotic shading, but also because the text felt fragmented and secretive in ways I could not put my finger on. This mystery kept me curious. I tried my hand at translating poems from the collection. I thought that in translating I would understand them better. Perhaps translation was the tool that made a text give up its secrets. The desire to figure out Sauvage's poems, to 'get' their meaning, proved generative. It roped me into participating in the poems themselves.

I began to refer to Sauvage as my pet project. Sauvage's obscurity gave her the aura of an author whom no one wanted, and yet whose virtues I alone recognized; this inspired in me a stubborn guardianship, tinged by a self-important sense of a special relationship. I have found her, she is mine, so there. I will show her off like a cross-eyed stray when people come to visit. I will be enthusiastic, and the visitors will have to be polite.

No engagement with a work or a writer is devoid of some degree of engrossment. Felski observes that if academics pretend this is so, it is because to do otherwise would be to reveal having been 'taken in' by the text, having been hoodwinked, and thus 'to sink into the mire of complacency, credulity, and conservatism' (2015: 10). The greatest amount of emotional recourse available to contemporary literary scholars appears to be the category of the 'interesting', which, Felski continues, 'often does considerable work in such discussions. As a form of judgement that is approbative yet curiously noncommittal, it allows critics to suspend

many of the usual moral distinctions and bridge the divide between like and dislike' (ibid: 27). To deem something 'interesting' is to indicate preference without utterly giving up the distance required of a critic. I, too, found myself frequently reaching for that word when asked why I want to translate Sauvage. 'Her poetry,' I would say, 'is... interesting.'

The idea of having one's rational mind compromised by closeness to a scholarly subject or artwork – however such closeness may be defined – is one that reverberates throughout this thesis. In this Prelude, I discuss how the idea is addressed in fan studies and Felski's postcriticism. I demonstrate that this same metaphor of spatial distance was applied to Sauvage in her time. The question of being overly proximate predates my personal engagement with Sauvage and is observable as a gendered phenomenon. The collapse of distance between the real-life individual and the cultural object is undesirable, as will become evident, because such a collapse taints the individual 'with the bad smell of the uncritical' (Felski 2015: 8). The uncritical is in turn a position conceptualized as slavishness, irrationality, immorality, guilelessness, and artlessness. Notably, the uncritical may be described as that which is marked by an absence of deliberation. These notions, built upon metaphors of distance and speed, provide insight into how the creation, reception, and perception of cultural objects are imagined.

2. Fannishness

I turn to the word 'fannish' to describe my engagement with Sauvage, in hopes that this word will be able to carry a profession of love for my writer as well as acknowledge the careful, analytical attention that is a key element of my love. I draw upon the existing concept of 'fan', defined as 'a keen follower of a specified hobby or amusement, [...] an enthusiast for a particular person or thing' (*Oxford English Dictionary* 2023). Fan studies as a discipline has been an integral part of cultural studies since Henry Jenkins conducted his ethnographic account of television and media fans in *Textual Poachers* (1992). Jenkins in turn drew upon Michel de Certeau's concept of 'poachers' as laid out in *L'invention du quotidien [The Practice of Everyday Life]* (1980). Certeau identified 'producers' of culture and, on the other end of the binary, individuals who could either be 'consumers' or 'poachers', depending on whether such individuals, through the deployment of certain tactics,

worked in accordance with or against the environment created by the producers. Jenkins, in his work, challenged the common perception of fans as consumers who were 'sitting too close' and giving themselves over 'morally, socially, ideologically, aesthetically' (1992: 60) to their favorite television programs. Instead, he conceived of fans as active re-appropriators of cultural objects, who manipulated texts to their own ends and in doing so participated in the creation of new works. Fan studies has continued to examine fans as subversive and subjective agents, acknowledging the debt of fan studies to feminist theory and methodology (Hannell 2020) and articulating intersections between fandom and queer practice (Jenkins 2011). Simultaneously, other disciplines have turned their attention to studying fan behavior. Translation Studies has seen a boom in scholarship about fan practices, especially in audio-visual translation: a wealth of studies has been dedicated to fansubs, or fan-generated subtitles (Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez 2006; Jiménez-Crespo 2017; Lu and Lu 2021) as well as fandubs, or dubbing by fans (Baños 2020). Such scholarly investigation into the audio-visual instances of fan translation touches upon subjects such as amateur translation norms, crowdsourcing, and the appeals of participatory culture.

For the sake of this project, I am more interested in identifying what fannishness – a position of 'keenness' or 'enthusiasm', to return to the Oxford English Dictionary's definition – may mean for how criticism and creativity are understood, especially with respect to metaphors of distance. In identifying television fans as not sheep but as poachers, Jenkins endowed fans with the ability to '[sit] too close' (1992: 60) and simultaneously resist being 'taken in' (Felski 2015:10) by the text in question. Jenkins argued that for the fan, 'a sense of proximity and possession coexists quite comfortably with a sense of ironic distance' (1992: 65). What Jenkins identifies fan culture as making possible is a sense of affective proximity with respect to a text; such proximity nonetheless does not compromise the reader's critical perspective. 'Proximity and distance are not fixed "positions" established at the outset of the viewing experience and unaltered by changes in the reception context or narrative information', Jenkins observes (1992: 65-6). Moreover, the affection that the fans feel for their subject matter acts as a catalyst for their engagement with and reconstruction of the text: 'the closeness the fans feel towards narratives and characters motivates their extensive reworking and reappropriation of those materials' (ibid). Emotional investment turns out to be the

animating and generating reason by which fans arrive at creating new texts out of preexisting material.

Jenkins' seminal work defends emotional proximity to cultural objects, as opposed to the detached and indifferent position that bourgeois aesthetics prescribes for an engagement with a text or artwork (Jenkins 1992: 60). The question arises of how, in an environment that encourages detachment under the guise of critical appraisal, an individual might validate their interest in a text through emotional attachment or love, without having to prove that the work is worthy of love only because the work itself is 'engaged in critique – even if unwittingly or unknowingly' (Felski 2015: 16). Scholars read like detectives, Felski observes, 'interrogating and cross-examining the texts of culture' to the end result that '[o]ur *explanations* of literature and art are also tacit *accusations*, driven by a desire to identify fault, apportion blame, and track down wrongdoing' (ibid: 87, emphasis in original).⁴ If a critic happens to discover 'criticality' within a text itself, this quality is 'hailed as the sole metric of literary value' (ibid: 16). But what happens if it is not possible to answer Dayan's questions about Sauvage's 'impact' or 'influence' (2021: 163) by demonstrating that Sauvage's poetry was itself subversive and critical? Instead of keeping the text at arm's length or on the opposite end of an interrogation table, as Felski suggests critics usually do with cultural objects, the reader may have to step inside the text and find another way of speaking about why this text is worth attention and study. A fannish approach would permit the reader to collapse that distance, to step inside the text and work from within it. Translation, I will suggest, may be one method for thus working from the inside.

It is worth noting that the word 'fannish' may be put to different uses. For Jenkins, a fannish engagement necessarily involves reappropriation of cultural material by those operating from a position of 'marginality and social weakness' (1992: 26). For Felski, fannishness is something negative: she draws on the word's connotation of zealotry to speak of 'a fannish dimension to theory' extant in today's academic milieu, which is 'evidenced in a cult of exclusiveness and intense attachment to charismatic figures' (2015: 27). For Felski, fannish theory is not one that draws upon textual participation and love, but which instead cleaves to an

⁴ Felski's emphasis on how literary critics strive to unearth a text's faults echoes observations of how translation criticism often amounts to mere judgement, or the cataloguing of a translation's defects or faults (Berman 1994; Hewson 2011).

established theoretician. For Louisa Ellen Stein, fannishness is a way of bringing personal experience into academic work. Stein is a self-proclaimed 'acafan', or academic fan, someone who is both a scholar and a member of a cultural phenomenon fandom (Largent, Popova and Vist 2020). While this may at first glance appear an unprovocative label – academics are allowed to have hobbies outside of work, after all – 'acafan' refers not to a split between academic and leisure life, but rather to actively practicing the collapse of distance between the scholar and the object of study by admitting one's own emotional investment in the cultural object being studied; this in turn may be a useful tool in preventing a scholar from fetishizing or devaluing the cultural object (ibid). Moreover, acafans describe how the new texts they generate chronicle their engagement with preexisting texts; this is the case for Karen Hellekson, who sees the texts she produces as rationalizations of her affective reactions to the texts she studies. Hellekson writes, 'For me, "It was confusing and I hated it!" is the same thing as "It made me think and I loved it!" The text I generate is the why' (2011). This may be considered as akin to a translator engaging with a source text and producing a target text. When Scott writes that translation 'is one of the few ways we have of making manifest what reading has released in us' (2000: 101), he is emphasizing translation's ability to generate physical evidence of textual engagement. In a similar manner, I say, 'Savage's poetry makes me think and I love it: the translation I am making is the why.'

Like creative critical practitioners, these acafans combine reflection and investigation with creative production, or what Brian Massumi calls 'augmentation'. For Massumi, criticism and creativity are different because one results in 'subtraction' and the other in 'augmentation'. Seemingly anticipating Felski's description of the traditional critic as a cold and relentless investigator, Massumi argues that 'Critical thinking disavows its own inventiveness as much as possible. Because it sees itself as uncovering something it claims was hidden or as debunking something it desires to subtract from the world, it clings to a basically descriptive and justificatory modus operandi' (2002:12-13). Massumi suggests that critique is not a generative enterprise, insofar as it remains 'self-serious': 'So why not hang up the academic hat of critical self-seriousness, set aside the intemperate arrogance of debunking – and enjoy? [...] It is not that critique is wrong. [...] It is simply that when you are busy critiquing you are less busy augmenting. You are that

much less fostering' (ibid). Pleasure, Massumi appears to suggest, is one way in which criticism can be salvaged into a productive operation, one that 'fosters' or adds something to the world. While this may be received as too harsh an evaluation of criticism's shortcomings, Massumi's position echoes similar opinions from the creative critical camp regarding the sterility and ossification of traditional critical practice (Butt 2005: 5; Beasley-Murray 2021: 67). By inflecting criticism with more joy, by approaching textual work with less seriousness but greater emotional investment, Massumi argues that criticism can become a fostering practice.

Tim Ingold takes a similar position about emotional investment in one's work. Although Ingold does not use the word 'fan', he speaks of 'amateurs' as superior to 'professionals', owing to the love that acts as a catalyst for the practice of amateurs. Ingold writes, 'All true scholars, I believe, are amateurs. Literally, the amateur is one who studies a topic not – like the professional – in order to stage a career, but for the love of it, motivated by a sense of care, personal involvement, and responsibility' (2021: 11). To his definition of 'amateur' Ingold adds the words 'rigor' and 'precision', writing, 'Amateur study, to be worthy of the name, must be rigorous and precise' (ibid: 12). 'Amateur rigor' is in turn defined not as rigor that is 'bereft of feeling, yields nothing to experience, and induces instant paralysis in anything living or moving with which it might come into contact' (ibid) but rather as 'a rigour that is flexible and in love with life, by contrast to the professional rigour that induces rigidity and paralysis' (ibid:14). Ingold's binary, like Massumi's, may be contested, alongside his unproblematized valorization of 'amateur' as a label and concept: the idea of having 'love' for one's labor, or holding 'amateur' status are very real ways of denying individuals fair or even adequate compensation for work performed (Hatton 2020). But it is the continuity of metaphor that is relevant to this project. I have traced the repeated emphasis on criticism as paralyzed or subtractive, theory as stiff, academia as over-professionalized (Guillory 2022). Meanwhile, love and personal involvement – or what I argue may be referred to as fannishness – are offered as solutions to this critical stupor.

3. Too close for criticism and creation

But if love, or emotion generally, are currently imagined as the solution, they have traditionally been cited as the problem and a serious obstacle to the creation of art.

Both the creation and reception of a cultural object could be contaminated by sitting too close, getting too personal. Metaphors of proximity do not merely describe the fannish manner in which I read and translate *Sauvage*. They were also used to describe how *Sauvage* and her contemporaries wrote. With respect to *Sauvage*, working at the beginning of the twentieth century, metaphors were rooted in a gendered distinction, whereby a lack of critical distance was associated with women and the type of work they produced. This was also the case for Jenkins, who defined the fans he studied as ‘largely female, largely white, largely middle class’ (1992: 1). The experience of mass culture at the end of the 1980s, marked by obsessive attachments and identification, was described in those traits frequently ascribed to women (Doane 1987: 2). The female spectator in particular was ‘often represented as drawn so close to the text that she is unable to view it with critical distance and hence as less capable of resisting its meanings’ (Jenkins 1992: 61). The use of gendered vocabulary of power indicates the degree to which women were associated with dominance by a cultural object: in an encounter with a cultural object, a ‘loss of mastery’ occurred, a ‘submission’ to textual authority took place (Doane 1987: 16), and the ideological construction of the text could no longer be resisted or criticized by the (female) spectator.

The parallels between gendered interactions with culture at the beginning and at the end of the twentieth century may be examined as social phenomena. Anxiety about being ‘taken in’ by a cultural object relates to the divide between low and high culture, between the loss of control supposedly exhibited by the masses versus the cool rationality in the face of art displayed by the bourgeoisie (Bourdieu 1980; Jenkins 1992: 50). Too much enthusiasm for a cultural object could be seen as a sort of enslavement, a loss of individualism accompanied by submission. Enthusiastic engagement with a cultural object was potentially ‘infantile’ (Adorno 2013: 290). This associated unquestioning enthusiasm with undeveloped faculties of deliberation. Correspondingly, in late nineteenth-century France social groups consisting of those who were believed to possess underdeveloped or absent critical faculties – lower-class laborers, women, and children – became the objects of concern and reasons for increased censorship; as society became more literate, these groups were perceived as unable to withstand submission to the ideology of immoral works circulating in print (Stora-Lamarre 1990).

By the turn of the twentieth century, greater numbers of women in mainland France became not only consumers, but also makers of culture (I discuss these circumstances further in Chapter 2). However, the association between gender and the uncritical masses proved difficult to shed. In 1910, an anthology of eleven women poets, including Sauvage, summarized women's cultural output in the following terms:

Mais leur art, et ceci est un des caractères de la poésie féminine, sait éliminer ce qui serait trop nouveau pour s'adapter à la sensibilité du public. Par elles, la poésie de Verlaine, de Régner, de Jammes, sentimentalisée, a pénétré dans la foule. Il ne s'agit pas d'imitation, mais d'une assimilation merveilleuse qui devient chez elles une vraie sincérité. Oui, en vérité, dans le creuset de leur cœur, les émotions littéraires et les émotions réelles se confondent en une même vivante sincérité. J'ai lu presque tous les livres de vers des jeunes femmes poètes, leurs poèmes sont souvent émus, ce sont des minutes de vie transcrites, de la vraie douleur, mais, souvent aussi, malgré le rythme et la rime, ce n'est pas encore de l'art, c'est trop près de la sensation directe, même si cette sensation est provoquée par une réminiscence littéraire. Trop près de la sensation directe ; les femmes poètes, en effet, n'atteignent la cristallisation refroidie de l'art que par hasard, sans le vouloir et sans le chercher.

[But their art – and this is one of the characteristics of *poésie féminine* – knows how to do away with that which is too new in order to conform itself to the public's sensibility. Through them, the poetry of Verlaine, Régner, and Jammes – now sentimentalized – has spread to the masses. This is not imitation, but rather a marvelous assimilation that in women becomes true sincerity. Indeed, in the crucibles of their hearts, literary emotions and real emotions merge into the same lively sincerity. I have read nearly all the books by the young female poets. Their verses are often moving – they are transcribed records of daily life, of true pain – but, equally often, despite the rhythm and the rhyme, this is still not art; it is too close to actual feeling, even if this feeling is prompted by a literary reminiscence. Too close to actual feeling, women poets do not achieve the chilled crystallization of art except accidentally, without wanting and meaning to.] (Gourmont 1910: 26-27)

According to this view of Sauvage and her female contemporaries, the woman poet is a conduit between the Parnassus frequented by the genius male poets and '*la foule*', the masses. This echoes the more general view held at the turn of the century in France of women as educative tools who could instill correct morals and hygienic practices in their own families (Stora-Lamarre 1990: 100). But, like the television fan of the 1980s, the woman poet simply sits too close. She is '*trop près*', unable to achieve true art because she lacks the correct critical distance between herself and the emotion she is transcribing. Her poetry may be moving, but it does not have the 'chilled crystallization' that marks true art. This is another broadly understandable metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) for how cultural objects may be experienced, this time relying on associations with physical temperature. In English we speak of the 'heat of the moment', as opposed to 'keeping a cool head'; it follows that emotions are warm and reason is cold. Emotions, presumably, will not lead to crystallization. Therefore, if women achieve art they do it accidentally, they stumble upon it without intending to have arrived. They do not write but transcribe (or perhaps translate) their experience.

Across the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, mainstream tradition in French literature defined writing by women as lacking craft. Adrianna Paliyenko observes that the notion of 'genius' was made distinct from women's cultural production and preserved as a uniquely male inheritance (2016). Writers such as George Sand and Alphonse de Lamartine observed a distinction between experience and writing, and consequently assigned a gender to either side. Sand wrote that '*la femme sera toujours plus artiste et plus poète dans sa vie, l'homme le sera toujours dans son œuvre*' [woman will always be more of an artist and poet in her life, man in his work] (cited in Paliyenko 2016: 37). Lamartine believed that '*l'art est un métier*' [art is a craft] that women should leave to men because, for women, '*leur art, à elles, est de sentir, et leur poésie est d'aimer*' [their own art is to feel and their poetry is to love] (ibid: 34). Lamartine tellingly drew upon the mind-body divide and the accompanying temperature metaphor when he wrote that creativity is '*flamme dans la tête de l'homme, chaleur dans le cœur de la femme*' [flame in the head of man, warmth in the heart of woman] (ibid). The mind reasons, the body feels; if men's creativity is a flame or a spark, women's creativity is more constant like a tended hearth. Men's poetry lies outside their lives and they are able to

maintain distance from the objects they create. For women, it is their lives that are poetry. Sauvage's work was described in this vein as late as 1931:

Le Vallon est une œuvre qui vaut par sa beauté simple et humaine. Si nous mettons en regard dans une balance Art et Humanité, le fléau pencherait du côté Humanité. Et tout est dans l'ordre, car dans le vaste temple qu'est la poésie, nous nous trouvons du côté 'femmes'. C'est de l'autre côté qu'il faut chercher les génies, tels Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Valéry, qui se possèdent souverainement, assistent avec lucidité à la genèse de leur œuvre et voient dans la perfection de la forme une manifestation de l'absolu.

[*Le Vallon* is a work whose worth lies in its simple and human beauty. If we weighed it on the scales of Art and Humanity, the needle would dip towards Humanity. And all is as it should be, for we find ourselves in the women's wing of the vast temple of poetry. It is in the opposite wing that we ought to go looking for geniuses, such as Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Valéry, who have supreme mastery over themselves and are lucidly present at the genesis of their work, who see in the form's perfection the manifestation of the absolute.] (Lacaf 1930: 37)

A genius such as one of the great male poets can be 'lucidly present' during the creation of one of his works. There is possibly an undercurrent of birthing imagery in this description, where the lucidity of midwives or doctors is contrasted with the bodily immediacy of the experience in which the birther is far too implicated. (Sauvage, as will be seen in her poetry, was interested in the murkiness and elusive mystery of the unseen process of fetal formation and based some of her art on the subject.) By Lacaf's evaluation, the 'perfection of form' that designates true Art – presumably art distinct from cultural objects produced for consumption by the enthusiastic and overidentifying masses – is acquired through clear-sightedness. The image of a great artist attending to the creation of his work is suggestive of a surgeon, a technically skilled individual who remains bodily unimplicated in the operation at hand. It suggests a sculptor stepping back from the work-in-progress to evaluate the emerging angles. It suggests Gourmont's crystallization and all manner of cold, hard things, from chisels to scalpels. Most importantly, it implies a space between the artist and what is being created. Distance is critical.

Thus being 'too close' is not merely undesirable for those who receive and perceive works of art; it also makes the creation of good art impossible. Contemporary attitudes towards gender meant that women in Sauvage's time were deemed incapable of being anything but 'too close' to life. Thus works by women are merely preliminary and 'attendent un grand poète pour être fixés en art' [await a great poet to be set in art] (Gourmont 1910: 30). It is noteworthy just how much the idea of distance – distance being, as demonstrated earlier, a key element of critical engagement – was crucial to creativity in the attitudes presented here. One could say these male artists were making a claim to being creative critical in their own fashion.

What emerges from the analysis of nineteenth and early twentieth-century outlooks on authorship is an apparent distinction between experience and craft. According to the views of Sauvage's contemporaries, one can be too much in life, with the consequence that one's writing 'carries the risk of becoming too "personological"' (Frichot 2018: 144); correspondingly, such writing risks becoming less deliberate, less artful. As Kate Love observes, this wariness of the too-personal stems from a gendered mistrust of the value of experience:

But because of the misreading of the concept of experience there is still a tendency to see autobiographical or confessional work functioning as little more than the sensitive pen of the Geiger counter caught in the act of registering the seismographic trace of emotion writ large in canvas or print. On this model it is thought that the artist is relieved of all the usual struggle, thought, and fabrication that typically go in to [*sic*] a piece of work but merely hiccups the work to fruition. This of course leads to all manner of hierarchical/hysterical judgements about the relative merits of work which is deemed too personal, and thus too empirical (often associated with women's work and therefore vilified even more), versus work which steers clear of anything to do with the artists' 'self' (which shows up in this binary as 'intellectual' or 'conceptual' – lending itself nicely to the stereotypically 'masculine' posture which is synonymous with the attempt to disavow all self-interestedness or anything too personal. (2005: 164-165)

Like a woman poet of Sauvage's time, the writer who is too confessional or too personal in her work merely 'hiccups' or 'transcribes' sensations but does not toil.

Confession, perceived as a process of relay rather than a process of making, does not draw upon artifice and the labor of construction. Confessional work is imagined along the same lines as translation has been sometime imagined: as an act of transcription, understood through gendered metaphor and operating in service to the superior, artful original (see Chamberlain 1988).

The separation of experience and craft results in the existence of two distinct types of authority. Experience-based authority draws upon what Şebnem Susam-Saraeva calls corporeal or experiential knowledge (2020). As Love continues, however, experiential knowledge accumulation does not translate into the same cultural weight as that enjoyed by the other type of authority, which permits one to speak from a less narrow position:

So... even though there might be more of a preponderance to 'allow' the so-called others to wield the 'authority of experience' in their art – because it's *not* the kind of experience which is valued a great deal within dominant, particularly patriarchal, economies of thinking – it means that it's *not* the sort of authority that many people actually want. This is presumably why others are permitted to do so much of it. In fact, even when they do not necessarily intend it, their work is often interpreted as personal. And furthermore, it seems that the more you use your 'own' experience in your work, the more likely it is that you will lose any vestiges of the social and cultural authority you that you were trying to hang on to. (2005: 165, emphasis in original)

In recent years the authority of experience has undergone significant valorization and the hierarchy described by Love has been interrogated (Susam-Saraeva 2020). But the defense of personal investment in academic work, as demonstrated earlier, suggests that the focus remains on 'elevating' the creative to the level of the critical; the kind of knowledge that results from keeping one's distance still has greater capital. Another question is who gets to 'own' their experience, in Love's words, without losing 'social and cultural authority'. When Ingold writes in his recent book, 'I have reveled in the freedom to throw off the shackles of academic convention, and write unashamedly as an amateur' (2021: 11), has this newfound freedom to 'be up close' been gained only after years of keeping one's distance, and thus having accumulated social and cultural authority? If fans necessarily operate from a

position of marginality and social weakness (Jenkins 1992: 26), it may be questioned whether it is accurate to speak of fannishness in the academic milieu, where instances of fannishness may be observable only as rewards for the precedent of emotionally distant criticism.

Considered in an optimistic light, creative criticism has for its task the incorporation of personal investment into one's work, but without relinquishing any dominant, non-experiential authority the work may possess. The question then becomes – as observed in the Introduction – what such a work may formally and tonally look like. Has this Prelude, for example, so far achieved the desirable balance of the personal and the coolly authoritative? It is not enough to label this dissertation as successfully creative and critical simply by attaching a collection of translations to a collection of theoretical and contextual chapters. The metaphors of proximity and distance that I have been discussing with respect to academics, fans, and early twentieth-century women writers in fact constitute what may be called a methodology for this project. I strive to sit too close and yet be authoritative throughout this dissertation. I intend to be intimate with her who was described as being too intimate with life – and also to claim back on her behalf the authority of skill and craft she had been denied. This all entails a continual balancing act, paying consistent attention to my tone, moderating my tone as I write and rewrite. This dissertation is ongoing, real-time practice. To call it a 'PhD by practice' is not merely to refer to its containing translations.

4. Metaphors we thief by

Matthew Reynolds observes that 'a metaphor can be a way, not just of saying something but also of doing and experiencing it' (2011: 43-44). Translation metaphors in particular expose 'the various kinds of imaginative work' that translators perform in understanding translation as well as making it understood (ibid). Reynolds continues, 'If you say that you are, not translating (or not only translating), but transcribing or transposing or building bridges [...] then you may be, not just using a different word for what is still fundamentally one thing, "translation", but doing something that asks to be distinguished from translation rigidly conceived' (ibid). I have proposed the metaphor of 'sitting too close' to my work, and thus operating fannishly, rather than keeping my distance. Such involvement or intimacy

with Sauvage's texts would be different, per Reynolds's distinction, from 'translation rigidly conceived', which Reynolds defines as 'a picture in which translation takes something called "meaning", and transfers it out of one thing called "a language" into another thing called "a language"' (2016: 18). Fannish translation would understand itself as a way of being inside a work, of floundering in its waters, rather than the discovery and transfer of unvarying meanings.

Fannish translation would be like making one's way through a maze that one has willingly entered, for the fun of it. Boase-Beier suggests that translation and reading are on par with the playful pastimes of 'games, poems, hunts, and mazes'; texts are like games in that their users are 'cognitively geared towards searches with no necessary or useful end' (2011: 104). Such activity is an open-ended 'pursuing of a search for meaning as long as new meanings can be found. It is this sense of searching that leads readers to reread and translators to retranslate' (ibid). The meaning-making process is in turn fostered by moments of ambiguity in the text, for the reader 'engages most strongly with those parts of meaning that are not clear-cut' (ibid). The literary text is satisfying because it offers opportunity for reader response, for participation, for a type of 'prospective translation' anchored in unlocking the 'source text potentialities' (Scott 2013: 18). Fannish translation resists treating the reader 'as a disempowered spectator' who is confronted with a text that has 'already achieved its meaning' (Scott 2000: 71). It is a type of engagement that is less about 'the need to know what the text means' and more about 'the need to know how it constructs its meanings' (ibid). A fannish translation, by allowing room for personal investment and experience, moves beyond a constricting notion of 'a translation of the signifier into the signified' and understands that individual words 'present their own complex perceptual contact with the world, with different coordinates of consciousness' (Scott 2012: 63). It is not that a fannish translation necessarily writes the translator's own biography into the translation or overwhelms the target text with personal detail; rather, a fannish translation is one that is less interested in interpreting the text and instead welcomes the subjective responses to text that are the natural results of diverse 'coordinates of consciousness'.

With such an understanding of translation comes a frequently articulated anxiety about the translator going too far, or crossing some figurative, yet delineating line. Another metaphor that has accompanied my discussion of fannishness, criticism, and translation is one of text as territory. Jenkins drew upon

Certeau to speak of fannishness as trespass, imagining participation in established cultural objects as 'poaching', or the grabbing of property belonging to someone else. 'For the distanced observer,' Jenkins writes, 'the text remains something out there, untouched and often untouchable, whose materials are not available for appropriation precisely because they can never fully become one's own property' (1992: 62). The non-distanced observer, by contrast, encroaches. Vocabulary of translation supports this idea of texts as spaces of power struggles, to the extent that a translator may be imagined as 'hijacking' a text through translation (von Flotow 1991: 78) With respect to creative criticism, Benson and Connors describe creative critical practitioners as 'burglars, or perhaps communists' (2014: 34). Chantal Wright prefaces her creative translation of Yoko Tawada by disavowing that the translator has absconded with the text, so to speak; Wright's disclaimer reads, 'Despite the inclusion of [...] personal response, the translation was never intended to be an exercise in narcissism. Rather, it aims to be a protocol of how a translator encounters a text' (2013: 26). Wright denies having carried off the text like a thief in the night or contorted it to reflect her own image as a translator. She supplies the word 'protocol', a word of stately professional veneer, suggestive of matters of gravity such as hospital administration and national security councils. The translator feels the pressure to pre-empt potential accusations of liking the sound of their own voice too much. The translator is anxious to not be perceived as a poacher, amateur, or burglar.

Yet, I suggest something interesting may emerge from thinking about translation as theft, and thus – in keeping with Reynolds' idea that metaphors are in fact ways of doing things (2011: 43-44) – in performing a little bit of thieving. As Hélène Cixous observes, the word *voler* in French means both 'to steal' and 'to fly' (1976: 887). By encroaching on a text, a translator may in fact give the work new wings. I am, of course, thinking about theft and property in figurative terms here, as the scholars and translators cited above do. Intellectual property law is highly necessary, especially with respect to giving translators their monetary due in the form of royalties as well as protecting moral rights to the translation. The concept of intellectual property likewise informs my approach to this project in a different way: the fact that most of Sauvage's work is in the public domain may have something to do with my readiness to encroach. The public domain not only makes certain types of intellectual property available; it also encourages use of such property. One could

say that the public domain, as a concept, inherently thwarts the possibility of trespass. A text in the public domain may be used by anybody but owned by no one. Perhaps non-hostile interactions become possible when we think of a text as common ground. Textual users – fans, readers, translators – develop communal, or communist, relationships to a text in which new meanings may be sown and grown. Different readers are free to let their associations and experiences graze upon the text like flocks of sheep. Finally, individuals may gather around a beloved text or cultural object and so imagine it as a common space upon which to build a community.

If these metaphors of thieving, having, and sharing are the figurative foundation from which I have constructed my thoughts about the subjects I address in this dissertation, it is in part because these concepts populate Sauvage's poetry. As Reynolds argues, 'Individual source texts can also exert a particular influence on what is done to them via the metaphors they hold out to translators' (2011: 47). Taking for his examples the translation work of figures such as Dryden and Byron, Reynolds observes that 'often [...] the metaphor or metaphors that define an act of translation emerge out of the texts being translated' and result in 'translators seeing "doubles of translation" [...] and having their practice affected accordingly' (ibid: 7). This contamination of the translator by the text's message, form, or ideology – like the contamination of the fan by the admired cultural object – results in a 'creative interaction' and 'gives rise to texts that have a particular aesthetic charge' (ibid). These texts, in turn, 'subject the idea of "translation" to especially vigorous definition' (ibid). Sauvage, in articulating in her poetry the processes of having and letting go, has led me to think of translation as 'having', among other things. My translations of Sauvage thus entail a kind of 'having', yet they also invite – following on my exploration of the idea of uncritical proximity – reflection on what it may mean to 'be had' by a text, and how 'being had' could turn out to be something other than the disreputable textual engagement it is currently imagined as being (Felski 2015: 10).

The metaphors of this Prelude will resurface not only in *A Sauvage Reader* – which expressly restructures the themes I read in Sauvage's work as metaphors for translation – but also throughout the dissertation chapters. For instance, I return to the notion of use and the idealistic standard of unhostile interaction in Chapter 3. I point out the inevitability of imparting, as a translator, bits and pieces of one's own reading autobiography on the translated text in Chapter 4. In this current chapter, I

have attempted to convey something of my imaginative foundation for this thesis. The rest of the project will show how Sauvage has inspired such a foundation, as well as what I have endeavored to build atop it, both in terms of theoretical and practical approaches.

At the beginning of this Prelude, I confessed to feeling jealously territorial of Sauvage. By the end, I broached the idea of envisioning her work as shared land. Reading and translating, I believe, share the same set of paradoxical drives: the desire to make something one's own along with the desire to release it into the world. Fans do not merely poach content; they transform content into new work and subsequently make it publicly available. In a similar manner, I strive to make Sauvage mine through translation. Then I strive to make that translation, and my Sauvage, available to you.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONTEXTS OF CÉCILE SAUVAGE

Here I reel in my confessional tone and scamper back behind the line of traditional academic convention. Back to protocol: I return to Sauvage and present, in this chapter, the social and literary contexts of my writer. This does not amount to a full biography of Sauvage but offers a survey of Sauvage's literary legacy as perceived by her contemporaries. It is necessary to understand this legacy in order to account for how Sauvage has been read and translated in subsequent decades. Moreover, this chapter proposes several contributions to burgeoning scholarship on early twentieth-century cultural production by women in France, of which Sauvage formed a vital element.

On her part, Sauvage insisted on her detachment from the literary world as well as the world at large. When her family suggested she try for some literary prizes, Sauvage wrote, 'Moi, les histoires de prix me laissent froide. Je préfère écrire dans le silence. Cela m'est égal de rester inconnue. Je suis bien mieux seule dans mon coin' [Stories of prizes do not sway me. I prefer to write in silence. It's all the same to me if I remain unknown. I am much better off alone in my corner] (1930: 20).

As much as she preferred to remain in her corner, her husband, her friends, and critics past and present have continued to rope Sauvage back into the world of literary movements and literary-historical narratives. In this chapter, I first analyze the earliest critical reception of Sauvage's work that praised the work's literary merit, but couched such merit within a framework of contemporary ideas about socially acceptable femininity. Then I move on to survey the ways in which Sauvage has been read in relation to the contemporary movements of *jammisme* (after the poet Francis Jammes) and *naturisme*. Finally, I bring other Belle Époque women writers into the conversation and point out the striking parallels between the work of Sauvage and her female contemporaries – contemporaries with whom, by all accounts, Sauvage was never in direct communication.

This survey seeks to identify commonalities between Sauvage and her contemporaries while remaining skeptical of assigning her to a distinct group or literary movement. Firstly, it examines the emphasis on Sauvage's femininity that has led her work to being classified as *poésie féminine*; I further examine *poésie*

féminine and its role in reading works by women writers in Chapter 3. Secondly, I argue that the association of Sauvage with *jammisme* and *naturisme* has led to her being read as overly pastoral and has had implications for the ways she has been translated; I subsequently challenge these translations in Chapter 4. The political and aesthetic consequences of classification exercises, such as those performed on Sauvage, are further discussed in Chapter 5, which deals with anthologies. This current chapter intends to show that Sauvage, whether willingly, whether consciously, did not write in a vacuum, and deserves careful analysis of her engagement with the world – with the world’s literary, natural, social, and even economic aspects – as well as her reception in it. Finally, I suggest that such analysis in the form of a recontextualization exercise is a critical pursuit that has creative consequences: in researching the ways in which Sauvage has already been read, I found myself reassessing my own readings and my own approach to translating and presenting Sauvage.

1. The earliest fan club

The breadth of Sauvage’s surviving oeuvre, as covered in the Introduction, at first glance appears humble. She published two collections during her lifetime, *Tandis que la terre tourne* (Sauvage 1910) and *Le Vallon* (Sauvage 1913). Growing up in Provence from the age of five, Sauvage appeared to be deeply fond of that region and landscape, evoking it often in her poetry. Subsequently, she has been claimed as the ‘poète de Provence’ [poet of Provence] (Proal 1932), and, for her poetry about motherhood, as ‘poète de la maternité [the poet of motherhood]’ (*Cécile Sauvage* 1928: 20), as well as, for her sensual poems, ‘poète de l’amour’ (see Sauvage 2009: 15-18). As I will show over the course of this chapter, Sauvage as a writer has been shaped into various images by various forces, notably through the posthumous publication of her texts, which are more suspect, more fragmented, more marked by omission and intervention than either of the two books published during her lifetime.

There is little evidence that Sauvage sought to imitate a deliberate aesthetic or work in a particular style. Her literary training is relayed in the form of second-hand reports. Marchal summarizes these reports from various sources to deliver Sauvage’s literary influences as

Virgile, Dante, Shakespeare surtout. Ajoutons Villard, Ronsard, La Fontaine, Chénier, Mistral et Aubanel, sans oublier Balzac, Dickens, les romanciers russes, Tolstoï et Dostoïevski, les romantiques français, en particulier Lamartine, mais aussi, grâce à son mari, anglais (Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth). Elle savait par cœur des milliers de vers de Racine et de Chénier, presque toutes les fables de La Fontaine.

[Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare above all. Add Villard, Ronsard, La Fontaine, Chénier, Mistral and Aubanel, without forgetting Balzac, Dickens, the Russian novelists Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, the French Romantics, especially Lamartine, but also, thanks to her husband, the English ones (Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth). She knew by heart thousands of lines by Racine and Chénier, and nearly all of La Fontaine's fables.] (Sauvage 2009: 15).

Family friend and fellow writer Henri Pourrat alleges, 'En toutes choses, je crois, elle a préféré la grandeur. En peinture, Poussin, Velasquez. En musique, Mozart et surtout Bach. En poésie, Dante et Shakespeare. Et Racine' [I believe that she preferred grandeur with respect to everything. In painting, Poussin, Velasquez. In music, Mozart and above all Bach. In poetry, Dante and Shakespeare. And Racine] (1937: 130). This list is predominantly composed of remote, dead figures. There are, as will become evident, very few overtly expressed references to living contemporaries in Sauvage's work and correspondence, although her thematic connections to her contemporaries, especially to the work of other women writers, may be greater than what even Sauvage herself acknowledged.

After her two publications went largely unremarked during her lifetime, it took the combined efforts of her husband Pierre Messiaen and family friend Jean Tenant to generate enthusiasm for Sauvage's oeuvre. Thanks to their efforts, a collection of homages to Sauvage was published in 1928 with a Saint-Étienne publisher, Édition des Amitiés. It was then that a smattering of warm and positive criticism poured in from minor figures in the world of literature and criticism in mainland France. Tenant, for instance, indignantly wrote in an article for the periodical *Vasco* that, having printed over a hundred and fifty copies of the *Amitiés* publication, he personally sent out a good number of these to 'la critique parisienne' [the Parisian critics], of which not a single member 'ont jugé Cécile Sauvage digne d'être saluée grand poète'

[judged Sauvage worthy of being hailed as a great poet] (1930). Still, the *Amitiés* publication appeared to have its effect. In the wake of its appearance, the copies of *Tandis que la terre tourne* and *Le Vallon* ‘qui sommeillaient depuis quinze et dix-huit ans sur les rayons du « Mercure de France »’ [which, for eighteen and fifteen years, slumbered on the shelves of (Sauvage’s publisher) Mercure de France], sold out (Tenant 1930). The apparition of the *Amitiés* publication inspired Léon Daudet to contribute a pair of laudatory articles on Sauvage to the newspaper *Action Française*, in which he wrote of Sauvage’s poetry being new and fresh.⁵ Sauvage, Daudet observed in an article that made the front page of the periodical, ‘domine [...] par cet accent de sincérité absolue qui ne trompe ni l’oreille, ni le cœur [...]. Cela ne ressemble à rien. C’est une grande nouveauté [...]. Ne vous y trompez pas, au firmament apollionien [*sic*] une étoile nouvelle est apparue’ [dominates by this note of absolute sincerity that betrays neither the ear nor the heart... This is like nothing ever before. It is a great novelty... Do not be mistaken: a new star has appeared in the Apollonian firmament] (1930). Jean Cassou contributed a review in a similar vein to *Nouvelles littéraires*, in which he observed Sauvage’s verse as having ‘cette mélodie lamartinienne’ [this Lamartinian melody] and suggested – perhaps in not altogether a laudatory tone – that there was something archaic about Sauvage’s style: ‘on estimera, sans doute, que ni sa technique, ni sa langage, ni ses images ne sont de notre temps [...] il y a chez celle-ci, une atmosphère de tapisserie et de verger, une gaucherie et une simplicité de poème chevaleresque et de sculpture romane’ [One will likely judge that her technique, language, and imagery are not of our time... there is something of the feeling of tapestry and orchard about her, a clumsiness and simplicity belonging to the chivalric poem and to Romanesque sculpture]; all this made Cassou think of the poetry of Francis Jammes and Alain Fournier (1929). Jean Proal contributed an extensive article on Sauvage to the literary journal *Revue hebdomadaire*, in which he laid claim to Sauvage as a poet of Provence, arguing that her genius had its roots in the very soil of the region. Proal excuses his enthusiasm for Sauvage – an enthusiasm that led him to embark on a pilgrimage to her childhood home – by saying that, although he

⁵ It is likely not a coincidence – given, as I demonstrate below, the critical emphasis on Sauvage’s conservative role in society and alleged conservative views – that *Action Française* was an overtly right-wing publication, whose contributors believed that French literature since the seventeenth century was suffering from progressive decline (see Renard 2019).

did not know Sauvage personally, 'j'ai lu ses vers – ses vers trop peu nombreux – et il rayonne d'eux une telle lueur d'humanité, et d'une humanité si éternelle, qu'il me semble avoir vécu dans son intimité, et qu'elle ait pour moi seul ouvert son cœur et m'ait tendu à deux mains son étincelant trésor' [I read her poems – of which there are too few – and they shine with the glow of humanity, an eternal humanity, so that I feel I have lived in (Sauvage's) intimacy, and that she has opened her heart for me alone and held out its sparkling treasure in her two hands] (1932: 594-595). This sensation of intimacy with a writer he never knew pushed Proal to write his own contribution to the wave of posthumous accolades surrounding Sauvage. Maurice Beaubourg, contributing to the literary journal *Mercure de France*, called Sauvage's poetry 'pure, palpitante, et délicieuse' [pure, quivering, and delicious] (1929: 260). Beaubourg scoffed at the idea that Sauvage could be compared with either Jammes or the poet Anna de Noailles, writing that *Tandis que la terre tourne* was 'un volume de vers d'une vie comme nouvelle, au son jamais entendu, intense, net, inoubliable (aucun rapport avec Francis Jammes, d'ailleurs, ni avec Mme de Noailles)' [a volume of poetry of seemingly new life, sounding like nothing ever before, intense, clear, unforgettable (it has, by the way, nothing to do with either Francis Jammes or Madame de Noailles)] (ibid: 259). Instead, Beaubourg compared Sauvage to Verlaine (ibid: 272) and even brought Catullus into the conversation by way of emphasizing Sauvage's contribution to literature on love (ibid: 276-277). And Charles-Henry Hirsch, reviewing the *Amitiés* publication in *Mercure de France*, pitted Sauvage against a slew of minor Parisian male poets when he claimed in response to Sauvage's work, 'Que nous serions heureux, si de tels vers, si humains, si mélodieux, si riches de signification, d'une langue si sûre, incitaient à quelque retour sur lui-même un seul de ces petits messieurs qui chantent à l'envi les cocktails et les bars, les drogues ou l'inversion, dans des pièces qui ne sont même pas de la prose!' [We would be very happy if such verses, so human, so melodious, so rich in meaning, written in such a sure language, were to make at least one of those little men – who sings over and over about cocktails and bars, about drugs and perversion, in pieces that cannot even be called prose – take a good look at himself!] (1928: 432). Hirsch's observation suggestively separates 'women's writing' and 'men's writing', the rural and the urban, the mastery of traditional literary forms and the apparent absence of form (the pieces written by these men who enjoy worldly cocktails 'cannot even be called prose'). A contrast is

made between the virtue of writing about beauty and the apparent sin of writing about vice. Sauvage's poetry, in the eyes of Hirsch and many others, falls surely in the first category, which itself aligns with women, with the rural, the traditional, and the innocent.

Such positive reactions to Sauvage's work are often tied to evocations of her womanhood. Contributions to the *Amitiés* publication (*Cécile Sauvage* 1928) are punctuated by repeated emphasis on the fact that Sauvage was a woman and a mother, and that her poetry was inextricably connected to both those facts. Eugène Marsan declared that Sauvage was 'Femme et mère, et poète comme cela, humainement, non par métier ni gloriole' [Woman and mother, and a poet in this manner, not because of profession or glory, but humanly so] (*Cécile Sauvage* 1928: 67). André Arnoux observed that Sauvage's work was 'Poésie très féminine par la plénitude de la fusion [...]. La femme [forme ses sujets lyriques] en elle comme l'enfant de ses entrailles, ne se distingue pas d'eux, les nourrit de son sang, souffre de s'en délivrer et les suit encore, quand ils sont détachés, avec cette tristesse et ce bonheur un peu jaloux des mères' [Very much *poésie féminine* because of the thoroughness of its fusion... The woman forms her lyric subjects as she forms the child within her guts, without distinguishing herself from them, nourishing them with her blood, suffering as she delivers them and then, once they are detached from her, she follows them about with the sadness and mild jealousy of a mother] (*ibid*: 42). A contemporary female writer, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, proudly titled her contribution to the collection 'La Fierté d'être femme' [The Pride of Being Woman] and declared Sauvage's collection *L'Âme en bourgeon* to be a 'document inouï sur le mystère féminin' [a groundbreaking document about the feminine unknown] (*ibid*: 33). These statements echo the attitude towards gendered creation surveyed in the previous chapter: literary production by women is less distinct from experience than is that of men, is human rather than genius or artful, and prone to being described in terms of gestation, delivery, and gendered mystery. Such critical applause in the *Amitiés* publication and elsewhere is revealing of what was expected of a woman writer, or women generally, in Belle Époque France. The critics found in Sauvage and her work the image of femininity they were seeking.

As Rachel Mesch has observed, the *femme moderne*, or modern woman who emerged in turn-of-the-century France, was a woman of intellectual pursuits, but one who did not use them to break what may have been construed as new political

or cultural ground. Women's magazines of the Belle Époque worked hard to create an image of femininity 'in deliberately stark contrast to stereotypes of the feminist activist and the New Woman' (2013: 1). The French Belle Époque woman did not challenge gender norms in the way the feminist activists or the New Woman – the smoking, bicycle-riding, trouser-wearing import of Anglo-Saxon culture – did. The image of the Belle Époque woman reconciled traditional family norms with women's capacity for intellectual independence, as had been fostered by the expansion of secondary schooling for girls in 1880s France (ibid: 4). Such a woman, as depicted in the new glossy magazines *La Vie Heureuse* and *Femina* oriented towards a female readership, could 'have it all': 'devoted husband, fulfilling family, beautiful home, and, if not a satisfying vocation, at least some sort of outlet for self-expression' (ibid). It is not that such women were perceived as stepping outside the bounds of their domestic circles, but rather that the domestic circles were now expanding to embrace other acceptable pastimes (Mesch 2013: 13), including literature. It is worth observing how photographic images of women writers in the press helped visually to reinforce their dependence on male networks (Prin-Conti 2021) and, furthermore, to reconcile women's cultural production and biological reproduction. In 1902, the inaugural issue of *La Vie Heureuse* ran a feature story on the poet Anna de Noailles (1876-1933), with accompanying photographs that portrayed Noailles in her home cradling one of her children on her lap, and, alternatively, Noailles cradling her most recent publication (Mesch 2013: 1). The photographs of Sauvage in the *Amitiés* publication are tellingly similar: the frontispiece portrays the writer with a book in her lap, while another photographic insert two pages later portrays her holding up her infant son Alain, his brother Olivier standing by their side (1928). This visual equivalence of books and babies would have soothed, by the beginning of the twentieth century, any lingering nineteenth-century anxieties about the unfemininity and infertility of women who wrote (see Planté 1989: 23, 48-50; Paliyenko 2016: 31, 41). Sauvage's critical reception may have been all the warmer due to her lyrical evocations of motherhood and her apparently limiting her subject matter to the themes of motherhood, love, and nature.

Sauvage's choice of genre, too, may have been a conservative one. Jennifer Milligan writes that 'in the early twentieth century one poetic domain was favored by most established *femmes de lettres*: the simple, elegiac, lyric poem. Characterized

by narcissism, sentimentality, and the old Romantic credo of the servitude of love, like the educative play, it offered no challenge to stereotypical female roles, and was considered to be ideologically conservative, a harmless vent for female creativity' (1996: 32). Although this claim can be challenged on multiple fronts (not all lyrics are Romantic, and many established *femmes de lettres* in fact wrote prose poetry or free verse, as did Sauvage herself), the lyric poem, and poetry generally, was an unintrusive literary form, as Patricia Izquierdo has similarly argued. It was, very simply, less lucrative than novel-writing, which is why men were happy to cede the genre to women (Izquierdo 2009: 62-65). For Sauvage, writing was not a profession: although it certainly held for her the importance of a life's *métier* – Pierre Messiaen insisted that she saw it as her craft, her 'travail', working at it daily (ibid: 306) – there is no evidence that she ever expected it to bring in money or wrote to make an income.

There is the additional matter of Sauvage's own alleged ideological conservatism. I say alleged because the following phrases, which critics proved to be fond of quoting, only appear in the posthumous *Amitiés* publication (*Cécile Sauvage* 1928) and the *Œuvres de Cécile Sauvage* (Sauvage 1929), both of which are the fruits of Pierre Messiaen's labors. The phrases in question are fragments extracted from supposed longer prose texts and letters written by Sauvage to Messiaen, and thus selected by Messiaen for publication. They cannot be traced back to any publications that appeared during Sauvage's lifetime.⁶ As will be further discussed in Chapter 5, what is interesting about these statements is not so much whether they are true – that is, whether Sauvage actually wrote them and harbored such sentiments (there is to my current knowledge no hard evidence to the contrary) – but how Messiaen arranged them to shape carefully an image of Sauvage as an ideologically conservative woman who produced moving literature without overstepping the bounds of her social role. Thus, the *Amitiés* publication suggests that Sauvage thought her literary craft second to her marriage, through the inclusion of a textual fragment that reads, 'Ma mère m'avait dit que, Dieu étant dans mon cœur, je devais le prier pour ma vocation. J'ai dit à Dieu que je voulais me marier et

⁶ It is possible that the manuscript letters containing these extracts may turn up at the Bibliothèque nationale de France over the course of the processing of Sauvage's archives, but to date I am unaware of their existence. For more information on what is available and has been catalogued by the archivists, see Chapter 5.

que c'était ma vocation' [My mother told me that since God was in my heart, I should pray to God for my calling. I said to God that I wanted to marry and that marriage was my calling] (*Cécile Sauvage* 1928: 158). Then, displayed prominently under the section *Pensées et fragments des lettres* [Thoughts and letter fragments] in the *Amitiés* edition is the following opinion about a woman's intellectual place: 'La culture intellectuelle pour une femme doit être une belle robe invisible. Il faut qu'une femme oublie sa propre personnalité quand elle aime. C'est une loi de la nature. Une femme n'existe pas sans un maître, elle n'est qu'un bouquet éparpillé' [Intellectual culture should be like a beautiful, invisible dress on a woman. A woman must forget her own personality when she loves. It is a law of nature. A woman doesn't exist without a master; she is nothing but a scattered bouquet] (*ibid*: 157). This evocation of restricting the display of a woman's intellectual activity echoes what was expected of women writers in Belle Époque France. Sauvage's alleged sentiments align well with the reconciliation of femininity and cultural production that was expressed elsewhere by her critics and peers. Given that the outburst of praise for Sauvage's work, as surveyed above, followed exclusively in the wake of the *Amitiés* and *Œuvres* publications, it is unsurprising to see these statements, apparently made by Sauvage herself, quoted across the myriad articles whose authors appeared pleased with Sauvage's focus on motherhood and the way she respected women's traditional role (Hirsch 1928: 432-33; Beaubourg 1929: 258; Bever and Léautaud 1947: 191). These statements were also used as evidence of Sauvage's antifeminism by later critics, especially by Beauvoir (1949b: 478) and Izquierdo, who calls Sauvage and her peers not feminists but 'hoministes' [man-ists] (2009: 358). It was perhaps in appreciation of this ideological position that Sauvage was described by the critic Paul Léautaud as 'une femme qui ne dit pas de bêtises' [a woman who does not say silly things] (Dormoy 1963: 244) and earned the commendation, in Bever and Léautaud's anthology, as 'la première femme poète de notre temps' [the foremost woman writer of our time] (1947:191).

This flurry of accolades tells of a small and early Cécile Sauvage fan club, operating in the years 1929-1932, mostly male, largely indebted to Messiaen and Tenant's efforts. Tenant even celebrated Sauvage's life and work on the ground by organizing a conference in her honor on 10 January 1932 in Lyon (Gregoris 1932a): 'Devant une assistance nombreuse et promptement gagnée à sa ferveur [...] mêlant aux souvenirs personnels des remarques profondes et d'heureuses citations, M.

Jean Tenant insiste sur la poésie de l'amour et de la maternité dans l'œuvre de Cécile Sauvage' [Before a large and promptly impassioned audience, interweaving personal anecdotes with profound insights and opportune quotations, Mr. Jean Tenant places emphasis on the poetry of love and the poetry of motherhood in the work of Cécile Sauvage] (Gregoris 1932b). Once again there is insistence on Sauvage's thematic treatment of love and motherhood in her poetry. For this group of fans, Sauvage was ideologically and formally conservative, operating within the bounds of acceptable femininity, which in their eyes only heightened her appeal. Equally, these fans found Sauvage to be technically accomplished, moving, and inspiring. Many among them, such as Tenant, Henri Pourrat, and Marie Dormoy, knew her personally and believed the quality of her work would result in her work's enduring beyond the appreciation of intimate friends. 'Nous la retrouvons, presque trente ans après sa mort, aussi proche de nous qu'elle fut pour ceux qui l'admirent et l'aimèrent vivante. Ce qui est la meilleure preuve de la pérennité de son œuvre' [We readers encounter her again, almost thirty years after her death, as close to us as she had been to those who admired and loved her when she was alive. This is the best proof of the permanence of her work] (1955: np), suggested Dormoy in a preface to a re-edition of *L'Âme en bourgeon*. Other contemporaries expressed regret that Sauvage's worth as a poet was not celebrated to its full extent during her lifetime. Proal mournfully observed that, upon the first instance of the publication of Sauvage's works, 'aucune voix ne s'éleva pour annoncer au monde qu'un grand poète était né, et qu'il fallait lui faire large place à côté des plus grands' [no voice came forth to announce to the world that a great poet had been born, and that we must make room for her by the side of our greatest] (Proal 1932:603) Note the deliberate use of the masculine form in the French throughout Proal's sentence. Proal, not interested in specifying Sauvage, as had Léautaud, to be the best 'femme poète' and therefore the best only among women, uses the masculine form to induct her into the pantheon of greatness.

What emerges so far is a portrait of Sauvage praised by her contemporaries and even found worthy of standing among the greats; however, this image is at points colored by conservative notions of a woman's intellectual output and expectations about the type of writing women produce (instinctual, overly implicated in its subjects). Such notions and expectations were possibly articulated by Sauvage herself. Sauvage's traditional, bourgeois reputation was helped along by the efforts

of Messiaen and Tenant, and, as will be further discussed in the following chapter, this contributed to a perception of Sauvage as antifeminist among later twentieth-century scholars. Meanwhile, Sauvage's 'rustic' and 'pastoral' reputation, the evidence for which can be found in the remarks of her contemporaries as well as in readings of her work by twenty-first century translators and scholars such as Norman Shapiro and Patricia Izquierdo, has its roots in the association of Sauvage (and Belle Époque poetry by women more broadly) with two contemporary movements: *naturisme* and *jammisme*.

2. Between the *jammistes* and the *naturistes*

In the article that accompanies his translation into English of *L'Âme en bourgeon*, Phillip Weller writes that Sauvage, 'like all the poets of her time [...] owed a considerable debt of a generalized kind to the Symbolist project and what it had accomplished' (2007: 260-261). The Symbolist movement appears like a turn-of-the-century watershed in the history of French literature: there was a before and after Symbolism, a for and against. In 1927, writer and critic André Billy identified a stream of poetic schools or movements active during the Belle Époque or otherwise influential on its literature. He classified some under the heading of 'Réactions contre le symbolisme' [Reactions against Symbolism]: these included *le naturisme* [*Naturisme*] and what Billy identified as its offshoot, *le jammisme* (after the poet Francis Jammes). Other movements, presumably not anti-Symbolist enough to be classified as such, were listed under 'Les tendances contemporaines' [Contemporary trends]. These included the like of *les romantiques-parnassiens* [Parnassian Romantics], *les poètes du Midi* [poets of the Midi], *les néo-classiques et archaïstes* [Neo-classicists and archaists], and even *Paul Valéry, Paul Claudel, et Paul Fort* in a group of their own. Bringing up the rear after all other possible groupings had been exhausted, were *les poétesses* [poetesses] (Billy 1927).⁷ This list gives a feel for how many literary schools, formal and informal, existed at the

⁷ Billy's anthologizing methodology is, evidently, inconsistent, because although he includes self-identifying schools – a collective of writers who produced a theory or manifesto, such as the *naturistes*, *intégralistes* [Integralists] or *unanimestes* [Unanimists] – he also groups into movements those poets whose work contained similar themes or rhetorical strategies (*humoristes* [Humorists] and *poètes argotiques* [Slang poets]) and even on the sheer basis of gender or geographical origin (*les poétesses* and *les poètes du Midi*).

turn of the century. It seemed that at every turn there was a literary trend with which a prospective writer could ally themselves. Francis Jammes (1868-1938), a recluse of the French Basque country who came to prominence after the publication of his first volume of poetry with the publisher *Mercure de France* in 1898 (Mallet 1950: 33), wrote as much in a two-page manifesto published in the literary journal *Mercure de France* in March 1897. The manifesto was a contribution ‘à la fois parodique et sérieux’ [at once serious and a parody] (Izquierdo 2012: 117), in which Jammes observed that since ‘il est opportun, en ce siècle, que *chaque individu* fonde une école littéraire’ [it is appropriate for *every individual* to start a literary school] (1897: 493, emphasis in original), that he was setting up his own called *le jammisme*. This school would be dedicated to literary expression that was natural, pure, and true, for transmission of truth was the worship of God. ‘Je pense que la Vérité est la louange de Dieu’ [I believe that Truth is praise of God], wrote Jammes. ‘Que nous devons la célébrer dans nos poèmes pour qu’ils soient purs [...]’. Toutes choses sont bonnes à décrire lorsqu’elles sont naturelles’ [We must celebrate him in our poems so that they may be pure... All things are good to describe, so long as they are natural] (ibid: 492).

It was this emphasis on the natural world in his poetry that led to Jammes being thrown in with the *naturistes* during his lifetime (and, as we will see, with women writers, whom Billy previously labelled as ‘les poétesses’). If the (ironic) creation of *jammisme* dates to Jammes’ manifesto, *naturisme* as its own movement began around 1895 and was propelled by its main proponent, Saint-Georges de Bouhéliér. In tandem with the movement’s main theoretician Maurice Le Blonde, Bouhéliér proposed to save French literature from what he saw as the sterility and artificiality of Symbolism; *naturisme* was to oppose its decadent predecessors by channeling ‘the mystical grandeur of *la vie quotidienne*’ (Day 2001: 6). The movement was short-lived, perhaps due to its having produced more theory than actual literature and having courted but failed to attract notable writers (ibid:15). The connection between the *naturistes* and Jammes was a more a matter of perception than of any real theoretical or stylistic collaboration: by the turn of the century, Jammes somehow found himself taken for a *naturiste* (Izquierdo 2012: 117). According to Billy, ‘le Naturisme a réussi en dehors des « naturistes » et grâce à d’autres poètes. Naturiste, Francis Jammes; naturiste, Henry Bataille; naturiste, la comtesse de Noailles’ [*Naturisme* succeeded outside of the actual ‘*naturistes*’,

thanks to other poets. Francis Jammes was a de facto *naturiste*; Henry Bataille, a *naturiste*; the Countess de Noailles, a *naturiste*] (1927: 5). At some point the label *naturiste* became detached from the precise theories of Bouhéliier and Le Blonde and became synonymous with the themes and style of Jammes. Jammes may have been taken for a *naturiste* because he argued for the ‘clarity and simplicity of expression’ in which the *naturistes* themselves believed (Day 2001: 23). In their reach for truthful and simple descriptions of the natural world, *naturistes* and *jammistes* were both ‘reacting against a symbolist [*sic*] aesthetic that, they believed, ignored nature, or considered it as a symbolic representation of a deeper reality’ (ibid).

This purity that was the result of a truthful description of the world would become an often identified ‘feature’ of Jammes’ poetry. Observers credited Jammes with pure transmission rather than invention or (over)thinking: ‘Son instinct l’entraîne à décrire les choses telles qu’elles sont en mettant l’accent sur leurs caractères de tristesse, de gaieté ou d’impassibilité, selon leur propre état d’âme. Il dépeint plus qu’il n’analyse. Il sent plus qu’il ne raisonne’ [His instinct leads him to describe things as they are and to emphasize their sad, joyful, or indifferent natures. He depicts more than he analyzes. He feels more than he reasons] (Mallet 1950: 61). This wording is reminiscent of the gendered split between feeling and reason proposed by observers such as Gourmont and Lacaf in their analyses of Sauvage’s poetry: men have critical distance, but women are too close to life itself and their cultural production is too direct a transmission of life (Gourmont 1910: 26-27). Jammes, therefore, is not only close to the *naturistes* but also close to *les poétesses*, because women write ‘non par métier’ [not for a profession], as Marsan observed of Sauvage, but ‘humainement’ [humanly] (*Cécile Sauvage* 1928: 67). Jammes’ lack of artificiality was lauded, in contrast to how, in contemporary women writers, such a quality made them apparently unable to achieve the rank of genius (Lacaf 1931). According to Mallet, no poet before Jammes would succeed in being ‘naturally’ antithetical to the artifice of Symbolism and bring ‘un cri spontané, non une chanson étudiée’ [a spontaneous cry and not a studied song] to French literary production (1950: 10). Jammes would even be declared to be the ‘anti-Baudelaire’ or a refreshing antidote to Baudelaire’s ‘Satanism’ by Billy, who described Jammes’ work thus: ‘c’est la candeur, c’est l’innocence, ce sont toutes les vertus bourgeoises et familiales, c’est l’attachement au sol natal’ [it is candour, it is innocence, it is all

bourgeois and family values, it is the attachment to one's native soil] (1927: 5).⁸ Jammes was read as scorning the kind of writing that sought to shock or to please, and instead offered a deliberately natural and 'unstudied' style, marked by 'une sincérité intégrale' [complete sincerity], 'une sensibilité suraiguë' [highly acute sensitivity], and 'un style direct qui ne prétend pas être « du style »' [direct style that does not pretend to be 'a style'] (Mallet 1950: 22-23). These same terms have been used to describe Sauvage's writing: her style is marked by 'sincérité absolue' [absolute sincerity] (Daudet 1930) and 'simplicité' [simplicity] (Cassou 1929).

This reference to a style-that-isn't-style points to an inability to completely dismiss the artfulness of the writing process, even though Jammes is perceived as a 'sincere' and 'pure' writer who channels the truth of the world instead of artificially creating arcane and overly stylized poetry with a multitude of hidden meanings. In one of the few surviving remarks Sauvage makes about her writing process, she similarly implies that writing, even if it draws upon the most natural and descriptive of words, is still a process of deliberate alchemy:

Les mots naissent souvent sous couleur de soleil dans mon cœur ; les transformer serait étouffer mon naturel. Puis, l'élégance des mots légers est pour les petites filles un écran ; ce qu'elles trembleraient d'écrire uniment et brusquement, leur voix le gazouille. Elles font comme les oiseaux qui ne parlent que par les mélodies à leur dame d'avril, car ils savent bien que la musique peut traduire toutes les audaces sans jamais blesser l'oreille. Ceci vous explique qu'on peut, tout en étant très sincère, faire une perle d'une larme.

[Often, words are born in my heart beneath the color of the sun: to transform them would be to stifle my nature. Moreover, the elegance of light words is like a screen for little girls: that which they would be afraid to write steadily and bluntly, they twitter in their voices instead. They are like birds who speak in melodies to their mates in April, because they know that music can translate any cheek and never grate upon the ear. This explains to you how, while remaining very sincere, one can make a pearl out of a tear.] (Sauvage 1930: 2)

⁸ The praise of 'bourgeois and family values' and the nationalism suggested by the 'attachment to one's native soil' imply here Billy's reading Jammes through a socially conservative lens – similar, perhaps, to the kind of reading that got Sauvage on the front page of the right-wing paper *Action Française* (Daudet 1930).

In this description, the writing process is akin to a transformation that ossifies or solidifies: something transitory (a tear) is made permanent (a pearl) over the course of setting it down in words. And yet, words spring as if unprompted in the poet's heart, in the manner of flowers coming up naturally under the sun. Sauvage does not wish to consciously 'transform' such words by replacing them with more studied turns of phrase, for that would destroy the naturalness of the expression. In the manner of Jammes' 'style-that-isn't-style', Sauvage claims for herself direct, natural expression. Yet, there is a transmutation that occurs, a translation in fact, by which something on the level of animal impulse (the mating calls of birds in springtime) becomes something humanly refined and beautiful. Like Jammes, Sauvage describes herself as 'sincere'; she does not wish to be perceived as artificial or duplicitous. This passage contests Marsan's claim that Sauvage, being a woman, wrote without regard for craft (*Cécile Sauvage* 1928: 67), for time and technical skill go into making a pearl out of a tear. However, the passage also carries an observation of conservative social convention: Sauvage observes that specifically young women speak (are forced to speak, choose to speak?) in roundabout ways, transforming brusque thoughts into more elegant and more palatable expressions. This may well have bearing on the imagery and vocabulary that appears very common in Sauvage's poetry and that of her female literary contemporaries, as will be discussed in the third section of this chapter. Is the surprising consistency of natural metaphors in these women's texts simply stylistic preference – or a type of self-translation expected of these women writers, who repeatedly reach for plant and animal imagery to speak of something else, particularly human bodies and human desire?

Or is Sauvage simply a *naturiste*? The *naturiste* aesthetic, beyond its call for the abandoning of artifice, was a sensual one. It drew upon what the *naturistes* identified as a near-literal, autochthonous, and eroticized merging of the human subject with the natural environment. Bouhélier wrote,

La terre dont on a le domaine, vous tire à elle ; on y prolonge sa personne et bientôt, on s'y confond. C'est une fusion, à la longue, voluptueuse et dans laquelle on trouve, souvent, les seuls plaisirs qui laissent du goût à la vie fade.

Ainsi font les gens des champs. De quelle ferveur sont-ils unis à leur pré !

[The earth over which you preside draws you to herself: you extend your person into her and soon lose yourself in her. It is a sensual fusion that takes place over time and in which, often, the only pleasures that lend some taste to tired life can be found. This is what farmland laborers do. With what fervor they are bound to their field!] (cited in Day 2001: 21, translation mine)

Bouhélier's language is remarkably like that to be found in much of Sauvage's poetry. *Voluptueuse* [sensual] and *fusion* are words that dot the landscape of Sauvage's poetry. The fusion of human being and land is literal in Sauvage's poems about pregnancy, for example. The collection *L'Âme en bourgeon* opens with the lines,

Nature, laisse-moi mêler à ta fange,
M'enfoncer dans la terre où la racine mange,
Où la sève montante est pareille à mon sang.

[Nature, let me blend with your muck,
Plunge myself into the earth where the root gnaws,
Where the rising sap is like my blood.]
(Sauvage 1910: 117)

This merging of the human subject and land, when considered literally as it had been by the *naturistes*, becomes a way for Sauvage to transform one thing into another without overtly considering this process as one of transformation, metaphor, or symbolism. Her expression may be read as 'sincere' because she describes a newborn directly as a wild, green fruit: 'O fruit sauvage et vert éclos de ma saison, / Quand ta jeunesse était chaude encore de mon âme' [O wild and green fruit sprung of my season, / When your youth was still warm with my soul] (Sauvage 1910: 167). The mother's blood is tree sap, the infant is a green bud; elsewhere in Sauvage's poetry, a pair of lovers is presented as a flower and bee (Sauvage 2009: 70). The fusion of nature and human subject permits the use of natural metaphor without too heavy-handed a display of literary technique. Sauvage's style thus permits a simplicity of expression, allows for a veneer of gendered modesty as Sauvage described it, and passes itself off as sincerity and not as literary fireworks owing to the close relationship between subject and nature as described by the *naturistes*.

It is safe to speculate that Sauvage knew of Bouhéliier and the *naturistes*. The Sauvage-Messiaen household was a literary one: Pierre Messiaen was a literary journal editor and a translator and teacher of English literature. Sauvage and Messiaen may have encountered, at least in passing, all the literary movements that Billy listed as active in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Sauvage wrote to her parents that she and her husband could hold long discussions about poetry: 'S'il nous arrive de discuter, c'est sur la poésie, notre seule passion. Nous avons de longues conversations à propos d'une pièce, du sens d'un mot' [If we argue over anything, it is over poetry, our only passion. We have long conversations about a single text or the meaning of a word] (Marchal 2008: 51). But there remains, to my current knowledge, no existing evidence of Sauvage openly mentioning a school or a movement. Even Izquierdo's claim that Sauvage had been strongly influenced by Jammes (2012: 114) appears tenuous: it is based on observations of similarities between the two poets' styles made by third parties, as well as on a passing reference that Sauvage makes to Jammes in a letter written to Messiaen in 1907. Sauvage reports, 'Je voyais notre voisin qui jardinait avec un grand chapeau de paille. Je pensais que Francis Jammes au soleil doit mettre de tels chapeaux. Francis Jammes est très sympathique, n'est-ce pas?' [I saw our neighbor gardening in a large straw hat. I thought that Francis Jammes must wear such hats in the sun. Francis Jammes is very nice, no?]. Further down the same page Sauvage demonstrates a knowledge of Jammes' work by describing a donkey foal she had seen: 'Il y avait un ânon pelucheux et hérissé comme ceux du paradis de Francis Jammes' [There was a fuzzy, disheveled donkey, as if out of Francis Jammes' paradise] (Sauvage 2002: 250). The comments speak to no more than a familiarity with and enjoyment of Jammes' work. In turn, Jammes appears to have known of Sauvage as a writer and admired her, too, reportedly calling all of *L'Âme en bourgeon* 'le poème de la maternité' [the poem of motherhood] (*Cécile Sauvage* 1928: 20). Perhaps each recognized in the other an interest in using the humblest phenomena of the natural world to speak of abstract human concerns, such as birth, death, or the afterlife. As Jammes wrote in 'Prière pour aller au paradis avec les ânes' [Prayer to go to Paradise with the Donkeys],

Lorsqu'il faudra aller vers vous, ô mon Dieu, faites
Que ce soit par un jour où la campagne en fête

Poudroiera. [...]
Faites que, dans la paix, des anges nous conduisent
Vers des ruisseaux touffus où tremblent des cerises
Lisses comme la chair qui rit des jeunes filles,
Et faites que [...] je sois pareil aux ânes
Qui mireront leur humble et douce pauvreté
À la limpidité de l'amour éternel.

[When it is time to go to you, my God, make
It on a day when the countryside is powdered
In celebration ...
Make it so that angels peacefully escort us
Towards densely-covered streams where cherries
tremble,
Smooth as the laughing skin of young women,
And make it so that I am equal to the donkeys,
Who, in their soft and humble poverty,
Will reflect the clarity of eternal love.]
(*Poetica Mundi* 2023, translation mine)

In this example, similar to Sauvage, Jammes provides a celebratory and sensual description of the natural world. Humans and animals stand on equal footing in Jammes' poetry, and, in *naturaliste* fashion, natural and human characteristics blend as cherries are described in terms of the smoothness of young women's skin. In Sauvage, cherries also frequently have eroticized appeal, as in her exoticized description of a cherry orchard as a 'blanc harem' [white harem] (1910: 57). But there are arguably differences between the prosody of Jammes and Sauvage (the last two lines of the poem extract here give a taste of Jammes' loose approach to end rhymes, a more frequent phenomenon than in Sauvage), although a detailed comparison is beyond the scope of this thesis. Sauvage and Jammes would ultimately be better connected through readers and critics' identification of both poets' literary output as 'pure' and 'sincere', more so than through any self-avowed adherence to a particular type of literary practice. In fact, the most *jammiste* thing about Sauvage may have been her reluctance to say much about her work or to categorize it in any fashion. If women writers at the time were suspicious of schools or movements (Izquierdo 2012: 117), then *jammisme*, in denouncing the literary affiliations that occurred out of vanity and instead espousing sincerity, did offer these women writers a critical position, so to speak: not declaring a side was, in itself, a way of declaring a side.

Finally, this connection between Jammes and Sauvage is triangulated by Anna de Noailles, possibly the most prominent woman poet of the Belle Époque.⁹ Noailles is a concrete bridge between *jammisme* and *les poétesses* because she did, in fact, have an epistolary friendship with Jammes. The two were said to admire each other's work and Noailles wrote that Jammes was the contemporary poet who influenced her most (Izquierdo 2012: 115). Thus, Noailles was *jammiste* and *naturiste* – this is the conclusion at which Billy arrived when he wrote that the *naturiste* movement lived on through 'better' poets such as Jammes and Noailles (1927: 5). On the other hand, Noailles, as a woman of prominent social standing and a published writer, was, to observers, undoubtedly a *poétesse* and even the face of Belle Époque *poésie féminine*. She appears in Gourmont's anthology alongside Sauvage (1910), while her interest in thoroughly chronicling the natural world in verse is the subject of snide remarks by Bever and Léautaud (1947: 323-327). From a modern perspective, Izquierdo reads Noailles, Jammes, and Sauvage as stylistically and thematically similar and mutually admiring and influential (2012). The full force of Noailles' style – marked by grandiloquently lyrical evocations of the pastoral – is noticeable in her contribution to the *Amitiés* edition honoring Sauvage's life and work. The short homage does not lack fervor:

C'est avec tendresse et émerveillement, avec incrédulité quant à son évasion terrestre, que nous évoquons cette nymphe rapide, aux doigts agiles, cette prodigieuse fileuse de verdure, assise au rouet parfumé des saisons, déroulant la soie du cocon végétal, tissant la fraîche prairie, composant le feuillage des forêts. [...] On l'imagine, ses doigts ailés attachés aux mamelles azurées du monde, extrayant le lait bleu des sèves, pressant le raisin de ses pieds jubilants, assumant avec une gaieté grave de bacchante réfléchie le travail des bergers antiques.

[It is with tenderness and wonder, with incredulity at her earthly escape, that we speak of this fleet nymph with nimble fingers, this prodigious spinner of greenery, seated at the fragrant wheel of the seasons, unwinding the silk of

⁹ I continue to refer to Sauvage and Noailles as Belle Époque, following Izquierdo's classification of the writers as such. The label 'Belle Époque', generally taken to refer to the time period from the advent of the Third French Republic (1870) to the outbreak of World War I in 1914, is generous in its chronological breadth. It encompassed a range of cultural movements, such as Decadence, Symbolism, and the beginnings of modernism.

the vegetal cocoon, weaving the fresh field, composing the foliage of forests... We think of her, winged fingers around the azure teats of the world, extracting the blue milk of sap, squashing the grapes with her jubilant feet, and taking on, with the grave gaiety of the conscientious bacchante, the work of the shepherds of antiquity.] (*Cécile Sauvage* 1928: 5)

The deliberate and overwhelming evocation of Arcadia in this passage brings to mind how Cassou described Sauvage's poetry as deliberately antiquated – 'une atmosphère de tapisserie et de verger, une gaucherie et une simplicité de poème chevaleresque et de sculpture romane' [the feeling of tapestry and orchard about her, a clumsiness and simplicity belonging to the chivalric poem and to Romanesque sculpture] (1929). Cassou may have found that in Sauvage's case such an atmosphere did not lack charm. However, as Izquierdo observes, working in an 'outdated' or 'foreign' aesthetic meant that Belle Époque women writers were not perceived as threats to the male-dominated literary establishment. Izquierdo gives the example of the mainstream reception of Sauvage's contemporary Judith Gautier (1845-1917), whose novels were set in China and Japan and whose very content marked her out for an unthreatening oddity (Izquierdo 2009: 94). A woman who wrote verses set in Arcadia did not risk coming across as too modern or too pioneering. This would have given later readers the impression that writing by women in early twentieth-century France stood 'somewhat apart from contemporary developments' (Weller 2007: 261) and likewise given rise to critical analysis and translation choices influenced by such a reading (Shapiro 2008). Sauvage, like Anna de Noailles, was referred to as 'muse des jardins' [garden muse] (*Cécile Sauvage* 1928: 80) and 'la bergère' [the shepherdess] (ibid: 66). Beyond this charming association of women and gardens and echoes of pastoral idyll lurked the risk of being disparaged, of having one's choice of style and content trivialized. Noailles was elsewhere written off as 'muse potagère' [vegetable muse] and 'muse du radis' [radish muse] (Izquierdo 2009: 134), suggesting that the prevalence of natural subject matter in writing by women was a reason for ridicule.

This association between Belle Époque women writers and the vegetal could be explained by a connection to the *naturistes* or *jammistes*, and either celebrated as 'sincere' – the 'natural' content extending to the 'naturalness' of expression – or else dismissed as something out-of-touch. In the following section, I would like to

suggest that Belle Époque women writers were not out of touch at all; instead, they were responding quite actively to contemporary aesthetics and images of femininity, resulting in literary works that proved to be on occasion surprisingly transgressive.

3. Sauvage and her female literary contemporaries

By broadening the scope to bring into the conversation literature written by Sauvage's female contemporaries, I hope to help correct the mistake Jennifer Milligan observes is often made when analyzing the work of women writers: despite an 'insistence on women writers as relational beings [...they] are, almost without exception, never placed in relation to other women' (1996: 67). This may be partly due to the fact that, as Izquierdo has observed, a male network was often necessary to succeed as a writer in Belle Époque France, and even to be published at all (2009: 307). Sauvage herself is a textbook example: by all accounts, her writing was first encouraged by her father Prosper Sauvage, who sent a sample of her work to the renowned Provençal poet Frédéric Mistral, who praised it and suggested she submit to regional literary journals. She did so, and her first published poem 'Les trois Muses' was welcomed at *La revue forézienne* in Saint-Étienne by her future husband Pierre Messiaen (Sauvage 2009: 11). Another handful of poems were soon welcomed by Remy de Gourmont at the *Mercur de France* (ibid). The outpouring of posthumous reviews that Messiaen worked to secure for his wife was, as already observed, predominantly male. Contemporary women who wrote about Sauvage included Anna de Noailles and Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, who both contributed to the *Amitiés* edition, though there is no evidence of either of them knowing Sauvage personally. Sauvage also corresponded with and was much admired by a female poet whom she appears to have known in Grenoble, Claude Chardon, who wrote several short poems in praise of Sauvage in her own collection *Trois roses Dauphiné* (1934).

Despite Sauvage's apparent dearth of female literary networks – or of any apparent literary networks beyond that of her husband and friends¹⁰ – Sauvage's writings display remarkable stylistic and thematic similarities to both poetry and prose works composed by other women writers during the Belle Époque. Firstly,

¹⁰ In what survives of Sauvage's letters, the only contemporary names she mentions are those of Jammes and Henri de Régnier (Sauvage 1930: 22).

these writers' interest in the natural world is, I argue, an engagement with the sensual and feminized aesthetics of the contemporary Art Nouveau aesthetic (I continue the argument put forth by Izquierdo, 2009). Secondly, there is an observable common interest in the erotic, even a transgressive erotic. Thirdly, there is an engagement with Christian motifs and imagery that intertwines with the erotic and the vegetal and often explodes into a kind of pantheism, echoing the aesthetic of the *naturistes*. None of these observations reject readings of Sauvage devoted to traditional ideas of femininity or motherhood, nor of Sauvage as a *jammiste*, but they nuance an otherwise neat, easily classifiable portrait of Sauvage. I argue on behalf of the contexts I propose not because they are absolute, nor in order to defend an essentialist claim about 'women's writing' at the turn of the century, but instead to tease Sauvage away from the readings that have accompanied her work to this date and which have been surveyed in the two preceding sections of this chapter. To me, Sauvage remains unique and not replaceable by any of the writers I cite below. The partiality I feel for her work, as expressed in the beginning of Chapter 1, as well as my opinion of its formal excellence and affective power, lead me to prefer Sauvage from among other potential candidates with whom I suggest Sauvage has thematic affinity. Nevertheless, the exercise of recontextualization I perform here (somewhat as a warm-up to the recontextualization I perform in *A Sauvage Reader*) has been useful for me in helping to broaden the range of ways in which I read and re-read Sauvage's poetry. This in turn served as a mental springboard for me as I went on to arrange *A Sauvage Reader* along thematic lines and to work on my translations. Recontextualization, which at first glance may appear a critical exercise, has consequences for creative approaches.

French mainland women writers of the Belle Époque have received increased attention in recent years, indicating growing interest in the history of literary production by women during this time period. A special issue of *Çédille* (Fouchard and Schellino 2021) was dedicated to the reception of Belle Époque women poets in France and Spain, its contributions examining the careers, receptions, and representations of Hélène Picard, Marie Dauguet, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, Renée Vivien, and Anna de Noailles. Izquierdo's extensive literary, historical, and sociological study *Devenir poétesse à la Belle Époque* (2009) predominantly takes for its examples Loïe Fuller, Marguerite Burnat-Provins, Delarue-Mardrus, Natalie Barney, Judith Gautier, Hélène Picard, Noailles, Dauguet, Vivien, and Sauvage,

presenting them as representative of Belle Époque literary production by women. *Les Femmes poètes de la Belle Époque* (2019) under the direction of Wendy Prin-Conti examines the legacies left behind by writers such as Marie Krysinska, Burnat-Provins, Vivien, and Noailles, and considers the reasons by which such a fecund moment of cultural production by women was largely forgotten as the twentieth century rolled on. Most recently, Diana Holmes and Martine Reid published a volume on Jeanne Loiseau, who wrote prolifically under the pen name Daniel Lesueur (2023). Milligan's early, but indispensable volume *The Forgotten Generation* (1996) follows many of these Belle Époque writers into the interwar years and analyzes the social and material circumstances of their profession, as well as the subsequent reception and repeated 'miss-representation' (ibid: 48-74) of these writers. There were obviously more Belle Époque women writers than the handful listed above, and the recurrence of certain names across studies suggests their degree of prominence, but for the sake of this project I will only bring in works by a few of the aforementioned writers, having selected excerpts that I believe to be most intriguing or striking when read in conjunction with *Sauvage*.

Izquierdo briefly raises a thought-provoking hypothesis regarding the amount of vegetation in the works of Belle Époque women writers: could it be the influence of the Art Nouveau visual arts movement? The prevalence of women as subjects within Art Nouveau tableaux meant that the public eye extended women's decorative function to any piece of literary production by women: critical reception of literature written by women 'confond allègrement le poème, son auteur, et l'image stylisée de la femme-fleur, ou animale, telle que les hommes – les parisiens et les français surtout – voulaient la voir [...]'. La femme-poète est le meilleur exemple de cette poésie Art nouveau : elle n'est pas seulement poète, « elle peint, elle dessine, elle est douée d'un sens prodigieux de la décoration » [casually mixes the poem, its author, and the stylized image of woman as flower or animal, in the manner that the men – especially the French and the Parisians – wish to see her... The woman poet is the best example of this Art Nouveau poetry: she is not only a poet, 'she paints, she draws, she is gifted with a prodigious sense of decoration'] (2009: 126-127). Women writers, according to Izquierdo, willingly embrace their public decorative function: they write from within the very setting into which the visual artists of the day paint them – surrounded by long-stemmed flowers, running water, aquatic plants, and shimmering insects (ibid: 125). Butterflies are a staple feature both in

poems by women writers and in the work of glassmakers, symbolizing 'la grâce et la beauté, l'éphémère et la légèreté' [grace, beauty, ephemeralness and weightlessness] (ibid). As poets, women integrate and appropriate natural forms 'dans une communion effusive' [in a communion that overflows] (ibid) – here echoing the erotic fusion of the human subject with the natural landscape in Bouhéliier's description of *naturisme*.

For one example, we can take Marguerite Burnat-Provins (1872-1952), a writer and painter originally from Switzerland who, tellingly, has been better remembered for her art, with a collection of her drawings exhibited in Paris as recently as June 2021 (Grivet 2021) and a retrospective in Vevey in autumn 2020 (*Liberté* 2020). Burnat-Provins appears to have brought her visual sensibility to her writings. Her novel *La fenêtre ouverte sur la vallée* (1912) is a three-hundred page vegetal and mystical narrative to an addressee known only as Marie-Raphaelle. Early on, the speaker describes herself with an image that would not be out of place in an Alphonse Mucha tableau:

Me voici reine de jeu de cartes, aux boucles brunes serrées sous une couronne de papier doré. Un long voile s'y attache, brodé de fleurs de thym et qui répand un parfum à faire pâlir les flouves ; j'ai un sceptre, des manchettes de dentelle pointue, une grosse rose à la ceinture et je me nomme Argine.

[Here I am, queen in a deck of cards, my brown curls squeezed beneath a gold paper crown, to which a long veil is attached, embroidered with flowering thyme; the thyme gives off a scent headier than that of any sweet vernal-grass. I have a scepter, cuffs of pointed lace, a fat rose upon my belt, and I am called Argine.]
(Burnat-Provins 1912: 7)

The speaker is deliberately stylized, a queen-figure with an artificial paper crown, surrounded by flowers which are real ('qui répand un parfum') and also decorative ('une grosse rose à la ceinture'). The stylization and beautification in this passage echoes how 'Art Nouveau's enchantment with decoration aligned with the import of Beauty in both the biological and cultural realms' (Fischer 2017: 9). In Izquierdo's words, there is a demonstrated willingness to engage with women's decorative capacity. Later Burnat-Provins continues in the same vein,

Le long de ma main se risque une araignée brune au corselet orné de boules de corail [...]. Elle me quitte pour entrer dans le royaume des mousses plumeuses qui me font un épais coussin. [...] Et celle qui hante les baumes fraîches, celle dont les pieds transparentes ne froissent pas les fougères, la muette Beauté vient près de moi. [...] J'ai posé ma bouche mortelle sur ses doigts froids et doux, j'ai miré mes yeux d'encre dans ses yeux changeants où se balancent des ondes vertes et bleues et dans ses bras pudiques, la Dame me prend et me berce.

[The length of my hand brushes a brown spider, whose thorax is ornamented with coral beads.... She leaves me to go into the kingdom of downy moss that makes for me a thick cushion.... And she who haunts the fresh balms, she whose transparent feet do not disturb the ferns, she, mute Beauty, comes near me.... I placed my mortal mouth on her cold, soft fingers; I saw my inky eyes reflected in her changing eyes, where green and blue waves sway; the Lady takes me in her modest arms and rocks me.] (ibid: 26-27)

The passage emphasizes the decorative: even the infinitesimal spider might be a piece of artificial but beautiful handiwork, with coral balls or beads ('boules de corail') on its thorax ('corselet'). This could be a kind of coral jewelry with which the spider's bodice ('corselet') is ornamented ('orné'). The polysemy of the vocabulary feminizes the spider while drawing attention to its ornate and decorative appearance. Then the speaker, reclining on the moss in the forest, encounters Beauty in human form. Compare this mystical apparition with the nearly identical experience described in one of Sauvage's poems:

La femme simple et confiante
Marche en souriant sur les plantes.
Elle ne sait pas si c'est bien
D'être nue ; elle ne sait rien.
Mais avec sa robe de laine
Elle approche de la Beauté
Et lui présente la verveine
Fleurie en son jardin d'été ;
La Beauté rit à l'âme douce
Qui s'achemine sur la mousse
Et tendrait aussi sa verveine
Au premier venu dans la plaine.

[The sure and simple woman
Walks smiling on the plants;
She does not know if it is good
To be nude; she knows nothing.
But in her woolen dress
She approaches Beauty
And gives her the verbena
That has flowered in her summer garden;
Beauty laughs with her sweet soul
That goes along the moss
And would also hold out her verbena
To whomever comes first to the meadow.]
(Sauvage 1913: 106)

Both speakers encounter Beauty in a lush, humid setting where vegetation blooms. Is this evocation of Beauty in human form a Symbolist inheritance, and therefore an example of the 'considerable debt' that, Weller argues, Sauvage and her contemporaries owed to the Symbolist project (2007: 260-261)? Is it the incarnation of Sauvage's own metaphysics, as suggested by Pierre Messiaen? Messiaen wrote that Sauvage's literary subjects were

toujours poursuivis par le vieux mythe égyptien et platonicien de la Beauté qui ordonne l'univers selon un rythme d'ordre et de mesure. La Beauté, pour Cécile, ce n'était pas l'effort chrétien de retrouver l'originel paradis [...] c'était, comme aux yeux des philosophes grecs et des humanistes de la Renaissance, l'éternel féminin de lumière et de fécondité accompagné d'un enfant qui joue parmi les fleurs.

[always hounded by the old Egyptian and Platonic myth of Beauty, who organizes the universe according to orderly, measured rhythm. Beauty, for Cécile, was not a Christian endeavor to recover the original paradise... it was rather, as in the eyes of the Greek philosophers and Renaissance humanists, the feminine eternal of light and fecundity, accompanied by a child playing among the flowers].
(1944: 139).

In light of this, Sauvage's evocation of a personified Beauty may be read as a display of personal philosophy. In her poem Beauty may be an anthropomorphized force that lends rhythm and sense to those who, knowing nothing, come to her; in fact, Beauty may be the metrical imposing of order upon an otherwise unordered

lexis, which is what the writing of poetry amounts to. If so, can Burnat-Provins be writing with a similar take on Beauty, given the similarity of the descriptions in the work of the two poets? Or can it be speculated that what may be occurring here is an engagement (even an unconscious one) with the highly visual and ubiquitous representation of femininity in popular culture? The frequency of Belle Époque representations of femininity suggest what Lucy Fischer calls an Art Nouveau obsession ‘with the figure of Woman’ (2017: 13). Although such a line of inquiry is beyond the scope of this project, it may be worth further investigating how the representations of female beauty in contemporary media correlated with the evocations of a symbolic Beauty and accompanying evocations of love and sensuality in the works of Belle Époque women writers. It is quite possible that, despite the apparently simplistic, sincere, and rustic vocabulary employed by these writers, they are in fact betraying an awareness of the commercial circulation of certain sights, smells, and images – even of particular goods: consider, for example, the increased visibility and advertising of *verveine* with the introduction of verbena liquor as a digestif towards the end of the nineteenth century (the use of *verveine* to refer to the liquor entered usage in 1904), as well as its use as a perfume (*Le Petit Robert* 2016). It could be that the *verveine* used twice in Sauvage’s poem is, both to writer and contemporary reader, more than a mention of an ordinary weed – more than *jammiste* simplicity – but instead has echoes of tangible consumer goods that bear connections to Belle Époque society. A broader understanding of the potential influence of Belle Époque media on expression and imagery written by women at the time would further complicate a reading of Sauvage as simply pastoral.

The display of aestheticism in contemporary women’s poetry, as evidenced by the apparition of personified Beauty as well as the beautification of objects and creatures, is accompanied by a prevailing interest in sex and sensuality. Such sensual texts were apparently well-received by the reading public. For instance, Burnat-Provins’ *Le Livre pour toi*, first published in 1907 as a collection of prose poems written as an ode to a lover, was circulating in its fortieth edition by 1926. *Le livre pour toi* was about ‘l’amour, et, plus précisément, la passion charnelle, constamment confondue, d’ailleurs, avec la splendeur et la vigueur de la nature environnante’ [love, and, more precisely, carnal passion, which was constantly interwoven with the splendour and vigour of the natural surroundings]

(Chandernagor 2016: 153). Carnal love was expressed with constant reference to natural metaphor. Burnat-Provins writes,

Parce que l'Amour a noué nos corps de ses mains divines,
comme les enfants nouent les tiges qu'ils arrachent aux
prés, parce que nos vies se sont mêlées comme se mêlent
les eaux chantantes, je consacre à ta jeunesse un hymne
enivré. Je dirai la lumière de tes yeux, la volupté de ta
bouche, la force de tes bras, l'ardeur de tes reins puissants
et la douceur tiède de ta peau, blanche et dorée comme la
clarté du soleil. Je dirai l'emprise de tes mains longues qui
font à ma taille une ceinture frémissante ; je dirai ton
regard volontaire qui anéantit ma pensée.

[Because Love wove together our bodies with its divine
hands as children weave the stems they pull up from the
meadows, because our lives mingled as singing waters
do, I dedicate an intoxicated hymn to your youth. I will
speak of the light in your eyes, the pleasure of your mouth,
the strength of your arms, the ardor of your powerful hips
and the warm softness of your skin, white and gilded like
the brightness of the sun. I will speak of the grip of your
long hands that make a trembling belt around my waist; I
will speak of your willful gaze that obliterates my thoughts.]
(1907: II 2r-2v)

There is no mention of Burnat-Provins in any text left behind by Sauvage, but given the success of *Le livre pour toi* and of Burnat-Provins' extensive literary career, Sauvage may have come across the book. Moreover, Marchal reports that Sauvage's surviving love poems were meant to have constituted a broader work titled *Livre d'Amour* (Sauvage 2009: 23-24). Could the lost *Livre d'Amour* have been an engagement with *Le Livre pour toi*? In her surviving manuscripts Sauvage writes,

Je me sentais liée à toi de molle sensualité où toute la
chair se fondait, par tous les baisers donnés et reçus.
[...] Parce que tu m'avais touchée, parce que ton corps
s'était étendu le long du mien, j'étais toute comme la
terre d'un jardin où il a plu. [...]

Il est étrange que je me sente prise et à toi par la vue
seule, détachée du reste de ton visage [...]

Je garde aussi ton bras d'amant,
Autoritaire enlacement,
Comme une ceinture à ma taille.

[I felt connected to you by a soft sensuality in which all flesh was melted by kisses given and received. Because you had touched me, because your body had spread the length of mine, I was all like the earth in a garden after the rain....

It is strange that I feel ensnared, sense myself to be yours, by gaze alone, separate from the rest of your face....

I also keep your lover's arm,
That commanding embrace
Like a belt around my waist.] (2009: 64-65,144-145)

Both texts use the vegetal to describe the erotic: the lovers' bodies are like plant stems that children braid together or else like a garden after the rain. Burnat-Provins' text contains many of Sauvage's favorite words (*volupté, divine, frémissante*), the same image of an arm wrapping around the lover's waist like a belt, and a similar description of the imprisoning force of a lover's gaze. This similarity of imagery and vocabulary extends to the work of other contemporary women writers, such as Marie Dauget and Hélène Picard. Dauget (1865-1942), who worked in both verse and prose, published eight poetry collections around the turn of the century in which 'L'érotisme est transcendé dans un grand chant panthéiste; c'est la Nature tout entière qui lui fait l'amour, la Nature à laquelle elle s'abandonne, *immense amour qui éclate, et craque, et monte, et brise*' [eroticism is transcended in a great, pantheist song; it is all of Nature that makes love to her, Nature to whom she succumbs, an *immense love that explodes, and splits, and mounts, and shatters*] (Chandernagor 2016: 156, emphasis in original). The fusion of human subject with all of nature is, as has been already observed, a staple of *naturisme*, but the particular technique of using natural metaphor and simile to describe the male body through a female gaze appears unique to these writers and is remarkable in its frequency. In Dauget's poem 'Ode à l'amant' [Ode to the lover] we find lines such as 'Tu es la force de la forêt' [you are the power of the forest], 'Tu es rude comme un chêne' [you are as formidable as an oak], 'Tu jaillis comme un hêtre' [you erupt like a beech tree] (Chandernagor 2016: 155). The poem elsewhere employs vocabulary such as *sève* (sap), *ruisseau* (brook), and *aubépine* (hawthorn) – three natural world 'items' that often recur in Sauvage's poetry. Sauvage writes of

the difficulty of weathering a spring without the beloved while all around are ‘les rameaux chargés d’une sève charnelle’ [the branches are weighed down with carnal sap] (Sauvage 2009: 137); entirety of *Le Vallon* (1913) is filled with references to *fougères* [ferns] and *ruisseaux*, while red *aubépine* berries are the preferred image to describe the flush of a lover’s cheek in the earlier poetry of *Tandis que la terre tourne* (1910: 69). *Sève* reappears in the poetry of Hélène Picard (1873-1945), who in 1904 was one of the earliest winners of the poetry prize for women writers established by the *Femina* magazine (Laval-Turpin 2021). In Picard’s early poetry, evocations of the vegetal and the rustic are used to describe worship of a lover. In ‘Hymne au bien-aimé’ [Hymn to the beloved], Picard writes, ‘Je te savourerai dans le pain du matin’ [I will savor you in the morning bread] and ‘Et je m’effeuillerai sur toi comme une fleur’ [And I will undrape upon you as a flower’s petals are plucked] (in Chandernagor 2016: 175). In the conspicuously titled poem ‘Pénétration’ are the lines ‘J’aurai goûté vos yeux, votre front, votre main / Plus que je n’ai goûté l’eau limpide et le pain’ [I will have tasted your eyes, your forehead, your hand / More often than I have tasted clear water and bread] (ibid: 176). Consider Sauvage’s references to bread within the context of love – ‘J’aurai tant d’amour à manger ton pain’ [I will eat your bread with so much love] (2009: 146). Coupling a vocabulary of ecstasy and a vocabulary of worship – these compositions are often titled as ‘odes’ and ‘hymns’ to the beloved – what could at first be read as merely rustic expressions take on a distinctly Christian flair. In her work, Sauvage repeatedly replaces a Christian God with descriptions of the lover as God (2009: 80). The web of vocabulary and imagery shared by these writers is sensual, full of flora and fauna, full of Christian connotations that, through repeated emphasis on the natural world, sometimes expand into Pantheistic expression.

The thematic and stylistic similarities between a handful of Belle Époque women writers could fill several more extensive studies – as, for example, that of Julien Eymard, who identified what he termed *ophéliasation* [Opheliazation] across the work of various nineteenth- and twentieth-century women writers. Eymard defines *ophéliasation* as the sum of the tropes of mirroring, reflection, and what he calls ‘le narcissisme au féminin’ [narcissim in the feminine]. Eymard identifies in Sauvage’s texts the recurring imagery of ‘la chevelure dénouée [...] trait essentiel du mythe d’Ophélie’ [loose hair... the essential characteristic of the Ophelia myth] (1977 :143). Sauvage is joined in her interest in water and reflective surfaces by

Picard, Christane Burucoa (ibid: 144), Burnat-Provins, and Doëtte Anglivièl (ibid: 142), as well as Noailles and Marceline Desbordes-Valmore (ibid: 5-6). It is worth noting that Sauvage's evident engagement with the Ophelia trope (Sauvage 1913: 44, 149, 203) may have been inspired by Pierre Messiaen's translations of Shakespeare, and thus Sauvage's likely familiarity with *Hamlet*. Yet Eymard's study indicates that, beyond her network of husband and family friends, Sauvage's poetry may be figured within a web of aesthetic and thematic commonalities that extends to the work of other contemporary, and particularly female, writers.

This apparent preference for natural, watery imagery and intertexts appears to stem from something other than 'women's nature' or literary archaism. It is a deliberate choice, at least for Sauvage, who displays a keen awareness of other possible aesthetics. In a poem about an automobile ride in Paris, which is telling in its references to the visual arts, Sauvage momentarily steps out of her natural habitat – in both senses of the word: she leaves behind the natural world as her preferred subject, as well as 'steps out' of the floral and vegetal cadre that the Art Nouveau movement had painted her into as a woman. Sauvage replaces her evocations of ferns, streams, hills, moss, and mist – all soft, undulating, willowy, ephemeral forms of beauty – to speak of harsh lines, Cubist angles, and lightning-quick movement. This poem is about Sauvage's encounter with urbanity and the speed of new technology, as evidenced by her use of verbs such as *bondir* [leap] and *zigzaguer* [zigzag], the hardness of textures in *rapide coffret de glace* [swift box of glass] and *placards troués* [billboards with holes], and the fragmented flicker of shape and light described by *l'éclair des platanes* [the flash of the plane trees] and *angles cubistes* [cubist angles]. Sauvage observes it all and then declares she prefers slowness and gentleness:

Rapide coffret de glace et de cuir,
L'auto bondissait dans le soir moderne [...]
Des placards troués, faces de maison,
Zigaguaient parmi l'éclair des platanes [...]
Et sûr de régner sur ce branle-bas
D'essence, de cris et d'angles cubistes
Passait plus léger qu'entre les lilas
Un mol papillon aux ailes artistes.
Seul comme un rayon d'ordre et de douceur
Il planait parmi la cité fantasque [...]
Le flot gris des toits, terrestre et fatal

Gondolait la fin d'un jour de lumière
Et sur le couchant d'or horizontal
L'église tanguait grand vaisseau de pierre.

[Swift box of glass and leather,
The automobile leapt in the modern evening...
Billboards with holes, house fronts
Zigzagged among the flash of the plane trees...
And sure of ruling over this commotion
Made up of petrol, and shouts, and cubist angles,
There went a butterfly with decorative wings,
More softly than it might fly among the lilac.
Alone like a ray of order and gentleness
It soared above the fantastic city,
The grey flood of roofs, earthly and fatal,
Warped the end of a light-filled day,
And, upon the setting, gold horizon,
The church pitched, a great vessel of stone.]
(2009: 186-87)

Is there a hint of ideological conservatism in the triumph of the soft butterfly like a 'ray of order' over the chaotic and quickly modernizing urban hullabaloo, or even in the image of the grey 'earthly' flood of people and houses that makes the church pitch? Perhaps. Certainly, the Art Nouveau aesthetic in the form of a butterfly triumphs over the Futurist and Cubist principles of fragmentation and the impression of speed and motion.¹¹ In following the progress of the butterfly, the reader's gaze lifts upwards from the 'pans de robe' [bits of dress] and 'pieds valseurs' [waltzing feet] to the 'flot gris de toits' [grey flood of roofs] and ultimately to the visual of the church that dominates everything. This underscores the engagement Sauvage displays throughout her work with the Christian faith – the image of the church upon a hill reappears consistently throughout the subcollection *Le Vallon* in *Le Vallon* (1913) – but it is never a purely pious engagement. Instead, Sauvage extrapolates religious emphasis on flesh, spirit, and worship into more secular areas such as carnal love. In her texts, the lover becomes a God to be adored and love a secret

¹¹ A similarly disparaging use of the word *cubiste* occurs in Rachilde's 1931 novel *Les Voluptés imprévues*, whereby seedy nightclubs are described as full of feminists and 'tables cubistes' (Hawthorne 2001:213). Comparison of Sauvage to Rachilde, a female contemporary often classified as Decadent (Holmes 2001), throws up another question of context: is Sauvage Belle Époque, or something else?

religion (2009: 80); Christological motifs such as a bodily wound and a crown of thorns come to represent the speaker's suffering in the lover's absence (ibid: 79).

Moreover, this engagement with religious themes is no obstacle to endowing oneself with godly powers of creation. Pregnancy endows Sauvage's lyric subject with a participation in a Pantheistic divinity that touches everything (1910: 123). The power to make the world and to mold all men resides with the woman now, who is omnipotent and omniscient: 'Hommes, vous êtes tous mes fils, hommes, vous êtes / La chair que j'ai pétrie autour de vos squelettes. / Je sais les plis secrets de vos cœurs' [Men, you are all my sons, you are / The flesh that I have shaped around your bones / I know the secret folds of your hearts] (ibid). Nor is Sauvage, despite how her treatment of motherhood is repeatedly emphasized, the only writer to discuss the subject. Novels by women writers of the era treat the conflict between women's professional development and family (Rogers 2007), while maternity and motherhood are the express subjects of Delarue-Mardrus' novels *Roman de six petites filles*, *Marie, fille-mère*, and Renee d'Ulmès' novels *Sybille femme* and *Sybille mère* (Waelti-Walters 1990: 55). Sauvage is not unique in her apparent synthesis of sons and lovers, which is evident in her description of the infant child as 'mon petit amant' [my little lover] (1910: 168) and 'mon jeune bien-aimé' [my young beloved] (ibid: 161), while the lover's body is in turn treated like the unborn baby that resides within the mother: 'Je t'ai bercé, je t'ai porté, / J'ai porté ton germe en mon flanc, / J'ai entendu tes mouvements / Dans mon giron, mon bien-aimé' [I rocked you, I carried you / I carried your seed in my flank / I understood your movements / In my lap, beloved] (Sauvage 2009: 96). Dauguet's 'Ode à l'amant', referenced earlier, ends on a maternal tone with the lover perceived as 'Plus doux qu'un petit enfant / Et plus innocent qu'un ange' [Sweeter than a little child / And more innocent than an angel] (Chandernagor 2016: 155). In 1907, Sauvage's contemporary Valentine de Saint-Point wrote a novel about a mother's sexual love for her son in the frankly titled *Un Inceste*, where the mother narrates her own life-giving force in terms strikingly similar to those which Sauvage employs in her poetry. Alternating between first- and third-person narration, Saint-Point writes,

Je suis la force, je suis le soleil. Étreins-les. Étreins-les.
Tout est pour toi. Tout mon être arde en un feu qui est le
soleil, qui est la vie. Et ma bouche est le cœur de la vie.
[...] L'esprit alangui et serein, les yeux clos, elle contempla

la face douloureuse que la Vierge-Mère penche sur le visage du Christ son fils, dans la *Pietà* de Michelangelo. Elle s'émeut de la volupté des doigts maternels dans les cheveux souples où s'attarde encore la vie.

[I am the power, I am the sun. Embrace them. Embrace them. They are all for you. My whole being burns in a fire that is the sun, that is life. And my mouth is life's heart.... With her mind calm and relaxed and her eyes closed, she contemplated the grief-stricken expression of the Virgin Mary bent over the lifeless face of Christ, her son, in the Michelangelo *Pietà*. She was moved by the voluptuous touch of the maternal fingers in the flowing locks, where life yet lingered.] (Waelti-Walters 1990: 77-78, translation by Waelti-Walters)

Saint-Point (1875-1953) was a figure connected to the Futurist movement; her *Futurist Manifesto of Lust* (1913) is now regarded as '[anticipating] key aspects of Surrealism' and Saint-Point is credited with having 'explored the feminine psychology of desire, at a time when feminine sexuality was still defined by Freud in terms of "castration" and "lack", compared with male sexuality' (Wilson and Sina 2019). It is striking to observe the parallels in the erotic and mystical expression in the work of Saint-Point and Sauvage and their evocation of a life-giving force that issues from the female body. Compare Saint-Point's passage with the following poem by Sauvage that describes an equally *Pietà*-like, post-coital moment:

Alanguï et suant, beau comme un jeune mort,
Te voilà dans mes bras si pale si candide,
Tes cheveux sont collés à tes tempes humides
Tes yeux se sont fermés et ton corps est plus lourd [...]

[You lie in my arms like a beautiful corpse, pale
And slick and frank and languid. Your hair
Sticks to your wet temples, your eyes are closed
Your body heavier than it had been before] (2009: 107)

In Saint-Point, there is a transgressive quality to both the sensual and the spiritual in the presentation of an incestuous Mary/mother with desiring fingers ('la volupté des doigts maternels'). In both texts, body or spirit are described as languid, lethargic ('alanguï'). There is even a tinge of necrophilia, given the apparently lifeless body of the lover/son. More broadly, the illicit subject matter of Saint-Point's novel is openly acknowledged in the novel's title, *Un Inceste*. We could compare this to an instance

of Sauvage's description of a kiss the female speaker bestows upon her male lover: 'Je baise cette bouche et c'est un viol tendre' [I kiss this mouth and it's a tender rape] (2009: 127). There is a willingness in both writers to cross erotic boundaries, which suggests that the vegetal and Christian vocabulary employed by Sauvage and her fellow writers is less about the need for euphemisms or a demonstration of conservatism or prudishness, and instead an aesthetic choice. The work of Sauvage, who has been so determinedly presented as a traditional and bourgeois wife and mother by her family and friends, who has been grouped either with the 'vegetable muse' de Noailles or the rustic and piously Catholic Jammes, may in fact have greater parallels with the exalting eroticism of writers such as Saint-Point and Burnat-Provins.

An interest in women's life force and its accompanying sexual expression, the evocation of Beauty as an abstract and symbolic entity, and an engagement with contemporary and rapidly developing visual arts movements can be thus identified across the texts of diverse Belle Époque women writers. Is this enough to make for a literary movement that could be called something other than *poésie féminine* or *naturisme/jammisme*? The first, as will be discussed over the course of the next chapter, is unsatisfying due to its essentializing tendency and the arbitrariness with which it is assigned and the ease with which it can shed or acquire positive or negative connotations. The second has had frustrating implications for the continued reception of Sauvage, along with other women writers, as overly pastoral and bucolic; moreover, it fails to account for evidence of transgressive eroticism and a possibly deliberate engagement with the visual arts. Finally, it must be considered what aesthetic or political value is gained out of classifying Sauvage with a particular group of writers. The immediate benefit of this exercise with respect to this thesis has been to stimulate my thoughts about translating Sauvage's poetry for *A Sauvage Reader*. For example, erotic transgression becomes an overarching metaphor for translation in the '*Possession*' section of the *Reader*. Recontextualization likewise raises awareness about how certain preexisting contexts are transmitted through translations and anthologization – a point to which I return in Chapters 4 and 5.

Cécile Sauvage emerges from amid her contemporaries – male and female, writers and critics – as a bundle of contradictions. Despite expressions of bourgeois conservatism, the content of her work is daring. She engages with Christian faith,

imagery, and metaphor, but her relationship to the church is not a pious one. Her poetry, though often employing a 'simple' vocabulary of everyday objects, and perhaps at first reading 'archaic' because of her preference for the natural, rustic world, nevertheless reveals an innovative and even transgressive interest in the mystical and the erotic from the perspective of the female subject – an interest Sauvage appears to share with her literary contemporaries. Is this enough to read literary production by women during the Belle Époque as containing feminist discourse? Some scholars have done so (Rogers 2007; Waelti-Walters and Hause 1994; Waelti-Walters 1990). But the overt expression of ideological conservatism by professional women at the end of the century (see Holmes and Tarr 2007), and even by Sauvage herself, means that later twentieth-century feminist critics such as Beauvoir have read Belle Époque women writers as uninteresting from a feminist perspective, and found their work merely populated by accounts of 'vertueuses idylles' [virtuous idylls] (Beauvoir 1984: 89). If Sauvage, like many of her contemporaries, is therefore unusable for the late twentieth-century feminist movement and the accompanying development of feminist practice in translation studies, what kind of engagement is possible with her work from a twenty-first-century perspective? What kind of feminist translation practice is possible or desirable with an ideologically conservative subject? These questions, as well as a closer examination of the use and application of the label *poésie féminine*, are treated in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

SAUVAGE'S FEMINIST USEFULNESS

This chapter begins by examining the reception of Sauvage at later instances in the twentieth century. Although there are no studies exclusively dedicated to Sauvage in the period between the outpouring of posthumous praise surveyed in the previous chapter (1928-1932) and Marchal's doctoral thesis (1995), Sauvage does make an appearance in a handful of works and anthologies during this time. Most famous among these is Simone de Beauvoir's *Le deuxième sexe* (1949), which cites Sauvage's work to provide literary examples of women's acceptance of patriarchal myths, and particularly of the ways woman has been 'concrètement constituée comme l'Autre' (1949a: 231) ['concretely established as the Other'] (2009: 163), or the non-subject in which man finds himself. In subsequent decades, Sauvage continues to be read in association with the label *poésie féminine*: she is either included in or excluded from collections of writing by women that seek to define womanhood and 'women's writing' in essentialist terms. These anthologies, which focus on content rather than rhetoric, do not challenge the traits typically ascribed to *poésie féminine* – such as 'naturalness' of composition or the choice of a domestic subject – but instead appoint either good or bad political value to them, and thereby either good or bad political value to Sauvage.

I move on to investigate whether translation can extirpate Sauvage out of this essentialist bind; whether feminist translation as it is conceived of today can help strip the 'unfeminist' label with which Beauvoir and other readers have marked Sauvage; and whether it is necessary to do so. Does Sauvage need to be made more feminist through translation in order to make her work relevant and pleasurable reading today? The early Canadian School of feminist translation encouraged interventionist and even 'abusive' translation strategies: these found their echo in the general translation approaches of theorists such as Philip E. Lewis (1985) and Lawrence Venuti (2008). And yet, despite endeavoring to be a practice of 'subversion' (Lotbinière-Harwood 1991) and 'hijacking' (von Flotow 1991: 78) – terms reminiscent of the illegal encroachment of textual property suggested by Certeau and Jenkins's concept of 'poaching' – feminist translation theory has likewise stressed affective bonds of intimacy, love, and pleasure between the translator and the author, notably in the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2012)

and Susan Bassnett (1992). The contradiction of feminism thus representing both love and violence has been observed (Arrojo 1995), but I will suggest this does not render both concepts useless for theorizing translation through a feminist lens.

Recent developments in feminist translation theory have moved away from the idea of a singular patriarchy and have acquired 'renewed, intersectional focus' that is 'more attuned to geohistorically contingent, multiple, interlocking systems of domination and corresponding, coalitional agendas of resistance pursued in feminist translation praxes' (Castro and Ergun 2018: 135). Translation has come to be seen as localizing texts and other cultural objects across different types of patriarchies, rather than a monolith one. Translation is thus understood as a 'process of cultural transfer carried out by socially situated agents, who are embedded in and contribute to a broader process of locally meaningful resignification' (Bracke et. al 2021: 3-4). As with the apparent paradox of translation being an act of both love and violence, intersectional and transnational feminism seeks to embrace gender injustice as a universal pattern while accounting for diverse, local modes of resistance and different socio-political agendas, or what Emek Ergun has escribed as 'universal differentialization' (2023). Crucial to the practice of feminist translation is an awareness of the specific context of the translation and its strategies, as well as an overt acknowledgement of the feminist translator's positioning and non-neutrality.

Rather than arguing for *Sauvage's* being received as either feminist or unfeminist, as previous readers have done, I am more interested in examining my non-neutral stance towards my translation of *Sauvage*. I believe it is productive not only to acknowledge that intimacy and abuse both exist in translation, but even to address their simultaneity: this may expose our affective investment in texts while revealing how we make texts our own. I find the 'sex/ualization of translation', a concept developed within queer scholarship (Santaemilia 2018), to be a useful framework in which to play out this tension between love and abuse of texts. The sex/ualization of translation is how José Santaemilia describes a perspective in which sexuality 'projects itself' onto translation, rather than the more common, opposite occurrence in which the 'translation of sexuality' is studied (ibid: 12). The sex/ualization of translation permits a movement 'away from the reification of essentialist identities to focus on desire and performance' (Baer 2017: 1), suggesting a possible solution to the previous, predominantly essentialist readings of *Sauvage*. Towards the end of this chapter, I offer an example of how the

sex/ualization of translation occurs within my own translation of Sauvage. I argue that such sex/ualization permits me not only to articulate the uneasy balance of love and abuse as it coexists within a fannish project such as this one, but also – by recontextualizing Sauvage’s poetry so that it may equally be read as a discourse on translation – emphasizes the rhetoric, not the content of Sauvage’s poetry. In this manner the target text draws attention to its own textuality, to its own status as a translation, and encourages readings of Sauvage’s work that differ from those performed by critics such as Beauvoir.

1. Unfeminist beginnings

In *Le deuxième sexe*, Sauvage rubs shoulders with other prominent literary figures, many of them her contemporaries, such as Colette, Anna de Noailles, Virginia Woolf, Kathryn Mansfield, Isadora Duncan, Colette Audry, Juliette Drouet, and Renée Vivien. In the work of these writers who address womanhood in the first half of the century, Beauvoir finds accounts of selfhood and self-actualization that serve to illustrate her points about how women have historically sought the wrong, dependent types of selfhood within the limited scope of relationship that society has afforded them, such as motherhood and romantic liaisons. For instance, Beauvoir takes an interest in Sauvage’s poetry about pregnancy because such testimony is, in Beauvoir’s view, evidence of how women have embraced the ‘les grands mythes collectifs’ (1949a:378) [‘the great collective myths’ (2009: 270)]. Unlike the writer Colette, who experiences ‘une « grossesse d’homme »’ (Beauvoir 1949b: 314) [“a man’s pregnancy” (2009:558)] by failing to be wholly absorbed by her new state, women such as Sauvage

ruminent indéfiniment leur importance neuve. Pour peu qu’on les y encourage, elles reprennent à leur compte les mythes masculins: elles opposent à la lucidité de l’esprit la nuit féconde de la Vie, à la conscience claire les mystères de l’intériorité, à la liberté stérile le poids de ce ventre qui est là dans son énorme facticité; la future mère se sent humus et glèbe, source, racine. (Beauvoir 1949b: 314-315)

[they muse endlessly on their own importance. With the slightest encouragement they revive in their own cases the

masculine myths: against the light of the mind they oppose the fecund darkness of Life; against the clarity of consciousness, the mysteries of inwardness; against productive liberty, the weight of this belly growing there enormously without human will. The mother-to-be feels herself one with soil and sod, stock and root] (1993: 528-529)

Beauvoir cites poems from *L'Âme en bourgeon* as well as extracts from Sauvage's letters to Pierre Messiaen (1949b: 315, 319, 324) to describe the ways in which a woman who has birthed a child suddenly feels herself necessary. It is not through any independent method that woman is realized, Beauvoir suggests in her reading of Sauvage; rather, it is through the existence of the baby (as through the existence of the male lover) that woman feels herself become useful and complete (1949b: 326). The fusion of human subject and the natural environment within Sauvage's poetry – which in the previous chapter I suggested could be a possible echo of the poetic practice of the *naturistes* – is in Beauvoir's reading evidence of Sauvage's embracing the myth of how womanhood serves as a link between this world and a more spiritual, irrational, or mysterious plane (1949a: 241). Sauvage's vocabulary often evokes that uncanny other realm: a newborn has the appearance 'de rentrer déjà dans le *mystère*' [already returning to the *mysterious* beyond] while the mother explains, 'Je te voyais sorti de l'antre *nébuleux*' [I saw you emerged from your *murky* lair] (Sauvage 1910: 159, emphasis mine). According to Beauvoir, a baby is 'le trésor de chair qui est un précieux morceau de son moi' (1949b: 316) ['the treasure of her flesh that is a precious piece of her self' (2009: 561)], and the woman, upon losing this piece of the self once the baby is separate from her, grieves such a loss, as Sauvage does when she writes in a poem about the postpartum, 'Mon être est la maison fermée / Dont on vient d'enlever un mort' [My body is the shut house / From which a dead body has been carried out] (Sauvage 1910: 155). Beauvoir also analyzes the relationship between mother and baby as something erotic: it is through 'la maternité possessive' (1949b: 324) ['possessive motherhood' (2009: 568)] that a woman possesses her child in the same way a man possesses a woman. Although Beauvoir would not have read Sauvage's love poetry, which only came to light in 2009 and in which Sauvage most directly compares a lover to a baby in figuring the extent of physical possession, Beauvoir describes the way a woman possesses her baby/lover with vocabulary identical to

that of Sauvage: 'la mère trouve dans l'enfant – comme l'amant dans l'aimée – une plénitude charnelle et ceci non dans la reddition mais dans la domination ; elle saisit en lui ce que l'homme recherche dans la femme; un autre à la fois nature et conscience qui soit sa proie, son *double*' (1949b: 325) ['the mother finds in the child – like the lover in the beloved – a carnal plenitude, not in surrender but in domination; she grasps in the child what man seeks in woman: an other, both nature and consciousness, who is her prey, her *double*' (2009: 568, emphasis on original)]. Thus predicting the content of Sauvage's work, Beauvoir's reading of how Sauvage's texts align with myths about motherhood and maternity appears justified. Sauvage often uses the word 'plénitude' to describe a moment of a fulfilling spiritual and physical bond between two people (2009: 70); elsewhere, she identifies a baby boy as a lover: 'Il est né, j'ai perdu mon jeune bien-aimé' [He was born, I have lost my young beloved] (1910: 161). Inversely, she presents the lover as a fetus: 'Et sais-tu que toujours je te porte en mon sein, / Pareil, ô mon amant, à l'embryon humain' [And do you know that I still carry you within my womb, / O my lover, like the human embryo] (2009: 97). The newborn is referred to as 'Mon petit double, mon émoi' [My little double, my emotion] (1910: 169) while the female lyric subject observes herself to be the lover's double, as opposed to identifying the lover as *her* double (2009: 69). Sauvage's texts fit neatly into Beauvoir's analysis: while the woman consents to be man's 'double', or the Other through which man himself is realized, the woman performs a similar kind of othering upon her child. Elsewhere, the erotic mysticism of Sauvage's love poetry furnishes evidence for Beauvoir's claim that women, conditioned from childhood as men's social inferiors, prefer to imagine men as gods when in love (Beauvoir 1949b: 478). Beauvoir observes that the vocabulary of the flesh doubles as the vocabulary of worship, for both refer to embodied relationships: 'On prétend parfois avec piété que la pauvreté du langage oblige la mystique à emprunter ce vocabulaire érotique ; mais elle ne dispose aussi que d'un seul corps, et elle emprunte à l'amour terrestre non seulement des mots mais des attitudes physiques' (1949b: 511) ['It is sometimes piously claimed that the poverty of language makes it necessary for the mystic to borrow this erotic vocabulary; but she also has only one body and she borrows from earthly love not only words but physical attitudes' (2009: 729)]. Sauvage's prose collection *L'Étreinte mystique* (1914-1915) is written from the perspective of a woman who sees her lover as God and a master: 'Mon ami est mon Dieu sur la terre et je dois me

renoncer entièrement pour lui [...]. Il est mon maître, ma douceur d'être servante' [My lover is my God on earth and I must renounce myself entirely for him [...]. He is my master, the sweetness of my servitude] (2009: 84). The earthly flesh is compared to the Host (2009: 46), aspects of the sexual act itself are described in the metaphor of prayer and incense (ibid: 80-81) and body parts are transformed into lilies (ibid: 70) – all cementing Beauvoir's analysis of how the connection between the erotic and the divine is perpetuated in texts composed by women in patriarchal terms.

Sauvage's work may therefore be read as a portrait of a woman engrossed by her own physicality and by her body's relationship to the bodies of her child and lover. Sauvage's preferred lexicon carries the essentialist overtones of what Beauvoir identifies as 'les grands mythes collectifs': terms such as 'mystique' and 'secret' speak to the opacity (as opposed to rational clarity) of women (Beauvoir 1949a: 241) while terms such as 'racine', 'glèbe', and 'plénitude' speak to the naturalistic powers of maternity (1949b: 314-315). Most importantly for Beauvoir's thesis, Sauvage's texts speak of woman as a 'double' for the male lover, suggesting Sauvage's acceptance of woman as man's privileged reflection, 'le miroir où le Narcisse mâle se contemple' (1949a: 294) ['the mirror where the male Narcissus contemplates himself' (2009: 209)].

Beauvoir's reading of Sauvage does not necessarily assign a negative aesthetic or political value to Sauvage. Rather, Beauvoir is using Sauvage's work, alongside the works of others, as an example to define 'masculinity and femininity as situations' and demonstrate that 'these situations are the product of history and power dynamics' (Garcia 2021: 197). Sauvage is unfeminist for Beauvoir in the sense that Sauvage appears to fail to understand that women's 'situations are defined from the outside' and fails, in Beauvoir's eyes, to '[endeavor] to overcome this limitation' (ibid: 201). Readers after Beauvoir continue to identify Sauvage's content and vocabulary as representative of an essentialist vision of womanhood and go on to assign positive or negative value to such a vision. Such reattribution occurs, for instance, in Jeanine Moulin's anthology *La Poésie féminine*, a collection of French-language poetry written by women. Sauvage is included in both editions of Moulin's anthology (first appearing in 1963-1966 in two volumes and again in 1975 in one volume) as one of *poésie féminine's* representatives. Moulin, emphasizing sincerity as a fundamental characteristic of women's poetry, especially

erotic poetry, argues that *poésie féminine* should be celebrated with respect to the frankness with which it sings of women's sexual lives (1975: 20). Moulin appears to concede to some social conditioning when she observes that women's literary production is the direct result of their social experience, although she is not as critical of this conditioning as is Beauvoir and does not perceive its results as necessarily negative, but instead inevitable: if women wrote about the despair of losing their husbands, it is because the loss plunged them into social and financial precarity; if men failed to write about domestic bliss, it is because the home was not the only sphere they moved in (ibid: 9). Moulin also claims that women did not actively participate in literary schools and preferred to take one particular writer for a mentor rather than engage with the principles of an aesthetic movement (ibid: 12); unlike the more analytically minded men, women engaged with the natural world in a way that was purely 'instinctive' (ibid). Here Moulin echoes the attitudes of Belle Époque observers sixty years earlier, which held that women who wrote did so without paying much technical heed to their work and composed in a vacuum. Moulin espouses 'instinct' as a trait inherent to women; women writers who wrote sincerely and instinctively of women's experience (irrespective of whether the experience was the product of a myth or a construct) were therefore deemed by Moulin to be representative of *poésie féminine*. Moulin's other terminological suggestion for the phenomenon is *féminitude*, which – inspired by the term *négritude*, designating the Black francophone intellectual movement developed in the 1930s that addressed the African diaspora and Eurocentrism – 'englobe toutes les façons de penser et de ressentir qui les distinguent' [encompasses all the ways of thinking and feeling that sets women apart] (1975: 7). Moulin continues that *féminitude* 'est ce qui différencie les réactions biologiques, psychiques et intellectuelles des femmes, de celles de l'homme' [is that which distinguishes women's biological, psychological, and intellectual reactions from those of men] (ibid). According to Moulin's argument, women's cultural production, as the result of such reactions, differs from that of men.

For further comparison, consider Domna Stanton's 1986 anthology, *The Defiant Muse*, which seeks to redefine *poésie féminine* but does not challenge how the term is constructed. Stanton's anthology simply presents an inverse of Moulin's argument that came a decade earlier. Although the compilers of Stanton's volume claim that 'no canonical definition of the term and genre' of feminist poetry ought to

exist (1986: xviii), their aims are quite clear: ‘this project began with the determination to exclude poems that privilege *kinder, kirche, küchen*, extol conjugal bliss, passively bemoan seduction and abandonment, and seek escape into transcendent saintliness or the beauty of flora and fauna. Conversely, the decision was made to include poems that showed an awareness of the scenes and acts of “the femininity plot,” and opposed or tried to subvert them with a different script’ (ibid). Sauvage is not included, presumably for having failed to ‘decry matrimony’ and avoid expressions of ‘stereotypical maternal bliss’ in her work (ibid: xix). Some of her contemporaries do make the cut, however, including Renée Vivien, Nathalie Clifford Barney, and, surprisingly, Delarue-Mardrus; perhaps the anthologists were not aware of Delarue-Mardrus’ claims back in 1928 that Sauvage’s poems about motherhood were more useful than the political feminist campaigns of the day (*Cécile Sauvage* 1928: 33). Stanton implicitly counters Moulin’s definition of *poésie féminine* by proposing that ‘*poésie féminine* is informed first and foremost by a condemnation of the patriarchal institutions and attitudes that oppress women’ (ibid: xix). By this definition, and Sauvage’s omission from the anthology, Sauvage’s work is not *poésie féminine*. In this case, at least, the anthologists are overt about the fact that they are reading for content. In their quest for ‘authentic’ feminist works, they state their intention to privilege the ‘message (or the denotative function), rather than the form of the message for its own sake, which Roman Jakobson has defined as the poetic function’ (ibid: xxv).

This ability to reshuffle categories so easily, to read literary work primarily for its ‘message’ or denotative function, and to reapply the label of *poésie féminine* to either type of politics points to the fact that *poésie féminine* is, I argue, a reading practice that has disguised itself as a writing practice since the nineteenth century. Barbara Johnson, in her study of the literary interaction between Charles Baudelaire and Marceline Desbordes-Valmore (identified as one of the earliest practitioners of French-language *poésie féminine*; see Paliyenko 2016), has pointed to the existence of different, gendered types of reading:

When men employ the rhetoric of self-torture, it is *read* as rhetoric. When women employ it, it is confession. Men are read rhetorically, women, literally. Yet within the poetic tradition it is the rhetorical, not the literal, that is taken seriously. Why should the literal be the opposite of the

serious? What is the nature of the seriousness of nonliterality? (1991: 176, emphasis in original)

Johnson offers an explanation for the way writing by women has been continuously ‘miss-represented’ (Milligan 1996) and placed ‘opposite to genius’ (Lacaf 1930). The failure to read women’s cultural production rhetorically means that a given woman writer was, from the Belle Époque critics to Moulin and Stanton, received as a ‘*sujet supposé sincère*’ whose poetry was welcomed as an ‘unproblematic and authentic representation of her specificity *as a woman*’ (Johnson 1991: 166, emphases in original). Johnson observes that such a woman poet – who could be Desbordes-Valmore, Sauvage, or countless others – succeeded ‘in constructing an unthreatening poetics of sincerity, which enabled her to maintain a place in the French poetic canon as a “romantique mineur” [...and] has tended to render her unusable and invisible for feminism’ (ibid: 170). In other words, a ‘sincere’ woman poet would fail to be suspicious enough of femininity as a ‘situation’ (Garcia 2021: 197), or, per Stanton’s requirement, fail to display ‘an awareness of the scenes and acts of “the femininity plot”’ and thus be unable to subvert it (1986: xviii). (It should be noted, however, that Stanton herself, in foregoing the poetic function for the denotative function, is performing the type of reading Johnson observes: reading women’s literary production literally.)

If writers such as Desbordes-Valmore and Sauvage are ‘unusable’ and ‘invisible’ for feminism for having failed to express an awareness of their social conditioning and of the great patriarchal myths – and even for having sincerely celebrated them – then how can they make for useful and pleasurable reading in a feminist world without their outlooks simply being repackaged in positive terms, as occurs in Moulin’s anthology? Translation, like anthologizing, has the ability to render something appropriate or inappropriate for a target audience and for a given project. Does Sauvage need to be ‘feminist-ed’ through translation, for instance by omitting or rewriting her famous phrase ‘Une femme n’existe pas sans un maître, elle n’est qu’un bouquet éparpillé’ (*Cécile Sauvage* 1928: 157)? In the next section, I outline the goals and contradictions of feminist translation methodologies. I suggest that feminist translation is at least a highly useful starting point because it figures translation in two seemingly antithetical terms: manipulation and love. Feminist translation opens my discussion about ‘abusing’ texts, which I expand into

a consideration about *using* texts, about making texts *usable* or *unusable*. Most importantly, feminist translation encourages the translator to greater prominence, which in turn encourages the translation to be read as a translation, thereby drawing attention to the rhetoric of the text and encouraging readers, as Johnson writes, to take things less literally.

2. Necessary violence?

In what has been called the ‘first paradigm’ of feminist translation in the 1980s and 1990s (Martín 2005: 36), translation presented an opportunity for the deliberate manipulation of text and language, so that a target text could work to deconstruct sexist linguistic and cultural patterns existing in the target sphere. As Luise von Flotow observed, first-paradigm feminist translation often involved dealing with feminist writing, produced in Quebec towards the end of the twentieth century, which was already grappling with sexism or the marginalization of female subjectivity (1991). Like Hélène Cixous’ notion of *écriture féminine*, which argued on behalf of writing about women, bringing women to writing, and breaking free of ‘the discourse of man’ (1976: 887), feminist writing and feminist translation offered a way to reinscribe women into language and narrative.¹² Sherry Simon wrote, ‘Feminist writing and translation meet in their common desire to foreground female subjectivity in the production of meaning’ (1996:12). Of paramount importance, too, was the visibility of the feminist translator and the vesting of authorial power in the translator: Barbara Godard wrote of ‘womanhandling’ that involved ‘the replacement of the modest-self-effacing translator’ (1990: 91), while Lori Chamberlain questioned a sexualization of translation that presented the source text as potent and creative, and translation as derivative, weak reproduction (1988). Feminist translation was openly ideological and politically motivated: as Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood

¹² Cixous’ *écriture féminine* is different from *poésie féminine*. Cixous imagines the former as something which will ultimately ‘make love better’ in its un-narcissistic approach to other beings and subjects: this is writing that functions ‘in the moving, open, transitional space’ (1976: 893) and, although gendered in the sense that Cixous asks us to pay attention to constructions of sexual difference (ibid: 883), such writing does not belong to women exclusively, nor do all women perform *écriture féminine* by default. By contrast, *poésie féminine* is a reading practice, as I have argued, that assigns characteristics, such as sincerity and instinctiveness, to writing performed by those who are identified as women at the outset.

claimed, 'My translation practice is a political activity aimed at making language speak for women' (1991: 9). In translating, Lotbinière-Harwood used 'every possible translation strategy to make the feminine visible in language' (ibid) – an approach which 'deliberately contravenes conventional translation practice of being see-through and silent' (von Flotow 1991: 79). Such strategies notably involved privileging the feminine grammatical gender over the masculine or even the neuter, in languages that have this capacity (ibid:79). Feminist translation meant that translation could, through such deliberate intervention by the translator, in similar-but-different ways challenge the status quo extant in the receiving language. When feminist translator Howard Scott translated Louky Bersianik's experimental works, instead of replicating what Bersianik says about French, he chose to 'adapt her message to English, and show how the English language is sexist' (1984: 74). Feminist translation was therefore a force for subversion and disruption, intent on challenging ideology across several language systems. If first-paradigm feminist writers were accused of 'hijacking' texts (von Flotow 1991: 78), they counterargued that they were now endowed 'with the right, even the duty to "abuse" the source text' (ibid: 80) – a perspective shared by translation theorists such as Philip E. Lewis and Lawrence Venuti with respect to wider translation practices.

If, on the one hand, feminist translation is about the foregrounding and increased prominence of female subjectivity, then to translate *Sauvage* and so increase the number of texts in circulation composed by women would be a feminist undertaking in itself. After all, *Sauvage*, as Moulin argued in her preface, writes about desire and sexuality from a female perspective. Translation may be used 'more consciously and strategically as a tool to help disseminate the works of silenced women writers' (Castro and Vassallo 2020: 130) and thus 'change literary history by bringing to light authors who were inaccessible before' (Massardier-Kenney 1997: 65). Translating *Sauvage* answers Susam-Saraeva's call to perform restitutorial work and do more research 'on the "lost" works of female writers/translators in strongly patriarchal societies' (2005: 175). Translating the work of women writers may also aid in uncovering historic and literary networks and patterns – as I have suggested in Chapter 2 with respect to *Sauvage* and her contemporaries – which in turn would foster the feminist deconstruction of the stereotype of women writers as 'solitary' or 'exceptional', each woman 'the only

woman poet' of a given time, and would contribute to the establishing of new historical narratives (see Bracke, Morris, and Ryder 2018).

On the other hand, that which is female in a patriarchal society is not necessarily feminist, as Beauvoir has demonstrated. So if the other aim of the feminist translation movement is 'to reverse the existing order and to resex language' (Martín 2005: 36), how far should *Sauvage* be hijacked or abused in translation in order to fulfil the goal of reversing a structural order to which she herself was apparently committed? Should *Sauvage*'s references to women not existing without masters, and the references to the male lover as God and master (2009: 84), be erased or somehow reworked in translation?

Some critics have expressed unease about the avowed violence of feminist translation practice. Susam-Saraeva argues that this heavy-handed method is apt to spook students and readers, calling instead for a gentler 'gender-conscious approach' (2005: 175). Bassnett attempts to present the emphasis on the female as nonviolent by claiming that feminization through translation would permit translation practitioners to transcend the violence of colonial or patriarchal practice (1992). Elsewhere, theorists speak of love and surrender, not of takeover. For Spivak, it is crucial the translator 'surrender' to the text in translation. In this model, the translator, unless acquired of a certain intimacy with the text and the source culture, runs too great a risk of imposing the dominating conditions of the target language and culture upon the source text, thus especially risking homogenizing the literature that emerges from previously colonized cultures and/or the Global South. Spivak proposes intimacy and love as potential bulwarks against the erasure of the inherent idiosyncrasy and rhetoricity of such literature in translation. She stresses prioritizing rhetoric over what the epistemes of the Global North present as logic (2012: 313). 'I surrender to the text when I translate,' writes Spivak, adding that the source texts she works on 'have a peculiar intimacy' for her (ibid). Where possible, 'the task of the translator is to facilitate this love between the original and its shadow' (ibid). This can be achieved through a literal adherence to the rhetoricity of the source text as well as an understanding of the status of the source language in the world (ibid: 321). Spivak's translation approach is perhaps not broadly prescriptive so much as relevant to her agenda and the postcolonial context in which she operates – just as the translation strategies employed by first-paradigm feminist translators were tailored to the context of experimental literature that was emerging in Quebec in the

1990s (Castro 2023). The strategies employed in the act of translation may vary from project to project; but what persists in the discussion around what is increasingly intersectional, postcolonial, and feminist translation is the tension between the theoretical concepts of violent takeover and intimate surrender.

As recently as 2021, translators who identify as feminist translators continue to speak both of takeover and surrender. Noémie Grunenwald writes in her translation memoir that it is vital to take control because feminist practice has an ideological responsibility to overthrow sexist models in language and culture: ‘Parce qu’il est notre responsabilité de déranger, bousculer, incommoder, pirater, détourner, contrarier, dévoyer, ou interrompre les usages, les habitudes, et les règles patriarcales et racistes de la langue, de la science, ou de la littérature’ [Because it is our responsibility to disturb, upset, inconvenience, pirate, redirect, thwart, alter, or interrupt the patriarchal and racist usages, habits, and rules of language, science, or literature] (2021: 11). At the same time, Grunenwald takes up Spivak as her model and stresses the need for a translator to ‘s’abandonner’. Grunenwald’s relationship to her author is one in which Grunenwald must ‘[o]ser se perdre dans ce qu’elle [l’auteure] dit [...] Elle mène la danse, du début à la fin. Je n’ai aucune raison d’essayer de contrôler ça’ [dare to lose herself in what the author is saying... The author leads the dance from beginning to end. I have no reason to try to control that] (ibid: 3).

The self-contradiction here is evident. As Rosemary Arrojo argues in her analysis of the translation approaches of theorists such as Bassnett and Chamberlain and in conjunction with Cixous’ concept of *écriture féminine*, feminist translation and feminist writing do not escape the masculine-feminine binary they wish to transcend. Instead, their proponents ‘undoubtedly [take] the “feminine” to be the new paradigm, the new *logos*. In other words, it is the “feminine” or, at least, something that [Cixous] identifies with the “feminine,” that comes to be the legitimate basis for everything that is supposedly non-violent and positive’ (Arrojo 1995:71). A world order that feminizes cannot claim to be transcending any essentialist binary. Arrojo points out that practitioners informed by feminist theories – such as Stanton and Moulin – ‘[defend] an essentialist thesis’ in their intention to amplify that which is ‘feminine’. The inherent contradictions of translators who speak of surrender one moment and of manipulation the next demonstrate that a ‘pacifistic’ theory of translation – or any theory that foregrounds love – cannot exist; such an idea is

fundamentally 'incompatible with what is perhaps the most human of all characteristics in a world in which meaning is not intrinsically attached to words and objects: the need to make reality (and, consequently, also texts and objects) our own' (1995: 74). Similarly, Spivak has been criticized for presenting a 'fairly pastoral' vision of the intimacy of translation as 'pleasant, pacified, and most of all unhindered by the potential for violent non-relationality and mis-reading at the heart of intimacy itself' (Basile 2018: 28).

Emek Ergun defends the hypocrisy of which feminist translation has been accused by arguing that 'heteropatriarchal and feminist agendas are not ethically comparable [...] since they serve different political causes – the former is invested in relations of domination while the latter is in pursuit of equality and justice' (Ergun 2020: 117). Specifically, Ergun focuses on the ethics of feminist translators' disclosure practices: by not pretending to be objective, universal, or apolitical, feminist translators may be seen as 'more ethical' than their supposedly 'apolitical' counterparts; feminist translators who are overt about their positioning perpetuate 'an ethics of accountability that simultaneously recognizes the translator's agency and contingency and translation's potential to perpetuate or disrupt relations of power' (ibid). Indeed, the undisclosed, 'apolitical' position, operating under the veneer of professionalism, may serve to mask the perpetuation of sexist language and heteropatriarchal values, as is evident in a case study offered by Olga Castro in which a translator faced accusations of being 'unprofessional' for having employed feminine (just as often as masculine and neuter) grammatical markers to translate an English text where the genders of characters were unmarked (Castro 2013; see also Bengoecha 2014). The overtness of the feminist agenda is therefore necessary to draw attention to such moments when the status quo is unjustly upheld in the guise of 'readability' or 'professionalism'. By being frank about their political stance, feminist translators underline the inevitable non-neutrality of *any* translation act. In my case, *A Savage Reader* repeatedly emphasizes my subjectivity and loving investment as a translator working on *Sauvage*; the occasional confessional in my translators' commentary is a disclosure of my positioning vis-à-vis the text, outlining how I came to the text and how I read it non-neutrally. In this sense, *A Savage Reader* aligns with the ethos of feminist translation.

Ergun's description of feminist ethics yields a narrow definition of feminist translation as disclosure. But this does not do away with a certain longing for utopic visions of how translation may exist without violence or appropriation, especially in feminist and decolonial contexts. For example, María Lugones speaks of 'loving perceptions' in translation and asks how we might 'learn about each other [...] without harming each other' and 'cross without taking over' (2010: 755) – even as theorists acknowledge that translation routinely can be and is used as a tool for the perpetuation of oppressive and abusive power structures (Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002; Castro and Ergun 2017; Samoyault 2020). Translation may even be the instigator of real-world violence (Inghilleri 2018). Within a practice that is aware of being a struggle for control and meaning, how is it possible to present translating *Sauvage* as loving *Sauvage*?

Violence may be reframed in positive terms, as Philip E. Lewis and Lawrence Venuti demonstrate. Neither Lewis nor Venuti approach the question of abuse in translation from a strictly feminist perspective: instead, 'abusive translation' is presented as positive for the act of translation itself, rather than positive in the sense of being a contribution to an ideological struggle with a positive end goal. Skirting talk of takeover and hijacking, Lewis and Venuti separately argue that an abusive translation is more faithful to the source text than a translation that does not abuse (Lewis 1985; Venuti 2008). For Lewis, an abusive translation is a 'forceful translation that values experimentation, tampers with usage, seeks to match the polyvalencies or plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own' (1985: 41). Such a translation remains faithful and intelligible because it pays more attention to the 'order of syntax or metonymy' of the original, that space in which the "textual work" is carried out' (ibid), rather than the 're-presentational processes' of the source text (ibid). This is similar to Spivak's call to pay attention to rhetoricity; here, too, is an emphasis on moving away from the denotative function to the poetic function. Venuti takes up Lewis's definition in turn to speak of 'abusive fidelity', a concept which 'acknowledges the abusive, equivocal relationship between the translation and the foreign text and eschews the prevailing fluent strategy in order to imitate in the translation whatever features of the foreign text abuse or resist dominant cultural values in the foreign language' (2008: 18). As was frequently the case for first-paradigm feminist translation, abusive fidelity here involves identifying a text that already contains resistance and then 'matching' this source text in

translation by ‘tampering’ with usage (ibid). But abusiveness can extend to the source text itself – an approach similar to the feminist ethos of ‘hijacking’ or ‘womanhandling’. Venuti writes, ‘The abusiveness of [a] translation does not stop with the receiving culture, for it may also enact ‘an “unsettling” ideological critique’ of the source text (2008: 150). This may be compared to Suzanne Jill Levine’s instruction that ‘a translation should be a critical act’ by ‘creating doubt, posing questions to its reader, recontextualizing the ideology of the original text’ (1991: 3-4). In other words, Venuti and Levine see good translation as a practice that is rightfully suspicious. Like Spivak, whose translation approach makes the reader of the target text confront ‘the selvages of English’ (Baillehache 2021: 51), Venuti and Levine figure translation as a critical and investigating process that disturbs the assumptions and constructs extant within both source text and receiving culture episteme. This permits translation to fulfil an activist role, both in drawing attention to the authority and visibility of the translator – ‘a[n abusive] translation highlights its own discursive strategies and thereby demands to be read as a translation, as a text that is relatively autonomous from the text on which it depends’ (Venuti 2003: 258) – and in challenging dominant patterns of oppression before the reader.

Whether such abusive translation is effective in practice is debatable. Pym calls Venuti’s own translations strange (2016), Robinson faults Venuti for a one-size-fits-all approach (1997: 136-7), Bassi observes that, even when foreignizing, Venuti falls into the very traps of cultural normativity he wishes to avoid (2014), and Kadiu demonstrates that a good deal of explanatory commentary is required to convey just how self-reflexive an abusive translation actually is (2019: 36-37). Gentzler notes that Venuti’s presentation of abuse reduces abuse to a space of resistance and fails to imagine the constructive possibilities of abuse: for example, Gentzler writes that when Derrida uses the word *abuser* in French, as in the phrase ‘une “bonne” traduction doit toujours abuser’ [a good translation should always abuse], Derrida ‘uses it because of the *multiplicity of referents* associated with the term, including those creative, playful connotations in French, always pointing his form of deconstruction towards the positive, the affirmative, the life-giving. In a typical Derridean rhetorical strategy, there is a kind of double-writing manifest, with *abuser* connoting both pleasure and pain, mixing destruction with construction’ (Gentzler 2002: 202, emphasis in original). Given that *abuser* is imagined here as something that transforms, as a process that constructs even as it destructs, I

wonder whether 'abuse' remains an accurate term to use. Perhaps we should be thinking instead of the more unassuming, but very useful, 'use'. For Sara Ahmed, the word 'use' has its own multiplicity of referents, referring at once to preservation and extraction, to caretaking and contact (2019). I will return to Ahmed's many applications of 'use' at the end of this chapter.

With respect to Sauvage, even if use/abuse is figured in positive terms of playfully manipulating language, the question remains of what to (ab)use and how to (ab)use it. What is it in her text that, per Venuti's understanding of abusive fidelity, (ab)use will be faithful to? If Beauvoir's reading of Sauvage is to be accepted, then Sauvage's French texts do not in themselves challenge any existing configurations of power in the source culture. Moreover, it feels insufficient to simply rebrand 'abuse' or 'use' as desirable rather than controversial actions performed upon a text, in the way *poésie féminine* was reassigned empowering rather than traditional traits. Such a reassignment does not do justice to the legitimate concerns regarding the struggle for meaning-making in translation, which amounts to a struggle for control, and for translation's being complicit in upholding established power structures.

I now turn to queer scholarship for useful outlooks on translation that balance the intimacy and creativity of translation with its risks of violence. Queer scholarship, by dealing with the translation of sex and gender but also with what José Santaemilia terms the 'sex/ualization' of translation (2018), offers an opportunity to reconfigure translation by weighing the implications of pleasure against the implications of transgression, as I discuss below. Differing from the sexualization of translation previously imagined by George Steiner as heteronormatively penetrative (1998: 313-314), or translation stereotypically represented as passive and feminized reproduction (Chamberlain 1988), Santaemilia's sex/ualization of translation also allows a translation to be self-reflexive in a more successful manner than does the abusiveness suggested by Venuti. Most importantly for this project, the sex/ualization of translation offers a way of making explicit the tension between love and control without either presenting utopic visions of love or denying the role of affection in configurations of power.

3. The sex/ualization of translation: 'Possession' as a case study

In the section of *A Sauvage Reader* titled '*Possession*', I present a selection of poems by Sauvage in my English translation. This selection lends itself well to investigating the sex/ualization of translation because the content of these erotic love poems may be recontextualized and used to explore my translating Sauvage's texts as a process of play, affection, and even transgression. A first-paradigm feminist translation approach would have me question the ways Sauvage's texts support or challenge patriarchal and heteronormative constructs; now, by sex/ualizing translation, the investigation becomes less about initially evaluating Sauvage's own feminism or unfeminism and more about how the translator, as a desiring subject, relates to and manipulates a text within an intimate exchange. In such an exchange, translation emerges as a highly visible practice.

According to Santaemilia, the 'sex/ualization of translation' as a direction of research 'has not fully entered the field of language and sexuality, making it susceptible to essentialist positions' (2018: 20). But in beginning to conceptualize the sex/ualization of translation, queer theory suggests that metaphors other than those replicating heteronormative, essentialist imagery may be possible for talking about the relationship between texts and translators. By sex/ualizing translation in '*Possession*', I offer a selection of Sauvage's poems as texts that may be read in two ways: firstly as a direct address to a lover and secondly as the translator's reflection on the feelings of proximity and possession generated by this project. The sex/ualization of translation in this manner is not necessarily a way of making the translation itself 'sexy' (although there is something to be said about foregrounding the translator's pleasure in translation). To translate sex or pleasure, as Santaemilia observes, 'is not a neutral affair but a political act, with important rhetorical and ideological implications' (2018: 20). The sex/ualization of translation permits the investigation of translation as a 'precarious space' in which relationality, corporality, creativity, and productivity all play themselves out (Baer and Kaindl 2018: 7-8). The sex/ualization of translation continues the feminist line of inquiry into the authorial power of the translator and examines translation's capability for violence, asking to whom or what such abuse is being done, and whether the abuse is necessary, desirable, inevitable, or condemnable. The sex/ualization of translation asks the translator to interrogate their own position vis-à-vis the text and the power dynamics that have structured the conventions of source and target languages, similar to Venuti's and Spivak's approaches. The sex/ualization of translation makes the

intimacy of the encounter explicit, asking readers and translators to consider where the 'passion' of a passion project or the 'love' of a labor of love reside, how these feelings manifest, what they permit or forbid.

Crucially, the sex/ualization of translation envisions translation as a process that takes no fixed form. Elena Basile encourages us to think of translation as a scene of intimacy and 'to acknowledge that the scene is neither stable nor given once and for all: foreground, background, what is visible of it, what is not, its protagonists – all of this keeps shifting' (2018: 32). Basile's analysis here echoes Clive Scott's rejection of 'stable' translations made from 'stable' texts (Scott 2018: 8). 'If we want to pay rigorous attention to such shifting (without jumping to facile conclusions of universal sexual fluidity or infinite textual creativity in translation),' continues Basile, 'we might want to practice attunement to the modulations of expanded sensorium (perceptive, affective, cognitive) activated by the textual encounter, rather than anxiously go about retroactively (re)constructing exact boundaries and orientations for the textual objects under scrutiny' (2018: 32). Basile, like Scott, appears to be thinking along the lines of a phenomenological approach to translation (Scott 2012a; Scott 2012b), and therefore figuring translation as a transcription of a reading experience. Such a reading experience is especially attuned to the 'protagonists' of the experience – the text, the translator, and whatever intertexts and interpolators manifest themselves during the reading process (Scott 2012a: 22-25).

In '*Possession*', I use Sauvage's poems, via translation, to present her poetry in a metaliterary fashion: the anonymous, beloved addressee of Sauvage's poems becomes, in my reframing, Sauvage or the translated text itself. I use what Sauvage's poems 'hold out' to me as a translator (Reynolds 2011: 47), specifically the metaphors around intimacy and desire (ibid: 127-158), to speak of the scene of intimacy that takes place between text and translator. My creative commentary, which is interspersed among my translations, uses the imagery present in Sauvage's texts to draw the reader's attention to the double reading of such intimacy. Through translation, I extend Sauvage's imagery and vocabulary out from the poems and into the supplementary texts I generate. The commentary becomes a transcription of the translation experience, but it uses the imagery I find in and translate from Sauvage. For example, in the following extract I take up Sauvage's image of the lover as a thief and use it to ruminate on the metaphor of translation as

theft. The translated poems are presented in blue, the translator's commentary in black (for more on the material presentation of *A Savage Reader*, see Chapter 6):

[...] Better to abscond with the text in the night and wipe
down my fingerprints after me.

Tonight, slinking like a thief
Through velvet darkness,
I will go to drink the drop
From the bottom of your cup.
Precious instant –
Precious desire...

The precious cherished sweet sweet moment of getting
the thing that you want, like when you throw your head
back and catch what's left of the wine on your tongue,
triumphant.

The letterbox is a malicious tabernacle that holds as
much joy as disillusionment for me. I descend, like a
thief, to take this letter.

'Letter-box' like 'word-hord': the Anglo-Saxon term for the
literary vocabulary at a poet's disposal.

I descend, like a thief, to plunder the chest of letters, the
hoard of turns of phrase.¹³

By using the same imagery to imagine translation as Savage uses to imagine a romance, I deny the 'translation' and 'commentary' their traditional 'exact boundaries and orientations' (Basile 2018: 32). I also answer the creative critical call to blend different forms of writing and to present hybrid texts. A collapse of the distinction and the distance between writer and translator occurs. Through my translation – my intervention, my interruption of Savage's poetry with my commentary – Savage and I are brought into such proximity that we appear to fuse. This fusion is visual as well as thematic, for it relies on the proximity of translation and commentary upon the page as well as the reusing of imagery and vocabulary across translation and commentary. In this way, I render material Savage's observations about fusion between lovers and redirect or repurpose the observations to apply to the relationship between text and translator, as occurs in the following instance:

¹³ For formatting reasons, these source texts are provided in Appendix B.

Dans une si étroite union, chaque geste donne un sentiment de plénitude, de joie, de possession.

[Variant:] Quand on est si liés, si confondus, chaque geste donne un sentiment de plénitude, de joie, de possession absolue.

[In such an intimate union,
In such a close embrace,
 When we are so connected, so fused,
 When we are so much a part of one another,
Every gesture gives the feeling of plenitude, of joy, of possession.
Every movement has the sensation of possession, of plenty, of joy.
Of absolute possession.
Absolute.] (Sauvage 2009:70)

In first-paradigm feminist translation terms, I claim authorial power for myself as a translator – the power to reuse, to repurpose, and to reinvent a reading of the text through translation. Whether this power was officially bequeathed is irrelevant: as von Flotow argues, '[t]he translator's collusion with the author is, I think, of secondary importance. Here the translator is writing in her own right' (1991: 80). By bringing translator and author onto an equal footing – by setting them both within what Basile calls a 'scene of intimacy' (2018: 32) – I also blur the stern separation 'between production and reproduction' which Chamberlain observed was vital to a traditional sexualization of translation that equated translation with the stereotypes of passivity and faithlessness in women (1988: 466). Moreover, the scene of intimacy that occurs in '*Possession*' allows me to consider explicitly, via an extension of Sauvage's imagery, where the boundaries of manipulation in translation lie. Rather than arguing on behalf of the ethics of hijacking in this case, I extend Sauvage's image of a thief (a thief driven by desire) into an evaluation of how translation may be akin to the thieving or plundering of texts. Thieving suggests legal or ethical transgression, a poaching of someone else's property. But in her poetry, Sauvage speaks of transgression as something fueled by desire, even as she recognizes the potential for violence. Sauvage recognizes the illicit nature of going too far – and yet, when embedded in erotic play and sensual expression, abuse is imagined as possible and perhaps even permissible:

Personne n'aura vu ta bouche comme moi
Quand je renverse un peu ta tête dans mes bras
Et que tu es si jeune et si pâle. Elle est rose,
Elle sourit à peine et fine, et féminine
Elle a des tremblements légers, une pudeur,
Ton œil se trouble un peu mais demeure rieur.
Je baise cette bouche et c'est un viol tendre,
Ma bouche doucement l'entr'ouvre en la pressant
Et pour te le donner elle est lourde de sang.

[Nobody shall see your mouth the way I have,
Tilting back your head between my hands.
You, young and pale; mouth, pink and thin,
Shy, trembling a little, feminine,
And lightly smiling, laughter in an eye
That grows overcast with wanting.
I kiss this mouth: a tender profanation.
Gently, I open you up with my pressure,
Hungry to give you my blood.] (Sauvage 2009: 127)

Crucial to this poem is the phrase 'un viol tendre', which may be rendered in English so as to emphasize violence ('a tender violence'), something forbidden ('a tender violation'), gendered violence and the human body ('a tender rape'), or religious desecration ('a tender profanation'). In the end I selected 'profanation' in order to connect this poem to the theme of religious and mystical devotion that runs through Sauvage's erotic poetry. But the paradox of loving violence remains in this poem. The violence is described as being propelled by a constructive urge: it is the speaker who wishes to give their blood to the addressee, although such 'giving' may entail breaking something or someone open. I connect this explicitly to translation in the commentary that follows the poem, writing, 'A foray into a text is, I think, like a targeted incursion rather than a general battering. There is no vagueness of generalized violence to it. It is often enthusiastic, often a plunge, a desire to leave a little bit of oneself in the spot of the text identified as having the greatest give' (*Possession*).

My hybrid text attempts to render 'real' Basile's concept of translation as a 'scene of intimacy' (2018: 32). Sauvage's texts and mine, though distinguished by color, appear like the suggestive outlines of two bodies lying one atop the other. The hybrid text moves from role to role as it attempts to figure translation: the translator

plays a thief ('I descend, like a thief, to plunder the chest of letters, the hoard of turns of phrase'), an all-powerful creator ('Leave your mark on the resurrection, so that when the next admirers file by they will see where you have laid a claim to ownership, to progeny'), and a private eye ('If I am playing a detective, then this little experiment has been a film noir'). In this veritable role-play, the translator puts on and then sheds costume after costume. In a ludic manner that does not sacrifice pleasure to the examination, I ask, is the translator a *transgressing* (thieving) figure? Is the translator an *authoritative* (godlike) figure? Is the translator a *critical* (investigating) figure?

The possibility of performing one or more of these roles mimics the playfulness with which Sauvage imagines the lover in her texts: the male lover is at various points a prince in a French court ('un jeune prince un peu pâle' / Sous Louis quinze' [a young prince, rather pale / under Louis XV], 2009: 102), or Prince Hamlet's brother ('Je t'ai vu, frère du prince Hamlet / Debout sur une pelouse en Danemark' [I saw you, Prince Hamlet's brother, / Standing on a lawn in Denmark], 2009: 96). He is sometimes presented as dead ('beau comme un jeune mort, / Te voilà dans mes bras si pâle' [as beautiful as a dead young man / Here you are, so pale, in my arms], 2009: 107) and very often as a woman, or at least with the femininity of certain traits remarked upon: 'd'une blancheur si féminine' [of such a feminine pallor] (ibid: 91), 'bouche de femme' [a woman's mouth] (ibid), 'ton cœur qui est doux comme celui des femmes' [your heart that is tender as are those of women] (ibid: 118). On one occasion the speaker and the object of her desire swap genders completely: 'Il ferait bon, ma grande amie, / Dormir un peu dans vos caresses [...] / Je suis un tout petit garçon, / Ô vous si belle!' [It would be good, my beloved (female) friend / To sleep a while in your embrace / I am but a little boy / And you so beautiful!] (ibid: 101). Elsewhere, within one sequence of poems, Sauvage moves between formal (*vous*) and informal (*tu*) addresses (ibid: 106-107). Her revisions likewise indicate moments where she changed pronouns around, altering a poem's address from third person singular to second person (ibid: 102). The object of desire in Sauvage's love poetry therefore inhabits various roles, various positions, is imagined from various angles. Upon translation into English, the 'you' and 'I' become even further detached from gender markers that may have existed in the source text, while the loss of any distinction between the formal and

informal 'you' in English complicates translating Sauvage's uses of *vous* and *tu*.¹⁴ Without verb agreement to designate gender, lines such as 'Gently, I open you up with my pressure, / Hungry to give you my blood' multiply the possible referents. 'I' and 'you' could be Sauvage's speaker and the speaker's lover; they could be me and Sauvage; they could be the reader and an imagined someone else entirely.

What emerges, both within Sauvage's source texts and my hybrid text, is a space in which figures and roles may be imagined without necessarily locking the text's participants down into one configuration. The sex/ualization of the translation makes my hybrid text into a 'precarious space' (Baer and Kaindl 2018: 7). The question of 'how far is too far' remains ever present. But it also makes the text into a playful space, a pleasurable space, one in which the translator is able to try out, or try on, different ways of relating to the source text. As a translator, I am not coming up with these roles *ex nihilo*: the figures of thieves, gods, and readers populate Sauvage's love poems. I am drawing them out – through the acts of translating the poems and composing the supplementary commentary that permeates the poems – in an attempt to have the hybrid text imagine translation as much as imagine a physical lover. By making it possible to read all of '*Possession*' as a translator's address to the beloved source text or source author, I am making the translation self-reflexive.

I would like to return to the idea of translation as fusion, especially as proposed by Bassnett in her call for an 'orgasmic' theory of translation. As previously discussed, translation is often perceived in combative terms, with the source text imagined as a ground in which to implant one's own meaning and one's own ideology. Bassnett suggests something along these lines when she reflects on her own experience of translating a text, calling the act of translation 'a struggle': 'In the process of fighting with the text and its author, I arrived at a reading which is much more complex than I had first discerned, a reading that sees the whole book as a struggle not only between two characters, but also between the male and female principles, between fire and water, spring and autumn, life and death' (1992: 72). Bassnett gives her account through binary opposites, while the metaphorical seasons and elements, listed in the same sentence as the gender divide, lend the

¹⁴ I do play around with the archaic English equivalent of the informal *tu* ('thee') in the section titled '*Correspondance*' in *A Sauvage Reader*.

two gender options an essentialist veneer. Bassnett then goes on to express a wish, 'idealistic though it may seem, [...] for an *orgasmic theory of translation*, in which elements are fused into a new whole in an encounter that is mutual, pleasurable, and respectful' (ibid, emphasis in original). Such a fusion is what I have attempted to achieve in the entirety of *A Sauvage Reader* by interlayering translations of poems by Sauvage with my creative commentary. Elements of myself and elements of Sauvage fuse into a 'new whole' – that is, they expand to make new readings possible.

For example, they permit me to revisit the assessment of Sauvage as 'unusable' for feminism. *A Sauvage Reader* brings Sauvage into the discourse of feminist translation by raising the translator to authorial status and blurring the traditional divide between production and reproduction. It brings Sauvage into the discourse of queer(ed) translation by highlighting the fluidity of roles within Sauvage's own work and by using Sauvage's own work to address the simultaneity of love and violence within a translation that is construed as an intimate scene. By recontextualizing the translations so that the translations may act reflexively, such a translation approach makes it possible, for instance, to read Sauvage's narrative of doubling differently from how Beauvoir read it. When Sauvage wrote, 'Je me sentais réellement [...] un petit double de toi' [I felt myself truly to be your little double] (2009: 69) to refer to a woman's recognition of herself as the mirror image of her male lover, Beauvoir read in this an expression of woman's complacency with being an object, rather than a subject, through which man himself is fulfilled. But by interposing an additional line of text from the translator, it becomes possible to recalibrate the passage so that this instance of 'doubling' is not necessarily only occurring between a woman and a man, but between a reader and a text:

J'aillais, je venais. Je me sentais réellement, en petite culotte de soie, mince, mignonne, mignotant, ma houpette à la main devant la glace, un petit double de toi.

Cette sensation de te ressembler, d'être toi, le petit envers féminin de ton être, un autre toi-même vers qui si simplement tu te penches dans l'ombre pour trouver une petite bouche si adaptée à ton baiser...

[I came, I went. In my little silk slip I felt genuinely lithe, luscious, indulgent, holding my powder puff before the mirror. Your little double.

Sensation of resembling you. Of being you. Of being the little feminine inverse of your person. An other yourself towards whom you lean so simply through the darkness and find a small mouth most suited to your kiss.

Sensation of being reflected. Of seeking out the things that speak to me, or maybe that which I already know. Sensation of bias – but also of contentment.] (2009: 69)

This instance of intervention by the translator permits the passage to be read as a moment of what Felski calls identification: ‘an affinity that is based on some sense of similarity’ (2020: 81). In her exploration of identification as a valid form of attachment to art, Felski likewise notes that the phenomenon has been extensively studied within queer scholarship and feminist cultural studies (ibid: 82). Here, my translator’s addition pivots the passage to emphasize the pleasurable attachment the translator feels towards the source text; this addition, in turn, allows Sauvage’s translated text to be re-read not only as a woman speaker finding herself reflected in a man, but also as a metaphor for the act of a reader pleurably finding themselves reflected in the text they encounter. This does not overwrite or invalidate Beauvoir’s reading of Sauvage. It merely uses Sauvage in a different manner, supporting Toril Moi’s claim that, although we cannot do simply anything to a text, ‘we can do more than one thing with texts’ (2017: 190).

Although Sauvage may not at first glance appear *useful* for feminism, as shown in the first part of this chapter, she ultimately emerges as quite *usable*. I previously suggested that the ‘abuse’ in translation of which Derrida, Lewis, Venuti, and Gertzler all speak could be simplified to ‘use’. I have in mind Ahmed’s inquiry into what ‘use’ and ‘being of use’ mean (2019). Use may be positive or negative; things may fall out of use (or, in the case of a writer, out of circulation, out of print); things may be taken out of use for their own good, for preservation (Ahmed 2019: 31). Ahmed acknowledges that use may justify theft or lead to situations of coercion (ibid: 4-5, 31), which is why the power of translators as rewriters and compilers must always be acknowledged. Equally, Ahmed has an optimistic and generous sense of what use entails. ‘A relation of use can be one of affection,’ (ibid: 7), she suggests, echoing Felski’s ideas of identification and attachment. Use keeps things in

circulation, keeps them accessible, makes it possible for others to enjoy them, in the manner of a well-trod pathway, and we can ‘think of this maintenance work as care. To keep something usable requires taking care’ (ibid: 41). To use Sauvage in the manner I use her – by intervening and possessing – is not a translation approach that lacks care, or what Spivak would call love. Performed from a place of affection, such a translation approach also hopes to see Sauvage’s work propagate. To use Sauvage is a way of keeping her work alive: ‘Use can also be a sign of a life being lived,’ Ahmed concludes, ‘which is to say, use involves coming into contact with things. Use could be described as a contact zone’ (ibid: 40). Here, Ahmed’s description of a ‘contact zone’ is not too distant from Basile’s ‘scene of intimacy’ (2018: 32). In *A Sauvage Reader*, I attempt to use Sauvage’s texts to write this scene of fusion, contact, and intimacy. It is a scene in which I weigh the balance between theft and caretaking. If I do not take care of Sauvage’s texts, then who will? How will they be exposed to further use, if not through me? In the following chapter, I examine the care I take with Sauvage by articulating my translation approach on the lexical and formal levels, demonstrating how and why her French verse takes particular English forms in my translation.

CHAPTER 4

TRANSLATING SAUVAGE

The last chapter distinguished between Sauvage's usefulness – or, historically, lack thereof for an assortment of feminist projects – and the possibility of 'using' her work, for example by examining the sex/ualization of translation or for trying out the application of feminist translation techniques. I demonstrated that translation could be understood as an act of using a text characterized by affection and violence. In this chapter, I zoom in on the 'scene of intimacy' (Basile 2018: 32) that is translation and further examine the process by which I bring Sauvage from French into English.

'Translation,' writes Bassnett, 'involves far more than replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages and [...] the process may involve discarding the basic linguistic elements of the SL [source language] text' (2014: 35). Consequently, 'problems of determining the exact nature of the level of equivalence aimed for begin to emerge' (ibid). The difficulty of establishing just how similar-but-different a target text ought to be from a source text has led to a translation being described as a text which exhibits an 'appropriate relation of relevant similarity' to the source text (Chesterman 2016: 69). For literary translations, proposed definitions have been narrower, emphasizing the importance of textual properties: for Jean Boase-Beier, it is possible to describe 'different types of textual equivalence', which may in turn 'help a translator to realise there will rarely be a simple equivalent' (2020: 7). Although the term 'equivalence' has been 'much-used and abused' in Translation Studies (Bassnett 2014: 35), as well as dismissed as an 'illusion of symmetry' (Snell-Hornby 1988: 22), the many kinds of equivalences that have been identified within the field attest to the inescapable necessity of the idea, or the inability to leave it behind. For example, Anton Popovič identifies four types of equivalences – linguistic, paradigmatic, stylistic, and textual (1976); Eugene Nida distinguishes between 'formal' and 'dynamic' equivalence (1964; 2012); Anthony Pym analyzes, in conjunction with the development of Structuralism and Translation Studies, the distinction between 'natural' and 'directional' equivalences, and what both mean for the use and development of translation theories (2010). In recent years, some theorists have moved away from ideas of equivalence in translation to speak of necessary difference (Venuti 2013) and even originality (Emmerich 2017).

Many have described translation as an act of rewriting (Lefevere 1992b; Bassnett and Bush 2006; Loffredo and Perteghella 2008; Gentzler 2017). Translation theories therefore strive to articulate the ‘relation of relevant similarity’ (Chesterman 2016: 69) between source and target texts even as new understandings of the creative and authorial role of the translator have been welcomed, acknowledging the translator’s power to create new, autonomous texts.

Crucial to theorizing the translator’s creative role has been increased engagement with the translator’s reading process. Boase-Beier, in her work on cognitive stylistics in translation, demonstrates that literary translations are grounded in a translator’s cognitive and imaginative responses to the style of the source text, and that translation is the endeavor to approximate those responses in the reader of the target text (2020: 90-127). Clive Scott, who encourages a phenomenological approach to translation that pays attention to ‘that sequence of sensations activated in the reader by language and linguistic structure’ (2012a: 11), observes that the ‘literariness’ of a text may be defined in two ways, with consequences as to how we think of translation: the literary may be understood as ‘a set of identifying properties already locatable in the text’ or else as an “‘interpreted” value, not text-inherent but described by the reader’ (2021: 197). Scott writes, ‘[w]hile the former of these options leads one in the direction of the rhetorical, broadly understood (figures, verbal structures, style), the latter has no defining characteristics, but is a quality of response [...]. It is something read into a text’ (ibid). The former is what Boase-Beier identifies as the source text’s style, acting its influence upon the reader/translator through ‘the rhetorical’; the latter is what the reader/translator brings to the reading experience, ‘the making of the self and its accumulated experience’ (Scott 2021: 195).

I draw primarily on Boase-Beier and Scott to discuss my approach to translating *Sauvage*. I find their emphasis on the translator’s situatedness relevant to my discussion of my situatedness vis-à-vis *Sauvage*’s poetry in this project. Scott’s interest in how the ‘making of the self and its accumulated experience’ impacts translation is similar to the emphasis on situatedness and disclosure within the creative critical field, as surveyed in the Introduction to this thesis. I combine Scott’s call to pay attention to the experience of reading with Boase-Beier’s call to pay attention to the source text’s style. Boase-Beier defines ‘a concern with style’ as

paying attention to what is unique to a text and the choices it embodies, being aware of patterns in the text, and paying close attention to the attitudes, views, and opinions expressed in or suggested by the text [...]. Increasingly, style has ceased to be viewed only in terms of its linguistic features and has come to include contextual issues such as history and culture, linguistic peculiarities of a specific language and possibly universal ways of conceptualizing and expressing meaning. To pay attention to style in the study of translation means to consider how all these factors are reflected in the text and its translation. (2020:2)

Boase-Beier would have such close reading lead to as near an act of transfer as possible in translation. 'When we translate poetry,' she argues, 'it is particularly important to examine and analyze the stylistic structures and patterns of the source poem, so that they can be carried over into the translation and still be recognized there' (2021: 139). This aspiration of recognition of source text structures in the target text arguably reflects too neat and optimistic an idea of the relationship between source and target text. But what Boase-Beier's theory has to offer is an explanation of how a translator establishes what a poem is about, even if different readers arrive at different conclusions. Both Boase-Beier and Scott orient themselves towards the translator's reading process. They also share a belief that a literary translation is one that maintains a degree of openness in the target text, warning against making a literary text too comprehensible for a reader through translation.

In the first section of this chapter, I survey literature that addresses translation as the creation of autonomous texts. I evaluate how theorists have balanced the 'relevant similarity' that connects source texts to target texts while at the same time acknowledging and even welcoming the difference generated in translation. I go on to address what have been traditionally perceived as the special and particular challenges of translating poetry. I then turn to my examples of translating *Sauvage*, focusing on metaphor, meter, and rhyme in translation. I draw on Boase-Beier's theories about metaphor and conserving ambiguity in translation. For meter, I bring in James Underhill and Yves Bonnefoy, examining how French alexandrines may be served in English by iambic pentameter. With respect to rhyme, I respond to Francis Jones' process of poetry translation. Finally, I bring into the conversation Norman Shapiro and Philip Weller, who have both translated

selected poems by Sauvage into English, and I compare their efforts with mine. Throughout my analysis, I demonstrate that the English-language Sauvage who emerges out of my translation is not without ‘relevant similarity’ to the French-language Sauvage – a connection made possible through attention paid to the style of the source text, including an appreciation of historical circumstance. Equally, my translation reflects my own situatedness as the source text’s reader and displays my ‘accumulated experience’ (Scott 2021: 195) that I bring to the process of translation.

1. Translation as ‘same’ but ‘different’

Translation has been observed as bound up both in criticism (Rose 1997) and creative writing (Loffredo and Perteghella 2008). In the wake of the scholarly embrace of translation as an important process of cultural and power mediation (Lefevere 1992b; Tymockzo and Gentzler 2002), Translation Studies arrived at its ‘creative turn’ (Loffredo and Perteghella 2008) with the goal of accepting literary translation as an art and restituting the translator to their rightful, creative and authorial role (Bassnett and Bush 2006). Whether identifying love for the text or the author a translator is working on (Bassnett 2006), or stressing the kinship curated through methodical cultural and lexical research (Balmer 2006), what comes to the forefront is a translator’s relationship to the source text. Loffredo and Perteghella argue that

the ability to respond to a text – and a translation is a manifestation of one of the possible responses – entails a relationship to the source text, in which a dialogue is established and in which the translating subject – neither the person of the translator nor a Kantian universal subject – comes to be defined. The focus on the cognitive aspects at work in the translation process enables us to compare [translation] to the process of writing itself. (2008: 7)

Such focus on response finds echo in Boase-Beier’s approach: because the translator is a reader of the source text, ‘the effects of its style upon the translator need to be examined’ in the first instance (Boase-Beier 2020: 4), even before the translation is approached as a text in its own right. What connects translation to writing is an acknowledgement that the translation is ‘operating in a decision-making

space related to both the construction of meaning in the source text and the creation of meaning in the target text' (Wilson and Gerber 2012: xii). Although, as Loffredo and Perteghella indicate, the translator's response (or ability to respond) lies somewhere between the individual and the universal, it is 'the presence and the influence of the translator's subjectivity' which 'represents a significant stage in the understanding of the intimate links between creative writing and translation' (Loffredo and Perteghella 2008: 8). In other words, the creativity of the translation process is directly linked to the subjective, the mental, and the phenomenological experience, or even to what Scott calls 'the kinaesthetics, the psycho-physiological responses of reading' (2012b: 1). The result of a translation process ought to be received as creative because it is something that cannot be separated 'from its maker as an object of understanding' (ibid: 3).

But if all translation is rewriting or even just plain writing, then how do we account for the degree of similarity that exists between a translation and its source material, a connection that is arguably at the heart of what makes a translation a translation, and not some other type of text? Describing her own translations of Argentinian poet Alejandra Pizarnik, Bassnett writes that '[a]ccuracy was irrelevant' when it came to her creative translation process, adding that she, Bassnett, translated 'for pleasure' (2006: 182). Hence, any criticism that Bassnett's poems were inaccurate translations of Pizarnik misses the point (ibid). The suggestion here is that the pleasure one associates with self-expression – particularly creative self-expression – cannot be experienced if one's goal is the creation of 'accurate' translations. And yet, we cannot do away with evaluations of accuracy when talking about translation, as Bassnett's anecdote demonstrates. Even if we account for the subjective mental response and ensuing self-expression of the translator during the translation process, the question of how source and target texts are approximate or proximate will remain present so long as we continue to use the word 'translation'.

The definition of translation may, of course, be stretched in either direction. Insofar as all texts are based on preexisting use of language and are influenced by preexisting texts (Perloff 2010) or are derived 'from a trans-linguistic tradition and cannot help re-using material from elsewhere' (Reynolds 2016: 10), then all forms of literature may be perceived as translation. Steiner goes so far as to claim that all communication is translation: 'Translation is formally and pragmatically implicit in every act of communication [...]. To hear significance is to translate' (1998: xii,

emphasis in original).¹⁵ Insofar as the translator is responsible for putting down one word after another and supplying new contexts for a literary work, the translator is creating autonomous texts that are effectively originals (Emmerich 2017). Bassnett herself observes that she has ‘never satisfactorily worked out exactly when there began to be an hegemonic distinction made between writing and translating’ (2006: 173). Kirsten Malmkjær checks translation against the criteria for creativity and concludes that, like any creative work, translations ‘are original while embodying aspects of copying’ (2019: 4). Equally, there has been little satisfactory closure in attempts to differentiate translation from adaptation (Raw 2012), with theorists noticing particularly that when attention is paid to strategies focused on the reception of target texts in target cultures, the boundaries between translation and adaptation methods are weakened and any difference in approach becomes negligible (Azenha and Moreira 2012). Despite this open, rather flexible image of the writing-adaptation-translation spectrum, I believe a translator cannot deflect considerations of accuracy by deeming accuracy irrelevant, especially in the case of passion projects, where it may be tempting to justify the translator’s creative input by suggesting that pleasure or love somehow render accuracy unimportant. On the other hand, the celebratory embrace of the translator’s pleasure, as in the case of Bassnett’s anecdote (2006: 182), could be perceived as an antidote for what Lance Hewson observes to be the general negative attitude towards evaluating translations, by which ‘translations are fundamentally flawed and [are] dealt with as “deficient” texts’ and, subsequently, an inquest is launched into the translation’s ‘quality’ or what constitutes ‘equivalence’ (2011: 13). Antoine Berman makes a similar point when he observes that most translation criticism engages primarily in ‘negative’ analysis that amounts to a judgement of the translation (1994: 41). Hewson strikes a balance between celebrating the translator’s agency and articulating the relevance of the target text to the source text by proposing we speak not of ‘shifts’ or ‘deformations’ in translation, but rather of ‘effects’ that have the capacity to be measured (ibid: 17).

Jacques Derrida’s inquiry into what makes a translation ‘relevant’ suggests that relevance is ‘whatever feels right, whatever seems pertinent, apropos,

¹⁵ Reynolds counters this by explaining that communication and translation are not the same, that translation is ‘part of communication’ and a process which occurs ‘when we encounter an obstruction to understanding’ (2016: 25).

welcome, appropriate, opportune, justified, well-suited or adjusted, coming right at the moment when you expect it' (2012: 368). Yet, Derrida also talks of economy, in the sense of 'property' and 'quantity': 'A relevant translation is a translation whose economy, in these two senses, is the best possible, the most appropriating and the most appropriate possible' (ibid: 369). On the one hand, Derrida highlights the 'attempt at appropriation that aims to transport home' (ibid); on the other, a translator must be able to count and account for the 'calculable quantity' of whatever it is that is being transported home (ibid). The result is a paradoxical acknowledgement of the target text as a new, 'appropriated' entity which nevertheless accounts for some kind of measurable transfer of certain elements from the old text, these being perhaps similar to Hewson's proposed, measurable 'effects' (2011: 17).

Of course, Derrida's use of the word 'relevant' may not, in fact, refer to relevance as it is generally understood in the field of translation: Batchelor observes that readings of Derrida have co-opted the word 'relevance' to be relevant to Translation Studies, arguing that translation theorists 'privilege the possibility that "relevant" belongs to English, and, more specifically, to a particular specialist field within English' (2023: 3). Instead, Derrida's '*relevant*' should be understood as a 'translative body' that has been 'marked by an act of translation that has taken place in the past' and so 'carries with it the memory, stigmata, or halo of past translations' (ibid: 9). Translation inflicts marks and is therefore, like writing, 'a form of intervention that is both loving and aggressive towards the language in which it intervenes' (ibid). Such an understanding echoes Ahmed's concept of use as a form of contact (2019: 40) and Basile's understanding of translation as an intimate site that carries the potential for violence (2018: 28). Thus, writing and translating may be understood as the same manner of using (coming into contact with) preexisting words, texts, or 'translative bodies'. Batchelor continues that Derrida understands translation as the process of 'taking responsibility for the words in the new language' (2023: 10). In such an understanding, a translation becomes less about the measure of its relation of 'relevance' to the source text and more about the translator's stepping up to claim the translated text for their own.

In many other understandings of translation, it remains difficult to shake translation's special status, manifest in the target text's connection to the source text, which is often far more visible than the indebtedness that a non-translated work

may bear towards preexisting material. Hewson observes that any given translation has 'double status [...] whereby the new text both represents its "original" by bearing its author's name, and leads its own, autonomous life within its new linguistic and cultural environment' (2011: 17). This double vision of translation results in a kind of Schrodinger's attitude towards the translated text, particularly the translated poetic text. For example, in the preface to David Ferry's 1992 translation of *Gilgamesh*, William Moran writes, 'let it be stated at once: it is David Ferry's poem' (Ferry 1992: xi). And yet, this poem by Ferry nevertheless 'seems remarkably faithful to the original' (ibid). So the poem is at once *Gilgamesh* and it is David Ferry's. Jerome McGann, in speaking of editions of literary works, takes up the metaphor of quantum superimposition in calling for editions to be accepted as 'quantum' states of a single text: instead of pursuing a reverse teleology that seeks, through careful editing, to return a text to an identifiable author's intention, we ought to acknowledge that a text may exist in several states at once (1993: 159-161). Chesterman contributes to this idea that texts are replicated rather than replaced in his analysis of the memes of translation (2016). For Chesterman, it is more useful to think of ideas and the texts that carry them in terms of biological metaphor. Memes, like genes, do not become absent from the source environment once they are translated; neither do texts (ibid: 4). Rather, their slightly altered copies appear in the target culture and target language. The notion of progress suggested by evolution would hold that 'translation adds value to a source text, by adding readers of its ideas, adding further interpretations, and so on' (ibid). Translation is theorized as a process that multiplies the existing states of a text; any resulting target texts are the same as the source text and also different. In Chesterman's view, this process, like the evolution and competition of genes, is necessary for the survival of texts and of the ideas contained therein (ibid).

These are inventive metaphors for communicating the idea that a translator is engaged in a process of replication, but that such replication involves mutation rather than the transfer of invariants – invariants which, as a hermeneutics-based approach to translation argues, do not exist in the first place (Venuti 2013). This mutation is the process of a subjectively inflected reading experience, where the translator exhibits a degree of response, or 'response-ability', in their encounter with the source text (Loffredo and Perteghella 2008: 7). It may be said that this mutation process is also a process of use, by which a text – to return to the examples from

Ahmed provided at the end of the previous chapter – like a retrodden path or a piece of crockery, acquires new characteristics, becoming distinguishable through such wear from the object it had been before. Yet it bears relevance to the object it had been before. The following section continues this discussion of sameness and difference, but now with a specific focus on the translation of poetry – an endeavor which, in Roman Jakobson’s appraisal, is simply not possible (2012: 131).

2. Translating poetry, especially between French and English

Poems are particular. Boase-Beier argues that, from the start, the very shape of a poem ‘helps alert readers to the fact that a poem *is* a poem’ (2020: 107, emphasis in original). Such foregrounding ‘is therefore not just something to be aware of in stylistic terms, but also what it says about text-type, a fundamental question for the type of translation to be carried out’ (ibid). What type of translation a poem – as opposed to other types of texts – demands is a matter of debate. Answers will range from how ‘the intricate nature of poetry requires bold creativity of a translator’ (Sullivan 2018: 269) to the belief that the sole duty of the poetry translator should be to produce a “‘literal translation’” (Nabokov 2012: 119). Because poetry is perceived as ‘the space where form and content co-exist’ (Sullivan 2018: 268), which is to say that its form or shape is understood as being connected to its possible meanings, the translator is forced to consider not only semantic units in translation, but also form, and especially how form and semantics interact to yield the poem’s high degree of expressivity. Because this relationship is highly dependent on the structure of a language itself – because, as Jakobson observes, ‘Phonemic similarity is sensed as semantic relationship’ in a poem (2012: 131) – the translation of poetry emerges as a particularly challenging undertaking, or, in the most pessimistic of perspectives, impossible.

Whether a poem is perceived at first glance as a poem because it is short, because it has line breaks, because it is organized into stanzas, or because it is surrounded by a much larger amount of blank space on the page than prose, the reader of a poem is likely to expect a high degree of literariness connected to the poem’s formal features. I focus predominantly on rhyme and meter in this chapter –

although it is of course possible to define many other formal features of poetry¹⁶ – because rhyme and meter are central to much of Sauvage’s corpus. Rhyme, as André Lefevere observes, ‘has been the hallmark of Western poetry for about fifteen hundred years’; consequently, ‘what did not rhyme was not poetry’ (1992a: 70). Beyond indicating that a text is a poem or a song, rhyme contributes to the pleasure and cohesion of the source text: ‘it marks a completion, a rounding of a line, and acts as a further “marker” in the development of the poem as a whole. Furthermore, the sound effects produced by the succession of rhymes undoubtedly heighten the illocutionary power of the poem’ (ibid: 71). Lefevere suggests that a translator endeavoring to undertake poetry evaluate whether removing rhyme in translation would ‘fatally weaken’ the poem and whether rhymed and metered poetry is important in the receiving culture, if at all (ibid). Most importantly, Lefevere instructs the translator not to produce a rhymed and metered translation unless the translator is sure they will ‘do it well’ (ibid: 72) – suggesting that a translator must have either poetic training, or enough awareness of their poetic skills to be able to evaluate when a poem reads ‘well’ or ‘badly’.

Such a call to artistry in poetry translation is antithetical to Vladimir Nabokov’s observation that a true translation can only ever be a ‘literal translation’ with intention ‘to reproduce with absolute exactitude the whole text, and nothing but the text’ (2012: 119). Such a translation approach would mean that ‘the original text will not be able to soar and sing; but it can be very nicely dissected and mounted, and scientifically studied in all its organic detail’ (ibid). Nabokov seems to be calling for a taxonomist here, rather than a poet. Although a vision of a poem translation that neither soars nor sings may sound like a disappointing or unpleasurable one, Nabokov challenges the assumption that a translator of poetry should be able to do rhyme and meter ‘well’. For whom, asks Nabokov, should a poem ‘read well’? His contentious translation of *Eugene Onegin* may be understood as having ‘betrayed Pushkin far less than it did the English language, or expectations to cleave to standard literary and lyrical usage [...] by implication [the translation] expressed disdain for standard literary usage – and for the higher status of English’ (Bozovic 2018: 173). In this sense, Nabokov sits closer to theorists such as Spivak and

¹⁶ Neither does all poetry rhyme, or is broken up into lines, or contains regular meter. Prose poetry makes for an interesting case (see Hetherington and Atherton 2020).

Venuti, both proponents of unseating the standard literary usages of the target language, and against the domesticating approaches of theorists such as Lefevere, who instructs the translator to privilege the ideology and poetology of the target text and culture, not the source (1992a: 19).

But Nabokov appears to be an outlier in a field where those who are interested in poetry translation would like to make a poem 'soar and sing' even in translation, even if the very act of changing languages poses a challenge to a poem's expressivity. James Underhill writes, 'If the poem is expressive, then it owes that expressivity in part to the means furnished by the language system [...] Being forced to discard the movement of one language and to adopt a foreign movement does, therefore, inevitably threaten to undermine the expressive potential of the poem' (2016: 49). At this point Nabokov might say good riddance, while Lefevere would suggest that an expert with poetic training in the target language step in. Underhill observes that the pessimist translator, first separating form and meaning, then reducing form to meter, and finding that meter cannot be transposed (founded as it is on the structural particularity of a given language), 'fall[s] back onto the strategy of a prose translation – the transposition of meaning – having concluded that translating poetry is impossible' (2016: 50). Underhill goes on to argue that this line of logic 'reposes on the idea that expression is irrevocably rooted in linguistic form, and that languages that do not share the same linguistic form cannot express the same things' (ibid:51). This is partially what leads theorists to dismiss equivalence as a useful quality when speaking about translation (see Pym 2010: 6-42). Thus the translator, faced with diverging linguistic forms, is able to produce a 'dissected' (Nabokov 2012: 119) target text at best, or possibly 'fatally weaken' (Lefevere 1992a: 71) the poem through translation. A more optimistic vision of the translator's abilities is articulated by Underhill, who argues it is the translator's task to understand how the source text poet is bending their own language into expressive form, and then go on to investigate what they, the translator, may do in the target language 'to enact the same expressive movement using different means' (ibid). Underhill's use of 'sameness' may of course be questioned: 'sameness' appears to be a more rigid quality than Boase-Beier's any 'type' of 'textual equivalence' (2020: 7) or Chesterman's 'relation of relevant similarity' (2016: 69), and it is worth asking who is evaluating the measure of 'sameness' between expressive movements, and how. I read Underhill as reiterating a notion of relation

or relevance in his understanding of how poetry may be successfully translated, as well as allowing space for the translator's own creativity and manipulation of target language poetics to enter into play.

The following steps now emerge for the translator in a possible approach to translating a poem. Firstly, identifying the expressive movement of the original. Secondly, identifying the forms or structures in the target language that may be made to serve this expressive movement. For the process of the first, I turn to Boase-Beier's application of cognitive stylistics to translation and compare her approach to Yves Bonnefoy's idea of recreating a 'poetic space' through translation (2004: 234), which is itself similar to Scott's approach to translating 'the linguistic experience' of a text (2012a: 11). For the second, I consider how studies of comparative stylistics and poetry translation have addressed the differences between French and English poetic forms, focusing on the case of poetic meter across both languages.

Boase-Beier is interested in what happens to readers when they read, and consequently how the translator, as a reader of the source text, may pass along something resembling that experience to the reader of the target text. In describing the application of cognitive stylistics to translation, she writes, 'If what we experience as a result of reading is a changed mental state, guided by or enhanced by elements in the text, how do translators ensure that the reader of the translation also experiences a change in mental state, and that those changes have at least something in common with those the translator has experienced?' (2020: 90). Such changed mental states could be an acquaintance with thoughts or feelings the reader had not previously considered, an understanding that other people in other cultures experience such thoughts or feelings, and the recognition that such thoughts and feelings can be represented in a new language (ibid: 94). For Boase-Beier, the predominant question is one of what is approximated in translation, in contrast to how translation can be used to 'minoritize' and so disrupt the standard rules of dominant languages (Venuti 1998: 10-11), or else the unimportance of accuracy as articulated by Bassnett (2006: 182). But neither is Boase-Beier's analysis of effect upon the reader the same as Nida's concept of 'dynamic' equivalence, which outlines how the translator 'aims at complete naturalness of expression and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of [their] own culture' (2012: 144). Like the translator/reader subject outlined

by Loffredo and Perteghella, who is neither merely one individual nor a universal subject (2008: 7), Boase-Beier anticipates that a translator will bring a degree of subjectivity to their encounter with the source text; like Scott she is interested in how the translation process effectively documents a reading experience (Scott 2012b: 1). According to Boase-Beier's theory, possible translation approaches will emerge during and after the reading of a poem, as the translator/reader is taken through a shift in mental states and grasps what, in that moment, the poem is 'about'. For example, Boase-Beier argues that Thomas Hardy's poem 'The Walk' is about 'the feeling of an incremental realization of absence' (2020: 97). Boase-Beier may be criticized here for arguing too neatly on behalf of the definite connection between a source text's poetics and the 'feeling' (or what Underhill would term 'expressive movement') to which these poetics give rise. If 'poetics' for Boase-Beier are the consequences of a writer's 'patterns of thought', then a translator, by studying source-text poetics, will '[gain] insight' into these thought patterns and consequently work to give the reader of the target text access to such thought patterns by creating a translation (2021: 139). It may be argued that the identification of such thought patterns – otherwise referred to as a writer's 'world view' (ibid) – will not always be consistent from translator to translator. Not every reader will agree that Hardy's poem is about absence. However, Boase-Beier places emphasis on the transformation that poetics undergo through translation and acknowledges for a 'translator's particular interpretation' (ibid). Paying attention to style means '[creating] the new poem from the same basis' as that from which the source poem sprung (ibid). The translator, in reconstructing from the base through translation, may have to 'sacrifice quite a lot': in the case of the Hardy poem this may mean giving up 'the *aabb* rhyme, the regular rhythm, and even the description of the ways and trees' (2020: 97). Nothing obliges the translator to hold on to form or even content if, in the course of translation, such features get in the way of what gives the target poem a matching expressivity. In thus admitting that a target text has to be different in order to be 'the same', translation becomes an invitation to discover what the approximation of style may look like across texts and languages and how the translator may play to the strengths of the target language in order to approximate the source text's ability to convey a feeling and, in doing so, bring about a changed mental state or a changed affective state.

The French poet and translator Yves Bonnefoy understands this process of discovery as both the translator's freedom to make the text their own and the translator's obligation to re-create what Bonnefoy terms 'the poetic space' (2004: 234). This 'poetic space' may be compared to Boase-Beier's understanding of a text's capacity to bring about changed mental states, or Underhill's understanding of an 'expressive movement' present in the source language poem. For Bonnefoy, good verse translations are only possible when the target text arises out of the translator's experience of the world (2004: 243), similarly to how Scott understands translation to be the result of an experience, rather than the deciphering of intended meaning (2012a; 2012b). A good translation occurs when the words necessary to form the target text manifest themselves not 'par le circuit court qu'on croit qui va chez le traducteur du texte à la traduction, mais par toute une boucle de [son] passé' [via that short circuit we imagine runs between text and translation in the translator, but via an entire loop of the translator's past] (Bonnefoy 1990: 100). In this sense, Bonnefoy, although more poetic in his expression, echoes the approaches of Scott and Boase-Beier, who similarly believe that there is more than a transfer of semantic or figurative value involved in translation. An experience of the world, or at least of reading, becomes an inextricable part of the translation process. Bonnefoy is wary of both literal and literary translation: *literal* translations in which semantic units are replicated for the sake of a gloss are bad (although they can be useful and educational), while *literary* translations, being stylistically refined and too smart for their own sake, are equally bad (although they can be admirable) (2004: 234). Somewhere, Bonnefoy implies with the mysticism of the artist, in a place that is neither literal nor literary, lies the space of poetry. He writes, 'The poetic act is a space, the very space of existence, and the translator should at least know how to understand and evoke this space, if not restore it, in order to preserve its crucial value for us. But this is precisely the great task that literary translation is incapable of assuming, and its grandest stylistic refinements will only lead us astray' (2004: 234).

It seems as if Bonnefoy is reaching for something that cannot be taught and cannot be articulated; his approach to translating poetry defies method and terminology. He is good at articulating what must not be done – no literal translations that prosaically follow the order of thoughts articulated in the source text, no literary translations that are off-putting by their sheer cleverness (ibid) – and

perhaps he is hoping to define successful translation by the things it is not. For him, translations are false because they are too faithful to the 'poetic impulse', by means of failing to adhere to equivalence of form and content, or else they are 'half-translations' that, through an attempt to duplicate the form and content of the source text in the target text, lack the necessary but elusive poetic quality (2004: 241). However, although Bonnefoy starts out by claiming that poetry cannot be translated (1990: 95), his emphasis on the translator's obligation to evoke a poetic space claims no small amount of authorial power for the translator. Translation is understood as a way of experiencing the source text; Bonnefoy presents this experience as a crossing, a journey in which the translator can be themselves: 'et au lieu d'être [...] devant la masse d'un texte, nous voici à nouveau à l'origine, là où foisonnait le possible, et pour une seconde traverse, où on a le droit d'être soi-même' [and instead of being confronted with the mass of the text, here we are again at the beginning, where possibility teemed, ready for a second crossing during which we have the right to be ourselves] (1990: 98). Bonnefoy invites the translator to take up the source text 'à l'origine, prétendre donc à un pouvoir d'invention semblable' [at the origin and thus aspire to a similar power of invention] (ibid). In the words of Pierre Joris, the translation of a poem should 'lead to a renewal of the poem' (Adonis and Joris 2017: 33). Similar to how Boase-Beier observes that a translator may have to 'sacrifice quite a lot' (2020: 97) to get across the cognitive effects of a poem in translation, Joris writes that a translator may have to 'revamp, strip [the source text] bare of the all too many repetitions, both at a formal level (too restrictive rhymes and meters), or at the level of content (too limited or conventional themes)', for 'there's work to be done for a new image to arise' (Adonis and Joris 2017: 33). Joris' 'new image', like Bonnefoy's 'poetic space', is an account of difference in translation that allows for the foregrounding of the reading experience and even – by presenting translation as an act of refurbishment, as the labor of stripping old wallpaper in order to upgrade a space – for the making of better poems.

Other accounts of the structural and stylistic differences between languages, and what such differences imply for translation, are less abstract and more technically prescriptive. For example, the global prominence of French and English as well as the long history of translation between the two languages has meant that comparative stylistics studies are not scarce, nor are prescriptive manuals for

translation methods (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995; Hervey and Higgins 2002).¹⁷ Vinay and Darbelnet's manual of comparative stylistics, for instance, suggests that translation may be codified to an extent through a close understanding of the structures and usage of both languages: 'with a better understanding of the rules governing the transfer from one language to another, we would arrive at an ever-increasing number of unique solutions', they write (1995: 8). In their view, any claim that translation is an art 'tends nevertheless to place an arbitrary limitation on the nature of our object of investigation' (ibid: 7). They argue that not only can translation reveal the idiosyncrasies of languages to a greater extent, but also that a translator, once acquainted with the particularities of usage, can follow a set of rules that makes it easier to make translation decisions. The translator is not presented as a writer, nor are they expected to be one (ibid: 289). Creativity is not required of the translator, who moreover ought to 'stray from the requirements of literalness only to the extent of the requirements of the target language [...] in other words, [...] with good reason and within strictly defined limits' (ibid: 288). What matters in order to achieve a good translation between French and English is knowledge of, for example, 'the preference of English for the passive voice' and 'the predominance of pronominal verbs in French' (ibid: 17). This awareness of the 'rules' results in what Vinay and Darbelnet term a 'precise' translation, which does not entail the reproduction of a source language's use of the passive voice or of pronominal verbs but rather takes recourse to codified equivalences; Pym identifies such equivalences as 'natural' (2010: 6-23). These codified equivalences are established through the tabulation of the literal and figurative semantic values of words (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 63).

Can the strictness of such a codified approach to language difference help a translator in the realm of poetry, where translation is more likely to be perceived as an art and described, as in the case of Bonnefoy and Joris, in poetic terms? But poetry engages the language of its operation in technical ways, and it is possible to

¹⁷ Additionally, the relative similarity between French and English makes discussions of meter and rhyme apropos in the way that working with another language pair may not. The languages share similar histories of poetic development (see Scott 2002) and a degree of structural similarity that would not exist were I working, for instance, with Russian, which is far more inflexional than English or French and is therefore (to take one example) far more syntactically flexible. This structural difference would prompt a different evaluation as to how to describe the degree of 'sameness' and 'difference' in translation.

set for oneself, as a translator, concise rules for dealing with a poem's formal characteristics. One example is the case of meter. It has been observed that English is accentual whereas French is syllabic (Underhill 2016). The respective musicality of the two languages comes from 'intonation and movement of the phrase' in French and the 'binary strong-weak movement' in English accentuation (Underhill 2016: 57). Bonnefoy appears to acknowledge this when he offers alexandrines and iambic pentameter as different equals, so to speak, each better attuned to the metaphysical character of the language in which they occur (2004: 219). Then again, as Underhill observes, 'neither [the alexandrine nor iambic pentameter are] natural to the language to which it belongs. Both are highly stylized forms of speech that take up residence within the language as part of its cultural tradition' (2016: 59). Bonnefoy would disagree: in subscribing to the 'different metaphysics of English and French', he believes their linguistic forms are somehow innate, which to my ears echoes Vinay and Darbelnet's statement that languages have 'idiosyncrasies' (1995: 8). Bonnefoy argues, for instance, against transposing Shakespeare's *Hamlet* into Claudelian versets, arguing that 'the pentameter in *Hamlet* is by no means a secondary or negligible fact. And this is because it bears – like the decasyllable or the alexandrine in French – a power of metaphysical receptivity that is a good deal more specific and precise than is often thought' (2004: 227). Bonnefoy goes on to write that there is something particular about the virtues of both the alexandrine and the pentameter: 'the line of five or six feet, or ten or twelve syllables, is the boundary between the mind's inner workings and the world outside on which that mind must work' (2004: 228). In other words, this rhythm has not been 'imposed on Western languages by chance' (ibid) but rather has organically developed in order to create 'the greatest intensity' and yield expressions 'with a maximum of richness' (ibid).

Thus Bonnefoy identifies two similar-but-different carriers of poetic expression across French and English. It is evident that these two forms produce lines of relatively equal length (ten or twelve syllables), while both forms conjure classical precedent in their respective languages, the classical alexandrine harkening to Racine in the way iambic pentameter harkens to Shakespeare. This is not to say that translating alexandrines in iambic pentameter, or vice versa, is the definitive and prescriptive approach. Bonnefoy himself admits to not following his

own rules in his practice as a translator (2004: 255).¹⁸ Even Underhill's comparative study of French and English versification, which insists that 'translating poems is possible', acknowledges that 'when it comes to metrics and versification, theories often get in the way rather than opening up the way to creative responses to poems' (2016: 291). Attention paid to the strengths of the target language, rather than recourse to codified rules, makes poetry translation possible: 'If the voice of a poet makes itself heard in a foreign language, it is by utilizing the resources of that language' (Underhill 2016: 293). It is recourse to creative solutions, it would seem, that is the requirement to translate poetry well.

3. The difference in a gloss

Let us consider a poem by Sauvage. I have selected this poem for its usefulness in demonstrating the process of how I, as a translator, think about metaphor and meter especially. I consider examples of other poems in the section on rhyme. I draw upon further examples in the section where I consider the approaches of other translators to Sauvage's texts, comparing their approaches with my own.

Even before I begin an examination of how Sauvage's French poem functions as a literary text, analyzing what formal features exist in the source-language poem and how these features work to create cognitive shifts in the reader, I present what may be termed a 'gloss' translation. A gloss translation gives the bilingual dictionary equivalent of semantic units and is pedagogical in nature, helping all readers to be on the same page, so to speak (see Nida 2012: 144). A 'gloss' may be called Vinay and Darbelnet's 'precise translation' (1995: 63) for it takes recourse to the codified semantic equivalences between English and French. It may also be imagined as an example of what Bonnefoy terms 'bad' literal translation (2004: 234) or what Nabokov terms the 'dissected' text in translation (2012: 119). I provide this gloss not only to get readers of this thesis on the same page, but to demonstrate that, even in the most unliterary of translation attempts, difference is already occurring on the level of meaning. Even in an attempt to stick

¹⁸ It has been argued that Bonnefoy's theories on the different metaphysics of French and English are self-contradicting, however, and that Bonnefoy's ideas 'run directly against the grain of contemporary literary and philosophical thinking', given that translation is 'a practice that constantly wriggles free of generalizing theories' (Dickow 2015: 170).

to codified equivalence, the notion of equivalence becomes suspect: as Bassnett writes, 'sameness cannot even exist between two TL versions of the same text, let alone between the SL and the TL version' (2014: 39), while Hewson similarly notes that 'any reformulation, including intralingual paraphrase, leads to a transformation of content, however minimal it may be. This means that *all* translation implies a degree of change and difference' (2011: 17, emphasis in original). In the case of this gloss, even before I begin to consider source text poetics or set a conscious goal for the translation, the process of reformulating Sauvage's French words in English creates unavoidable difference.

Il était là avec sa forme lumineuse
Qui semblait éclairer la nuit de la maison
Et celle de mon cœur ; mes mains étaient heureuses
De le servir, d'errer légères devant lui,
De lui donner le vin et le pain en silence.
J'allais, mes pieds discrets marchaient avec amour,
Tout mon être était un baiser suave et sourd.

[Gloss translation:

He was there with his luminous form
That seemed to illuminate the night of the house
And that of my heart; my hands were happy
To serve him, to wander, light, before him,
To give him wine and bread in silence.
I went, my discreet feet walked with love,
All my being was a smooth and muted kiss.] (2009: 104)

Despite aiming for explanatory neutrality, this translation displays ways in which the stylistic effects of this poem differ according to the new language into which the poem has been translated. To take one example, the lexical web around the word 'light' has been expanded in English translation, even though the translator has not sought that specific effect. In French, references to light and illumination are present in terms such as 'lumineuse' [luminous] and 'éclairer' [illuminate]. In English, I reached for the primary dictionary definition of 'légères' and translated the word as 'light' meaning 'weighing little'; in doing so I invited in the other English-language meaning of 'light' relating to luminescence. Now the speaker's hands are potentially implicated in giving off light, as is the man in the poem, expanding the Christian imagery to involve both characters, not just one. The positioning of the word 'light' renders it ambiguous in English, especially since English words do not carry

markers of grammatical gender or quantity. Thus 'light' may be read as an adjective, it may be read as a verb akin to the preceding 'wander', or it may be even read – if the commas were omitted – as the object of the verb 'wander', although admittedly the phrase 'to wander light' does not make very much sense. I could have, still with the intention of achieving explanatory clarity in my gloss translation, moved the word 'light' from line four to line three; the expression would sound more natural in English ('my light hands were happy'), but this has the effect of bringing 'light' into greater physical proximity to the words 'luminous' and 'illuminate' and so emphasizing the meaning of the word 'light' as 'source of luminescence' rather than 'weighing little'. Or I could have turned 'light' into a natural-sounding adverb ('To serve him, to wander lightly before him'), but another change occurs – now it is the verb 'wander' that is being modified instead of the noun 'hands'. I could have eschewed 'light' completely for a word such as 'weightless' and avoided contributing to pre-existing references to luminosity, but is 'light' truly the same as 'weightless'? One evokes 'weighing little', the other 'weighing nothing'. These may sound like insignificant decisions, but my point is that despite reaching for a gloss translation, it is already visible how the inclusion or exclusion of what is by all appearances a common, simple English word has the potential to add to existing imagery, introduce new ambiguity, and contribute to new possible readings of the poem, thereby confirming that the target text is an autonomous and new creation. All this occurs before one enters into an analysis of the translator as author endowed with creative agency. The change occurs almost by itself, in the attempt to replicate a semantic unit via recourse to established semantic equivalences locatable within a bilingual dictionary. As with Chesterman's memes/genes, the religiously inflected image of light, in a simple attempt to replicate, grows, evolves, becomes slightly different.

4. Metaphor

Having acknowledged that a gloss translation will have a life of its own, I now turn to what a translation of this poem will look like after the translator has analyzed the source text's expressive movement. In order to do this, I take Boase-Beier's approach of first arriving at an understanding of what this poem is about (2020: 34-45). I read it as a poem about devotion; the overwhelming 'feeling', as Boase-Beier would call it (2020: 24, 96), is of tenderly serving an object of one's love. Without

further context – without the knowledge that this poem is part of a collection of sensual poems addressed to a lover – this may be taken for an expression of religious sentiment. Christian imagery is present in references to wine and bread, in the portrayal of the lover as giving off physical and spiritual light, and in the reference to demure servitude. The poem ends on a striking, if difficult metaphor in which all of the speaker's 'being' (presumably body and soul) is compared to a 'kiss'.

This is one example of Sauvage's metaphors, a common stylistic feature in her poetry. Certain metaphors, like this one, operate on a high level of abstraction, thereby demanding a high level of cognitive input from the reader. Others may be more 'straightforward': for example, a description of the moon as a 'Céleste nénuphar ouvert aux eaux d'en haut' [Celestial waterlily open to the waters from above] (1910: 25) is easy to grasp because it requires a relatively low amount of reader participation, despite being a striking turn of phrase. In Boase-Beier's words, such a metaphor 'compare[s] something concrete to something else concrete', or 'compare[s] two basic domains, rather than conceptualizing an abstract domain in more concrete terms' (2020: 114). The moon is a concrete image, conceivable with mild enough recourse to the imagination, as is the lily to which the moon is being compared. However, in 'Tout mon être était un baiser suave et sourd [All my being was a smooth and muted kiss]', the words 'être' and 'baiser' are grounded in the concrete world to a much lesser extent. 'Être' refers to more than a body: Sauvage here is speaking of both body and soul, the sum that is greater than all the parts added up together. Like its English counterpart 'being', 'être' may be both noun and verb, referring to something that exists and the act of existing. 'Baiser', on the other hand, is doing more work here than the English 'kiss' may do alone. 'Baiser' may certainly be understood as a peck of the lips, but it is also suggestive of sexual relations, given the common, lower-register meaning – around since the sixteenth century – of the verb 'baiser' as 'screw' or 'shag'. Moreover, it is the comparison of 'being' to 'kiss' that makes the reader want to extend the application of 'kiss' in their mind to something broader: in English, a 'kiss' is too concentrated upon the lips to be equated with the entire scope of a 'being'. But within the context of the references to happiness, light, and Christian motifs of the poem, there is nothing vulgar about Sauvage's use of 'baiser': the line is as affectionate as it is abstract.

The reader is left to imagine a world in which a being exists as a tender application against something or someone else.

This is what Peter Stockwell terms a highly expressive metaphor with low visibility (2002: 107-108). It offers richness but low clarity, because the tenor (the familiar element of the metaphor) is as opaque as the vehicle (the new element being described in terms of a familiar element). In certain other metaphors by Sauvage, it may be easy enough to distinguish tenor from vehicle and to map the metaphor: for instance, it is easy to unpack the metaphors BODY IS NOURISHING EARTH in a line such as 'Je suis la plaine fourragère' [I am a field of fodder] (1910: 119) or BODY IS NOURISHED EARTH in expressions such as 'Je suis la terre au printemps [...] Je suis la terre fructueuse' [I am the earth in springtime... I am the fertile earth] (2009: 95) and 'j'étais toute comme la terre d'un jardin où il a plu' [I was all like the earth in a garden after the rain] (ibid: 64). One speaks to a body's capacity to feed another being, such as a growing embryo, and the other suggests a nurtured, invigorated body. But the metaphor BEING IS KISS demands a great amount of 'creative input on the part of the reader' as the reader performs the process of 'vehicle-construction' (Stockwell 2002: 107). And 'where there is greater potential for creative interpretation, of course, there is also greater potential for ambiguity' (ibid). In other words, the possible meanings of 'Tout mon être était un baiser' are more numerous than the possible meanings of 'Je suis la plaine fourragère'.

Boase-Beier argues that the work of the reader (translator) in such cases 'involves not only identifying and processing the metaphorical compound, but also finding contexts for the comparison' (2020: 117). Consider, too, Levine's observation that in translation, 'You don't translate texts, but rather you attempt to re-create contexts' (1991: 8). I have already suggested several contexts for 'Tout mon être était un baiser'. For instance, we may consider the multiple meanings of 'baiser' across different registers, as well as the Christian imagery in the rest of the poem – the reference to the adored person's luminosity, the evocations of bread and wine – coloring Sauvage's use of 'baiser'. Consider the importance of kissing the crucifix in the Catholic tradition, or the Christian ritual kiss as a greeting, per the instruction to 'Salute one another with a holy kiss' (Romans 16:16). Finally, an acquaintance with the rest of Sauvage's corpus, particularly her love poetry, suggests that the fusion of religious and erotic elements is common in Sauvage's writing (see also 'Sauvage

and her female literary contemporaries' in Chapter 2). The expression of the sexual via the religious or mystical – which can be read as what Stockwell terms a 'megametaphor' or a 'thematically significant extended metaphor' (2002: 111) – is an aspect of 'the mind in the text' (Boase-Beier 2020: 91-94). In Sauvage's understanding of the world, physical and spiritual proximity to another human being brings one closer to God and the divine (Sauvage 2009: 77, 80-88). The translator gains a degree of creativity in making the decision about how these contexts and world views may be recreated or captured, or which context is to be prioritized over the others. In making such a call, the translator plays an authorial or even an editorial role.

5. Meter

Previously I noted the correspondences observed to exist between alexandrines and iambic pentameter (Bonney 2004: 227; Underhill 2016: 57). In Sauvage, the use of the alexandrine is accompanied by other evidence that she is deliberately reaching for high, classical expression. Intimate addresses to a lover are presented in the formal 'vous' while the interjection 'hélas' appears with frequency, sometimes to round out a line syllabically as well as to cement the poem's reference to classical modes of expression (Sauvage 2009: 108, 124). Sauvage's alexandrines are evidently a choice and not a default, given that Sauvage equally works in shorter hectasyllabic lines, *vers impairs*, and prose, and occasionally alternates short and long lines (ibid: 145-146); she evokes not only classical drama, but also other forms of song such as lullabies (ibid: 111). Given that the form of the alexandrine is connected in these cases to meaning and register in the French source text, translating alexandrines into iambic pentameter may serve as an approximate – if inherently different – solution. This would draw upon the existing strengths of the English language, if we agree with Underhill that iambs serve English accentuation better and so yield musicality (2016: 57). I find blank verse an especially attractive option for the translation of alexandrines: being unrhymed, the form takes the pressure off the translator to contort syntax or insert filler words to ensure rhyme, but its metrical cadence nevertheless makes up rhythmically for the absence of end rhymes.

In the example of the poem I provided above, I discussed how its metaphor and imagery contributed to the ‘expressive movement’ I identified in the poem – a ‘feeling’ of adoring, religiously inflected servitude. In closely examining the poem on a metrical and sonorous level, I read a degree of subtle humor in the piece. The discreet and loving pair of feet in the poem are betrayed by the subtle unsteadiness of the poem’s other feet: in the first five lines there is an uncertainty about the equilibrium that emerges from the potential pronunciation, or not, of the *e muet* at the end of words such as ‘forme’ in line one, ‘celle’ in line three, and ‘légères’ in line four. As Scott observes, the scansion of a French line is open to interpretation, with ‘traditional’ scansion seeking to ‘minimize controversy’ (1980: 12); there is, however, a difference in counting syllables and actually pronouncing them when the poem is read aloud (ibid: 19). If Sauvage’s poem is read aloud without the deliberate pronunciation of the extra syllables that are formally required to complete the alexandrine, the first four lines may come across as aurally short, in contrast to the final couplet in which twelve syllables per line are pronounced. I find the effect to be one of aural hesitation in the first half of the poem, like the shuffling of feet. Then, from the suave, repetitive swells of ‘De le servir’, ‘De lui donner’, ‘J’allais, mes pieds’, and the soft repetition of the *m* within ‘marchaient avec amour’, the feet suddenly catch upon a threshold, tripping rudely over the hard sequence of *ts* of the first hemistich of the final line, ‘Tout mon être était’, and then the poem, regaining its balance on the fly, smoothens itself back out and resurfaces through alliteration and the rhyme of ‘amour’/‘sourd’. The poem resolves itself through the tumble of internal rhyme in the final couplet: ‘allais’, ‘pieds’, ‘discrets’, ‘était’, ‘baiser’. The overwhelming aural harmony of these rhymes is suggestive of the speaker’s blissful state. The text is particularly effective because of the discrepancy of what it says and what it does, because of the speaker’s overt claim to being silent, tidy, light, unobtrusive, and the noisy, stumbling eagerness of the form that betrays the speaker’s happy rush to serve the adored object.

This is my analysis of the ‘stylistic structures and patterns of the source poem’ (Boase-Beier 2021: 139). Here I have provided ‘solid evidence’ for the ‘translator’s interpretation’ (ibid: 148). My reading is not completely fantastical, because I am operating from a position of acquaintance with Sauvage’s corpus, which, for example, allows me to identify thematically extended metaphors in her poems. This acquaintance may be described as ‘research undertaken by the

translator' (ibid), or what Boase-Beier defines as the sum of 'examining and understanding the geographical, historical, and literary situation' of the source text poet, as well as 'discovering how [the poet] used metaphors' (ibid). The translation, in turn, is 'written out of an idea' about the source text's poetics (ibid: 149). The translation 'remains an interpretation' (ibid: 148) and therefore counts as a translator's creative output. It is informed, however, by a close reading such as the one I have performed above. Here is my translation:

Il était là avec sa forme lumineuse
Qui semblait éclairer la nuit de la maison
Et celle de mon cœur ; mes mains étaient heureuses
De le servir, d'errer légères devant lui,
De lui donner le vin et le pain en silence.
J'allais, mes pieds discrets marchaient avec amour,
Tout mon être était un baiser suave et sourd.

[And there he was, his shining form that seemed
To chase away the darkness in the house
And in my heart. My hands were light and glad
To serve him, move before him, bring him bread
And wine in silence. As I went, my feet
Discreetly walked with love,
My being all a sweet and muted kiss.]
(2009:104)

In keeping with the discussion of the virtues of syllabic stresses in English, I have decided to translate into iambs, although in three lines the word 'And' begins the line to supply the unstressed foot. Only the sixth line is incomplete – two iambs short. I decided to leave it as is, taking as precedent Sauvage's own forms elsewhere, where she mixes lines of different length for effect.¹⁹ Moreover, there was no content left with which to fill out the line. This, more so than any general rule about translating meter, has informed my approach to translating Sauvage's poetry. To give another example, when I began translating 'Let us, my double flute, unheard-of music play', the poem which closes *A Sauvage Reader*, I attempted to translate it with five stresses per line, so that it would match 'I recall', the poem which opens the *Reader* (Sauvage composed both in alexandrines). I quickly realized that although I had no problem with 'I recall', I could not fit the contents of 'Let us, my double flute'

¹⁹ See for example the source text for the poem 'The ash sways and the hazel creeps' ('*Chant*' in the *Reader*), provided in Appendix B.

into lines of five stresses. When there is not enough content to fit a chosen form, or else too much, a one-size-fits-all approach is rendered tricky.

My English translation here has a different cadence than that of the French text: whereas I read the French poem's formal features as contributing to the effect of the poem's tripping over itself, my version, with its evenly rolling iambs, contentedly shifts its weight from foot to foot. In my version, 'As I went' is not exactly accurate in attempting to capture the brevity of 'J'allais', but the English phrase gives the described action the veneer of the continuous, which is more proximate to Sauvage's use of the *imparfait*. I translated 'donner' in line five as 'bring' (line four in my version) rather than 'give', as 'to give bread and wine' sounds odder in English than to 'bring' or 'offer' someone bread and wine. I toyed with 'offer' and 'proffer', conscious of the ceremonial and religious resonance of 'offer', as in 'an offering' to a saint or a god. I am pleased that the assonance of 'discreet', 'feet', 'being', and 'sweet' approximates the rhyme of 'allais', 'pieds', 'discrets', 'était', and 'baiser' and hopefully contributes to a sense of harmony that ties the poem together at the end, thereby approximating the effect the reader of the French text may encounter. The final line can be read as missing a verb ('my being was/is a sweet and muted kiss'), or 'being' can be read as a gerund. Although I considered the deliberate expansion of 'kiss' into something broader – for instance, I thought to make the abstractness of 'baiser' more concrete by translating the term as 'way of pressing to his body' or 'laying myself against him' – I decided to keep the oddness and ambiguity of 'kiss', not wishing to lose the Christian resonances of kissing. In this way, the ambiguity that Boase-Beier deems essential for a text to be literary is approximated through translation.

6. Rhyme

Francis Jones, a scholar and professional translator of late twentieth-century Bosnian poetry, describes his practice of translating a poem containing end rhymes as follows. Jones' approach 'was managed in three phases: generating rhyme pairs; then rewriting each line to bring its rhyme word to the end, in fluent, stylistically acceptable discourse that fitted the rhythm pattern; and then repeatedly polishing the resulting "rough poetic" output' (2011: 159). Despite carefully identifying the source poems' rhyming patterns, Jones admits that he worked 'without attempting to

reproduce each source poem's rhyme scheme' (ibid). In Jones' process it is possible to identify a desire to approximate the effects of the source text in translation: he is reaching – via the methods of 'free association', 'rhyming-dictionary search', 'thesaurus search for synonyms', and 'using thesaurus synonyms as input for free-association and rhyming-dictionary searches' (ibid: 160) – for a rhyme pair that will help him best approximate, in translation, the rhyming pattern of the source text. Yet he acknowledges that 'rewriting' becomes an integral part of the process: not only does the rhyming word need to be maneuvered to the end of the line without excessively contorting the syntax of the English-language translation, but also, as Jones admits, 'The harder it became to find a rhyme pair, the more radical the creative transformations I became prepared to accept' (ibid). Writing a rhyming translation, although it may result in a type of textual equivalence by approximating the harmony and musicality that rhyme lends to the source poem, involves accepting other 'creative transformations' over the course of the translation process and encourages the reception of the target text as a new, creative text in its own right.

In translating *Sauvage*, I considered rhyme on a case-by-case basis. The poems cited above do not rhyme. If I had a general rule, I would say that I strived to make rhyming translations out of her shorter poems (both in terms of poem length and line length), particularly those poems where in English I ended up with fewer than five feet per line. I assessed whether the rhyme was 'essential' to a poem; if I deemed it essential to the poem's expressive movement, I accepted the creative transformation that comes with a rhyming translation. Take the following poem by *Sauvage* and my rhyming translation:

Regarde sous ces rameaux
Où murmurent les oiseaux
Toutes ces croix alignées :
Ce sont les tristes épées
Qui nous fixeront au sol ;
Et pourtant, ce rossignol...

[Look there, where songbirds murmur
Beneath the tree boughs in the vale:
All those crosses in a line
Are mournful blades that, in our time,
Will fix us to the ground.
And yet – that nightingale...] (1913: 28)

Like Jones, I do not reproduce the AABBCB rhyme scheme of the source text poem, but it was my intention to provide a few end rhymes in the translation, because in my reading I understand the cohesion of the French text to be achieved primarily through rhyme. Being a short poem, there are not many tools which can otherwise deliver the cohesion the poem requires. Rhyme is essential in tethering the final line to the rest of the poem, which is otherwise an interruption in the narrative: the speaker mulls on the sad and possibly pointless end that awaits us all, but interrupted by the sound of a nightingale, which forces the speaker to acknowledge the existence of beauty, thus complicating a fully nihilistic dismissal of life. The final line is an economical, four-word deflection that nevertheless forms part of the preceding thoughts because 'rossignol' rhymes with 'sol'. In fact, the rhyme achieves an elegant, simultaneous contrast and connection of the bird and the earth, rhyming the evocation of downcast thoughts with an evocation of a bird of flight. This similarity-but-difference is impossible to achieve in a language where no word for 'earth' rhymes with the word 'nightingale', so I settled for the creative transformation that results from what Lefevre calls 'padding' – or the phenomenon, especially in poetry translations, whereby 'the information content is almost inevitably supplemented or altered in none too subtle ways by "padding": words not in the original added to balance a line on the metrical level or to supply the all-important rhyme word' (1992a: 71). I padded out the target text by adding 'in the vale' and 'in our time' to provide the end rhymes that hold the sparse poem together in English.

This technique by which a final line, coda-like, is linked to the rest of the poem by means of an end rhyme is found elsewhere in Sauvage. For example, the poem 'Let us, my double flute', which is the final poem in my collection *A Sauvage Reader*, ends with the lines,

D'une quêteuse main je recueille sa cendre
Et j'en fais sous les pleurs que mon œil sait répandre,
Quelque utile mortier que sèche le soleil.

Je chante et les bourgeons sortent de leur sommeil.

[I, with a questing hand, its particles collect,
And mix it with the tears my eye knows how to shed,

And make some useful mortar hardened by the sun.

I sing and buds emerge out of their slumbering.]
(Sauvage 1910:12)

This poem is about vernal ecstasy, but it is also about writing – or singing, which is perhaps closer to poetry – as a way of acting upon the world. The penultimate image is one of the speaker who collects the ‘dust’, ‘ash’ or ‘particles’ of the natural world to make, through an investment of personal emotion in the guise of tears, a ‘useful tool’ by which this same world may be understood or read. Then there is a line break splitting up the final couplet – nonetheless still connected through its rhyme of ‘soleil/sommeil’ – so that the first line of the couplet relates to the image just described, but the second summarizes the main idea of the poem: the writer, with godlike power, fashions the world, makes change occur. In this case I decided not to force the rhyme in English translation, hinting instead at the French pairing of ‘soleil/sommeil’ through the assonance of ‘buds’, ‘sun’, and ‘slumbering’. It would have been possible to squeeze a rhyme of out ‘sun’ and ‘come’, as in ‘I sing and out of their sleep the buds come’, but that is to my ears beyond what Jones calls ‘stylistically acceptable discourse’ (2011: 159). Yet, there are other moments in translating Sauvage where I felt that a distortion of English syntax was not quite beyond the pale, and accepted it, especially in the poem ‘You’ve departed from your nook’ (*Possession* in *Reader*), where I rendered the lines ‘Te voilà hors de l’alvéole, / Petite abeille de ma chair’ as ‘You’ve departed from your nook, / Little bee of my flesh made’; similarly, I translated the lines ‘Et qui reste sèche et craquante, / Les pieds enchaînés au terrain’ as ‘And who remains, all cracked and dry, / And to the earth by her roots pinned’ in order to maintain the ABAB rhyme scheme throughout the target poem. To avoid recourse to such excessive distortion of syntax or to the type of ‘padding’ described earlier, I opted to avoid rhyme in the translations of longer poems, particularly those such as ‘My child, pale embryo’ (*Mystère* in *Reader*), in which the imagery is dense and complex. In some cases, the inclusion of additional elements in the translation with which to round out the rhyme scheme may lead to an overinterpretation of Sauvage’s often-ambiguous imagery (see in this chapter, ‘Metaphor’ and ‘Closing Down / Opening Up’), while complicated syntax will render already-complex content less readable. However, I acknowledge how rhyme in Sauvage works to lend harmony and cohesion to her

poems, and, as observed in the section of this chapter titled ‘Meter’, I often rely on (frequently iambic) lines of five or six stresses when composing unrhymed English translations. As Scott observes, unrhymed translations should not necessarily be presented ‘as an admission of failure’ (2006: 111); rather, they should be presented as examples of how the target language, with its strengths and structure, works in favor of the source text and leads to a renewal of the poem.

7. Closing down / Opening up

In this final section I turn to the two other anglophone translators who have worked on Sauvage, comparing their results with mine, and suggesting ways in which our different readings have influenced the translation process. First I examine Norman Shapiro’s translations, which form part of his anthology *French Women Poets of Nine Centuries: The Distaff and the Pen* (2008). I read Shapiro’s translations as overemphasizing the pastoral quality of Sauvage’s poems – perhaps unfortunately, given that Bassnett picks out the pastoral as a prime example of how, by the time translation takes place, ‘*the significance of the [source] poem in its context is dead*’ (2014: 94, emphasis in original). Thus, ‘as with the pastoral, for example, the genre is dead and no amount of fidelity to the original form, shape, or tone will help the rebirth of a new line of communication [...] *unless the TL system is taken into account equally*’ (ibid, emphasis in original). Bassnett provides an example of three translations of Catullus to demonstrate ‘how the closer the translation came to trying to recreate *linguistic* and *formal* structures of the original, the further removed it became in terms of function. Meanwhile, huge deviations of form and language managed to come closer to the original intention’ (ibid: 101). But the ‘original intention’ or ‘function’ of the source text depends on the translator’s reading of the text, as well as on the expert knowledge that a translator has with respect to the texts they are working on (Vermeer 2012: 192; Jones 2011). For example, the expert knowledge I bring to Sauvage consists of a re-evaluation of the pastoral quality of Sauvage’s work, as I demonstrate in Chapter 2 where I argue that the pastoral and antiquated qualities were overemphasized upon reception of Sauvage’s work due to contemporary social constructs surrounding femininity and

intellectual production. This is what leads my translations of Sauvage's poems to be different from those of Shapiro. Consider the following example:

Des baisers sont échangés ;
La bergère et le berger
Se promettent à la brune
D'unir la même infortune ;
Et tous deux à pas plus longs
S'éloignent dans le vallon
Enveloppés par la lune.

Here a kiss and there a kiss...
Shepherd lad and shepherd miss
Swear, with twilight tendernesses,
Ever to share life's distresses;
And they saunter, rolling on,
From the valley, thither, yon,
Midst the moon's gentle caresses.

Ils vont. De tranquilles fleurs
Sous les ombres sans couleur
Frôlent leur marche légère
Et peut-être dans ces cœurs
Font naître avec leur odeur
La tristesse du mystère.
(Shapiro 2008: 954-955)

Far they wander. Flowers serene –
Darkling shadows, scarcely seen –
Graze them lightly as they go
Sprightly passing ; whose scents might
Give birth in their hearts this night
To dim mysteries of woe.

The English version accentuates the pastoral tone through the inclusion of what are now archaic terms, such as 'thither', 'yon', the prepositional 'midst', even the singular use of 'woe'. It is worth noting that Sauvage's poem contains no archaisms in the French; but the English translation, in transmitting a bucolic reading of the source text, does so chiefly by reaching for archaic usage. It lends credence to Bassnett's observation that the pastoral is 'dead' and to the image of Sauvage's work as charming, but ultimately outdated (see Chapter 2). Shapiro expresses fidelity to the source text's formal structure in his translation: the rhyme scheme is replicated, while the translation of Sauvage's septasyllabic lines into tetrameter produces lines that are approximately the same length in English as they are in French. The paratexts of the translations – such as Shapiro's introduction to Sauvage and his footnotes to his translations – indicate that Shapiro was aware of the literature published on Sauvage's work around and just after her lifetime (2008: 944-945, 949, 955). In this manner, Shapiro performed his own 'research' into the 'geographical, historical, and literary situation' (Boase-Beier 2021: 148) of Sauvage's poetics. My research into Sauvage's situation is rather different, as demonstrated in Chapter 2, where I argue that early twentieth-century literature on Sauvage should be read with an awareness of contemporary social and cultural attitudes. Such literature, with its emphasis on the natural and the bucolic, appears

to have constituted the expert knowledge informing Shapiro's translation, leading him to focus on what Bassnett terms 'the significance of the [source] poem in its context' (2014: 94) at the expense of the target language system's ability, or inability, to carry that same significance. Shapiro's interpretation of the poem's 'original intention' appears to be a charmingly antiquated jaunt: alongside the archaisms, French expressions such as 'à pas plus longs' [with longer strides] and 'leur marche légère' [their light step] become 'saunter' and 'sprightly passing', respectively, making a cheerful poem out of what another reader may interpret as a melancholic composition.

Philip Weller has also translated Sauvage, specifically the poems of *L'Âme en bourgeon* for a monograph on Olivier Messiaen. I find Weller's translations useful for observing how translators – myself included – are tempted to 'close down' what is ambiguous in a source text by rendering it more familiar or predictable in its expression before the target reader. Here is one extract of Weller's translation, preceded by Sauvage's text:

Hommes, vous êtes tous mes fils, hommes, vous êtes
La chair que j'ai pétrie autour de vos squelettes.
Je sais les plis secrets de vos cœurs, votre front
Cherche pour y dormir dans mon auguste giron,
Et ma main pour flatter vos douleurs éternelles
Contient tous les nectars des sources maternelles.

Mankind, you're all my sons! Mankind, the very flesh
That I have formed around your bones: I know
The inner secrets and recesses of your hearts,
Your head seeks in my queenly lap the oblivion of sleep;
And, assuaging your eternal griefs, it is my hand
That holds the balm of maternal consolation. (2007: 199)

Here, the complexity of Sauvage's final image is rendered by a more immediately available image in English. 'Les nectars des sources maternelles' [The nectars of maternal springs] that exist 'pour flatter' [to flatter, to stroke] men's eternal griefs are turned into the more logical 'balm of maternal consolation' that 'assuages'. 'Balm' and 'consolation' answer in English the question, 'What soothes or assuages?' without asking the reader for too much imaginative input at this stage. It is not that I believe Weller reads Sauvage incorrectly or – as I argue in Shapiro's case – that Weller's translational choices 'encourage an interpretation that lies outside the

range' of interpretations that I have set out (Hewson 2011: 20). I, like Weller, see the mother figure in this extract as a Virgin Mary of sorts, stroking on her knees the head of a Christ-like figure who is the condensed representative of all humankind. I read Weller as emphasizing this very image by translating 'auguste giron' as 'queenly lap', thereby suggesting a link between the poem's mother and the Queen of Heaven of Christian tradition. Neither is my observation of Weller's version based on an assessment of semantic equivalence towards the end of the poem (for instance, *nectars* and 'balm' may be read as more closely related in their dictionary definitions – being both of plant origin – than *sources* and 'consolation', which are semantically unrelated). As Chantal Wright observes, 'it is the translation's complex literariness to which we should be attentive, rather than merely the equivalence of source and target (especially if we can conceive of equivalence only at the level of individual linguistic units or the sentence)' (2016: 110). I therefore note that Weller's 'balm of maternal consolation' appears to me to have less complex literariness than Sauvage's 'nectars of maternal springs'. Sauvage's version not only takes recourse to typically Sauvageian terms – *nectar* and *source* being staples of the lexis of the natural world populating her poetry – but it also presents the reader with a sudden tacticity that contrasts with the abstract and grandiloquent evocation of mankind's eternal sorrow. That which will stroke away the sorrow is sticky, perhaps flowing. The shift from abstract notions to textures in Sauvage's lines makes the idea behind her words harder to grasp, asking the reader to do more work, and giving rise, through this cognitive effort, to potentially novel imagery: for instance, when I read Sauvage's lines, I imagine a Madonna whose hands are oozing with a sweet, sap-like substance. Weller's translation opts to be more accessible to the reader, and perhaps closes down the possibility for creative cognitive responses as it offers a turn of phrase that is predictable in English usage. A similar translation approach occurs earlier in the extract with the translation of 'les plis secrets de vos cœurs [the secret creases of your hearts]' as 'the inner secrets and recesses of your hearts', offering to the English reader the familiar literary usage of 'recesses' to speak about that which is hidden in someone's mind or soul.

Before I am accused of criticizing Weller too much for having, in my eyes, a lesser level of complex literariness in his translations, I admit I am prone to doing the same thing. For instance, in an earlier draft of my translation of Sauvage's poem 'My child, pale embryo' ('*Mystère*') I translated the lines 'Je te donne mes yeux où

des images claires / Rament languissamment sur un lac de fraîcheur' [I give to you my eyes, where clear images / Languidly row upon a lake of freshness] as 'I give to you my eyes, full of clear sights / That row across the surface of the world'. I explained to the English reader what I believed Sauvage's words to mean. Weller, on the other hand, sticks more closely to Sauvage's concrete image by writing, 'I give you my eyes where clear images float, as if / Rowing themselves languidly upon a cool lake' (2007: 207) – although it is interesting to note that he introduces a comparison into the construction, whereas in Sauvage there is none, thereby softening, as I do, the literalness of Sauvage's lines. I use this as evidence of how the complexity of Sauvage's expression tempts the translator to exegesis. This temptation is exactly what the literary translator must resist if the target text is to emerge as sufficiently literary. Scott instructs against such explanation of the source text by the translator to the reader: 'It would be simply misguided', writes Scott, 'for the translator to regard [themselves] as the interpreter of the ST, as the one who mediates the ST's comprehensibility to the reader [...] it is the translator's task to maintain, or indeed increase, the innate incomprehensibility of the ST' (2006: 106). It may even be that we are not aware, as translators, of how we render the text more comprehensible through translation until we come across a different translation of that same text. To take another example from 'My child, pale embryo', I translated the lines, 'Mais tu ne sauras plus sur quelles blondes rives / De gros poissons d'argent t'apportaient des anneaux' as 'But you will not recall those flaxen shores / Where silver fish retrieved you rings to wear'. Weller gives these lines as, 'But you'll no longer know on what white riverbanks / The great silver fish brought you their silent rings' (2007: 207). I realized as I read his translation that what Weller appears to have imagined – what he appears to have *seen* in reading the French text – are the circles that break upon the water when something bobs to the surface. (At least, this is the reading of Weller's translation that I arrive at, given Weller's addition of the word 'silent' to describe the fishes' rings.) My translation, on the other hand, is less grounded in the real world than is Weller's, and my fish are fantastical fish that fetch physical jewelry from the riverbed, as evidenced by my addition of the words, 'to wear'. Reflecting for a moment on what may have caused my own imaginative response to these lines in Sauvage's poem, I decided I must have been half-consciously remembering folktales from childhood. I may have been especially influenced by 'The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish', Aleksandr Pushkin's verse

retelling of a folktale about the dangers of greed, where at one point the magical fish bestows golden rings upon the increasingly demanding fisherman's wife (Pushkin 2019). It led to my creative response being entirely different from Weller's. In keeping with Boase-Beier, Wright, and Scott's evaluations of a good literary translation as something that recreates the ambiguity of the original and allows for breadth of imaginative response, it may be concluded that neither Weller nor I came up with the best literary translation for the line: the best possible literary translation would be the one that allows for the possibility of the anglophone reader to react to the line either the way Weller or I reacted to it, or in another way entirely. But the inclusion of Weller's 'silently' and my 'to wear' narrows down the variety of possible responses to the target text.

I only half-acknowledged my Pushkin intertext at the time that I composed my translation, and yet it was pivotal in my interpretation – and what Scott terms 'mediation of comprehensibility' – of Savage's text. This illustrates Scott's point about how a translation is not about textual meaning but instead 'intimately part of an autobiography of reading and associating' (2012a: 22). Although '[l]iterary criticism is bound to think of texts as isolates', reading a text is in fact a process of 'reading out into, and incorporating, other acts of reading and reference' (ibid). Scott deliberately writes into his translations references to the related texts of which it is 'impossible' for him not to think as he is reading a particular work (ibid). Sometimes he refers to such introductions as mischievous (ibid: 23); but I would say they are even ethical, in the way feminist translation disclosure practices are perceived as ethical (Ergun 2020: 117). Scott would perhaps dispute this point: he writes that what he terms 'translational autobiography' is different from 'translations with a certain agenda' and instead refers to 'the making of the self and its accumulated experience available to a text and its language, in order to invest it with other forms of life' (2021: 195). Yet, I see similarities between Scott's phenomenological approach in which attention is paid to reading as a 'whole body experience in which words, and grammar, and syntax, and typographic phenomena such as typeface, margin, punctuation, activate cross-sensory, psycho-physiological responses prior to concept and interpretation' (2012a: 11), and what Basile calls paying 'rigorous attention' to the 'shifting' landscape of the scene of intimacy that is the encounter with the text, including 'foreground, background, what is visible of it, what is not, its protagonists' (2018: 32). The importance of paying attention to what takes place

during the reading experience allows us to reflect on the influence of our autobiographies and reading histories upon our practice. As translators, we ought to be paying attention to our reading in order to be able to discern those moments, as Scott observes, in which we mediate the text's comprehensibility (2006: 106).

Scott argues that his phenomenological approach – or what he calls 'creative translation' elsewhere (2021) – will lead to a 'futuring' of the text through translation. Such 'futuring' is similar to Bassnett's observation, drawing upon the theories of Slovak scholar Anton Popovič, that "the translator has the right to differ organically, to be independent" provided that independence is pursued for the sake of the original in order to reproduce it as a living work' (Bassnett 2014: 94). Paying attention to the reading experience makes the text's future life possible – as opposed to trying to replicate a supposedly 'dead' text or genre (ibid). Scott explains how the reading experience acts as the catalyst for the 'futuring' of the work:

The reading experience is a peculiar weave of the reflexive and the experimental, of responses triggered and intuition mobilised. What such intuition includes is an act of co-authoring, which involves the reader's also imagining the text's invisible, its unrealised possibilities, its alternative formal and structural configurations, different rhythmic shapes, lexical and syntactic variants, different paginal dispositions, different typographic presentations and so on; these processes I call 'editing'. What such experimentation sets in motion is the infinite multipliability of the ST, such that its being now resides in a continual becoming, so that the 'authenticity' of the text is no longer to be found in an authorised 'original' text, a single properly established text, but rather in the total text, that is, in the ever expanding and incomplete totality of a text's centrifugal and self-multiplying manifestations, so that an original can no longer be said to exist. If creative translation can be said to justify the ST, it does so by demonstrating the ST's capacity constantly to be different from itself in order to be true to itself as a total text; that is, be true to the horizons of becoming that it releases. (2021: 192)

Translation, Scott concludes, is 'a performative art, rather than an interpretative one' (ibid: 194). Translation is figured as a kind of slow reading practice. It becomes comparable to Batchelor's understanding of Derrida's reading and translation process as 'prowling', which means circling around a word and its translation

history; this 'places a pause on the word and wakens meanings other than the one that would most likely be assumed in a swifter reading' (2023: 11). Literary translators, performers rather than interpreters, are constantly paying attention to the text itself, to the histories of the words and the situations that give rise to the text's poetics (Boase-Beier 2021: 148). Literary translators are contemporaneously paying attention to the 'translational autobiographies' (Scott 2021: 195) that are being developed over the course of the reading experience. To give one example, in translating the line 'D'une quêteuse main je recueille sa cendre' for the poem that closes the *Reader* (see above under 'Rhyme'), I think of the way the words *recueillement*, *recueil*, and *recueillir* have already played themselves out in translation across the preceding pages of the *Reader*. I think of the importance of birth and death in Sauvage's corpus and of the possibilities that translation now unlocks in Sauvage's text. I think that in my translation of the line I would like to emphasize collection and particles, so as to have the English poem reflect on the practice of gathering Sauvage's poetry into a reader. My new English poem joins Sauvage's French poems, as well as Shapiro and Weller's translations, in constituting the 'total text'. This process, which reflects the multipliability of the source text, may well be understood as a type of editing, as a series of alterations and changes that reconfigure the poem's contexts as much as they alter what is happening on the level of word and line. In the following chapter, I examine translation as a form of editing. Sauvage's texts have a long history of being edited and recontextualized. Tracing some of her poetry back to its manuscript state, I confirm what the literary translator understands through practice: there is no fixed original.

CHAPTER 5

EDITING SAUVAGE

At the end of the previous chapter I cited Scott's observation that translation is an act of 'co-authoring' and a process of experimenting with the material text that may be called 'editing' (2021: 192). Scott understands translation as the 'becoming' of a text, so that a single source text no longer has sole claim to 'authenticity', but that such authenticity is expanded to reside in all iterations of a text; thus 'an original can no longer be said to exist' (ibid). In this chapter I consider the intersection of translation and editing, examining how translation and editing relate to one another and in what order they may be carried out as processes that are worked upon a text. Both are responsible for the presentation of a version of a text; both, despite being processes of close reading and careful applications of reasoning and skill, reveal the subjective positionings of the translator or editor, and may say just as much about the individual performing such work upon a text as about the text itself. In the previous chapter, I gave examples of how my close readings lead to translations of individual poems and how I strive to approximate the literariness of those poems. Here, I argue that the most radical aspect of Sauvage's transformation into English lies not in the decisions made on the level of word and verse line, nor even in the translator's decisions to manipulate content that does not align with the translator's or the target culture's values, as may be said of certain feminist translation strategies. Rather, it lies in the selection and organization of poems to be included in the target language collection.

Previous anthologists, like previous translators, have via inclusion or omission presented subjective readings of Sauvage and have recontextualized her. Such anthologies have served a pedagogical purpose by expanding access to their subject, yet they have also revealed methodologies governed by preference, taste, and even the fannishness I described in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. Some of Sauvage's image-makers, such as Pierre Messiaen and Alain Messiaen, cut and reshaped her texts according to their judgement. What they deemed good, or otherwise not worth saving, has resulted in the Sauvage canon to which we have access today.

In composing *A Sauvage Reader*, I, too, make the call about what is fascinating and what is not worth translating. Despite the interest this thesis has in the academic value of thoroughness – despite wishing to present, in this dissertation, as nuanced and expansive an image of Sauvage as has not been presented before – I find myself, like Sauvage’s previous translators and anthologists, cherry-picking the parts of her work I best enjoy or find most convincing. In drawing up a list of ‘top hits’, an anthologist or editor is forced to reckon with the tension between, on the one hand, wanting to present their knowledge of the broader context and, on the other, their own partiality, as well as space and time constraints.

In the first section of this chapter I observe how, in the case of editors such as Pierre and Alain Messiaen, their partiality becomes visible in the results of and annotations to their editing process. In the case of Marchal, she presents herself as a restitutive critic aided by the archives righting previous wrongs; she recasts Sauvage in yet another light by assigning a new, sensual narrative to Sauvage. I move on to survey anthologies that include Sauvage’s poetry, observing that the compilers of these editions recategorize Sauvage through their practice, or else replicate preexisting categories such as that of *poésie féminine* discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. In the second and third sections of this chapter, I turn to the allure of the archives: this allure, tempting the scholar with the promise of access to truth and totality, is what propelled me to the archives as it did Marchal. The archives pose an interesting question for the translator, reflecting as they do issues of textual genesis and authorial intentionality. The translator is asked to consider where they draw the line between translation and editing, if at all. It is not only, as Scott observes, that an original text ceases to exist when translation occurs (2021: 192). Even before the process of translation begins, it may turn out there is no original. Thus faced with unstable source material, the translator is able to confront the full extent of their broad powers and accept translation as a process of co-authoring.

1. An editing history

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Sauvage’s first posthumous editor was her husband Pierre Messiaen. Charging himself with the task of increasing Sauvage’s profile after her death, Messiaen helped along the publication of *Cécile Sauvage: Études* (1928),

Œuvres de Cécile Sauvage (1929), and the slim volume *Lettres à Pierre Messiaen* (1930). I am interested especially in the tone on which the *Œuvres* closes, which provides revealing insight into Messiaen as an editor and as a (re)compiler of his late wife's work. The end of *Œuvres* contains the section *Fragments, pensées et extraits de lettres* [Fragments, thoughts, and letter extracts], which are bits of texts presumably pulled from Sauvage's letters to Messiaen or perhaps some kind of journal. These extracts may be read less as a reflection of Sauvage herself than as a revelation of Messiaen's reading process, his literary judgement, and perhaps even his thoughts and feelings with respect to the personal and professional actions of his late wife. I read Messiaen as using Sauvage's words to ultimately say something about himself, about what is on his mind. The outtakes that he compiles here present a Messiaen mulling over love, devotion, and Sauvage's moribund state. When he quotes Sauvage as writing, 'Dans un sourire indolent s'encadrent les plus réelles peines' [The realest pain is framed within an indolent smile] (2002: 264), the words may be referring to Sauvage's pain, but also, by an act of ventriloquy, perhaps to Messiaen's. Sauvage's mention of Casanova's memoirs – 'Je ne saurais dire à quel point mon cœur se serre à la lecture de certains livres où les âmes se nouent et se dénouent avec la facilité de l'abeille qui quitte la fleur [...] Est-ce là aimer ?' [I cannot express to what point my heart hurts in reading certain books where souls are entangled and disentangled with the ease with which the bee abandons the flower.... Is this love?] (ibid: 264) – may be a bitter repurposing of a comment to reflect on a more personal instance of marital infidelity, thus allowing Messiaen to voice, despite using someone else's words, an idea about what love ought to look like. Most telling of all, Messiaen leaves the final word of the book to himself, so to speak. The final paragraph of *Œuvres* is about him and about his goodness to Sauvage, although the terms used are of course hers: 'Pierre a toujours été pour moi la bonté même [...]. Il a été mon compagnon [...] depuis nos fiançailles, c'est mon cher Pierrot qui a toujours réconforté sa bonne cabrette' [Pierre was always the incarnation of goodness towards me... He was my partner... Since our marriage, it is my dear Pierrot who has always comforted his good cabrette²⁰] (ibid: 269). What emerges is a confessional picture of a devotee, a

²⁰ Here Sauvage is referring to herself as a musical instrument, the cabrette, a bellows blown instrument traditionally hailing from Auvergne. She presents herself not as the

partner, a companion, a translator, a literary critic, a professor of English literature, champion and refiner of Sauvage's work, who in the end, feeling sidelined, stepped in to give himself the credit he believed was his due.

Messiaen may not have thought he was overstepping a line. After all, he shared with the world texts by Sauvage that may have otherwise gone unpublished. It may have appeared natural to him to tweak the narrative in order to achieve the portrait by which he wanted Sauvage to be known and remembered. If he omitted the more directly sensual lines from her love poems in arranging them for publication, perhaps he felt he was justly guided by his sense of what was appropriate, tasteful, and made for good literature. Marchal notes, for instance, that Messiaen made edits such as altering the line 'Et ma gorge a fleuri lentement sous ta main' [And my throat blossomed underneath your hand] to the less physically evocative 'Et mon cœur a fleuri lentement sous ta main' [And my heart blossomed underneath your hand] (Sauvage 2009: 145). Similarly, the provocative image in 'L'horloge offrait au bout des chaînes / Deux fruits qui semblaient dans leur gaine / Le désir de la race humaine' [The longcase clock offered, at the end of its chains / Two fruits that, in their sheath, seemed / The desire of the human race] was toned down to the more austere reflection, 'L'horloge parlait, grave et vaine, / Et le temps tirait sur ses chaînes / Pour marquer la minute humaine' [The longcase clock spoke, serious and vain / And time pulled on its chains / To mark the human minute] (ibid: 169-170). Marchal is critical of the role Messiaen played and of the narrative he constructed, considering it an inadmissible instance of rewriting, if one driven by pathos:

Nul doute que Pierre Messiaen, qui aimait et admirait profondément sa femme, ait beaucoup souffert. [...] Pathétique, il n'en est cependant pas moins un faussaire, dans sa tentative acharnée de construire l'image d'une Cécile Sauvage, mère parfaite, épouse modèle et soumise, qui n'a pas peu contribué à amoindrir celle de la poète, douée d'une personnalité forte et d'une sensibilité d'autant plus affirmée qu'elle était celle d'une femme libre et vraie. Il nous apparaît donc aujourd'hui que *Primevère* est le résultat d'un mensonge, celui d'un mari meurtri et sans doute soucieux de sa réputation. Il a transféré à

musician, but as the instrument being played. 'Cabrette' could also be read as the feminine of 'cabri', a young goat (the use of goatskin for the instrument bag lending its name to the instrument).

l'histoire de son couple tout ce qui pouvait vraisemblablement s'y appliquer et expurgé les morceaux choisis de toute résonance érotique et mystique, opérant ainsi un véritable travail de réécriture.

[Doubtless that Pierre Messiaen, who deeply loved and admired his wife, suffered very much. [...] Although a pathetic figure, he is no less a forger, given his relentless intention to construct an image of Cécile Sauvage as the perfect mother, as the model and submissive wife, which contributed greatly to diminishing the image of Sauvage the poet; the poet was endowed with a strong personality and a sensitivity that was all the more assured because she was a free, true woman. Today we understand (the collection of love poems) *Primevère* to be the result of a lie, the lie of a wounded husband who was probably worried about his reputation. He transferred to the story of his own relationship to Sauvage everything from the collection that could be thus feasibly reapplied, scrubbing the selected extracts clean of all erotic and mystical connotation, thus performing a true act of rewriting.] (Sauvage 2009: 25)

In Marchal's view, the all-too-personal injury Messiaen may have felt upon the discovery of Sauvage's love poetry resulted in an editorial process that significantly lessened the poet's profile and the impact her texts may have had, would they have been presented in the state they were composed. (But the identification of this 'ideal' state, too, is suspect, as I investigate in the final part of this chapter.) Messiaen's *Primevère*, which is a part of *Œuvres*, is in Marchal's opinion the result of a 'lie', a process of transfer and reapplication, as well as a process of omission. It is a process that results, however, in Messiaen's presence being tangibly felt throughout the entire organization and preparation of *Œuvres*. One may say that in its presentation, the collection belongs to him as much as to Sauvage. As will become evident, *A Sauvage Reader* functions much like this: it belongs to me as much as it does to Sauvage. The difference between my anthology and Messiaen's is that I am more overt about the role I play in mine.

Like Pierre Messiaen, Sauvage's son Alain Messiaen was responsible for leaving his mark on what endures of Sauvage's work. The only surviving fragment of a drama on which Sauvage was allegedly working can be found copied out in Alain's hand in one of Alain's notebooks. This notebook – filled with brief essays on literary figures, texts, and poems copied out from Christina Rossetti, Alex Blok,

Anna Akhmatova, and Sauvage's contemporaries Renée Vivien and Hélène Picard, as well as Alain's original poetry, including a small ode to his mother – functions as a kind of commonplace book in which fragments of Sauvage survive and are situated within a curated personal and literary context. Alain prefaces his copy of the fragment of Sauvage's drama, as well as his reasoning for its reproduction, thus (I transcribe his note complete with his amendments):

En 1917-1918, Cécile Sauvage composait un ~~vaste drame~~ ~~lyrique~~ poème dramatique aux vastes proportions dont le sujet central était la grande guerre. Cette œuvre – injouable comme *Axël* de Villiers, la *Dame à la Faulx* de St Pol Roux ou *La Nef* d'Elémir Bourges, est composé de deux parties. *Hémérocalle et la Guerre* et *Hémérocalle et l'Amour*. Elle est restée à l'état embryonnaire, et contient des naïvetés, des erreurs, d'étranges grandiloquences aussi, où on n'y retrouve ni la fraîcheur, ni l'émotion directe de *L'Âme en bourgeon* ou de *Primevère*. Néanmoins, certaines parties méritent d'en être conservées morceaux méritent d'être sauvés de l'oubli ; tel ce V^o [sic] tableau d'*Hémérocalle et l'Amour* qui évoque à la fois le Shakespeare du *Songe d'une nuit d'été* et le *Théâtre en liberté* de Victor Hugo – avec cette note tant sensuelle et intuitive qui était la marque de la « Cabrette des Basses-Alpes ». A.M.

[In 1917-1918, Cécile Sauvage was composing a ~~vast lyric~~ ~~drama~~ dramatic poem of great proportions, the central subject of which was the Great War. This work – unperformable as are *Axël* by Villiers, the *Dame à la Faulx* by St Pol Roux or *La Nef* by Elémir Bourges – was made up of two parts: *Hémérocalle and the War* and *Hémérocalle and Love*. The work remained in its nascent stages, containing naivetes and errors as well as bizarre moments of grandiloquence, where in which neither the freshness nor the direct emotion of *L'Âme en bourgeon* or *Primevère* are to be found. However, certain ~~portions merit being conserved~~ bits merit being saved from oblivion: for instance, this fifth segment of *Hémérocalle and Love* which evokes both Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Victor Hugo's *Théâtre en liberté* and carries that very sensual and intuitive note that was the characteristic trait of the 'Cabrette of the Basses-Alpes'. A.M.] (Messiaen nd)

Alain attempts to figure out how to classify his mother's extensive work, which, despite its proportions, he does not believe amounts to much. Is it a lyric drama, or

a dramatic poem? Should it be conserved, or – more dramatically – saved from oblivion? Does this imply that Alain did not find it very interesting reading, or did he merely believe that it had no life on the stage, deeming it as he does ‘injouable’ [unperformable]? Did he consider that someone else may be interested in it down the line? The fact that he left behind this preface suggests that Alain imagined an eventual reader, even if that reader may have been only himself. Both Pierre and Alain Messiaen therefore emerge as responsible for the conservation and omission of works in Sauvage’s corpus. In their results, it is possible to read avowed or unavowed expressions of judgement and taste. They function much like later anthologists who, engaging with Sauvage in their documentation of French poetry or poetry written by women, perform a personally inflected selection of her work they deem worthy of replication and perpetuation.

Finally, we must not forget Yvonne Loriod-Messiaen, who features in this history as another reader and champion of Sauvage. As Olivier Messiaen’s second wife, Yvonne Loriod survived Olivier and inherited the books and papers of the Messiaen-Sauvage family. It was she who, towards the end of the twentieth century, subsequently typed up Alain Messiaen’s transcription of Tableau V of *Hémérocalle et l’Amour*, or so hypothesize the librarians who received the family’s archives following Loriod’s death (BNF Archives et manuscrits 2022c). Was this transcription an effort at conservation, or paleography work performed in order to ensure ease of transmission? The document contains sixteen footnote numbers in the body of the text, but the accompanying footnotes are missing: these may exist in a separate document or were never printed. These little numbers may be evidence of Loriod’s annotations, what is now lost editorial commentary; they are, at the very least, evidence of a reader. Loriod was also the first to try and make sense of the manuscripts that Sauvage left behind, and which form the subject of the second half of this chapter. It was likely Loriod who christened this collection of manuscripts ‘Livre d’Amour’ [Book of Love] (BNF Archives et manuscrits 2022b) and lay the groundwork for Marchal’s transcription of Sauvage’s poems for the 2009 publication. Loriod therefore acted in an editorial role, not only by deciding to transcribe and organize for clarity’s sake, but also by taking creative liberties in giving the manuscripts a title that they were only rumored to possess (see Sauvage 2009: 23-25).

Before fully turning to the story of Sauvage's manuscripts and their implication for translation, I continue the history of Sauvage's editors and present a table listing anthologies in which Sauvage has been featured, and which were published after Sauvage's death in 1927. (It may be useful to refer to the list of known works by Sauvage, provided in Appendix A, when consulting this table.) This table displays interesting patterns about how these anthologists contextualized Sauvage and, through inclusion and omission, contributed to the perpetuation of an image of Sauvage or at least of particular Sauvageian themes. These anthologists made bold creative decisions, such as the reassignment or even creation of poem titles and the omission of verses from poems. In their prefaces, these readers often speak of their anthologizing process as the appropriation – and even digestion – of the primary sources they handle. They are frank about the influence of personal preference or pleasure on this process.

Figure 1
Posthumous anthologies featuring Sauvage

<u>Title</u>	<u>Compiler(s)</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Poems by Sauvage</u>	<u>Poems edited?</u>	<u>Comments on Sauvage (other than biographical notes)</u>
<i>Poètes d'aujourd'hui : morceaux choisis accompagnés de notices biographiques et d'un essai de bibliographie, Vol. 1-3</i> [Poets of today: selected pieces accompanied by biographical notes and preliminary bibliographies]	Adolphe Van Bever, Paul Léautaud	1947	'Le jardin' 'Je t'apporte ce soir' 'La tête' 'Il est né' 'Je savais que ce serait toi' 'Te voilà, mon petit amant' 'Je me suis dit...' 'Ne cherche pas...' 'Ainsi, voilà l'espace...' 'Le soir, au soleil...' 'Comme les jours dorés...'	Poems are reproduced without omissions; however, 'Je me suis dit...' regroups several short poems from <i>Mélancolie</i> under one title. All titles from and including 'Je me suis dit...' are insertions made by Bever and Léautaud, without corresponding equivalents in editions published during Sauvage's lifetime.	'Si on s'en tient au sens exact du mot : poésie, c'est-à-dire au don de concevoir, sentir, et exprimer les choses de façon particulière en dehors de tout vain talent de rhétorique, Cécile Sauvage est vraiment la première femme poète de notre temps' (1947: 191) [If we stick to the exact meaning of the word poetry – which is the gift of imagining, feeling, and expressing things in a particular manner untouched by any vain talent for rhetoric – then Cécile Sauvage truly is the foremost woman poet of our time.]
<i>Anthologie de la poésie féminine française de 1900 à nos jours</i>	Marcel Béalu	1953	'Il est né' 'Te voilà mon petit amant' 'La femme simple et confiante' 'Dans sa robe	Poems are reproduced without omissions.	

[*Anthology of French poetry by women from 1900 to our time*]

à fleurs une aimée...'
'Arrivent les danseurs sur la pelouse nette...'
'Deux hommes comme vêtus d'ombre...'

Anthologie insolite

Charles Vildrac

1963

'Enfant, pâle embryon'

Poem is presented with omitted stanzas owing to limited space/time: Sauvage's poems are 'assez longs et j'ai dû me borner à ne vous faire entendre que la majeure partie, l'essentiel de plus caractéristique d'entre eux'

'Je crois que le cas est unique de ces chants d'amour maternel prénatal, voués à l'être embryonnaire [...]. Il y a en tous cas peu d'exemples dans la poésie de cet accord du réalisme et de la spiritualité dont témoignent tous les poèmes de [*L'Âme en bourgeon*]

[*Quirky anthology*]

[rather long, and I was forced to limit myself to sharing only the main portion with you, the best of what is characteristic from among her poems] (Vildrac 1963: 5-6).

[I believe this to be the only instance of compositions about maternal love during pregnancy, addressed to the embryonic being... There are, anyway, few examples within poetry of such harmony between realism and spirituality, as that displayed by all the poems in *L'Âme en bourgeon*.] (ibid)

<p><i>Huit siècles de poésie féminine</i></p> <p>[<i>Eight centuries of poetry by women</i>]</p>	<p>Jeanine Moulin</p>	<p>1975</p>	<p>'Enfant, pâle embryon' 'Nature, laisse-moi...' 'La tête' 'Mélancolie'</p>	<p>'Enfant, pâle embryon' does not contain all of its verses and is presented as an 'extract', while Moulin appears to present the collection <i>Mélancolie</i> as one poem: what had been individual poems in the 1913 edition are here presented as verses of a long poem titled 'Mélancolie'.</p>	
<p><i>De Quelques visages de l'amour dans la poésie féminine française</i></p> <p>[<i>Several faces of love in French poetry by women</i>]</p>	<p>Michel Lagrange</p>	<p>1982</p>	<p>Verses from <i>L'Âme en bourgeon</i></p>	<p>Presentation of extracted verses and lines only, embedded within author's prose argument.</p>	<p>Sauvage is listed under the section titled 'L'Amour de la Mère' (1982: 30-32). Lagrange points out how Sauvage compares having a child to losing a lover.</p>
<p><i>L'érotisme dans la poésie féminine de langue française : des origines à nos jours</i></p> <p>[<i>Eroticism in French-language poetry by women: from the origins to our time</i>]</p>	<p>Pierre Béarn</p>	<p>1993</p>	<p>'Il est né' 'Enfant pâle embryon' 'La tête'</p>	<p>Presentation of extracted verses only; poems are incomplete.</p>	

Poèmes de femmes: des origines à nos jours

[*Poems by women: from the origins to our time*]

Régine Deforges

1993

'Je t'apporte ce soir...'
'Écoute, tout mon cœur...'
'Les étreintes du sang...'
'La tête'
'Il est né'
'Le Vallon'

Poems are presented without omissions. 'Le Vallon' is a title applied by Deforges to an untitled poem in Sauvage's editions that begins, 'Pourquoi crains-tu, fille farouche...'
In a rare move, Deforges includes two poems ('Écoute...' and 'Les étreintes') that are not included in the 1929/2002 *Œuvres*, which means she is working off the 1913 edition of *Tandis*.

Anthologie de la poésie de langue française, XII-XXe siècle

[*Anthology of French-language poetry, 12th-20th centuries*]

Michel Cazenave

1994

'La tête'

Poem is reproduced without omissions.

'Cécile Sauvage s'est surtout attachée à une poésie de la maternité qu'elle décline sur tous les tons et avec tous les accents. C'est parfois assez convenu, parfois assez mièvre, mais il lui arrive aussi d'avoir des inspirations éclatantes où, avec des intuitions somptueuses de la mort, elle se hausse à la hauteur du destin

et touche au fantastique.’ (1994: 1309).

[Cécile Sauvage is predominantly attached to poetry about motherhood, which she presents in a full range of tones and accents. It is sometimes rather formulaic, sometimes rather mawkish, but it also happens that she is at times brilliantly inspired and, with sumptuous premonitions of death, she reaches for the heights of destiny and touches the fantastical.]

<i>Olivier Messiaen: Music, Art and Literature</i> ²¹	Philip Weller	2007	All poems from <i>L'Âme en bourgeon</i> (as printed in the 1929/2002 <i>Œuvres</i>)	Poems reproduced without omissions and accompanied by their English translations on the facing page.	'To a modern ear and sensibility [...] Cécile's poetic voice seems only lightly touched by fashionable trends and developments, and scarcely at all by the contentious thrust of then-current literary debates. Hers is a more personal, less obviously polemical and self-
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²¹ This is not a poetry anthology, but an academic book of collected essays on Olivier Messiaen (Dingle and Simeone 2007). The Dingle and Simeone collection may be conceptualized as a type of anthology: here, Sauvage is related not to other poets or other women, but to other studies on Messiaen. Weller's afterword, in accordance with the book's subject, is as much about Messiaen as Sauvage, as much about Sauvage's poems being set to music (ibid: 277-278) as their being translated into English.

consciously
professionalized
view of her art'
(2007: 260-261).

<p><i>French Women Poets of Nine Centuries: The Distaff and the Pen</i></p>	<p>Norman Shapiro</p>	<p>2008</p>	<p>'Fuite d'automne' 'Si la lune rose venait...' 'J'entends tout bas pleurer les roses...' 'Langueur pure, douce harmonie...' 'Les mélancoliques crapauds...' 'La lune blanche au rire éteint...' 'Après moi celui qui viendra...' 'Dans l'herbe trotte un chien...' 'Je ne veux qu'un rêve...' 'Des baisers sont échangés...' 'Depuis que je suis aimée...'</p>	<p>Poems are reproduced without cuts in the French and translated into English by Shapiro on the facing page.</p>	<p>Shapiro describes <i>Le Vallon</i> as 'Keats-and-Shelleyesque'; <i>Tandis</i> as a 'brief, rather traditional, nature-steeped collection'; <i>L'Âme</i> contains 'sensitive and often profound lyrics on the miracle of maternity'; the poems of <i>Mélancolie</i> and <i>Fumées</i> are 'delicate, at times almost Verlainean' (2008: 944-945).</p>
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<p><i>Quand les femmes parlent d'amour : une anthologie de la poésie féminine</i></p>	<p>Françoise Chandernagor</p>	<p>2016</p>	<p>'Je suis belle d'être aimée..' 'Je t'ai écrit au clair de lune...' 'Je suis née au milieu du jour...' 'Le cœur tremblant, la joue en feu...' 'Je t'apporte ce soir'</p>	<p>The final six listed poems all contain omissions, per Chandernagor's assessment that some lines were too repetitive: 'les poétesses, lorsqu'elles ne sont pas enfermées dans une forme</p>
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‘Enfant, pâle embryon’ ‘La tête’ ‘Il est né’ ‘Je savais que ce serait toi’ ‘Te voilà hors de l’alvéole’	précise et contraignante (le sonnet, par exemple), ne sont pas toutes des championnes de la concision’
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[women poets, whenever they are unconstrained by a fixed, restrictive form (such as the sonnet), are not exactly proponents of brevity] (2016: 37).

*Donne : poeti
di Francia e
oltre: dal
Romanticismo
a oggi*

Andrea
Bedeschi,
Valentina
Gosetti,
Adriano
Marchetti

2017

‘La tête’
‘Te voilà mon
petit amant’
‘La femme
simple et
confiante...’

Poems are reproduced without cuts in the French; each poem is followed by its translation into Italian.

[*Women: poets
from France
and beyond,
from
Romanticism
to the present*]

An initial observation to be made is how the selection of poems by Sauvage for inclusion in these anthologies sheds additional light on Sauvage’s enduring image as the melancholic poet of motherhood. ‘Rien n’est plus émouvant [...] et d’une fraîcheur plus exquise, que les poèmes qu’elle a écrits sur [la maternité]’ [Nothing is more moving... and more exquisitely fresh, than the poems she had written about motherhood], observed Bever and Léautaud (1947: 190). For example, the popularity of ‘La tête’ (‘My son, I’ll hold your head upon my hand’ in ‘*Mystère*’) could be due to the fact that it combines insight into motherhood with existential reflection: there may be general consensus among anthologists that this

portrayal of a mother, who holds her infant son's head in her hands, both admiring the life that sparkles there and envisioning its eventual decay, is particularly affecting. The existence of both themes in one poem makes 'La tête' a good representative of Sauvage's broader corpus: such a poem may successfully give the reader a taste of the writer's thematic interests and therefore is a good contender for inclusion in an anthology where space (or time, with respect to Vildrac's 1963 radio program) is limited. It is also possible that later anthologists were simply working off earlier anthologies, leading to the reinclusion of certain poems. Equally popular appear to be the poems in which the child is imagined as a lover ('Il est né' [He was born], 'Te voilà mon petit amant' [Here you are, my little lover]) and a scattering of the shorter, more melancholic poems from the 1913 *Le Vallon*, presented by the anthologists under various titles and headings. Additionally, Weller, Shapiro, and Bedeschi, Gosetti, and Marchetti may have been influenced in their selection process by the fact that their choices required translating. Weller appears to have opted to translate all of *L'Âme en bourgeon*, but I find it telling that Shapiro only includes one long poem by Sauvage (2008: 947), while Bedeschi, Gosetti, and Marchetti opt for the shortest poems from of the motherhood collection (2017: 170-175). The translators' selection may have been governed not only by a sense of what would be pleasurable for them to translate, but also with an awareness of how labor-intensive the process would be.

Furthermore, these anthologies, whether consciously or unconsciously, contribute to the construction of categories and perpetuate Sauvage's relationship to these categories. For example, eight out of the twelve anthologies surveyed grapple explicitly with *poésie féminine* or some variation thereof (Béalu 1952; Moulin 1975; Lagrange 1982; Béarn 1993; Deforges 1993; Shapiro 2008; Chandernagor 2016; Bedeschi, Gosetti, and Marchetti 2017). In Chapter 3, I observed how Sauvage has been included in or excluded from collections of writing by women based on how the compilers of these collections defined *poésie féminine*. In the introductions to the anthologies listed in the table above, compilers frequently reveal a pressure to furnish thematic or essentialist unity – although not everyone is explicit about the distribution that results from this. For example, Cazenave speaks of 'le même mystère' [the same mystery] that is to be found in the poems of the women writers he presents, despite 'des voies, et des voix différentes' [different paths and different voices] (1994: 1289). Lagrange, on the other hand, tries to avoid such essentialist

generalizations, writing, ‘Seule doit compter l’œuvre, seules doivent compter la réussite formelle d’une pensée et sa hauteur, capables de sauver leur créateur’ [Only the work should matter, only the successful realization of a thought and its greatness – capable of saving their creator – should matter] (1982: 44). Lagrange is forced to admit, however, that he is putting together his collection under the umbrella theme of love and that his poets are arranged under sections such as ‘L’Amour et la Mère’ (ibid: 30-32) – which includes Sauvage – and ‘L’Amour de la Sainte’ (ibid: 36-43). Lagrange comes closest to being overt about the process of anthologizing as a readerly practice of thematic distribution. On the other hand, Cazenave’s anthology is an example of narrative that has inherited pre-existing categories and not challenged them. *Poésie féminine*, as theorized during Sauvage’s lifetime (see Chapters 2 and 3), reappears in Cazenave as an intact category under which women poets are regrouped (1994: 1289-1310). Interestingly, the male contemporaries of the women who are all classified under *poésie féminine* are in their turn classified under a variety of labels. Thus, Jules Supervielle and Jean Cocteau go under ‘L’Éclatement’ (ibid: 1572-1573), while Jules Laforgue, the poet Henri de Régnier (husband to the writer Marie de Heredia, penname Gérard d’Houville), and Sauvage’s inductor to the *Mercur de France* Remy de Gourmont go under ‘Symbolisme’ (ibid: 1570). Francis Jammes and André Gide join Paul Valéry under ‘L’Héritage Symboliste’ (ibid: 1571-1572), while Francis Carco, the object of the poet Hélène Picard’s affections and subject of her collection *Pour un mauvais garçon* (1927), is slotted into ‘Les Fantaisistes’ (1572). Cazenave’s reasoning is that the women, being ‘peu soucieuses finalement d’école ou d’étiquettes’ [ultimately unbothered about schools or labels], did not care about belonging to a school, while the men did, making the latter easier to classify. Cazenave may be read as reproducing the classification of Billy, who surveyed trending literary schools and movements in 1927. Cazenave’s approach represents an evasion of an acknowledgement of the anthologist’s power to make, and responsibility to challenge, categories.

If not all the above anthologists are frank about their role in the perpetuation of certain categories, almost all are frank about the subjectivity that has guided their decision-making process. They confess they took on these projects to explore, to digest, and to share their love for particular writers or poems. Deforges, for instance, begins by claiming, ‘Je n’ai pas voulu faire ici une anthologie exhaustive de la

poésie féminine française, mais donner à aimer des poètes que j'apprécie [...] je propose [...] un choix éclectique des poèmes de femmes qui me plaisent' [I did not wish to make an exhaustive anthology of French poetry by women, but to get readers to love the poets whom I appreciate... I present... an eclectic choice of poems written by women that I enjoy] (1993: 7). There is repeated emphasis on pleasure and the personal. Chandernagor strikes a similar tone when she confesses to the liberties she has taken:

Comme d'autres auteurs d'anthologies, j'ai pratiqué des coupes dans plusieurs poèmes cités [...]. Ce découpage, parfois un peu iconoclaste, était aussi une manière de « digérer » le poème pour me l'incorporer, le faire mien, car c'est avant tout une anthologie *personnelle* que je voulais donner au lecteur. Enfin, je l'avoue, il m'est arrivé de couper ce qui m'apparaissait comme du délayage, des redites.

[Like other makers of anthologies, I have made cuts in multiple poems among those presented... This cutting, sometimes rather irreverent, was also a manner of 'digesting' the poem so as to incorporate it into me, make it mine, because this is first and foremost a *personal* anthology that I would like to give to the reader. Finally, I confess I cut that which appeared to me to be verbosity and repetitiveness.] (36-37, emphasis in original)

Editing – here in the form of cutting ('découpage') – is presented as a way of appropriating the poem. The anthologizer allows herself to be dictated by her own tastes, her own appraisal of what constitutes good writing: she elects to omit instances of repetitiveness ('des redites') and verbosity ('delayage'). Though this practice crosses a threshold (it is irreverent, or even iconoclastic), it is necessary if the poem is to be 'digested'. Chandernagor argues that a text should be used, even a little abused, by the reader if the reader is to fully absorb it. Finally, there is a degree of inexplicability that accompanies anthologizing and editing decisions. The title of the following anthology, though irrelevant to Sauvage because of its scope, is telling: *Muse toi-même! Anthologie arbitraire de poésie féminine au XXI^e siècle* [*Muse yourself! An arbitrary anthology of poetry by women in the 21st century*] (Fabre 2015). The incisive use of the word 'arbitrary' to describe the results of this collection suggests that caprice, more so than deliberation, plays a role in the

creation of anthologies. Arbitrariness may be understood as playing a role in translation as well: Scott does not shy away from a degree of arbitrariness in what he understands as creative translation, writing that ‘what seems arbitrary about the translation is precisely the measure of the sensibility that inhabits it, where arbitrariness to the critical translator might well be anathema’ (2021: 195). Following Scott’s definition, whereby arbitrariness is a display of a unique sensibility, the arbitrary is evidence of how a translation has been digested and, from the perspective of the translator, made theirs.

Anthologies are therefore directed by two types of partiality: they are partial in the sense that they are directed by personal taste and pleasure, and they are partial by virtue of being incomplete. For instance, Moulin, Deforges, Shapiro, and Bedeschi, Gosetti, and Marchetti all claim to perform reparative tasks and correct the historical omission of women writers from publications and canons. At the same time, they claim to have achieved only a partial result. Lagrange defends his selection by stating, ‘Je ne prétends pas être exhaustif, ni même, après tout, revendiquer une impossible objectivité’ [I do not claim to be exhaustive, and not even to claim what is an impossible objectivity] (1982:5). Bedeschi, Gosetti, and Marchetti call for a second volume of women poets to be compiled even as they announce the launch of their first: ‘Un ulteriore volume potrà rendere giustizia a questa emergente e sempre più vasta pluralità [...]. Questa antologia si è fatta nel segno di un’attesa e di un inizio riparatori’ [A further volume would be able to do justice to this emerging and increasingly vast profusion (of writers). This anthology was created as a gesture of expectation and a reparatory beginning] (2017: 25). As pedagogical tools meant to fill gaps in knowledge and, by extension, gaps in canons, anthologies appear doomed to failure at the outset – which may be why there exists what Jeffrey Williams terms ‘anthology disdain’ for such collections, which he observes are ‘disposable [...] literally worthless after they are superseded by a new edition’ (2004: 207).

Despite what has been described as this tendency to treat anthologies as the ‘second-class citizens of the academic world’, to receive them as a ‘repackaging of primary sources’ and not as ‘creative or aesthetic acts in the same way that novels and poems are’ (Di Leo 2004: 9-10), I am struck by how anthologists, consciously or unconsciously, effectively create *new* poems in their treatment of *Sauvage*. As evidenced in Figure 1, they assign and reassign titles, sometimes regrouping what

were disparate poems in previous editions into a single text. They appear to differ greatly in their identification of where one poem by Sauvage ends and another begins. For example, Bedeschi, Gosetti, and Marchetti present only three poems by Sauvage (2017: 170-175), but the third – to which they assign a title, the first line of the poem, ‘La femme simple et confiante’ [The sure and simple woman] – is actually composed of what are three distinct poems in the 1913 edition of *Le Vallon* (1913: 86, 106, 125). Examining the 1910 and 1913 editions of *Tandis que la terre tourne* and *Le Vallon*, there is evidence to conclude that Sauvage – despite being inconsistent in numbering her poems and giving them titles – appears to follow the general rule of beginning a new poem on a new page. (This holds for her manuscripts.) Secondly, the large number of pages between the three poems in the 1913 edition, nonetheless presented by Bedeschi, Gosetti, and Marchetti as a single poem with three different parts, suggests that these are unlikely to be *one* poem. Still, this reading by Bedeschi, Gosetti, and Marchetti raises the question of how the subcollection *Le Vallon* within the 1913 publication *Le Vallon* should be read.²² Unlike the subcollection *Mélancolie* (1913: 135-248) which numbers its short poems, or *L’Âme en bourgeon* (1910: 115-179) which titles its poems, *Le Vallon* does neither. Can *Le Vallon* be approached as one uninterrupted meditation in verse, a long poem of many parts? Certainly, *Le Vallon* displays modified repetitions of image, theme, characters, and even lines, in the manner that a musical composition may riff on the same motifs. For instance, the ‘deux hommes comme vêtus d’ombre’ [two men as if clothed in shadow] and the ‘chien à peine dessiné’ [the bare sketch of a dog] (1913: 86), who appear in a poem towards the beginning of *Le Vallon*, reappear towards the end of the subcollection in a slightly altered poem: the men are now ‘vêtus de buée’ [dressed in mist] although the dog is still ‘à peine dessiné’ (1913: 131) and, instead of walking ‘dans l’ombre avec cadence’ [with quick step through the shadow] (ibid: 86), men and dog now ‘s’éloignent dans la somnolence

²² Even in referring to the subcollections within the 1910 edition of *Tandis que la terre tourne* and the 1913 edition of *Le Vallon*, I hesitated whether I ought to italicize the title of the subcollection or put it in quotation marks. It is a collection title rather than an individual poem, so I decided italics would be more appropriate, even if this creates confusion around whether the subcollection *Le Vallon* or the entire book *Le Vallon* is being referred to. Moreover, as I write above, an argument can be made for reading the subcollection *Le Vallon* as ‘Le Vallon’. A seemingly simple matter of style and usage – whether to italicize or use quotation marks – has consequences for whether this text is approached as a series of poems or as one poem made up of many parts.

[walk away into the torpor] (ibid: 131). *Le Vallon* displays a cohesiveness of subject that is different from the thematic unity of the other subcollections – for instance, the focus of *L'Âme en bourgeon* on pregnancy and the infant son. The ambiguity of where one piece of *Le Vallon* ends and another begins gives some credence to Bedeschi, Gosetti, and Marchetti reading the text as they do.

It is important to note that this difficulty in identifying the boundaries of Sauvage's texts points to the capacity of the anthology – particularly the poetic anthology – to alter the presentation of text upon the page. Rewriting here becomes a matter of materiality, despite how unconscious or unintended such rewriting may be. The anthology, which in its pedagogical and unifying pursuits attempts to deliver as much information as possible within a limited amount of space, may contribute to the breaking down of those page breaks or line breaks which are especially important to poems. If white space and the absence of text is in itself a stylistic choice that contributes to the construction of meaning in a poem, then to reduce or alter such empty space will alter the meanings that may be drawn from the poem. When Moulin presents *Mélancolie* as one long poem rather than a collection of poems in her anthology, she does this by doing away with the asterisks that indicated separation between poems in Messiaen's 1929 edition (Moulin 1975: 228-231). Messiaen, on his part, reduced to asterisks what had been page breaks in Sauvage. These decisions, surely, were made in connection to material considerations of page count and expense. But by turning poems into stanzas, as Moulin does, and by assembling in close proximity poems that had previously been printed pages and pages apart, as do Bedeschi, Gosetti, and Marchetti, these anthologists prompt the reader to seek out new patterns of imagery, themes, and vocabulary and to read as connected stanzas what, in other editions, may be read as disparate poems. Without rewriting a word, these anthologists open possibilities for the reader to create new relations between the provided texts. Even before considering Sauvage's manuscripts and what the existence of an incomplete writer's draft may mean for a reader, editor, or translator, we must acknowledge that those versions of Sauvage that are accessible in printed books are already unstable. The boundaries of her poems are ambiguous; her texts are constantly being misread, which is to say presented in ways that differ from previous configurations. With new configurations come new possibilities for meaning construction.

This history of editing and anthologizing Sauvage poses a challenge to the translator. Which text ought to be translated, what edition privileged? How do I, as a translator and anthologizer myself, decide where one poem begins and where another ends, or what title to use and where? Can the variation between this vast array of possible source texts be resolved by returning to the ‘true source’ – manuscripts written in Sauvage’s hand and now held in public archives? In the next sections of this chapter, I argue that, as tempting as the archives are, they are not a cure for textual instability. Nor is textual instability an ailment: to the contrary, it permits us to understand translation as the continuation of a text’s genesis.

2. The translator in the archives

What, exactly, is so alluring about the archives? Even the translator – who, in the professional sphere, is usually handed a printed copy of the book to be translated, or equivalent PDF – may feel the call of the archives and seek to travel into territory where the translator normally does not tread, that territory in which texts may be established. Although Translation Studies scholarship has worked to unsettle the hierarchy between originals and translations (Apter 2005; Baer 2017; Scott 2012b; Scott 2021), the appeal of conducting further research – of establishing oneself as an expert with respect to the text they are working on (Vermeer 2012; Jones 2011) – is enough to transform a translator into an archive-goer. In her article ‘The Allure of the Archives’, Helen Freshwater observes that an archive-goer may be attracted by the perceived, ineffable value of the original, or what Walter Benjamin termed the ‘aura’ of a cultural object (Freshwater 2003: 732). Archival research also offers ‘the temptation of making a claim to the academic authority conferred by undertaking “proper research”’ (ibid: 731). The interest in the material object in schools of thought such as New Historicism and Cultural Materialism has made the archives authoritatively appealing (ibid: 729), while the existence of primary sources suggests an apparent bedrock to research. As Arlette Farge observes in *Le Goût de l’Archive*, the archive-goer is seduced by the promise of the real: in coming into contact with the archived object, the archive-goer is gripped at last by the sensation of ‘appréhender le réel’ [encountering the real], rather than merely encountering ‘*le récit sur, le discours de* [the story about, the discourse on]’ (1989: 14, emphasis in original). Thus, continues Farge, ‘nait le sentiment naïf, mais profond, de déchirer

un voile, de traverser l'opacité du savoir et d'accéder [...] à l'essentiel des êtres et des choses [...]. [L]a découverte de l'archive est une manne offerte justifiant pleinement son nom : source' [a naive but intense feeling is born, that of pulling aside the curtain, of traversing the muddle of knowledge and of reaching... the essence of people and of things... The discovery of the archive is a free manna that justifies entirely its being called a source] (ibid). The archive-goer, like the translator, has the impression of arriving at the source, or the source text.

But this state of miraculous source-ness that lies beyond or before discourse is not where the archival object actually exists, Farge continues. No matter how 'émotionnellement prenante' [emotionally captivating] a document or object is, 'l'important est ailleurs' [that which is important lies elsewhere]; the object 'réside dans l'interprétation difficile de sa présence, dans la recherche de sa signification, dans la mise en place de sa « réalité » au milieu de systèmes de signes dont l'histoire peut tenter d'être la grammaire' [resides in the difficult interpretation of its presence, in the research into its meaning, in the putting into place of its "reality" among the systems of signs that history may be able to decode] (1989: 19). The objects in the archive are 'à la fois tout et rien. Tout, parce qu'elles surprennent et défient le sens ; rien, parce que ce ne sont que des traces brutes, qui ne renvoient qu'à elles-mêmes [...]. Leur histoire n'existe qu'au moment où on leur pose un certain type de question et non au moment où on les recueille' [at once everything and nothing. They are everything, because they surprise and defy the senses; nothing, because they are merely crude traces, pointing back only to themselves... Their story begins to exist only at the moment when one asks them a particular type of question, and not at the moment at which they are archived] (ibid). The object only gains meaning once it is inserted into the system of signs that govern human discourse and the history that such discourse is able to describe; the 'real' is no longer the idealized real but is instead the contextualized reality of an object that has been inserted into a narrative. This is a semiological approach that observes how, without a reader, archived objects are merely 'des traces brutes' – signs signifying nothing. The archival object, in order to become, requires the input of 'participatory readers who, when working in the archive, often must become synthesizing and interpreting writers' (Gage 2012: 8). Like translators, archive-goers slot objects into a language system and give these objects meaning in relation to the

language system. Like fans, translators and archive-goers actively work to create the objects of their curiosity, study, and affection.

But if for Farge the existence of a document in an archive may be on occasion a matter of accident (1989: 19), other theorists have analyzed not only the readers' agency in inserting archived objects into a narrative of reality, but also the actions and power structures that construct the narratives the archives tell. For Derrida, there can be 'no political power without control of the archive' (1996: 4). Freshwater similarly observes that the archive 'was originally designed as a tool and was utilized to silence and suppress as well as to provide a record of official approval' (2003: 732). Derrida suggests that archives are about concealment as much as public accessibility. An archive is a place of shelter that itself shelters or conceals (1996: 3). In a similar vein, Sonia Combe examines what kinds of barriers exist to public access when a state or a regime wishes to keep secret what is theoretically public (1994). Archivists are makers of narratives in the same way anthologists are – narratives that are not always extricable from political agendas. Derrida defines 'consigning' as both the act of placing documents for safekeeping into a repository, cataloguing them, and the act of *consigning* – that is, the gathering together of signs (1996: 3). Anthologists *recueillent*; archivists *consignent*. Both may be understood, in their powers to assemble and classify, as makers of what are frequently *authorized* versions.

Aside from the conversation on the non-neutrality of the archives, there is repeated emphasis on archival seduction (see Freshwater 2003: 734-740). As does translation, archival research presents an opportunity of getting too intimate with a text or cultural object and thus exists as a potential site of loving violence. Archival research itself has been sex/ualized, to return once again to Santaemilia's terminology (2018: 20). In the nineteenth century, the historian Leopold von Ranke described research through metaphors of lovemaking and mingling, the practice of which would result in a brainchild that is equal parts Ranke and the 'beautiful [...] object' of Ranke's study and love (cited in Smith 1998: 119). Elsewhere, the sex/ualization has not been so positive: cultural objects *consigned* to public institutions have been observed as being 'prostituted for possession and consumption' (Shanks and Tilley 1992: 79) – a negative vision of the term 'possession' I have been championing with respect to translation.

The allure of the archives therefore can stem from a desire to (literally) touch the real; from the perception that the archives will lead the historian or the translator back to the source; from a desire to participate, fannishly, in the cultural object and write it into a narrative. Archive-goers may head to the archives to find the flesh-and-blood traces that the objects of their affection have left behind, preferring this to reading someone's second-hand account, or the 'discours sur'. A signature on a scrap of paper holds attraction for the archive-goer as much as for the fan. It is interesting that, in seeking to create a theory of an affective approach to the archives, Palladini and Pustianaz define archival research in the distinctly creative critical vocabulary of relation making (see Petrou, Mussgnug, and Nabugodi 2021). For Palladini and Pustianaz, an encounter with an archive is a 'relation born out of the experience of finding, accessing, remembering, or, indeed, imagining and creating' (2017: 10), this relation being in part defined by the subjective positioning and experience of the archive-goer.

And yet one also goes to the archives, as Freshwater observes, for the academic prestige archival research confers. I understood my motivations when I headed to the archives as a fan (I wanted to see the way Sauvage loops the 'S' in signing her name) and as a critical scholar (I wanted to discover heretofore uncovered references to her practice and readership that would shed light on how Sauvage, and perhaps her contemporaries more broadly, understood their own literary production). The archives also ended up furnishing me with greater support for an ethos of creative translation. If at one point – faced with the history of Sauvage's textual corpus as one continuously reproduced in differing states of completeness and presentation – I imagined that the archives, with their apparent bedrock nature, would provide me with a certain stability vis-à-vis Sauvage's French texts, I was quickly rid of that illusion. Understanding the archives to be subject to power imbalances and narrative construction, acknowledging that archival materials themselves carry the potential for reinterpretation and re-inscription, my research into Sauvage's manuscripts confirmed that there is no authorized original – only the ever-shifting and multiple 'total' text (Scott 2021: 192).

Sauvage's papers form part of the Olivier Messiaen collection at the Bibliothèque nationale de France. It speaks to the non-neutrality of the archives that, even when catalogued in a public institution for posterity and accessibility, Sauvage remains buried beneath the Messiaen name. She is classified under 'Fonds Olivier

Messiaen > Archives privées > Archives familles Messiaen et Sauvage > Cécile Messiaen-Sauvage', where the pertinent documents are broken up into three categories: personal correspondence, literary works (manuscripts and printed editions), and secondary sources relating to her literary works (BNF Archives et manuscrits 2022a). The entire Messiaen collection is still being processed by the library's archivists after coming into the library's holdings in February 2015. Sauvage is unfortunately not a priority, dwarfed as she is by the scale of academic and public interest in Olivier Messiaen. But with the generous help of Marie-Gabrielle Soret, head of the Fonds Olivier Messiaen, as well as the librarians in the Archives et manuscrits division, I was able to access the manuscripts that Marchal transcribed in her 2009 edition.²³ I was also able to access one box of Sauvage's personal letters out of seven, where each box houses approximately one hundred sheets of handwritten correspondence. Thus, even in the archives, access to Sauvage's texts proved 'patchy', as I was limited not only by the time and funding available for my trip to the archives, but also by the progress that had been made in stamping, numbering, and cataloguing Sauvage's papers.²⁴ My experience at the national library followed the familiar pattern of reading Sauvage in anthologies: some texts were present, even duplicated, while other texts – whether by virtue of not yet having been catalogued, or simply missing from the holdings entirely, having been lost in transfer – were notably absent.²⁵

The documents which I was able to access and to which I refer throughout the rest of the chapter are three manuscript versions of Sauvage's collection of

²³ I note I did not encounter several sheets with contents that otherwise feature in Marchal's edition; presumably these have yet to turn up as Sauvage's papers continue to be catalogued.

²⁴ Despite the care brought to the task by archivists, objects sometimes slip through the cracks and, by accident, evade the narrative that comes with being *consigned* and catalogued. For instance, in the single box of letters I was able to access was a letter by Pierre Messiaen, slipped in among Sauvage's letters and numbered by a librarian as one of hers. Should I have alerted the library to their error and indicated that this object was not in its 'correct' place? Elsewhere, the national library's catalogue is mistaken in listing several letters as having been authored by Sauvage, when in fact they were written by her son Olivier Messiaen and contain no reference to Sauvage whatsoever. Curiously, the history of Sauvage's texts appears like a history of misses: misrepresented (or 'miss-represented', to recall Milligan's term, discussed in Chapter 2), misread, misquoted, Sauvage happens to be miscatalogued, too.

²⁵ It must be added that the Fondation Olivier Messiaen also plays a gatekeeping role in a researcher's potentially sharing relevant documents with other members of the public, because any request for the reproduction of a document held in the Fonds Olivier Messiaen must be routed through the foundation.

prose love poems, *L'Étreinte mystique*, MS 241 (1-3) (Sauvage 1915a; 1915b; 1915c); a slender manuscript of Sauvage's collection of verse love poems *L'Aile et la rose*, MS 241 (4) (Sauvage nd); and a manuscript of Sauvage's other, longer collection of verse love poems, *Prière*, MS 241 (5) (Sauvage 1914-1915). Encountering these manuscripts was a different experience from reading Marchal's edition (Sauvage 2009) although the poems themselves were by this point quite familiar to me. My encounter with the manuscripts complicated a traditional understanding of the translator's task by bringing the translator face-to-face with the source text's genesis, which is to say the development of the creative process that went into the text's composition, including evidence of the author's conflicting or changing states of mind. My time in the archives led me to consider how textual genesis and translation may interact and what happens to translation once it becomes detached from the idea of having a fixed source text.

Translation and textual genesis have already been brought together under the banner of Genetic Translation Studies (GTS). GTS has emerged from the practice of genetic criticism (founded in France in the mid-1960s as *critique génétique*) and is focused on the study of target text genesis through the examination of the manuscripts, notes, and drafts produced by translators. GTS therefore offers an opportunity to 'problematize the much-debated "agency" of the translator' (Cordingley and Montini 2015: 4). Considering 'translation as origin,' add Cordingley and Montini, 'affirms the need for originality in every act of literary translation, which, by definition, cannot merely replicate or reproduce anterior forms' (ibid). In GTS, notions of equivalence take on secondary importance and the hierarchical relationship between source and target text disappears. GTS both encourages the view of translations as originals (cf. Emmerich 2017) and contributes, through documentary scrutiny, to translator studies (cf. Chesterman 2009). Moreover, for certain scholars the affinities between genetic criticism and Descriptive Translation Studies have made the development of GTS a natural and intuitive extension of the Translation Studies field (Nunes, Moura, and Pacheco 2021: 1). Genetic approaches reveal that the intentions of both translators and authors 'can be highly mutable, to the extent that several genetic critics no longer see the writer as a monolithic "self" but as a succession of selves. The writer who cancels a word is already different from the one who wrote it. This interval opens up the space in which genetic criticism operates' (Van Hulle 2022: 11). By studying

archival evidence of the translation process, a narrative of the translator's creativity may emerge (Munday 2014). Genetic criticism, taking as its objects of study those *avant-textes* (see Contat et al. 1996) that frequently reside in archives, thereby partakes in the allure of the archives. GTS, described as helping 'pull the fig leaf off the printed page to reveal the choices that give rise to the aesthetic contours of the text' (Huss 2018: 461), tempts scholars with the promise of access to the 'real'.

However, GTS, as emerges from the sampling of scholarship above, has predominantly focused on translators' records. It is rare to encounter a study that investigates how a translator turns to the genesis of a source text in hopes of finding something that may orient their creation of the target text. In other words, there are few examples of why translators may go to their author's archives, as I have done. In one case, Dirk Van Hulle examines how the translators of Joyce and Beckett – two writers famously affiliated with texts that have undergone losses in transmission, or been otherwise revised between printings, or self-translated – have created translations that 'could be seen as a continuation' of works-in-progress by going back to the genesis of the source text and taking losses into account (2015: 42). Van Hulle breaks down the interaction of translation and textual genesis into five categories: it is possible to embrace genesis as part of the translation, to perform a translation of the genesis, to document a genesis of the translation (the focus of most GTS), to have translation be part of the source-text genesis (for this example Van Hulle refers to Beckett's self-translations, where it is difficult to draw a line between genesis of source text and genesis of target text), and finally what Van Hulle terms 'genesis of the untranslatable', a process by which a translation may be carried out in order to contribute to the existence of a variorum edition, although the translation may only offer one possible reading of a dense text (ibid: 48). Ultimately, Van Hulle stresses that any interaction between translation and genesis is 'bidirectional' (ibid: 51).

Laura Ivaska investigates a similar case (2021), drawing upon Toury to explain how a translation may be compilative in nature, especially when dealing with indirect translation, or translation performed through a pivot language (Toury 2012: 167). Ivaska argues that a translator may select or compile a 'best text' out of preexisting versions. Although Ivaska observes that, in doing so, a translator functions like a textual critic, her case study only provides two instances of the reasoning behind a translator's evaluation of what constitutes the 'best text': a

translator may consult the author's attitude towards preexisting translations, and the translator may be limited by linguistic ability when consulting preexisting translations. In the cases described by Van Hulle and Ivaska, when encountering source text genesis, the translators appear less motivated by aesthetic or value judgements – in comparison to the anthologists surveyed in the first half of this chapter – than by the reintroduction of lost material and deference to authority. Still, Ivaska's presentation of the translator as compiler, or selector of the 'best text', foregrounds the amount of control a translator possesses; in other words, there is room to imagine the translator as aesthetic arbiter, even if the translator in her case study did not perceive the translator's remit precisely in that manner.

In translating *Sauvage*, I am faced with many such potential configurations of how my translation practice intersects with the textual genesis of the French texts. One option, per Ivaska, may be to personally establish a 'best text' from *Sauvage's* manuscripts and give my reasons for what constitutes 'best'. Another option would be to defer to another authority for the establishing of the 'best text', such as Marchal, and to translate the entirety of Marchal's transcription and presentation of *Sauvage's* manuscripts (Sauvage 2009). But in consulting those same manuscripts in the archives – manuscripts which Marchal transcribes and, in doing so, decodes and rearranges in a different visual format – I was struck by what I perceived as *Sauvage's* own, decisive establishing of the 'best text', which is different from the 'best text' that Marchal presents. The three manuscript versions of *L'Étreinte mystique*, for instance, give the impression of an obvious teleology when compared side by side (see Figure 2). The third and final draft of *L'Étreinte mystique* was described by Yvonne Loriod – the final private possessor of *Sauvage's* manuscripts and one of *Sauvage's* many editors – as 'ici Recopié [sic] au propre (très beau)' [Here recopied neatly (very beautiful)] (Sauvage 1915c). This is also the only draft that is signed and dated at the end: 'C.S. août 1915' [C.S. August 1915]. The handwriting is careful and even (see Figure 5) in the way the handwriting of the first two versions is not (see Figures 3 and 4); the thickness of the ink appears consistent, suggesting that *Sauvage* is not switching out writing instruments. MS 241 (3) appears mostly the result of an act of copying, rather than composition. Its pages have been numbered in ink; Loriod speculates that *Sauvage* numbered them herself, and indeed the handwriting appears to match. By contrast, MS 241 (1) and MS 241 (2) contain greater variety of *Sauvage's* penmanship: the angles at which

lines are slanted and degrees of legibility suggest different moments and speeds of composition. The two manuscripts contain cross-outs, sentences penned vertically along the margin, and thin strips of paper, containing a line or two each, inserted among the pages of the booklets proper – suggesting that Sauvage penned a line when it struck her on a piece of paper closest to hand, and then physically added it to the ‘main’ booklet, so that this ‘afterthought’ could be added into the body of the text upon being next copied out. MS 241 (3) therefore appears to be Sauvage’s own ‘best text’, which would have been in a state to be sent out to a publisher, had Sauvage wished to see it printed.²⁶

²⁶ This stage however falls short of what Biasi identifies as the ‘pass-for-press’ (*bon à tirer*) moment, where a work goes from being *avant-texte* to text. For Biasi, this stage occurs after correction of typeset proofs (1996: 34-35).

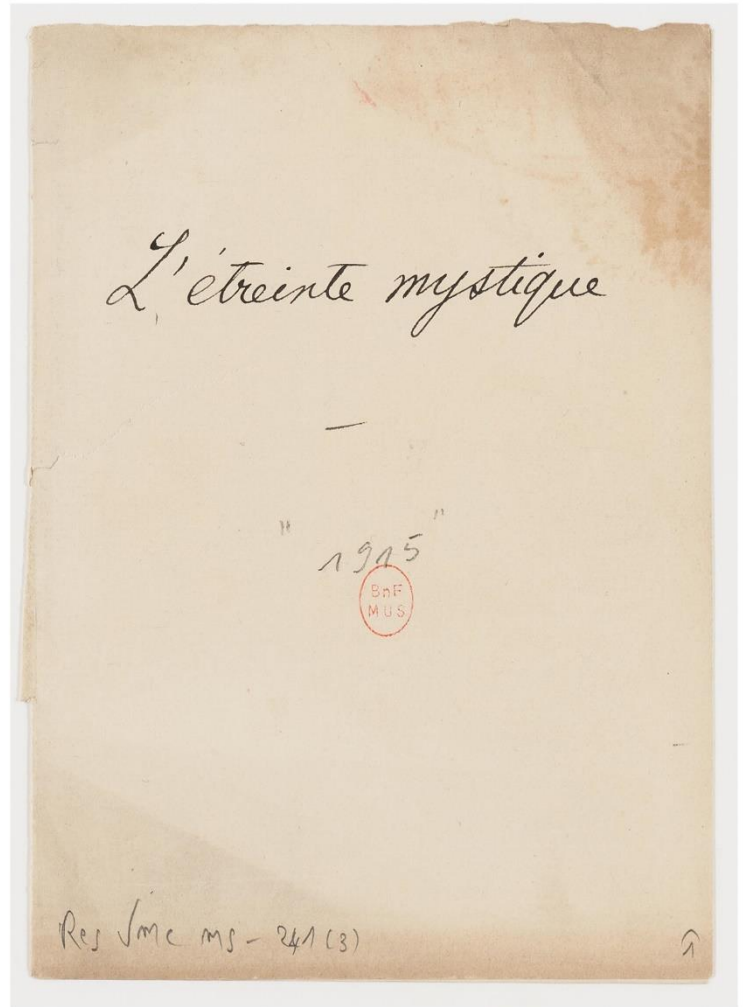
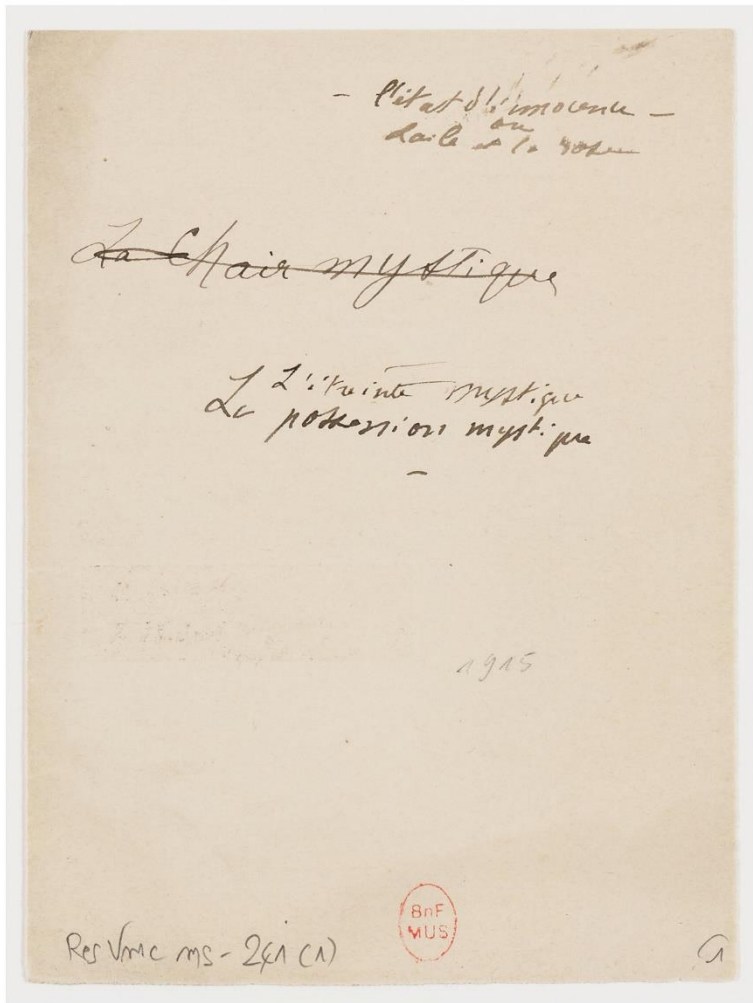


Figure 2

Title pages of the first and third manuscript drafts for *L'Étreinte mystique*. MS-241 (1) is on the left, while MS-241 (3) is on the right.

Le l'irradiateur me semblait encore
 la plus douce, la plus bleue lumière que
 j'ai jamais vue si j'en excepte celle
 qui tombait de la millieuse bleu de
 nuit sur nos caresses. J'ai aimé
 le feu de ton foyer, chacune de ces
 boules de braise d'or comme de
 brûlants fruits d'hiver, et une
 nuit, te soulevant, une bûche
 couronnée de flammes roula
 sur le tapis jusque devant notre
 petit lit tiré devant le feu. La
 chambre extérieure avait flambé
 sans pu nous y priver de garde -
 O un pied ne s'écroula et ne te
 repoussa vers le foyer cette bûche
 de braise et je songeais à ces
 carabes verts des jardins qui
 s'attachent à quelque ~~sans interruption~~
~~cesse~~ ^{quelque fruit tombé}
 et s'attachent ^{pendant} sans interruption

Ces intimes confidences...
 Toute ta chambre était flammes et
 amour. Je me traçais comme sans
 tes bras en ce petit fauteuil de
 ton enfance où j'm'essayais avec
 abandon. Qui sait si je n'étais pas
 là caressée par le cher fantôme
 de ta jeunesse, au temps où tu
 lisais des contes de fées près du feu
 et que tes grands yeux de roi-enfant
 se mouillaient de jeûs d'un enchantement
 rêve de désir -

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Entre ciel et terre il y a cette ^{divine} place
 Chambo, ta chambre. N'est-elle pas
 entre ciel et terre spacieuse, claire, tendue
 étranger à tout le reste de la maison ^{à l'air}
 toute d'immense ciel. Elle est ta ^{divine}
 pleine de demi-jour comme une âme ^{intime}
 comme nos âmes-mêmes s'élèvent ^à
 si nos deux âmes s'élèvent ^à
 plein corps sans leur propre amour



Figure 4

A passage from the first draft of *L'Étreinte mystique*, MS-241 (1). It begins with Sauvage describing the blue light of a little gas cooker (top of left-hand page) and ends with an evocation of two beings bathing in their own love (bottom of right-hand page).

14
de l'irradiateur me semblent encore
la plus douce, la plus bleue lumière
que j'aie jamais vue, si j'en
excepte celle qui tombait de la
Vieillesse bleu de nuit sur nos caresses.

J'ai aimé le feu de ton foyer, chacune
de ces boules en braise d'or comme
de brûlants fruits d'hiver, et une
nuit, te soulevas-tu, une bûche
couronnée de flammes roula sur le
tapis jusqu'à notre petit lit tiré
devant le feu. La chambre entière
aurait flambé sans que nous y
prissions garde. D'un pied négligeant
et nu tu repoussas vers le foyer
cette bûche de braise et je songeais
aux insectes du ciel qui'un choc
déplace et qui changent de
branche sans rompre cependant le
noeud recueilli de leurs profondes
confidences...

15
 toute ta chambre vivait et palpitait.
Y'étais dans tes bras en ce petit fauteuil
de ton enfance où je venais m'asseoir
accablée d'outrages épars. N'étais-je
pas là caressée par le cheu fantôme
de ta jeunesse, au temps où tu lisais
des contes de fées près du feu et
que tes grands yeux de roi-enfant
se mouillaient déjà d'un onctueux
rêve de désir.

X
Entre ciel et terre, il y a cette divine
chambre, ta chambre. N'est-elle pas
entre ciel et terre, spacieuse, claire
tendre, étrangère à tout le reste de
la maison, à toute l'immense ville.
Elle est là, close, intime, pleine de
demi-jour comme une âme, comme
nos âmes - mêmes épanouies et là
nos deux êtres baignaient à plein
corps sans leur propre amour.

Figure 5

The same passage reproduced in the third draft, MS-241 (3). The text begins with the same reference to the gas cooker (top of left-hand page) and ends with the reference to beings bathing in their love (bottom of right-hand page).

Translating *L'Étreinte mystique* as it is presented in MS 241 (3) on the basis of its being Sauvage's 'best-text' would yield a different target text than translating Marchal's edition. Such two translations would display the results of different editorial processes. Marchal's edition is compilative, or is a variorum version of *L'Étreinte mystique*, because Marchal brings into the 'main' text (i.e., text that Marchal does not relegate to footnotes) those passages which Sauvage included in MS 241 (1) and MS 241 (2) but subsequently omitted from MS 241 (3). In this manner, Marchal attempts to present a holistic vision of the genesis of *L'Étreinte mystique*. One strong example of this involves the final three paragraphs of *L'Étreinte mystique*, which Marchal reproduces in the body of her presentation, but which Sauvage only included in MS 241 (1). This small passage identifies Sauvage's lover Jean de Gourmont by name – 'Jean et Cécile se sont aimés' [Jean and Cécile loved each other] (Sauvage 2009: 87) – and refers to *L'Étreinte mystique* as 'le livre de leur amour' [the book of their love] (ibid). It is worth noting that Sauvage, by omitting this passage from the second and third drafts, deconfessionalizes her writing as she goes; although *L'Étreinte mystique* is personal, intimate, dedicated to a lover, and certainly drawn from life, Sauvage appears to desire some distance from the final literary product. She signs her name as author at the end of MS 241 (3), but she omits the direct reference to herself as participant in the narrative. For Marchal, however, this passage 'constitue [...] un document de première importance' [constitutes a document of primary importance] (Sauvage 2009: 87) – hence its inclusion in the main body of *L'Étreinte mystique* as presented by Marchal. Moreover, on this very same page of Marchal's edition is evidence of Marchal's occasional inconsistency regarding her decisions about what goes into the body of the text and what goes into footnotes. Marchal relegates what I consider to be a beautiful passage from MS 241 (1) to a footnote, with the justification 'Cécile Sauvage l'a finalement barré' [Sauvage finally crossed it out] (ibid). But Sauvage had omitted the reference to 'Jean et Cécile' as well. Marchal's method of evaluating the relative importance of passages that Sauvage had not conserved during her self-editing process suggests a greater interest in the author's personal history than an evaluation of the texts' aesthetics or affective power. Like an archive-goer, Marchal appears driven by a desire to discover and to reveal 'real' life as it happened.

I give this example of *L'Étreinte mystique* to demonstrate how the existence of multiple manuscript drafts has already generated a set of different relationships to one poetry collection. There is Sauvage's own reading and evaluation of her work; there is Marchal's understanding of what is worth transcribing and how; there is my idea of what is worth picking out and promoting through translation.²⁷ It may be a valid project for a translator to defer to the intentions of Sauvage or Marchal, either by accepting MS 241 (3) or *Écrits d'amour* (Sauvage 2009) as the source text. The notion of intentionality has not been entirely debunked by certain scholars of genetic criticism, who have defended the role of genetic criticism 'in the working of those processes and in the pressures and pleasures experienced by writers. The desire and need to disseminate and publish, or the attitudes to the social facts and contexts around publication, all make teleological questions critical in any study of the processes that lead towards, or indeed away from, these ends of dissemination or publication' (Fordham 2010: 26-27). Genetic criticism still grapples with intentionality, even if it refers to the concept by other names, to the point where such circumlocution is perceived as 'cumbersome and even evasive' (Sullivan 2013: 52). Still, although an author's intention – which is perhaps similar to what Boase-Beier terms an author's world view (2021: 139) as discussed in Chapter 4 – deserves not to be entirely dismissed in translation and editing practice, to decide on a single 'best text' would be to impoverish translation's possibilities. In accepting the source text's existence as 'not as a single text but a large number of versions and notes' (Van Hulle 2022: 23), translation is forced to abandon simple notions of equivalence and accuracy, because it is no longer possible to say *to what* a target text should be equivalent. Instead translation is now figured as the natural extension of a text's genesis; through translation a text continues to unfurl, expand, becomes polyglot. The translator is in turn understood to be an agent with expansive powers, capable of making value judgements on an aesthetic and stylistic level with respect to the totality of the source text, as well as with respect to the expressivity and resources of the target language.

²⁷ Very little of *L'Étreinte mystique* finally ended up in the *Reader*. This was not because I consider *L'Étreinte mystique* to be an inferior collection, but because, as the *Reader* developed thematically, my selection process became more focused on including that which best served those themes. I discuss my selection process further at the beginning of Chapter 6.

3. Translating the unstable text

Independently of genetic criticism, translation scholars have theorized the target text as an extension, rather than replication, of a source text. When editorial scholar Jerome McGann writes, ‘Editors (and readers) ought to have an altogether different object in view than the approximation of an “authoritative text”’ (1993: 163), he echoes the translation practices of scholars such as Venuti and Scott, who also have a ‘different object in view’ than a target text that pretends to be representative of what is traditionally perceived as the authoritative source text.²⁸ Venuti and Scott prefer instead to create translations that are acts of overwriting as much as rewriting, palimpsestic and ungovernable (Scott 2012b; Venuti 2013). I am especially influenced by Scott’s proposed concept of ‘translationwork’ that emphasizes a translation’s perpetually unfinished state and its resistance to being circumscribed (2018: 4). Coupled with McGann’s idea that editing is a way of ‘corresponding’ with texts (1993: 163), my attempt at translating Sauvage’s poetry into English is an experiment in creating a corresponding-yet-autonomous target text. I see my own edition of translated works by Sauvage as reaffirming the translator’s creative directorship – and indeed the translator’s license to operate in an editorial role – while emphasizing that the translator can extend the writer’s intentions through translation. In this manner, translation, like editing, is an act of extending source texts from past into future, rather than an act of ‘tinkering with a master-copy’ (Scott 2018: 14). Meanwhile, McGann, in observing that an edition ‘is a formal choice about how to *correspond with* the texts that are coming down to us’ (1993: 163, emphasis in original), provides not only an excellent word for thinking about the similarities between texts — for ‘correspondence’ denotes alignment, conformity, and a degree of parallelism — but likewise offers the suggestion that editing and translation are in some ways akin to an epistolary exchange. Who is reading whose words? Who is writing back to whom?

It is my intention that *A Sauvage Reader* reveal this correspondence between myself and Sauvage and exist as a new iteration in what is already a sequence of

²⁸ A version of the rest of this chapter appeared as the article ‘Intentions, Extensions: Creative editing and translation practice in *A Sauvage Reader*’, *Textual Cultures* 15(1) (Spring 2022), pp. 63-70.

versions of her work. Because Sauvage's manuscripts frequently contain the author's own suggestions for edits, her poems are indefinite. 'Indefinite' suggests not only a state of imprecision calling out for definition or stabilization (for example, for an editor to establish which of two drafts is the later one and give it preference), but also a state of continuation. I am interested in focusing on such continuation and discovering what it may mean, for translation, to extend the author's mental state (see Chapter 4), rather than make a firm decision to translate one version of a text over another, and thus continuing through translation to contribute to what Scott calls the 'total text' (2021: 192).

Selecting a version of a text to translate prior to translation implies that both translation and editing are finite processes and that there is a correct order as to their arrangement: edit first, thus creating a 'best text', then translate the edited text. As Scott observes, this approach is rooted in a traditional vision of translation-as-transfer that absolutely requires a definitive text to exist before the invariants it contains may be identified and carried over. Scott writes, 'Clearly, those notions which must play a considerable role in translation for the monoglot reader – fidelity, reliability, equivalence – can only come into operation with texts reckoned to have *achieved stability at the point of translation* (even if of a temporary kind)' (2018: 8, emphasis mine). Working with definitive texts results in an understanding of translation as a process that gives the target reader access to the source text, via notions such as fidelity and equivalence; it supposes that translation, too, is terminable, and is terminated once the appropriate degree of transfer has been achieved. An unstable or indefinite source text pre-empts notions such as fidelity and equivalence and makes it possible for other types of translation to occur.

The question is what such a translation — a text that corresponds to/with the source text(s) but is not necessarily anxious about equivalence — may look like. I now offer one example from Sauvage's oeuvre in which the multiplicity of her drafts actually helps me, as her translator, to better grasp what she is trying to say. I imagine these drafts as adding up to the next iteration, my translation; the drafts prove to be orienting, rather than conflicting. Below are two different versions of one sentence from *L'Étreinte mystique*, first presented as it is in the first manuscript, and then again as it was changed and recopied across the second and third manuscripts. (This passage is visible in Sauvage's handwriting in Figures 4 and 5, provided above.)

D'un pied négligent et nu tu repoussas vers le foyer cette bûche de braise et je songeais à ces carabes verts des jardins qui s'attablent à quelque fruit tombé et déjeunent sans cependant interrompre leurs intimes confidences....

[With a careless and naked foot you pushed towards the fireplace that smoldering log and I thought of those green beetles in the garden that sit down to dine upon some fallen fruit, but without interrupting their intimate confessions....] (Sauvage 1915a)

D'un pied négligent et nu tu repoussas vers le foyer cette bûche de braise et je songeais aux insectes du ciel qu'un choc déplace et qui changent de branche sans rompre cependant le nœud recueilli de leurs profondes confidences....

[With a careless and naked foot you pushed towards the fireplace that smoldering log and I thought of the insects of the sky who are displaced by a shock and who change branches, but without breaking the meditative knot of their deep confessions....] (Sauvage 1915b; Sauvage 1915c)

Following the literal translations provided above, I offer the following 'extending' translation:

With a careless, naked foot you pushed that smoldering log back into the fireplace. And I thought of those insects who live in the sky and, when knocked aside, alight on a different branch without interrupting the absorbed tangle of their intimate exchanges....

Considering both French versions together helps me better understand where it is Sauvage would like the text to go. I read Sauvage as wishing to land on an insect-related image that provides a metaphor for how the lover's action nevertheless leaves his attentions uninterrupted. I have opted to create what I like to think of as a third text containing elements of both previous versions, thus emphasizing the revision process that the sentence has already undergone, as well as reflecting my own input and composition. My translation speaks of flying insects ('insectes du ciel') instead of the 'green beetles' ('carabes verts') of Sauvage's first draft, but I also opt to translate the 'intimate exchanges' ('intimes confidences') present in the first draft, rather than the 'deep exchanges' ('profondes confidences') of the second

version, because this reference to intimacy more effectively connects the image back to the human interaction it is describing. The English word 'knock' is a sonorous rather than strictly denotative extension of the French *choc* and the English text has acquired new internal rhyme and assonance through the use of 'sky', 'aside', 'alight', and 'absorbed'. Similar to the observations on my translation process as presented in Chapter 4, my translation here demonstrates a way of communicating with authorial intention, or what may be better described as the author's mind state at the moments of composition, while also allowing the translation to be an autonomous text.

A slightly different case of textual instability or indefiniteness occurs in a poem from *L'Aile et la rose*. The collection *L'Aile et la rose* exists in one sole manuscript (Sauvage nd), the consistent handwriting of which suggests a clean copy, although its shortness and the abrupt end of the final poem suggest some of the collection may be permanently missing (see also Marchal's assessment in Sauvage 2009: 138). Despite the manuscript's 'clean' appearance, there are moments where Sauvage has crossed out words and squeezed alternate formulations between lines, such as the following example:

L'horloge offrait au bout des chaines
Deux fruits qui semblaient dans leur gaine
Le désir de la race humaine

Avec Ta culotte de soie
J'avais l'air d'un page de joie
Dont la cambrure fine ondoie

La douce princesse de Clèves
Cependant poursuivait son rêve
Dans le beau meuble dix-huitième.

[The longcase clock offered, at the end of its chains
Two fruits that, in their sheath, seemed
The desire of the human race

With your silk underclothes
I looked like a pleasurable page boy
Whose slender back undulates

The gentle princess of Clèves
Was meanwhile pursuing her dream
In the beautiful piece of eighteenth-century furniture]
(Sauvage nd:2v)

The line reproduced above bold is indefinitely presented in the manuscript, as is visible in Figure 6. The word 'avec' is crossed out, while the second person pronoun 'ta', I argue, could also possibly be read as the third person pronoun 'sa'. Above the line and in the margin, three other potential versions of the line are supplied, without the original line being crossed out definitively. We can decipher the variant, 'J'étais en culotte de soie' [I was in silk underclothes] where 'étais' is crossed out and replaced by 'avais' (without, however, 'en' being changed for 'une', as the logic of the sentence would hold). Then, in a very cramped hand in the margin, there is an additional version reading 'Tandis qu'en culotte de soie / J'avais l'air d'un page de joie' [While, in silk underclothes / I looked like a pleasurable page boy].

L'horloge offrait au bout des chaînes
Deux fruits qui semblaient dans leur sein
Le désir de la race humaine

pendis j'étais en culotte de soie
j'avais j'étais
Avec ta culotte de soie

pendis j'étais en culotte de soie
j'avais j'étais
J'avais l'air d'un page de joie
Dont la cambrure fine ondoie

La douce princesse de Clèves,
Cependant poursuivait son rêve
Dans le beau meuble six-huitième.

Et je revis ces heures-là
La table étroite où l'on dîna,
La branche maigre de lilas

Et le lit de religieuse
Si petit où nos chairs pieuses
Ne firent qu'un baiser tout bas.

Figure 6

Page from *L'Aile et la rose*, MS-241(4). Note Sauvage's indefinite emendations between the first and second stanzas on the page.

Marchal identifies the last variant in this example either as Sauvage's final or best version of the line; either way, Marchal reproduces 'Tandis qu'en culotte de soie' in her edition without making note of the other variants (Sauvage 2009: 135) – which may either be oversight or else speak to the inconsistency of what sort of information is distributed across the footnotes of Marchal's edition. I am not convinced it is so easy to decipher authorial intentionality in this case: by the physical appearance of the manuscript, it appears Sauvage is considering the sound of the line without necessarily committing to overwriting her first version – which, at one point, she must have been fairly convinced by, given that she wrote it out in her clean copy. The orbiting variants are evidence not of an edit, exactly, but of a question: which sounds better? The issue is primarily one of sound and rhythm, because the image across all possible versions remains similar – the speaker is wearing borrowed silk undergarments that make her look like a pageboy (with the formulation 'page de joie' likely evoking the term 'fille de joie' and serving as its gendered inverse). For Sauvage, Marchal, and myself, this is an instance where a purely aesthetic call will be made. Marchal's choice of 'Tandis qu'en culotte de soie' for reproduction in her edition may be understood as her evaluation that this variant simply sounds best. It avoids, after all, the ungainly repetition of 'J'avais' or even the similar 'J'étais' across two lines – something Sauvage herself may have realized. But the supplementary information that the speaker is wearing someone else's clothes is lost in selecting the 'Tandis' variant. The importance of this small piece of information is likewise for us to decide. How much does it matter for the reader to know that the speaker is wearing borrowed clothes, especially given that a reference to 'petite culotte de soie' reappears in another collection, *L'Étreinte mystique* (Sauvage 1915c; Sauvage 2009: 69)? Moreover, because Marchal does not reproduce the earlier variants in her edition, this information is only accessible to the reader who goes to the archives, as I have. Instead of finding the fixed, original Sauvage, I have merely come away from the archives with a greater instability of images in my mind's eye.

Consider likewise the following example, in which a simple change of pronouns from second person to third person changes the movement of a poem. In her clean copy of *Prière* (Sauvage 1914-1915), Sauvage copies out the following poem, as visible in Figure 7:

V

Ah! souloter avec mes lèvres
 Ta^{re} moustache tombant à peine
 Et trouver ce moelleux dessin
 A la fois persans et câlin
 De bouche au retroussis mutin
 Qui^{lui} donne avec tes^{re} yeux clairs,
 Ton^{re} nez busqué, ton^{re} frê^{re} orale
 L'air d'un jeune prince un peu pâle
 Sous Louis quinze. O bouche fine,
 Légère, ambiguë et câline,
 D'un rose tendre de pastel.
 Et je te^{re} vois dans les dentelles
 En des culottes de satin,
 Nonchalant, jouant de la main
 Avec une rose royale.

Figure 7

Page from *Prière*, MS -241 (5). Note the alternative pronouns added above the lines.

Ta moustache tombant à peine [...]
Qui te donne avec tes yeux clairs,
Ton nez busqué, ton frêle ovale [...]
Et je te vois dans les dentelles [...]

[Your slightly drooping moustache (...)
That gives you, with your light eyes,
Your hooked nose, your frail face (...)
And I see you in lace] (Sauvage 1914-1915)

I have reproduced above the relevant lines for which Sauvage offers variants. Without crossing out anything in the body of the poem (the second person pronouns ‘ta’, ‘te’, ‘tes’, ‘ton’, ‘te’), Sauvage adds, in a small hand in between the lines, pronouns that change the address to third person: ‘Sa moustache,’ ‘Qui lui donne’, ‘ses yeux clairs’, ‘Son nez busqué’, ‘son frêle ovale’, ‘je le vois’. The edit is not definite: it hangs on the page like a suggestion – and what if we re-sounded the poem like this? Whereas the first version of the poem is a gesture of correspondence (‘I express this towards you’), the second version is a moment of reflection (‘I express this as I think of him’). So this poem has the potential to exist both as an instance of *correspondance* and *recueillement*. By declining to firmly cross out one set of pronouns or the other, Sauvage left open the possibility of both these poems occurring. Her state of mind may have been equally partial to either version; her intention – at least during the construction of that manuscript – was to have both. Marchal, for her part, prioritizes the first, second person version of this poem and relegates mention of the pronoun edits to a footnote (Sauvage 2009: 102-3). As for myself – I opt to insert this poem in the ‘*Correspondance*’ section of *A Sauvage Reader*, rather than the ‘*Recueillement*’ section, which means that I also use the second person address in my translation; my decision, however, is influenced by my intentions regarding the thematic construction of my translated collection. I perform changes of address elsewhere, as in the section ‘*Possession*’ where I translate Sauvage’s phrase, ‘Même j’entends sa voix, son rire, son silence’ [I even hear his/her/their voice, their laugh, their silence] (2009: 151) as ‘[I even hear your voice, your laugh, your silence](#)’ in order to redirect and reappropriate Sauvage’s phrase as the translator’s address towards the author, or the scholar’s address towards the studied subject.

This brings me to my final point about how the creation of an anthology – by virtue of recontextualizing and reclassifying – yields something new, not merely

something recopied. The anthologists surveyed in the first section of this chapter, although admitting to cuts, edits, and pleasure-based selection processes, did not always articulate how the mere act of rearranging the order of a group of texts created what should be considered an extension, or Scott's 'futuring' (2018), rather than a replication of the texts in question. These anthologists invited the reader to create new webs of meaning between proximate poems through simple acts of rearrangement (see in this chapter, 'An editing history'). Especially when considering such rearrangement in conjunction with translation, there is no reason to assume that, once translated, a poem will hold the same relationship to its neighbors as it did in the source language; indeed, the poem in the target language no longer fits into the same slot as it did in its source language collection and in fact harbors entirely different lexical networks and cultural implications. It is therefore not a given that the 'editor's job' (selecting texts in the source language to be anthologized) should precede 'the translator's job' (translating the editor's selection). This order of things may make for a valid project elsewhere. But since I am both selecting and translating the poems to be included in *A Sauvage Reader*, one action (selecting or translating) potentially changes, challenges the configuration of the other, similar to fiddling with a Rubik's cube.

Any presentation or sequence of poems in *A Sauvage Reader*, in tandem with word choice in translation, will strengthen or soften the lexical networks and recurring imagery present in the French-language texts. For example, the two poems below are translations from the collection *Prière* (Sauvage 1914-1915). The poems have obvious correspondences in French, notably the same addressee; but they are separated in the manuscripts by other poems and are different in form (the first octosyllabic with an irregular rhyme scheme, the second in alexandrines). Presented as they are in English in the 'Correspondance' section of the *Reader*, the poems gain a new proximity — not only physical, but also the kind that arises out of the new textual similarities between the translated texts, such as the correspondence of the end rhymes 'Louis', 'me', and 'cede' and the irregularity of rhyme scheme, now extended to the second poem. This new arrangement will lead a reader to encounter the 'pale' subject of both poems differently from the way this subject may have been encountered in the source texts; notably, the reader of the English-language version is more aware of the subject's rapid transition from prince to corpse:

Ah ! Soulever avec mes lèvres
Ta moustache tombant à peine
Et trouver ce moelleux dessin
À la fois pervers et câlin
De bouche au retroussis mutin
Qui te donne avec tes yeux clairs,
Ton nez busqué, ton frêle ovale
L'air d'un jeune prince un peu pâle
Sous Louis quinze. Ô bouche fine
Légère, ambiguë, et câline,
D'un rose tendre de pastel.
Et je te vois dans les dentelles
En des culottes de satin,
Nonchalant, jouant de la main
Avec une rose royale.

[Ah, to lift
The trim of your moustache with my lips
And find there the soft outline
Of your sweet, wicked mouth,
Your lips turned up mischievously.
(O light slight mouth of pastel pink,
Cryptic and coy!)
You know, with this frail face,
Curved nose, bright eyes, you seem to me
A pale prince at the court of some Louis.
I see you in a lace cravat
And satin breeches. You blithely stand
Playing with a royal rose in one hand.]
(Sauvage 2009:102-103)

Alangui et suant, beau comme un jeune mort,
Te voilà dans mes bras si pâle si candide,
Tes cheveux sont collés à tes tempes humides
Tes yeux se sont fermés et ton corps est plus lourd.
Te voilà dans mes bras tout endormi d'amour,
Elle s'est endormie aussi ta main inerte,
Vide de tout désir elle demeure ouverte
Et je retiens sur moi ta jeunesse embaumée,
Amour, ta chair suante et si abandonnée.

[You lie in my arms like a beautiful corpse, pale
And slick and frank and languid. Your hair
Sticks to your wet temples, your eyes are closed,
Your body heavier than it had been before.
And felled by love you lie in my embrace,
Asleep. Your hand, too, lies dreaming, quiet,
Half-open it rests empty of desire.
I hold your embalmed youth atop of me,

O love, the flesh that you so freely cede.]
(Sauvage 2009:107)

This is how translation and editing — whether considered as a process of evaluating manuscript drafts or arranging texts in a new edition — interact to yield new, autonomous textual configurations. Sauvage’s texts may be encountered in versions, both as intervals in a process of handwritten genesis and in print across a variety of anthologies. Such versions offer an amount of indeterminacy that may be challenging for a translator used to working off a single, closed-down source text. In preparing Sauvage for publication, some editors, such as Marchal and Messiaen, have prioritized certain variants. Some anthologists, constrained by space, perhaps misreading previous divisions between poems, have erased preexisting material cues indicating boundaries between poems and have created new reading experiences. All these iterations of Sauvage should be welcomed as contributing to the creation of ‘the total text, that is, in the ever expanding and incomplete totality of a text’s centrifugal and self-multiplying manifestations, so that an original can no longer be said to exist’ (Scott 2021: 192). In the absence of such an original, traditional translators’ anxieties about fidelity and equivalence can be shed (Scott 2018: 8). This allows texts to be ‘worked’ (Scott 2018: 4), ‘used’ (Ahmed 2019), or possessed. In the next chapter, I preface my working/using/possessing of Sauvage’s poetry that takes place in *A Sauvage Reader*. I use Chapter 6 to explain the presentation decisions I have made regarding how the final form of the *Reader* may best convey translation as an act of co-authoring and encourage the reader to receive my translation as the extension of Sauvage’s poetry in English.

CHAPTER 6

MAKING A BOOK OF SAUVAGE

In this chapter, I discuss the construction and presentation of *A Sauvage Reader*. Like the anthologists before me, I am constrained by space and time: not everything can be translated and included in my collection. Below, I outline the thematic structure of the *Reader* and describe my selection process. I argue that the *Reader* constitutes a new collection of poetry that inaugurates the English-language Sauvage canon. I draw upon Frank Kermode to illustrate how the identification of what is pleasurable about a text, and working to transmit that pleasure, contribute to a text's renewal and endurance. Considering Kermode alongside Theo Hermans' concept of the translated text as quoted text, I suggest that translation may be imagined as a kind of loving misquotation. This connects to my early brainstorming about the form the *Reader* would take, which drew inspiration from the commonplace book as I tried to figure out a way to compile translation, intertexts, commentary, my original poems, and potentially other types of expression of thought in the *Reader*. Ultimately, as I settled on thematic organization and the *Reader* gained an internal narrative, I abandoned the commonplace book approach for a more linear and dialogue-like presentation – but there are echoes of its ethos in my vision of translated poems as (mis)quoted texts and the way such texts showcase the subjectivity of the compiler. The material presentation of the *Reader* strives to visually separate 'quoted' material (translations) from 'unquoted' material (commentary) but encourages, through a stacked or column-like presentation of its text, a linear reading experience that is akin to the flow of a dialogue between two voices (with other voices chiming in occasionally). I argue that the text should not be read bilingually, which is why the source texts are absent from the *Reader*, but primarily as a new English-language collection, trusting the translator's efforts and welcoming Sauvage in her new English incarnation.

1. Pleasurable departures

The *Reader* is organized by theme. This is an important aspect to Sauvage's newness: nowhere else has Sauvage been presented thematically – unless we count the handful of anthologies referenced in the previous chapter, but in those

cases Sauvage's poetry was predominantly grouped under the theme *poésie féminine*. This organization is an act of radical rewriting. Josephine Balmer, a poet and translator from whose appropriative translations I take inspiration, observed of her reorganization of Catullus, for instance: 'One of the most controversial issues of the translation, however, proved to be its framing. [...] I decided to [...] reorder the traditional, if often controversial numbering of Catullus' poems in the surviving corpus, changing their arrangement from a grouping by meter to that of theme' (2007: 48). In Balmer's reasoning, the existing order was controversial to begin with, and Catullus, as a poet in an 'essentially pre-literate society' (ibid), would not have cared. In Sauvage's case, grouping her work by theme reinforces the idea of the *Reader* as a new work: the six headings that organize the *Reader* do not exist as headings or titles anywhere in Sauvage's French texts. They do, however, crop up with frequency as vocabulary in the bodies of the poems. Therefore, these themes also serve to emphasize the idea that the *Reader* is an act of reading made tangible, the result of rummaging around in, and playing with, the French texts.

I open the *Reader* with the theme of *recueillement*. Baudelairian, this word may mean both meditative reflection and gathering (of poems in a collection, of one's own thoughts). The lyric, for Sauvage, functions as a tool with which to consolidate one's relationship to the world. I move on to *mélancolie*, which emerges from *recueillement* because – as the poems' order and my supplied commentary make clear – the theme of melancholy in Sauvage is often tied to the imagery of reflective, watery surfaces that prompt absorption. Next comes *mystère*. For Sauvage, this word is connected to those threshold moments, birth and death, which bookmark our existence and delineate the inexplicable. I connect this word to incomprehensibility and the limits of translation. The next theme is *correspondance*. Here the *Reader* begins to move into the territory of sexual imagery, using Sauvage's idea of perfect alignment between lovers as a way of describing alignment between translator and translated. *Correspondance* also refers to writer and reader talking to each other across time and the changes of address that translation makes possible. Then comes *possession*, which compares the idea of 'having' a lover to the idea of 'having' a text. Here I creatively work out the issues of transgression and desire, to which I have been referring throughout the chapters of this dissertation. The final theme is *chant*. The desire to sing one's experience and exalt the world, as Sauvage does through her poetry, reconnects to the idea,

manifest in the word *recueillement*, of reflecting upon the world. So *A Sauvage Reader* closes the loop of its narrative, bringing together beginning and end even as I suggest that *chant* is a way of launching one's song or text into the future, into the text's afterlife.

These themes did not present themselves to me immediately. They emerged two years into the project. At first, while I remained unsure of the *Reader's* form, my translation process was eclectic and tentative. Like the anthologists before me, I translated, sometimes in an arbitrary fashion, what pleased or intrigued me or whatever I wished to digest. I attempted to be comprehensive and translated all of *L'Étreinte mystique* (Sauvage 1915c), the results of which were uninspiring and, in my opinion, yielded too narrow a portrait of what Sauvage is capable of in her poetry. Once I had settled on my six themes, my selection process became more methodical, as I sought to include the poems that, in my reading, best served or illustrated my selected themes. Making a given poem serve its theme does not merely involve pointing out the corresponding vocabulary in that poem, but also explaining, in the creative commentary, how this poem may be recontextualized and reread with the appropriate theme in mind.

At the same time, I attempted to broaden the scope of Sauvage's poems and thereby supply a taste of her poetry from all points across her life and corpus. I include several of the popular poems frequently reproduced in anthologies – such as 'My son, I'll hold your head upon my hand' (*Mystère*) and 'My child, pale embryo' (*Mystère*) – but I also supply poems which did not make it into Messiaen's 1929 edition, and which subsequently had little opportunity to resurface alongside mentions of Sauvage. The 1910 and 1913 editions are expansive and, for the francophone reader, worth experiencing in their own right. To focus on post-1929 Sauvage would be to limit her to a set of recycled texts that we see frequently reappear when she is anthologized. Thus, the selection in my *Reader* claims to be broader in scope than any previous edition of Sauvage, for it brings together her love poetry come to light only in the twenty-first century, some of the usual suspects that crop up frequently in anthologies, and some of her earlier poetry that has a tendency to be overlooked by these same anthologies. However, my *Reader* is obviously not exhaustive, and is shorter than any standalone collection by Sauvage. It is not meant to be a translation of one of her collections, and not even to give equal representation – whether through word count or poem count – to each of her

identifiable collections. As the *Reader* began to take shape and I realized how much it could say about translation as well as about Sauvage, my selection process became more governed by the thematic method I have explained above, although digestion and pleasure remained equal motivation for translation. For example, I include a translation of 'I recall' ('*Recueillement*' in *Reader*, Sauvage 1910:49-50) as *Reader's* very first poem, for it kicks off a discussion about the relationship between reflection and writing. I close the *Reader* with 'Let us, my double flute' ('*Chant*' in *Reader*, Sauvage 1910:9-12) because it contributes to the idea of how life and the natural world inspire us to communication and to song. Of course, I also think these poems to be exquisite: 'Let us, my double flute' functions in Sauvage's 1910 edition like an overture and is a musical torrent of sound and bright imagery that overflows with its own vernal delight, with joy at the power to communicate such delight; meanwhile, 'I recall' surprises the reader with its elegant turn as the promise of the sublime is suddenly subverted. Additionally, both poems only feature in the 1910 edition, and so their inclusion in the *Reader* serves to shed light on the substance of Sauvage's earlier compositions, which have heretofore gone unreproduced. Finally, I seek, via translation, to highlight the thematic nuance and poetic melody in these compositions, which may at first glance appear like long, pastoral catalogues of nature scenes. Without denying Sauvage's poetic subject, I aim to tease her away from the tendency to read her work in purely pastoral terms. Yes, the *Reader* opens and closes on rustic imagery: Pan is mentioned in the first poem and the imagery of satyrs is evoked through the reference to the aulos, or 'double flûte', of the final poem. But I wish for the reader to pay equal attention to what Sauvage writes about how poetic verses are like mortar, fashioned out of time and experience. My rearrangement of Sauvage's poems and my commentary help to achieve this.

Translated and arranged thus, the poems now exercise new relationships to one another and open up to new readings. As was the case for the anthologists surveyed in Chapter 5, much of this newness is driven by pleasure. What is perpetuated of Sauvage's corpus, what gains a new lease on life, is often that which the anthologist or translator finds pleasurable. Frank Kermode observes that pleasure plays a role in the transmission and renewal of literary works and their canons. Although Kermode acknowledges that pleasure is obviously subjective (2006: 19), for him pleasure is intertwined with the regeneration of a text. He draws upon Czech critic Jan Mukařovský's definition of aesthetics, in which pleasure is

intertwined with ‘the power of the object to transgress, to depart, interestingly and revealingly, from the accepted ways’ (ibid). There are even negative consequences for texts that fail to depart on their renewing journeys: ‘Failure to undergo change harms the work by reducing the pleasure that arises, perhaps can only arise, from modernity, from the process of defamiliarization,’ writes Kermode (2006: 20). Specifically because pleasure is an ever-changing response, the text, too, demands to be changed so that it can continue to elicit pleasurable responses.

Kermode speaks of the responsibility that critics – and, I add, translators and anthologists – have in renewing texts. He observes that ‘it is our job to create that newness. Our way of doing so may be described as “appropriative,” meaning only that we have to do something *drastic* to a canonical text to make it ours, to make it modern. It must be made to answer our prejudices’ (2006: 37-38, emphasis mine). Kermode’s approach appears to assume that even the most canonical of texts are unstable, rather than fixed. His notion of doing something drastic ‘often amounts to no more than an expression of astonishment, which is of little use unless it induces an equivalent submission in our hearers’ (2006: 48-49). In other words, the task of the critic is to point out to a fellow reader that which is astonishing and to make such astonishment resonate. Like Kermode, Balmer emphasizes how new, contemporary collections of poetry emerge when she works on the classics and is frank about the possession that takes place. For example, for Balmer to translate Catullus is ‘to move Catullus into a new, very different ownership, that of a woman writer/reader’ (2007: 40).

I take Kermode’s ‘[doing] something’ to a text and extrapolate such an act to be more than just an expression of astonishment. It is an act more obviously manipulative in my understanding. I use *A Savage Reader* to suggest that translation is one way to ‘induce an equivalent submission’ in the anglophone reader. To translate and rearrange *Savage* by creating a new collection of poetry that allows for pleasurable departures is to ensure the transmission of her work: this is the beginning of her canon in English, and it is a different one. It is through manipulative renewal – and even sometimes downright misquoting – that texts are able to flourish in their afterlife. Analyzing the example of T. S. Eliot, Kermode stresses how Eliot misquoted the lines Eliot admired most in Thomas Middleton’s *The Revenger’s Tragedy*: ‘The play [Eliot] so much admired thus suffered unconscious emendation [...]. Eliot’s substitutions of certain words brought the

Jacobean play – at least in Eliot’s own reading – closer in line with decadent poetry and the likes of Baudelaire’ (2006: 45). Eliot introduced intertextualities by means of ‘a change, an updating’ (ibid). And in doing so ‘Eliot elevated Middleton and Tourneur to modernity, an essential step towards their preservation’ (ibid: 48). In Kermodé’s view, Middleton’s text was able to flourish through Eliot, through the way Eliot reproduced it ‘incorrectly’ or ‘misquoted’ it. The text that survives is, in Darwinian fashion, the text that mutates.

In light of the Eliot example, it is interesting to consider how Theo Hermans’ concept of translation-as-quotation (2014) may be reconstructed as translation-as-misquotation. In his work on positioning translators, Hermans inverts the traditional hierarchy between the translator and translated text. His vision of translation is that of a source text quoted ‘across the relevant languages’ and therefore ‘embedded’ in the discourse of translation (2014: 293). Hermans sees the translator as someone who negotiates and mediates the source text through translation. However, Hermans goes further and conceives of the translated text as ‘quoted discourse’, which inverts ‘the usual hierarchy between the author and translator’ and thus ‘the translator then appears as the authorial presence that allows, or enables, another voice, the original author’s, to speak in its own name’ (ibid: 292). It seems to me that, in rightly assigning the translator the power to enable another voice to speak, Hermans opens up the possibility of a translator ‘quoting’ this voice ‘incorrectly’, as Eliot does with Middleton. What kinds of newness does such misquotation bring about, especially when performed out of love or pleasure? In Sauvage’s case, Messiaen’s 1929 *Œuvres* constitutes a kind of loving misquotation, as Messiaen quotes Sauvage’s authorial voice to construct a narrative about her, and about himself in the process, that would influence subsequent ‘quotations’ of Sauvage. Shapiro’s translations are misquotations that represent Sauvage with a heavy emphasis on the pastoral aspect. My translations are misquotations that recalibrate Sauvage’s oeuvre with emphasis on what I read to be six essential and astonishing themes.

In the first year of this dissertation, while I was still brainstorming the *Reader’s* form, I reflected at greater depth on the importance of quotation/misquotation to creative and critical practice. For example, quotations could be said to distinguish, by their abundance, a critical text from a creative one. Julio Cortázar, in his book *Imagen de John Keats* – itself a fragmentary blending of

many forms that may be taken up as a model for creative critical work – wryly reflects that the amount of quotations categorizes a text: ‘Either you have the treatise, where quotations proliferate for the pleasure of everyone, or you have the “creative book”, where / gracefully / a single quote bears the honor of the parrot: a perch for a single quote that with one strike, receives the name of epigraph’ (Loksing Moy and Rojas 2019: 14-15). Hartman observed in *Criticism in the Wilderness* (1980) that ‘quotations *can* be where criticism happens’ (Benson and Connors 2014:27). Quotations are instances of direct reported speech, transmitting the original writer’s voice – unless, of course, the original writer’s voice is *misquoted* or filtered. They are often auxiliary to the text in which they find themselves: they support, encrust, or, as in Cortázar’s example, ornament a text. Quotes are spaces of opportunity, too – small openings into other texts, their quotation marks acting like hinges, swinging hatches open and shut. In brainstorming the *Reader*, I considered what type of writing relies heavily on imported material without losing the particular voice of the person putting the text together. What sort of text is personal yet eclectic, original yet borrowed? What kind of book might contain copied-out content alongside commentary, remarks, and creative attempts? These reflections initially kindled the idea of structuring my *Sauvage* translations as a sort of commonplace book.

The commonplace book is a form (or possibly genre) whose definition is highly debatable; nor has the commonplace book retained a single form across centuries of Western, anglophone literary practice and development. Adam Smyth proposes the broader category of ‘commonplace book culture’ as a ‘helpful way to convey’ what is a ‘very wide range of texts and practices’ (2010: 91). The classic image of the commonplace book is one of a personally curated index of aphorisms, which are meant to be employed in spoken or written discourse, thus leading the user towards eloquence and, by extension, a virtuous life (see Crane 1993; Moss 1996; Smyth 2010). Erasmus’ *De Copia Verborum* of 1513 was influential in outlining commonplacing and served as a guide for how students ought to organize quotations under extensive headings. But this rigid prescription did not dominate manuscript production: it was common, even in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to encounter eclectic ‘commonplace’ manuscripts in which aphorisms made room for recipes, ledgers, and poetry. For Smyth, the commonplace book is identifiable by its potential for transmutation: ‘an open-ended capacity to take on

other forms was a central trait of commonplace books' (2010: 94). By the early nineteenth century, commonplaces had morphed into 'literary diaries', although there was still someone around to tell readers how to keep such diaries: the publisher Taylor and Hessey of London printed *The Literary Diary; or, Improved Commonplace Book* between 1794 and 1814 (Hess 2012: 470) with instructions for upgraded commonplacing, moving away from index-like organization and towards the chronological chronicling of one's literary life. Romantic incarnations of the literary diary, such as those belonging to Coleridge, now deliberately mimicked the flexibility found in their predecessors of past centuries. The literary diary drew attention to the processes of thinking and writing, complicated the distinction between texts made for private and public consumption, and mixed replicated content with original thoughts.

The distinction between a literary diary and other types of compendia – such as anthology – may be slim. A literary diary or commonplace book possesses a taxonomic drive that consists of 'gaining intellectual authority and control over vast bodies of knowledge by collection, description, organization' (Jenkins 2016: 1374). Perhaps in a more avowed fashion than the anthology, the literary diary prioritizes personal response as the source of the taxonomic impetus. Commonplace books of the nineteenth century became locations of 'play between original notations and transcribed extractions' (Hess 2012: 471). Such texts offered the opportunity for an 'epistemological framework' that '[mediated] between original and received ideas' (ibid) and became sites of 'process rather than product' (ibid: 466). These characteristics echo the creative critical characteristics outlined at the beginning of this dissertation: creative critical texts may be marked by the absence of textual bounds or borders, may include the documentation of how the thinking process transforms into a written argument, and may contain a helping of personological or intimate modes of address.

Importantly, the quality of intimacy was not synonymous with privacy with respect to the commonplace book. In early nineteenth-century New England, for example, 'life writing' was readily available by anyone and for anyone, as personal literary journals were printed and circulated for consumption: 'Personal document creation in antebellum New England was socially infectious and culturally epidemic' (Zborary and Zboray 2009: 102). Moreover, it was as difficult for the keepers of such books to maintain the distinction between 'diary' and 'commonplace book' as it was

for scholars centuries later to categorize such texts themselves. For the writers, the desire to quote what resonated met with the desire to put down one's own words to paper; the two desires were mutually influential. While for later scholars the variety of forms collected within one 'book' would pose a classificatory headache, this capacity for heterogeneity echoes Smyth's observation of the commonplace book's ability to take on many forms. Ronald Zboray and Mary Zboray observe that, 'While the folks who created these literary items recognized each one's distinct form and purpose (the diary to record daily events, the commonplace book to transcribe extracts from printed matter, the household account book to track expenses, and the scrapbook to house clippings), in practice they often merged formats, so that a diary, for example, could easily morph into a scrapbook or a scrapbook into a commonplace book' (2009: 102-103). Such a book-of-many-forms offered invaluable testimony as to the phenomenology of reading and writing: 'The very moment these documents shift form or genre is often ripe with significance, for it offers a glimpse into the structural relationship between writing as a practice and lived experience' (ibid). A commonplace could contain an account of the diary-keeper's day alongside the keeper's original verses – and these sandwiched between a wry dismissal of a recently-encountered poem by Tennyson (Jenkins 2016: 1380). The commonplace thus blurs the distinction between real life and the reading life, as well as providing a space for reflecting on, or digesting, extraneous texts.

There has been a recent surge of interest in memoirs by translators, or other types of texts by translators which may amount to a type of 'life writing' with respect to translation (Grass and Robert-Foley 2021). The *Reader* not only speaks reflexively about translation, but it functions as a narrative of the translator's experience. Like a commonplace book, it contains content that did not originate with its compiler or keeper, but it nonetheless reflects its keeper's identity. Some portions of the *Reader* are diaristic, for example the section in '*Recueillement*' about Baudelaire, which draws upon a memory to better describe my positioning vis-à-vis Sauvage's texts and so display how my 'autobiography of reading and associating' (Scott 2021: 22) has contributed to my translation and organization of Sauvage in English. Elsewhere, the commonplace practice of copying out quotations becomes apparent, as citations from Donne, Whitman, Woolf and Shakespeare appear. These function as intertexts, giving insight into the literary connections I make as I

write and likewise displaying my 'autobiography of reading' (Scott 2021 :22). Moreover, these quotes – in commonplace fashion – function as anglophone authorities, which lend the wisdom of their discourse to the new collection and legitimize Sauvage in the anglophone sphere.

The concept of 'keeping' a diary or a commonplace book suggests elements of possessiveness and power. 'Keeping' Sauvage implies the authority to restructure her texts into a new, personalized form. This idea is along the lines of the discussion I raise in Chapter 3, where I note that my responsibility towards Sauvage is one of care and use, of keeping her 'in use'. As her keeper, I also ensure her continuation and existence. I function as a self-proclaimed warden of her estate. This may be understood not as an aggressive takeover of Sauvage's property, but instead as taking responsibility for it through translation, for 'taking responsibility for the words in the new language' (Batchelor 2023: 10). The concept of the commonplace also evokes the discussion of ownership and public domain broached in Chapter 1. Is the commonplace, per its name, something shared? Neither can the commonplace be separated from a discussion of quotes, which – quotation marks existing as little visual fences – delineate protected intellectual property. To fail to quote accurately, or to misquote, is an infringement of property: a textual poaching. And yet, the rich history of the commonplace also suggests that quotations may be a site of creation rather than theft or, in the best of cases, polite borrowing. The ethos of the commonplace offers a counterargument to Massumi's argument, addressed Chapter 1, that criticism is inherently different from augmentation (2002: 12-13). Even if quotation is figured as a practice of excision, the existence of commonplace books and anthologies attests to the fact that quotations are a method of creating new texts, of adding something to the world rather than subtracting from it.

2. Material proximity

Given the variety of quotations in the commonplace-like experiment that is *A Sauvage Reader*, the *Reader* emerges as a polyphonic object. I strove to achieve in the *Reader* something akin to Wright's 'translation-with-commentary' of a text by Yoko Tawada, which Wright describes as 'an attempt at answering the question of what Yoko Tawada sounds like in my voice, and what my voice sounds like in Yoko

Tawada' (2013: 30). One may wonder, however, given how both translations and commentary are presented in the translator's voice, just how much of the source text author is actually present or available to the anglophone reader. An especially glaring question for my project is why the *Reader* is not constructed as a bilingual book. Indeed, this may even be expected, given that a bilingual poetry collection is less expensive and time-consuming to produce than, for instance, a bilingual novel. There are also reasons for presenting translated poetry bilingually, as Boase-Beier argues: such reasons include 'the importance of the shape of a poem, including its layout, line-length, and division into stanzas, all of which serve to differentiate poetry from prose as a literary form' (2022: 361). By having at least visual access to the poem being translated, 'the reader is thus encouraged to read – or at least look at – the original poem, too, and thus to read the translation in the awareness of its relationship to that original' (ibid). The translation, aided by the presence of its original, can therefore establish a fruitful relationship between the source and target texts and display 'what this relationship sets into motion' (Scott 2012a: 14). Without a bilingual presentation, it may be questioned to which degree I actually succeed in establishing a relationship between source and target texts. One of the challenges I faced in composing the commentary that punctuates the *Reader* was how to refer to the French text without supplying the entirety of that source text: such instances occur when I wish to refer to particular translation decisions, or to point out important, recurring terms in the source poems. An early attempt at delivering this kind of information looked something like the example in Figure 8:

<p>I've told myself such tender words As nobody can say to <u>me</u>: They do not miss their mark, and <u>soothe</u> A heart that wastes away and bleeds.</p>	<p><i>je me suis</i></p>
<p>Come, I have loved myself so well – I've stroked so well my own two hands With little fingers thin with wanting, For all the lack that ravaged them.</p>	<p><i>je me suis si bien</i> <i>si bien</i> <i>maigres de faim</i> <i>la misère desolée</i></p>
<p>I've pressed my face into the <u>breast</u> Of my soft spirit, held me tight. I wrapped myself around <u>myself</u> As in the way no lover might.</p>	

Figure 8
Preliminary idea of translation accompanied by some of the poem's source text.

Although, as the sample image shows, the French words floating on the side of the English poem can be read as composing a new, minimalist poem on their own, this idea was scrapped owing to the inconsistency of the French words or phrases selected and the complexity of having to explain such selections. I opted instead to articulate in my commentary what I wished to say about French turns of phrase or vocabulary, as well as the capacity of English to express such semantic units, and thus link Sauvage's thematic content to reflections on translation, reading, and writing. I maintained that I would not include source text poems in *A Sauvage Reader*²⁹ – firstly, because I would like this collection to be encountered as the new, anglophone induction to Sauvage, and secondly, because I would like the reader to resist the compulsion to compare (Berman 1994: 65). By letting the source text be, the reader is instead able to test out the translation and see if it 'holds' as a text in its own right (ibid). I do not agree with Boase-Beier that the absence of the source texts in a collection of translated poems prevents us from doing justice to the author and translator, or that it leads us as readers and editors 'to pretend that the poems were originally written in English' (2022: 361). Often, paratexts are put in place to indicate that a translation is a translation without the entirety of the source text necessarily being present. A paratext, as developed by Gérard Genette and separable into the categories of peritext and epitext (1987: 10-11), may be defined as 'a consciously crafted threshold for a text which has the potential to influence the way(s) in which the text is received' (Batchelor 2018: 142). Well-studied paratexts that exist with respect to a translated novel, for instance, may be the words 'translation' or 'translated by' on the title page, the original title in the colophon, and a translator's preface or afterword (Batchelor 2018: 25-27). The entirety of the six chapters in this dissertation may be viewed as a very long translator's preface that serves as paratext to the translations in the *Reader*. In the *Reader* itself there are frequent references to translation decisions within the commentary section. Organized by six themes that reflect both the content of Sauvage's poetry and ways of thinking about translation as a process, Sauvage's poetry is therefore used to say something about translation at every turn. Despite the absence of source texts, it is unlikely that a reader who has followed this dissertation so far will receive my translations as if they were poems originally written in English.

²⁹ The source texts are however presented in Appendix B.

Moreover, I disagree that the absence of the source text makes the translation result less interesting, as Boase-Beier suggests (2022: 361). It may make the translation result less interesting for a particular type of reader – a reader endowed, perhaps, with an existing appreciation of the stakes of literary translation and the complexity of the notion of equivalence. Boase-Beier herself points to the fact that in the wake of Nida (1964), Toury (1995), and Pym (2010) the concept of equivalence has undergone redefinition (2022: 366). It is worth considering what type of equivalence a bilingual presentation may inherently suggest, as well as what degree of translation theory knowledge a reader of a bilingual edition is equipped with. There has been little scholarship on the role of the bilingual edition from a literary perspective in Translation Studies. Most work on bilingualism has a pedagogical slant; robust scholarship on the role of translation and bilingualism exists at the crossroads of translation and Education Studies, especially with regards to language acquisition (Malmkjær 1998; Laviosa 2014; Laviosa and González-Davies 2019). Otherwise, bilingual texts are explored as examples of self-translation (Hokenson and Munson 2007; Hokenson 2017; Wanner 2020). With respect to the actual use of bilingual texts, a study by Walker, Edwards and Blackswell outlines the importance of the material presentation of different language scripts in children’s books, analyzing what such presentation says about the legitimacy and equivalence of languages and texts (1996). In another study, Hewson stresses the pedagogical function of the bilingual book and investigates how such books are used by language learners, arguing that for such readers ‘the target text is the exact and in fact the only equivalent of the source text’ (1993: 152). According to Hewson, the bilingual layout – in which source and target texts are reproduced on facing pages – encourages the language learner to improve their linguistic capabilities by engaging in a visual back-and-forth between the two texts. Such comparison becomes possible only if equivalence of message and form is assumed and not questioned. When Boase-Beier writes that, as an editor of translated texts, she takes equivalence ‘as a given’, trusting the translator ‘to have considered all aspects and worked out how best to render the expression in question in order to create the desired relationship to the original’ (2022:3 68), she speaks from a position of a lifetime of understanding the complexity of a literary translator’s endeavor. Boase-Beier and Scott – who himself calls for the establishing of a fruitful relationship between source and target texts (2012a: 14) – may in fact be

assuming an idea of equivalence that is not compatible with the default pedagogical ethos of a bilingual presentation.

It also remains to be investigated how a bilingual text is divided upon reception into text and paratext, if at all. Translations may of course be read as the paratexts of source texts, as formulated in Genette's original theory (1987: 372), although Batchelor observes that limited scholarly research has been done to date in this direction (2018: 39-40). But it would be interesting to explore how source texts, when present in a dual-language publication, function as paratexts for the translation. Insofar as the inclusion of source texts in a bilingual book has been premeditated by editors and typesetters, the source text is 'consciously crafted' (Batchelor 2018: 142). Insofar as the source text has been penned by the source text author, it fulfils Genette's criteria of peritexts being connected to authorial intention (ibid: 27). The source text, as it exists in a bilingual edition, has the potential to influence how the translation is received: notably, the presence of the source text may, for a bilingual reader, prompt an encounter with the translation that consists of scouring the translation for 'deviations' or 'errors'. If, as Hewson argues, a bilingual text prompts a back-and-forth reading experience, then a reader who is already competent in the two languages may engage in a game of comparison in which the translation is scrutinized through the lens – or from the 'seuil' [threshold] (Genette 1987: 7-8) – of the source text.

The following example offers anecdotal, but considerably insightful evidence: upon calling up a copy of Bassnett's *Exchanging Lives* from the library, I was treated to evidence of a spot-the-difference reading experience, in which a reader went about circling in pencil the places where Bassnett's English translation differed from Pizarnik's Spanish texts. Was the reader confused by what may be perceived as departures from the 'gloss' translations of certain words and by the changes in articles? Did they disagree, or were they simply curious to know why these decisions were made? Bassnett offers no explanation of her translation process beyond her introduction, in which she hints at the creativity of language and at the contagion of that creativity. The translator writes, 'I had to learn [Pizarnik's] special language, learn something of the intricate way in which she used Spanish creatively to shape her thoughts into poems that are uniquely hers, and in the process of learning how Pizarnik used language, I found my own language changing' (2002: 8-9). (The pencil-wielding reader here circled the word 'learn' and added a question

mark.) Bassnett describes translation as the 'experience of freeing' Pizarnick's poetry and recreating it in English' (ibid), but the reader appears puzzled by this liberation. They appear to ask, why is 'recollections' given for the Spanish 'memoria'? Why 'despair' for 'tristeza'? Why 'a glass' when 'el vaso'? 'Homes' for 'moradas'? (Bassnett 2002: 38). Why has 'de un animal' become 'like an animal' (ibid: 42)?

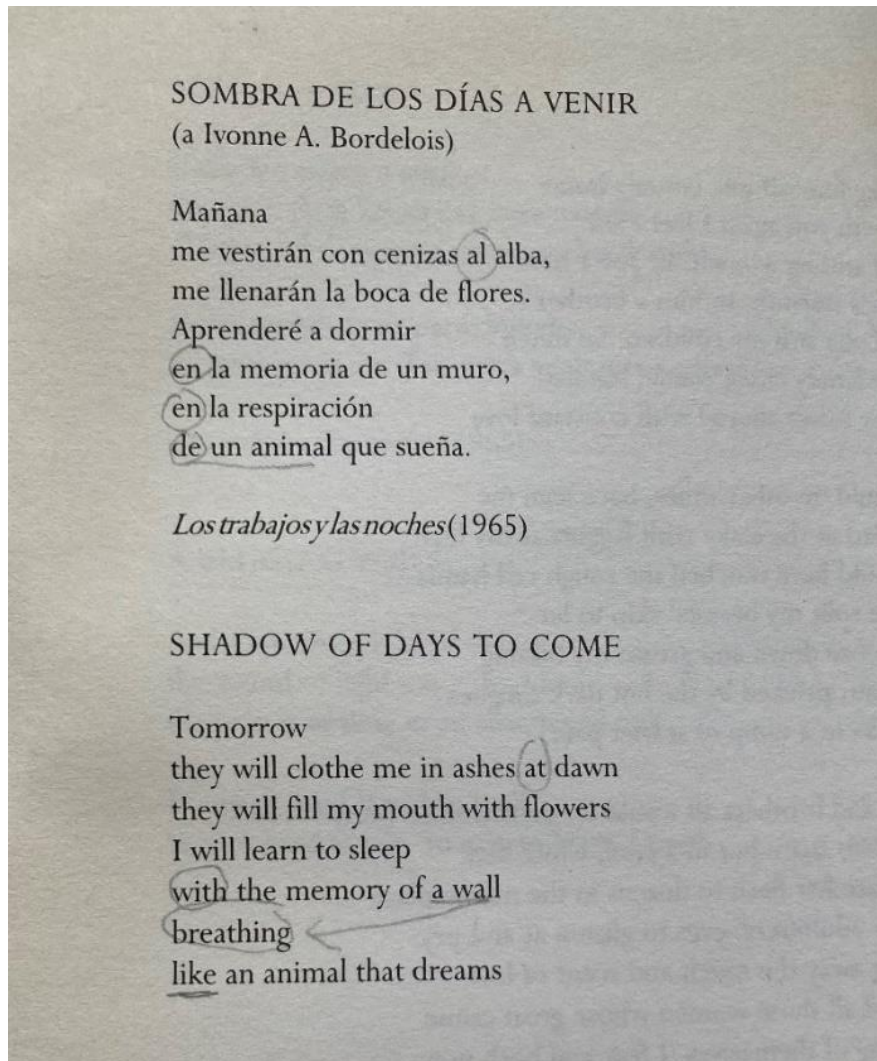


Figure 9

Page 42 of my library copy of Bassnett and Pizarnick's *Exchanging Lives* (2002). What may be perceived as 'deviations' are marked by an unknown reader in pencil in both source and target texts.

The reader, looking onto Bassnett's translations out of the 'vestibule' (Genette 1987: 8) of the source text, may have found the translation deviant in applying too inflexible a notion of translation to their reading, one governed by word-for-word bilingual dictionary equivalences. Perhaps Boase-Beier would not have read Bassnett's translations and the accompanying source texts in the same manner as this reader. Moreover, as Batchelor observes – and as Hewson argues (1993) – material presentation matters when it comes to influencing the reception of a text: 'Many paratexts [...] such as book cover, trailers, websites, transmedia stories and video prefaces, are image-based or combine linguistic and visual elements' (Batchelor 2018: 174). If the source text is given before the target text, either above the translation or on the left-hand page for an audience whose language script runs left to right, it is more likely to function as the threshold or vestibule through which a reader *must* pass if they are equipped with the linguistic capability to do so. (By contrast, if source texts are attached in an appendix, they become more like an attic into which the bored party guest may accidentally wander out of their own curiosity.)

I raise these points to suggest that the full nuances of the bilingual edition remain to be examined, especially from a literary perspective in Translation Studies. The materiality of the bilingual edition may set up a specific kind of reading of its translations and may assign different functions to the texts it contains. With *A Savage Reader*, it is not my intention to avoid answering the kind of questions that Bassnett's reader evidently had for Bassnett's translations; nor do I hope that my reader, denied the source texts, fails to pose such questions in the first place. In the *Reader*, my commentary frequently refers to vocabulary choices and translation decisions. I wish translation to be omnipresent: I believe I have achieved this through the organization of the *Reader's* themes, which keep the idea of translation reflexively foregrounded. By keeping the French terms for my section titles, I remind the reader that there is another language from which the *Reader* springs – translation as well as commentary. By encouraging a linear flow rather than a back-and-forth, I seek to integrate commentary and translation and to place them on an even footing. The commentary becomes not an auxiliary, to be addressed once the reader has completed a comparison of source and target texts; instead, it participates in the conversation, responding to the translated poem that precedes it and prompting the translated poem that follows. The commentary, in binding together my selection of translated texts, also performs a cohesive role as it

constructs narratives about the themes I present and encourages Sauvage's texts to be put to new work – for instance, in supporting the idea of translation as a type of correspondence, denoting not only alignment but also dialogue.

A layout that encourages linearity, rather than comparison, therefore feels necessary for the *Reader*. To take an example, Wright's translation of Tawada presents the translated text and the translator's commentary in two alternating columns, with Tawada on the left side of the page and Wright on the right (2013). The reader is invited to follow the two alternating voices and to perceive Wright's commentary, with its references to intertexts and notes on translations of particular terms, as integral to this experience of encountering Tawada's text. With its column layout, Wright's translation rewards being read on a screen – rewards scrolling rather than the turning of pages that occurs when handling a printed and bound book. The separation of translated text and translator's text into columns helps to achieve, materially, a distinction between the two voices, although everything could also be perceived as being filtered through Wright (Tawada's source text is not provided). The presentation of the translation in this manner creates a translator-centered textual object which does not entirely eclipse the difference between translation and commentary. For comparison, consider Balmer's poetry collection, *The Word for Sorrow*, which translates and repurposes selections from Ovid's *Tristia* to create a new, anglophone collection about grief (2009). Without the source texts (which are not provided) and a knowledge of Latin, there can be no telling precisely how Balmer manipulates Ovid into new forms. Balmer does supply endnotes indicating which Ovid poems she appropriates, but there is no back-and-forth available to the reader, only the target text with its standalone literariness, demanding the reader's encounter without recourse to something else, without revealing precisely where Ovid ends and where Balmer begins, and vice-versa.

With *A Sauvage Reader*, I aimed for something in between Wright's double column layout and Balmer's endnotes. I wanted to merge my commentary with Sauvage's poems to a greater extent than what occurs in Wright's book, and for there to be a little more distinction than in Balmer's. My translations of Sauvage are interlayered with the translator's commentary, so that the reader follows one, single column down the page. The poems mark the margins: I desired for everything other than translated texts by Sauvage, which is to say the commentary and other types of quotations, to fall in line with the translations visually, and thus to be dictated by

the translations of the poems. This not only encourages linear, dialogue-like flow, but also formally echoes the poetic tone of the commentary. ‘The margin,’ as Scott observes, ‘testifies to the will to create a verse-line, a meter’ (2012a: 21). My commentary reflects the contagion of creativity that Bassnett encounters in translation (2002: 8-9), and so it has its own creative cadence and rhythm. In order to fully delineate where Sauvage’s texts end and where other texts begin, I played with the color scheme. Poems by Sauvage are presented in blue. Other citations – texts not by Sauvage or myself – are presented in green. The words I have composed are presented in black. Color therefore helps to distinguish between voices, lending a visual degree of difference to a textual object in which my own voice is arguably the most dominant one.

Other creative critical practitioners have experimented with margins and font color to create texts that interweave different strains of argument or thought. In *Shelley With Benjamin*, described as a ‘critical mosaic’, Mathelinda Nabugodi uses formatting to present ‘marginal annotations’ and ‘interlinear interruptions’ (2023: xvi-xvii). The marginal annotations, presented in the margins of the main text, allow the author to be anecdotally present and ‘frame [her] interpretation even though they obviously are of no relevance for the texts under discussion. Their purpose is to highlight the boundary between the personal and the critical even as they echo some of the central themes in this part of the book’ (ibid). The interlinear interruptions, presented in italicized, grey font, ‘exceed’ the author’s reading of Shelley and Benjamin but address questions of racialized slavery and anti-Black racism that ‘cannot be ignored’ (ibid: xvii). The grey font marks out the interruptions to be distinct from the discussion of the writers as presented in unitalicized black text, and yet the interruptions are embedded in the flow of the text and cannot be voluntarily skipped over or ‘ignored’. In this way, formatting and font color allow Nabugodi to emphasize both the positioning of herself as a scholar and to simultaneously interrupt the mainstream reading of canonical European literary figures with important testimony; the choice behind the material presentation of this testimony, moreover, ‘testifies to the near-invisibility of the anti-Black violence on which European culture is built’ (ibid: xiii).

Like in Nabugodi’s book, my formatting decisions in *A Sauvage Reader* aim at both a degree of cohesion and separation. On the one hand, I mean for the margins to align all text in the *Reader* and so to poeticize everything, to erase any

difference in salience and thus to preempt division of the *Reader* into text and paratext. On the other hand, my use of different colors distinguishes the provenance of texts in this *Reader*. For an attempt at a hybrid text that aspires to full fusion and intimacy, the result remains visually delineated; translations, quotes and commentary intermesh only to a limited extent. They lie atop one another, perhaps regretful over ‘the impossibility of achieving the perfect union they cause to be craved [...]’. Texts, no more than bodies, cannot pierce, nor lose themselves in one another’ (Reynolds 2011:132). If the texts in this *Reader* remain separate like bodies, let them at least be bodies of equal stature, who all contribute to an appreciation of Sauvage and of a translation that is greater than the sum of its parts.

I add that the commentary and citations often visually serve the pedestrian function of separating one Sauvage poem from another (thereby offering a solution to the problem encountered by some anthologists, who, by removing the visual markers of where one poem ends and another begins, changed the ways in which a reader approaches Sauvage’s texts, as discussed in Chapter 5). But the commentary also serves to link disparate poems together, as for example, in the section ‘*Mystère*’, where I use a quote from Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* (1927) to connect two poems by Sauvage and also highlight correspondences between the texts that would otherwise have gone unremarked. The ‘cherry-plucking bird’ by whom the child is amused in Sauvage’s poem speaks, in turn, to the children who are ‘netted in their cots like birds among cherries’ in Woolf. Both Woolf and Sauvage, I suggest, speak in their own ways about a parent’s distress at the thought of the disillusionment that growing up brings. This exchange leads to yet another passage from *To the Lighthouse* about concern for the survival of one’s intellectual legacy, which in turn leads to a personal remark by Sauvage’s about the reception of her work. Thus the commentary, citations, and Sauvage poems form a new, polyphonic, and intertextual narrative in which multiple sources speak to each other.

The reader of the *Reader* is invited to read monolingually, linearly, with ample room in the margins provided for scribbling. The reader, too, may pay attention to their reading experience and choose to jot down notes for the translation of this experience. Here I close this long translator’s preface, after many thousands of words, and invite you at last to come meet my Sauvage.

A SAUVAGE READER



What device for becoming, like waters poured into one jar, inextricably the same, one with the object adored? Could the body achieve it, or the mind, subtly mingling in the intricate passages of the brain? or the heart? Could loving, as people called it, make her and Mrs Ramsay one? for it was not knowledge but unity that she desired, not inscriptions on tablets, but intimacy itself, which is knowledge, she had thought, leaning her head on Mrs Ramsay's knee.

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (2019: 57)

Ainsi, lecteur, je suis moi-même la matière de mon livre : ce n'est pas raison que tu emploies ton loisir en un sujet si frivole et si vain.

Thus, reader, myself am the matter of my book: there's no reason thou shouldst employ thy leisure about so frivolous and vain a subject.

Montaigne, *Essais I* (1965: 49)
English translation by Charles Cotton (1877)

This *Reader* is presented as a new, English-language collection of poems by Cécile Sauvage.

There are no titles for the poems in this collection, even if certain poems had titles in their earliest, French-language editions. I do not indicate as to which specific French-language collections the poems in this collection have come from. The poems have been remixed to create a new narrative arc for Sauvage, distinct from Pierre Messiaen's organization of her work and from any anthology in which she has been featured. This is a never-before-seen Sauvage, a Sauvage *inouïe*. Owing to the inclusion of my voice and the voices of other, established poets (for the English Sauvage and I are not so established, not yet, and we prop ourselves up through other authorities), this presentation is less like a solo concert, more choral.

The only titles are those which refer to the sections by which this *Reader* is organized. Each of the sections is a theme that is pivotal in Sauvage's poetry, which is to say that the titular word in question, and the idea it represents, recur with frequency in her poems. Because such organization constitutes an interpretive argument, this *Reader* functions as a course reader you may have encountered in classes. This collection therefore has pedagogical ambition: I intend to tell you something about Sauvage and her ideas, ideally convincingly.

It is also my commonplace or notebook. I am the reader to which the collection's title refers – and so are you. Here I have organized what may be read as quotations from Sauvage in a particular order because I believe this best highlights the wisdom that can be found in her texts. I wrote down my own reflections, or quotations from other bearers of wisdom, in the manner I thought would best contribute to the mutual enrichment of the different voices. My commentary is a translator's account of a project and it is an argument for better understanding translation. It occasionally narrates my thought process about translating an individual word or a line. It always strives to conceptualize translation in Sauvage's terms. Sauvage writes about reflection, kinship, incomprehension, possession, continuation. I write that translation can be understood as reflection, kinship, incomprehension, possession, continuation.

I encourage this to be read in the order in which it is presented, because it has an internal narrative. I start with the idea of collection, move on to reflection, then to unknowing. I continue through the concepts of alignment and dialogue, then through possession, and finally arrive at the idea of letting go – for the book must be let go and released into the world. It flits away to other horizons, to new readerships, miscellanies, reinterpretations.

D.C.

RECUEILLEMENT

I recall
The instant wrapped around the soul of plants,
A golden fleet sailing through space, the bells
Of sheep that in a mournful stream cascade,
While Aries' horn impales the atmosphere.
I am alone. The hills flush in ecstasy,
The flowers and houses close. The evening comes.
A blissful glow-worm living in a jar
Gleams like a tear in a dark and velvet eye;
The trampled fennel gives off a fierce scent,
As a grasshopper its cordial drools
When it butts its mouth against a finger.
I hear a voice's murmur in the quiet – perhaps
It is the sound of planets shuffling, borne
On the wind that tears from open crop-fields;
Perhaps the tidy bees have gone to sleep
And left their music wandering in the bushes;
The boughs of linden trees are whispering
To some abstract and silent, sylvan Pan;
Meanwhile the crickets snore their fat notes,
The astral she-bear whirls a minuet.
What odd chill coats my forehead,
Spreads to my hands? I am not cold. I wait.
An indistinct malaise roils beneath my ribs:
Is this not the long-awaited moment
Of elusive happiness? So strong, it overcomes?
A mist unfurls. No god tears apart the sky
To come down to me in dove form. In the darkness,
My uncertain step knocks against a wall.

I recall when I first encountered the French word *recueillement*. Unlike most words, it occupies a particular spot in my memory. During eighth-grade French at a middle school in Brooklyn, our teachers had the idea to hold a poetry recitation competition. The teachers selected the poems; I remember the different grades were assigned different poems, so that, in landing on Charles Baudelaire's 'Recueillement' (2023), I thought my age group had unfairly drawn the short straw.

Our teacher Michel – a tall man, long-necked, long-wristed, always in a bowtie, somehow embodying both the Brooklyn spirit (in the American fashion, his clothes always appeared sized at an overestimate) and the French (he made us bouillabaisse during home economics) – took us through 'Recueillement' with the cheerful but abstracted air of someone who did not expect us to get very far. Indeed, Baudelaire's poem was an exercise in utterance without comprehension: eighth-grade public school French had not got us as far as the imperative, so that, from the outset, when we yawned *SoissageômaDouleur* in one breath, the poem remained a mystery.

After some debate, the teachers settled on translating the word *recueillement* as 'meditation'. It is, they said, like, like – thinking; like sitting down and gathering your thoughts. They marked up our copies of the poem for us, adding slashes for pauses and swoopy links for liaisons. Although this gave some structure to our declamation, it did not help us to understand what exactly Baudelaire's *défunes années* were, nor why they hung from balconies, nor did it generally demystify the activity the poem's speaker was supposedly involved in.

Recueillement is, indeed, often translated in a bilingual dictionary as 'meditation'. It could also be read as recollection or remembrance. It is a practice of turning one's thoughts away from the external world and towards one's spiritual life. The prefix *re-* joins the verb *cueillir*, which itself means to pick, to harvest, to gather. *Recueillir* and *cueillir* jostle the verb *accueillir*, to welcome, to receive. All three verbs suggest the motion of gathering up into one's arms or into oneself.

What I find curious now about Baudelaire's poem is the fact that his *recueillement* is not a strictly introspective action. If anything, Baudelaire's speaker is looking outward and identifying where his life intersects with the environment. Past years hang from balconies in the sky, Regret surges, smiling, from the water, the sun crawls for

a kip beneath an arch. This practice of *recueillement* is connected – at the very least (the very most?) lexically – to the mass of mortals who, beneath Pleasure’s whip, ‘va cueillir des remords dans la fête servile’ (Baudelaire 2023). If the hedonist denizens of the city are out gathering remorse and regrets, then what is the poem’s speaker, in turn, re-gathering? What are the affinities between *recueillement* and observation of the external world? Between *recueillement* and writing?

I remember being little,
In the silence being cold.
The weight of an indifferent stare
Was hard to bear, heavy to hold.

O my withdrawn youth, I see you
Small and scrunched into a ball –
Sitting gathering the voices
Of your near-forgotten soul.

In one of Sauvage’s poems, the speaker stands and eyes her own youth from a distance. Her youth is ‘*toute petite et repliée / assise et recueillant les voix / de ton âme presque oubliée*’. The past self is *repliée*, or literally folded back upon herself. She is gathering ‘voices’ – suggesting there is some small chaos requiring organization, a reining-in.

I wish to keep in mind this idea that *recueillement* has something to do with the attempted imposition of order upon disorder; that, in its quality of contemplation, it relates to the sense-making processes of thinking and writing. A kind of system, an organization, lurks within the verbs *cueillir* and *recueillir*: one does not indiscriminately harvest everything. The French word for a collection of poems is *recueil*. What kind of affinities might exist between collecting poems and collecting oneself?

And then, what is to ‘to collect oneself’? To regain control, to remember one’s own boundaries (bodily, mental, textual); to compose oneself – in verse, into verses.

I've told myself such tender words
As nobody can say to me;
They do not miss their mark, and soothe
A heart that wastes away and bleeds.

Come, I have loved myself so well –
I've stroked so well my own two hands
With little fingers thin with wanting,
For all the lack that ravaged them.

I've pressed my face into the breast
Of my soft spirit, held me tight.
I wrapped myself around myself
As in the way no lover might.

The French language is aided by an elegant way of folding back onto itself in the form of reflexive verbs. So when Sauvage writes, 'je me suis dit' or 'je me suis bien aimée', there is a reflexive action happening not only as part of the speaker's mental and emotional state, but in real-time on the level of language, too. Meanwhile, English requires the addition of the clumsy '-self' suffix, which, trailing along, usually feels less an instance of reflexivity than an afterthought.

I sit before my door
 In the evening sun;
From the breeze, the garden
 And the orchard come
Rumors breathing of
 The tepid foliage,
But my unmoving heart
 To such news is strange.
I notice the soft hills
 That roll on as they please,
My hands lie on the cloth
 Covering my knees,
I sink as I observe
 These frail and slender hands,
As if all of my body
 Were contained in them.

Stoicism and acts of reflexive gathering: consider the metaphor kicked off by Seneca about bees to influence metaphors about imitation and creativity in the Western world. In a letter to Lucilius, Seneca suggests the apian way: we ought to be like the bees who collect nectar from a variety of flowers and rearrange the fruits of their labors in their hives. We ought 'to copy these bees, and sift whatever we have gathered from a varied course of reading, for such things are better preserved if they are kept separate; then, by applying the supervising care with which our nature has endowed us, – in other words, our natural gifts, – we should so blend those several flavours into one delicious compound that, even though it betrays its origin, yet it nevertheless is clearly a different thing from that whence it came' (1920, English translation by Richard Gummere).

From within my cherished house
I watch the days that trickle by:
The sun, the rain, the mist by turns
Will laugh, then melt, and then take flight.
Naught but the evenings, where I gather
The final inhale full of sky;
Naught but the bees, naught but the leaves
That by the wall in death do lie.

'Once Seneca strengthens his advice to imitate the bees with another image of transformation, digestion, one realizes that he is arguing for transformative imitation, not merely eclectic gathering. The bees convert flowers into honey by a process [...] similar to digestion' (Pigman III 1980: 4-5).

Translation is a transformative type of imitation – especially when the translator rearranges the poems to form an entirely new reading.

Less glamorously, the translator could be imagined as a kind of regurgitator, who heaves up the digested product like a bird bringing back food for its young. (Here I am mixing my metaphors, but then, Sauvage likes both the birds and the bees.)

It is not good for us *not* to metabolize, writes Petrarch. 'Take care that what you have gathered does not long remain in its original form inside of you: the bees would not be glorious if they did not convert what they found into something different and something better' (cited in Pigman III 1980:7).

And yet, I also want to sing
Like the buoyant bumblebee,
And also laugh just like the bee
Upon the sunning rose in spring.

Though I am blue like open fields,
Like joyous bee I chase the gloom,
In the day that breathes in turns
Both vermilion and brume.

Ronsard, the sixteenth-century French poet admired by Sauvage, lauded in a sonnet a contemporary's 'Book of Miscellanies', writing,

'Ainsy qu'au mois d'avril on voit, de fleur en fleur,
When in the month of April, we see from flower to flower
De jardin en jardin, l'ingenieuse [*sic*] abeille,
And from garden to garden, the ingenious bee
Voleter et piller une moisson vermeille [...]
Fluttering and plundering a vermilion harvest
De science en science et d'auteur en auteur [...]
From this and that science, this and that author
Il ne faut plus charger du faix de tant de livres
Nos estudes en vain ; celuy que tu nous livres
Seul en vaut un millier, des Muses approuvé'
There is no need to weigh down our studies in vain with
the burden of many books: the one you offer is worth a
million, approved by the Muses. (1866: 357-58)

Ronsard, though claiming that his acquaintance's compendium is better than all the books from which its contents have been sourced, nevertheless does not use the verb *cueillir* to describe what the bee does, but rather *piller*: the bee pillages, steals, swipes. The line between 'collection' and 'theft', as we shall see, is a fine one.

In lush grass
A table stands
Wine glasses pass
From hand to hand
Sun-spotted; grapes
And peaches dusted
With specks of rain,
Abundant blossoms.
I want to drink and my hand trembles.
Let's not appear to drink together.
A golden pear, where hums a bee
Falls from its tree
On merry friends.
The soft wind lulls.
I love your hand,
Your glass, and your bread.
I will eat your bread with such adoration.

Sauvage likes bees: for their flight, their collective labor, and for their connection to pollen, for their role in aiding cross-fertilization and in helping to grow the fecund, vegetal world from which she takes so much inspiration and pleasure.

Watch out for bees as we go.

MÉLANCOLIE

My dove Melancholy,
You've tender eyes and grey plumes,
At day's end you follow me
To the pond under the moon;

Like a wordless little sister
You peck at my thin arm,
Your kiss a pointy fingernail
Upon a slender hand.

As a pensive state, or a state of slow-paced reflection, melancholy is like *recueillement*. It will therefore be no surprise to encounter the reflective surfaces that populate Sauvage's poetry – ponds, rivers, mirrors. This may speak less of vanity than of a desire to make out one's own contours.

What shall I be, o mournful thought,
Without your grey wing at my back
By which, more so than any luscious coat
I feel caressed?

And yet, it is possible to read something of the stereotype of the wateriness of women in Sauvage's writing – especially for someone coming from a literary culture reared on Shakespeare's Ophelia. It is difficult, as an anglophone reader, to stave off a feeling of anxiety in watching Sauvage's speakers walk towards ponds, Melancholy on their heels. Might not these women be off to fulfil a cultural prophecy?

I like, little white violets,
How you frame my face,
Setting me in springtime
As I lean over the pond.

See how my poor and faded dress
Spreads out across the water, and,
Beribboned by the weeds,
Is buoyed by the swell.

See how the weeping birch
Sheds its shifting darkness,
That settles like a mantle
Of fine lace around my heart.

At her pond, Sauvage finds the violets that Ophelia could not find – ‘I would / give you some violets, but they withered all’ (Shakespeare 2023: 4.5.207-208).

What collects at the bottom of a pond?

Oh do not think I am too weepy:
I am serene during the day,
Like the velvet mountain stream
That through the long leaves winds its way.

I reflect with somber rhythm
Clouds, black tree, and parted grass;
But I like silence, and the shadow
That leans over my looking glass.

‘When down her weedy trophies and herself / Fell in the weeping brook,’ recounts Gertrude as she announces Ophelia’s death. ‘Her clothes spread wide, / And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up’ (Shakespeare 2023: 4.7.199-201).

You nude, reflecting woman, floating on the water,
As white lilies and thin birches pass on either side,
Your arms are crossed, your legs stretched out
 before you,
With all your beauty vaguely to the surface rising,
What is it that you eye in the low and grey sky?
Can you feel you are flowing down this somnolent river,
Which, with its calm and invisible motion,
Carries you off, leaving fixed banks behind?

Water, in *Sauvage*, is either flowing or still. It has attractive power: something about water fascinates the speaker and water is an integral part of the landscape. We could consider what *Sauvage* finds at the watering hole when she arrives there, what water offers. If Shakespeare's Ophelia goes to the water to die, Melville's Ishmael goes to the water, apparently, to revitalize: to 'see the watery part of the world' is a way 'of driving off the spleen' (Melville 1892: 7). Here, too, it is spleen, malaise, or melancholy that prompts the movement towards water. It is worth asking whether Ophelia and Ishmael's results are all that different: if for Ishmael the sea is 'substitute for pistol and ball' (ibid), perhaps the water is not a way of escaping death but only of renegotiating with it. Water still remains the substance that makes dissolution possible.

My head, lean over the white water, untangle
Your long hair in it; let the water pass and play
Through it, bearing your locks away upon the tide
In the vegetal and floating sleep of algae.
Let the water's sedate and murmuring sweep
Carry out of your mind this impalpable swell
Of thoughts, mirages, along with your tresses
That mix their flowing litheness with the current.

I wish to suggest (as Ishmael and Sauvage's speakers likely know) that something might come out of losing oneself in a pond, as something comes out of losing oneself in a text. Melancholy, defined not only as dejection but also as pensiveness, implies that the organization of one's thoughts may well require a kind of lassitude – a settling, a sinking, a motion towards stillness that in turn makes reflection possible. What sinks to the bottom of a pond? What can't be seen in its depths? What is seen looking back?

Soon as the water wishes, tired of being still,
To shake out its weedy tresses underneath the sun,
The springtime wind will push open my door, and pull
Me from my slumber, saying, Come:
Take my airy hand, the snow is melted now,
The rooftops will be budding. The young moss,
Rug-like, has hidden in the earth old memories.
The darkness hanging in the trees is thinner.
Your heart is surely breaking from so long a winter –
Listen to the water as it sings like silver,
Like a nightingale.

I'll answer: Let us go.

And perhaps in my heart that was aching
There will be little birds chirping,
Who, for fear the springtime might die
Before its time in my body,
Will have hatched from their eggs.

Sometimes, in writing, it is difficult to unstick yourself from a frozen place. This is perhaps where translation holds a slight advantage over trying to put your own thoughts to paper. With a translation, you are never at a loss for words: there are always more words waiting for you on the page – words awaiting translation, or words waiting to be axed, because, in the process of translating a single word, you have probably generated too many.

When not working off an immediate text (for even when we attempt to put our 'own' words to paper there are previous words, previous texts lurking behind words we think to be our own) it feels easier to become stuck. And then, once you are stuck, you think the whole world is conspired against you, and nothing will get done, and nothing will go right, and you cannot write.

The crows who closely follow
My small and languid strides
Perched in a circle in a field
Beneath the hoary sky –
They have the look of enemies
Conspiring all to swallow me
Alive, soon as the moon is out.

I shall see the moon draw away
Like bird into mist, at the hour
When misery in its pallor
Would compel my escape.
And the tree will say to me: stay,
Why leave? There is nothing as sweet
As the flaxen autumn who weeps
With her leaves onto your nape.

Sometimes in my mirror, where indolence resides,
I spy myself a dream, with silence at my back,
And in there is the window, where summer leaves are led
By the gentle wind in their noiseless dance,
While atoms of a golden mist against my head
Disintegrate. My frame is light and wispy, like
A print that's poorly pressed. And when within this scene
The shapes, the day, at last more tangible appear,
I hesitantly touch the coming atmosphere
As if a slice of sky carved away from earth.
Then my uncertain soul, which hovered in between
My mournful being and my pale, reflected twin,
Takes off. At once, I feel its warmth abandon me
And sense that now it lives but in my reflection.

The preceding poem displays the characteristic denseness of Sauvage's imagery. At once abstract and tangible, the described moment of absorption is a sequence of literal *mise-en-abymes*, of right angles within right angles. We could suppose the mirror mentioned in the poem is rectangular (though it could be round, more like a pond). Within the mirror is the window, presumably reflected. Sauvage speaks of how silence is a background, '*un fond de silence*', and the scene is compared to a *tableau*, or a painting; the speaker's body has *le cadre*, or a frame, that is as faint as an *estampe*, a print or a block-cut. The reflections bounce each other back infinitely. Imagine a sequence of infinite mirrors. Small wonder that the speaker loses herself in it.

'*Et je m'abîme*', Sauvage writes to say, 'I sink, observing these pale and slender hands / As if all of my body were contained in them.'

The page, too, is a rectangular object, made for sinking into, for losing ourselves in. For seeing ourselves reflected in it – finding ourselves in the text that greets us there, in the text that we put there.

And then, poems are often defined by their shapes: their shape is partly what distinguishes them from prose. Poems, even prose poems, are visually like '*objects such as the postcard, envelope, room on a floor plan, and frame*' (Hetherington and Atherton 2020: 83). To that list I add, mirror.

This eve I laughed, you see – a ringing laugh
For laughter's sake; to feel between my icy teeth
This gaiety that falls in pearls, trembling,
Drop by drop.

Perhaps we should have been happier, had we been less
absorbed.

For it was ultimately absorption that was Ophelia's
demise.

Protracted silence around us.
This head in my lap, harsh and white
Rejoins the stillness of the earth.
The eyes are closed over a smile
That is no more, lips sealed, the nose
Unbreathing. In the silent air
The odd sigh rises, peters out.
The longer I hold your face close,
The more I see it was made of dream-stuff.

Two men as if clothed in shade
Walk across the murky ley,
Vanishing into the chase
Where the clouds evaporate.
The bare outline of a dog
Follows them, head low and mute.
We don't know what thinks the brute,
Nor why these men wrapped in fog
March through the dark.

Heavy steps: man and son lead on their cow
Along the road that gleams after the rain.
The sun at daybreak's velveteen and grey
And blankets sleepily the dreaming hills. The cow
Now bids farewell to her last daybreak; never
Again the green field where she swung her udder,
Heavy, rich with the pleasure of spring plunder.
And yet how this dawn seems to go on forever!

Just there, in a field, cows walk on ahead.
It's evening and their hides are looking cold.
The valley's bluer, the peasant girl is singing,
The quiet broken by her guttural voice,
Which seems to come from elsewhere or to be
A call made by a wild and simple beast.
Then she falls quiet as the birches shake
Beneath the night-time wind; and so the cows
Return through greying space with even step,
Their noses huddled to each other's tails,
The peasant girl is farther still, within
The darkness pulling on its shapeless dress.

Over the land of the dead
Rings a bell
Its note quakes
Rises, trembles, and fades.
In the silence of the fell
A long coffin winds its way,
By keening women borne.
And we go smiling upon
The dew of our immortal turf.
Walking in between the blossoms,
Azure chalices and clusters.
Sway, you treetops
Sway, bellflowers
 O light wind and peace
 Mute common darters.
The lithe tendrils of the trees
With a murmur fuse and heave
Downy birds with trembling wings
Fly torpidly from birch to alder.
 The breeze shoulders
 The smooth motions of our arms
 Our slender legs
 Tossed up like twigs.
 The air lifts
 Around our faces
 Our long hair,
 The pale, blue air.

What awaits us after death?
What is a textual death?
How can translation prevent a textual death?

A moment of beauty may not be enough to stave off
death, but may, temporarily, deflect from it.

Look there, where songbirds murmur
Beneath the tree boughs in the vale:
All those crosses in a line
Are mournful blades that, in our time,
Will fix us to the ground.
And yet – that nightingale...

MYSTÈRE

My child, pale embryo, you who sleep
As a little god sleeps dead within a casket
Of glass; who, like a fish beneath the reeds
Existence brushes in its dreaming state.

You live as flowers live, unconscious as
The lily with its candor half-unfurled,
Unknowing of what depths its roots attain
When drawing from the earth its nourishment.

Sweet bloom, you have no dew, no buzzing bee;
It is my sap which courses through your veins
And gives you life and soul. You quake within
My core, your greedy contours taking shape.

You know not of your body's countless tendrils
Sunk deep into my young, maternal soil;
This is a secret knowledge, innocent,
Your eyes will never learn it from a book.

Who could describe the closeness of our union?
You're mine, as daybreak to the earth belongs,
My life is spun around you, warm as wool,
Your small limbs sprout in mystery.

My life encloses you like the green husk
That hides the milky almond; like a pod
All soft and lined with wrinkles, I contain
The silky infant seed within my flank.

And yet, you are acquainted with the tear
That wells up in my eye. It has the taste
Of my blood on your lips. You know firsthand
What passions and what fevers course through me.

I see you reach your arms towards my darkness,
As if to cradle that unknown in me,
That painful spot in which a human being,
Reduced, a stranger to all nature feels.

So listen, while you still understand me,
Imprint your childish mouth upon my breast,
Respond to my love with your docile flesh:
Who else's grasp could feel as strong as this?

When I will live alone and without fire,
You grown a man and living less for me,
I'll think back on the days we were together
And playing side by side within my soul.

Because we play, sometimes. I give to you
My heart, a trembling jewel, its wildest dreams,
I give to you my eyes, full of clear sights
That row across a cool lake languidly.

They may be golden swans, sailing ahead
Like ships; or they may be nocturnal nymphs,
Alighting on the water. They smile for you
Beneath the crowns of moonlight that they wear.

And when you take the first steps of your life,
The rose, the sun, the tree, the turtle dove
Will seem to you familiar in their motions;
You'll recognize them in your newfound grace.

But you will not recall those flaxen shores
Where fat, argentine fish did bring you rings,
And privy fields where tender-footed lambs
The ardor in their hooves kicked to the sky.

My heart will cease to talk like this to yours,
In the warm, unspoken language of pure thought;
Our knot, undone, will never be retied;
The dawn knows not from what darkness it came.

And you will never know the shameless Venus
Who placed a fiery kiss within your blood,
Nor art imploding in the wretched mystery,
Nor how it feels to nurture faint despair.

You will not know me on that fatal day
You burst into the harshness of existence;
My little mirror, you watch my loneliness
Lean anxiously over your glass's edge.

I find the above poem remarkably difficult to read, but it makes for a rewarding text with which to wrestle. It is difficult to translate what is not understood – hence the tendency of translators to exegesis – and here Sauvage is speaking about the incomprehensible: the space or event in which words fail and in which ‘*l’art va se briser*’ (in my version, ‘art imploding’). I read this poem as being about the limits of knowledge. The narrative swings between attempting to put into words what the unborn child currently knows and what the child will cease to know once severed from the mother. There is, Sauvage suggests, experience that eludes being fixed down in words, knowledge that cannot be found in a book. There is a contrast between the clarity of the outside world – the direct apprehension of the golden, wondrous images it contains – and the obscurity and secrecy in which the child grows. It is not merely the absence of ultrasound technology that gives rise to this expression of a relationship more felt than seen, and the contours of which are tentatively described with recourse to the imagination, rather any attempt at clinical description. The unknown bookends our existence. It is less than a space, which is why Sauvage opts to call it *mystère*: the thing that lies beyond the full capabilities of our expression.

In the eleventh stanza, ‘my wildest dreams’ translates the French word *chimères*. As a fantastical monster, the Chimera has lent its name, in French and English, to fanciful imaginings. But the Chimera also stands for heterogeneity, and in this case it would be accurate to speak of chimeras in English, too: microchimerism is the term for the presence of genetically distinct cells in another person’s body, most common in pregnancy when cells originating in the fetus travel into the mother’s body and lodge there. Tendrils sunk in soil.

This *Reader* is a type of chimerical undertaking. Sauvage’s words have lodged in me over the course of the years and multiple rereadings. Sometimes lines float up in my thoughts without special prompting – the music of the imperative command, ‘*Réponds à mon amour avec ta chair docile*’ interrupting the course of my ordinary day – but sometimes I remember, even more starkly than the original, the sound of Sauvage’s poems in my English, which seem natural to me now, and perhaps even the default, this blend of me and her.

They put you by my side in the vast bed.
The night-light was throwing its weak glow,
The watchwoman sleeping in front of the fire.
The cord of our ferocious intimacy,
Months-long, still trembled between us.
I still felt you move in me, a phantom kick,
And I was afraid to see this tiny thing
Breathing as faintly as flowers open
And close. But instinct was stronger than reverie.
I saw you, mummy-child, in a fold of the sheets,
Your eyes were a muddled color –
Or maybe it was just the half-light –
Two eyes, open wide, clouded
With the remains of my shadow.
You looked austere. In mourning. Were you
Tracing out the course of your stubborn destiny
In the air? Perhaps, tentatively fumbling life,
You sought to find my thrilled embrace again.
Maybe you were, on this your first waking,
As stunned as a god who emerges from slumber,
Or were you a hatchling made for adventure,
Weighing the mute hubris of the natural world?
So frail and so small: a whole shriveled human
Lay in the wrinkles of your face, between
Your dreaming grey eyes. Your mouth was puckered
By bitter experience, your lips curled
In the flippant disdain of the all-knowing.
Little old man unaware of my intense gaze,
You looked like those who sense the end
As very nigh, who walk alone and bent
Beneath the weight of that mystery.
My shivering secret, I saw you emerged
From the murk of your lair, and I felt cold for you,
You, upon whom fell the shower of my introspections,
You, who curved my heavens to your little sphere.

These spent arms, that had caressed you within,
Revive to envelop you once more. Then,
These arms will slowly fall back, into obscurity,
Sensing that you are come onto this earth.

Mystère in *Sauvage* being used to name that which exists after death, it reminds me of Walter Benjamin's ideas on textual afterlife. 'A translation proceeds from the original', Benjamin observes, '[...] not so much from its life as from its "afterlife" or "survival"' (2012: 76, English translation by Steven Rendall). Emphasizing difference in translation, Benjamin observes that a translation continues an organic, and possibly unpredictable trajectory: 'For in [a text's] continuing life, which could not be so called if it were not the transformation and renewal of a living thing, the original is changed [...]. Just as a tangent touches a circle fleetingly and at only a single point, and just as this contact, not the point, prescribes the law in accord with which the tangent pursues its path into the infinite, in the same way a translation touches the original fleetingly and only at the infinitely small point of sense, in order to follow its own path in accord with the law of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic development' (ibid: 77-82).

This is not to say that *mystère* should necessarily be translated as 'afterlife', but rather that we can think of a text's afterlife as *mystère* – extension and unknowing, the moving of a text into who knows what forms, to be received by who knows what readers.

In a more straightforward sense, a text's afterlife may be imagined as the resurrection of a forgotten writer or corpus. Translation may result in the (however temporary) saving of a text from oblivion, may grant a text a new lease on life.

Could I have called you out of darkness to the light,
Knowing there is so little love and joy out here,
Knowing the sun that gleams up in the sky has not
Its soul, and that beneath its fire-drenched eye
Sleeps eternal night?

Could I have wished to shape such frail and yielding flesh,
And demonstrate the fury of my beating wing
As I twist my arms inside the shrunken sphere,
As death meanwhile outside the portal stands, and hides
His bitter nakedness?

You'll have to learn it all: your astounded eyes,
While giddy now with your arrival and with sight,
Like flowers in March caressed by tender rays will grow
Wide with astonishment at this first tenderness,
And infinitely laugh.

You'll think it's for your glee the cherry-plucking bird
Gives chase after the fleet footsteps of the wind
Across the aureate sky where the stars hang their nests;
And you will think the moon is a burnished pebble
To play with as a toy.

But soon enough you'll understand the way things are,
Their sad design, the surface varnish and the paste;
The gloss upon the flower will seem to you less clear;
You'll know then how a human is taken by the storm,
A grain upon the wind.

So you will say, 'O mother, what have you done to me?
I tended towards rest and lithe obscurity,
Unknowingly I gathered my unconscious germ –
And now for me you have lit up oblivion.'
My child, what have I done?

What is the difference between conscious and unconscious self-gathering or self-collection? Can *recueillement* be *sans savoir*, as the unborn child in the above poem claims?

‘And, touching his hair with her lips, she thought, he will never be so happy again [...] She heard them stamping and crowing on the floor above her head the moment they woke. They came bustling along the passage. Then the door sprang open and in they came, fresh as roses, staring, wide awake, as if this coming into the dining-room after breakfast, which they did every day of their lives, was a positive event to them; and so on, with one thing after another, until she went to say goodnight to them, and found them netted in their cots like birds among cherries and raspberries still making up stories about some little bit of rubbish – something they had heard, something they had picked up in the garden. They all had their little treasures... And so she went down and said to her husband, Why must they grow up and lose it all? Never will they be so happy again.’ (Woolf 2019: 66).

What collects you if you don’t collect yourself? Gravity? A parent? A child? A reader? (Unknowingly, to Sauvage, I gather her.)

‘He would always be worrying about his own books – will they be read, are they good, why aren’t they better, what do people think of me?’ (Woolf 2019: 131).

'It appears,' wrote Sauvage in a letter to her parents on 1 May 1914 (one hundred and nine years later, my eyes fall on this letter), 'that these good Russians find *L'Âme en bourgeois* quite to their liking. They say it is full of mystical angst and that they were struck by compositions such as 'My son, I'll hold your head upon my hand' and 'Could I have called you out of darkness to the light', etc. No one in France has read me so well. [...] I laughed as I said to Pierre, "They give a shit about me in Saint Petersburg."' (Sauvage 1914: f.48r-f.48v).

A textual death may be imagined as not only when a text falls out of circulation and into obscurity, but also the moment when the text's genesis ends – when we stop working on it. Perhaps that moment is also the moment when the translation is reluctantly put aside; the deadline has arrived, or else the book goes to print, and, faced with the inability to shape it any further (at least for the moment, for this print run), we, as the text's tinkerers, accept the text's newfound stillness.

But of course the text goes on to be read and reanimated in the minds of its readers. It goes via Saint Petersburg. So the end of a text's genesis is not a small death, but only the beginning of its (after)life.

My son, I'll hold your head upon my hand,
I'll say I've shaped this little human world;
Beneath this brow, its curve a narrow dawn,
I've placed a fledgling universe that shines
And stormy sorrows clears with heaven's blue.
I'll say I've lit the flame inside those eyes:
I've drawn upon the moon's ambiguous smile,
The gleaming sea, the smoothness of the plum
To make this pair of stars, naïve, that gaze
Out to infinity. I've formed this cheek,
This mouth, a nest where flails the voice-bird.
This is my work, this world with human face.

My son, I'll hold your head upon my hand,
The day will rise, will shine and then descend;
I'll see beneath the pink flush of your skin,
Whose silk a bee would mistake for a rose –
I'll watch the eyes into their orbits sink,
Reveal the gaping darkness of the nose,
The teeth grinning atop the naked jaw;

Your deathly skull is equally my work.

By fault of physical separation, does the thing to which
you were once intimately joined become unknowable?

Does the thing that slips out of our possession – out of
our material proximity – also slip past the limits of our
comprehension? So we lose control over the born, the
dead, and the read.

Knowledge, therefore, is tied to proximity. Sauvage, like
this *Reader*, makes the case for material proximity. It is
only by lying side by side, line by line, that we are able to
ingest and get a sense of the other.

O green and savage fruit blossomed of my season,
When your newness was still warm from contact with my
soul,
I, sensitive, was shocked in seeing other women
Bind your naked limbs in soft cotton, and stare
At your ousted flesh, now plucked into being,
As if they'd found the stream of my hidden tears.

It may be that it is not too pleasant, watching what lies
close to our hearts (and bodies) be manipulated, swaddled
by someone else.

But if birth is a type of exile, an ousting from the bodily
country to which there is no return, then bodies (corpus,
corpora) may also offer a type of shelter to the lost or
wandering spirit.

I rock you in my lap to sleep,
My child of love, so I can keep
You safe from all of human pain.

You are despaired; I hold you tight
Within my arms so that you might
Sleep, away from all the pain,
Sleep, away from all the fear,
From the sadness of the hours.

I am mother; at your tears
And your tearful smile, I smile.

Outside the room the wind blows,
But we press into the glow
Of our bodies' tender folds;

O flesh, what consolation
Is flesh to my exiled soul.

CORRESPONDANCE

A divine adaptation occurs, spreading the length of the body. Legs close around legs as wings slide into their sheaths, coming to rest within. Your body marries my body simply, bee nestling in a lily. And for all these pure, profound, and natural correspondences I am yours – I am you – you, whose embrace is the only one for me. On this earth I can have no other.

I write to you, beloved. We correspond. Meaning, not only are we alike in certain ways and suited to one another, but we address each other, too.

Tim Ingold writes it is imperative we 'forge a different way of thinking about how we come to know things: not through engineering or a confrontation between theories in the head and facts on the ground, but rather through corresponding with the things themselves, in the very processes of thought' (2021: vii).

This poetry, it
Speaks to me –

I speak to it, addressing it – fervently, reverently. Through thinking it, I come to know it.

My contemplative love is like a prayer;
My flesh before thee prays and sobs and dreams
Falls to its knees; all that is present there
Of skin, soul, blood, I offer up
My life, my chaste and pious love, my pain
And fever, this human sweetness flowing to thy veins
Which, on its torrent, purely carries me,
My love, in wild and heady rush to thee.

A change of address in the preceding poem. At some point in the translation drafts, I played around with other pronouns available in English. In her love poems, Sauvage – similar to how she swings between the second and third person addresses – swings between the formal word for ‘you’ (*vous*), and the informal (*tu*). The use of the formal coincides with a stately Sauvage, with dramatic, or even melodramatic alexandrines; while the informal address is reserved for shorter, more playful poems (such as the preceding poem) where the lines do not necessarily all conform to a set length nor to a strict rhyme scheme. Mixing the terms of address on my end – reaching for ‘thee’, the English archaic equivalent of *tu* – lent me not only additional rhyming opportunity, but also the ability to play with my distance to Sauvage: have her close, intimately; have her formally, farther away.

Moving between the third person and second person addresses is the difference between speaking to you directly and describing you from the side.

In the above poem, Cécile, you write that your love is *recueilli*. Contemplative, I called it. It could also have meant collected, reflective.

I suppose that what you mean, Cécile, is a type of love that sits back on its heels, coils up, before being launched elsewhere. Latent love that, by the end of the poem, has darted in a new direction and towards somebody else.

‘The thinker may sometimes seem detached, head in hands, isolated in a bubble, but the lover’s pose is much the same. What the thinker and the lover have in common is that they are uniquely vulnerable. They are in a condition of surrender, whether to the idea or to the beloved.’ (Ingold 2021: 2)

You lie in my arms like a beautiful corpse, pale
And slick and frank and languid. Your hair
Sticks to your wet temples, your eyes are closed
Your body heavier than it had been before
And felled by love you lie in my embrace
Asleep. Your hand, too, lies dreaming, quiet,
Half-open it rests empty of desire.
I hold your embalmed youth atop of me,
O love, the flesh that you so freely cede.

It may be questioned how I am proposing I correspond with the dead.

I answer, with care.

With intention to reach a kind of communication that, in D. W. Winnicott's words, 'does not violate the fact of the essential isolation of each individual' (Phillips 1998: xii). This is a requirement for 'desire, aliveness, "creative living"' (ibid: xi).

Ingold argues that with the loss of letter-writing as a type of correspondence, 'the spontaneity of communication' has been lost; 'Conversely, care has lost much of its spontaneity: it seems more calculated and, by the same token, less personal, less imbued with feeling [...]. Corresponding with people and things – as we used to do in letter-writing – opens paths for lives to carry on' (Ingold 2021: 3).

For textual lives to carry on.

After all, it is not only the text that cedes itself. On my part, I, too, freely cede my flesh to the text, perhaps too much on certain occasions, on those days when I spend too long at my desk and hardly get up, and I have the impression my vertebrae have glued themselves together, and I tell myself once again I will get more exercise in.

O my beloved, what else do you seek?
Restless you sink your teeth into my cheek.
Have I not proffered my life and my blood?
But drink, in your maddening way, drain my cup
Of my soul and my sweetness, beloved; have your fill.
Your hunger is baiting and this tenderness kills.

Reading, writing, translating are embodied processes,
although we may not be used to thinking of thinking as
such. (Do you not get hungry after periods of mental
exercise?) And a killer desire may be executed with
tenderness, as part of an attentive kind of play.

Ah, to lift
The trim of your mustache with my lips
And find there the soft outline
Of your sweet, wicked mouth,
Your lips turned up mischievously.
(O light slight mouth of pastel pink,
Cryptic and coy!)
You know, with your frail face,
Curved nose, bright eyes, you seem to me
A pale prince at the court of some Louis.
I see you in a lace cravat
And satin breeches. You blithely stand
Playing with a royal rose in one hand.

In translating, I ask, how can my forms serve you? This
work is about bringing something as much as taking.

And there she was, her shining form that seemed
To chase away the darkness in the house
And in my heart. My hands were light and glad
To serve her, move before her, bring her bread
And wine in silence. As I went, my feet
Discreetly walked with love,
My being all a sweet and muted kiss.

'First, every correspondence is a *process*: it carries on. Secondly, correspondence is *open-ended*: it aims for no fixed destination or final conclusion, for everything that might be said or done invites a follow-on. Thirdly, correspondences are *dialogical*. They are not solitary but go on between participants. It is from these dialogical engagements that knowledge continually arises. To correspond is to be ever-present at the cusp where thinking is on the point of settling into the shapes of thought.' (Ingold 2021: 11, emphasis in original)

Correspondence as cusp, as Benjamin's point of contact.

Sonorous points of contact – assonance, alliteration, end rhyme – are a type of correspondence on the formal level of a poem. This kind of harmony and alignment may be extended out, perceived as more-than-formal poetic kinship, as a metaphor, in fact, for dialoguing through which potential is released. 'Rhyme, Derrida suggests, is more like friendship than any other relation [...] Like the best friendships it says, "you're more than that". "You're other than you think". Like a good teacher, perhaps, it says, "when you hear *this* I also hear *that*". "There's another thought in what you say". And then "what can you make of that?"' (Connors 2011: 145-146, emphasis in original)

Do not avert your eyes: I love him among men
And in his treasured heart I adore all men
I am shaped like mother to better fit his skin
It is my flesh that quakes around his trembling limbs.
He is my son, o God, and I to him am mother!
His heavy head lies sadly on my little breast,
His slightly larger hand has restless need of mine.
And though he has grown big, he is feeble still.
Do not avert your eyes from my celestial zeal
For I must serve my God, cleaving to his skin,
And host his burning blood within mine that runs clear.
He is my son: his hips are mournful in my hands
My flesh will feed his flesh, that fat and fertile is.
It is to better love him that I hold him like this
It is to give him my blood that I reach for his.

Our exchanges, Cécile's and mine, are a moment of this
blood contact. Translation as transfusion. A moment of
contact, a knot, a tangling. Translation as a *noeud*
recueilli.

With a careless and naked foot you pushed towards the
fireplace that smoldering log and I thought of –

Of those green beetles in the garden that sit down to dine
upon some fallen fruit, but without interrupting their
intimate confessions

Of the insects of the sky who are displaced by a shock
and who change branches, but without breaking the
meditative knot of their deep confessions

without breaking their collected knot
their gathered knot
their meditative tangle

With a careless, naked foot you pushed that smoldering
log back into the fireplace. And I thought of those insects
who live in the sky and, when knocked aside, alight on a
different branch without interrupting the absorbed tangle of
their intimate exchanges...

POSSESSION

I know now that saints, poets, lovers are all kin in one
fervent family.

In such an intimate union,
In such a close embrace,
 When we are so connected, so fused,
 When we are so much a part of one another,
Every gesture gives the feeling of plenitude, of joy, of
possession.
Every movement has the sensation of possession, of
plenty, of joy.
 Of absolute possession.
 Absolute.

Sitting next to you, my temple against your head, all the
ardent joy of the most absolute possession was in me. You
touched me with every fiber of your being. You felt every
one of mine touch you in return.

Lovers lie body-to-body, sit head-to-head. An affectionate
position, this touching of temples, but also bookish. A
moment of poring over a written page together.

Under the lamp, heads
Illuminated. Somebody read.
Remember how time crawled
Those evenings? How they felt
A soundless, single night
In which to hold you, and you me.
You were afraid to lift your eyes
To where I sat beside you. Bent
Over some work, I tasted how
Your presence wed itself to me.
Your silence sang. And thought to thought
We almost touched, as our two souls
Without our knowing elsewhere soared,
Leaned towards each other, face to face,
In an invisible embrace.

A faint perfume rises out of the preserved letters. It
brushes me like breath.

I even hear your voice, your laugh, your silence.

When the librarian writes back they *do* have the
manuscripts, I am overjoyed. I think myself a pretty poor
paleographer, but I will go if only to see you. The preserved
letters smell faintly of the dampness of basement stacks
and old wood. Your body is not here but the sure ink is
proof enough of your body. The letter S is graceful,
perhaps for years of practice. I spend a week with you,
listening to your voice, your laugh, your silence.

I like to pick up in my hand
The book you with abandonment
Have cast aside, and thumb it through.
The pages' shivering repeats
(It is your soul that I pursue)
Confessions of adoring lips.

You spoke: your voice slipped around my shoulders, like
a gentle arm.

You looked at me.

I could not quit my work,
Nor the little bench where I sat,
Feeling pinned down by your gaze.

When I am alone, I like to say your name out loud, to
surround myself with a little bit of tangible love.

Is such behavior not an obsession? You haunt me in my off hours. Enough for someone to say to me, once, *You really take your work home with you, don't you.*

I pore over these letters tenderly;
Here you will find the contemplative touch
Of my pale hand, the movement of my eyes,
Loving and silent.
I let my eyes so slowly drift
Over these pages that you'll see
Them raised at you, running you over,
Roving as you read.

I let 'I pore over' emerge from *se pencher*, which in French means *to lean*, as is the case here: I lean tenderly over a composition to the lover. But *se pencher sur* can also mean, by extension, to investigate or to study, to pore over with careful attention to detail. And I do pore over, still tenderly.

I pour myself over you, too, Cécile, with my other words, with my Anglo-Saxon ear. You who like caresses and are always handling things with a soft and careful touch. Sometimes, I find your caresses one too many. I prefer your '*yeux caressants*' as 'roving eyes'. As per John Donne, instructing a lover in the poem 'Going to Bed': '*License my roaving [sic] hands, and let them go*' (2002: 87).

License *my* roving hands and let them go.

In the dust of a small lane,
I saw the imprint of your step;
Softly to the spot I crept
And with my hand brushed it away.
I did not want, from jealousy,
For a stranger's print to wed
This passage of your love.

I acknowledge the risk of a loving erasure through translation. Is the lack of source texts here a loving erasure? Should I be admitting to myself that the reason I am obscuring my process – covering my own steps as it were, or the steps this text has taken to become what it is now – is so that no one can go back over my work and, in picking up on departures or errors, challenge my claim to this text? No private eyes to come round asking questions. Better to abscond with the text in the night and wipe down my fingerprints after me.

Tonight, slinking like a thief
Through velvet darkness,
I will go to drink the drop
From the bottom of your cup.
Precious instant –
Precious desire...

The precious cherished sweet sweet moment of getting the thing you want, like when you throw your head back and catch what's left of the wine on your tongue, triumphant.

The letterbox is a malicious tabernacle that holds as much joy as disillusionment for me. I descend, like a thief, to take this letter.

'Letter-box' like 'word-hord': the Anglo-Saxon term for the literary vocabulary at a poet's disposal.

I descend, like a thief, to plunder the chest of letters, the hoard of turns of phrase. If this is a tabernacle and not a pagan treasure, then double transgression. Potentially breaking into something that is holy and off-limits. Most irreverent action. Making off with the Host, the flesh, the corpus.

I came, I went. In my little silk slip I felt genuinely lithe, luscious, indulgent, holding my powder puff before the mirror. Your little double.

Sensation of resembling you. Of being you. Of being the little feminine inverse of your person. An other yourself towards whom you lean so simply through the darkness and find a small mouth most suited to your kiss.

Sensation of being reflected. Of seeking out the things that speak to me, or maybe that which I already know. Sensation of bias – but also of contentment.

I, who was resigned to indolence –
See me now, incandescent,
Running up and down the house,
Arranging, rummaging, aroused,
Going off on the slightest thought,
Head full of song?

I can tell that writing is going well when I'm pacing. I have a clump of excitement in my stomach that keeps me going. When a line is correct, I get up to take a turn around the room or go into the next room if one is available to me. Like an eager dog I do a circle, then settle down again. The roll of the sentences gives me this desire to physical motion. So I swirl myself around, a container, happily agitating the contents within.

Alas, your little feet have walked out of this town,
Your breath has slowly left, retreating from this place.
But still I search for your collected form around me.

Or I collect, through seeking, your scattered form
around me?

Or do I look and find your gathered form is here?

I seek the warmth and scent your life has left behind,
And you who are in pieces brush past me in the air.
Divinely you do float across the smallest object.
I do not dare to touch the walls and these old roses,
These books that lie half-open where your gaze had
sometime dreamed.

What does the (re)gathered form look like, when the tools left to us are half-open books or papers imprinted with ghostly glances? What kind of mortar of invention holds that stuff together, and how much of the material is necessary? How to make a body, a corpus, out of warmth and scent?

I pray through you, my divine chalice, by my touch,
And piously inside of you, fierce tenderness,
Is all of me; and all of you, inside my core,
Are but a sob of love, my face against your cheek.
Prolonged embrace so piercing that the breath, the flesh,
The soul all meld within a heady scent, within
A fire more secret than the ravished fire that drips
With slowness into palms held up by happy women.
Long burn of incense, lily tangling with the rose
Within the quiet and the privy fervency;
Long sleep: your sleep and mine, one in the other held,
And drop by drop your blood comes to my tenderness
Throughout the night, its purity, your lips
Upon my lips, your hand upon my heart and there,
Your sheathed desire, tranquil in its shadow, rests;
Inside this wordless prayer that rocks me to my sleep
You closer lie than my own mind to what I am.

Have mercy on us; may the angels hear my plea.

What is it about a poem, especially a poem unfinished or in pieces, that makes it so irresistible, invites a desire to unify, encourages sense-making? Thrill of filling in the blanks and reconstructing a forgotten object. Bring back the lost, beloved thing, because an absent lover can't be had. Leave your mark on the resurrection, so that when the next admirers file by they will see where you have laid a claim to ownership, to progeny, and you, now slightly in thrall to your own powers of creation, will say, *Look upon my work, I who can make things over in my own image and bring them to new life.*

I would have liked to be your mother:
The strongest bond of human kinship
Would have bound us one unto the other
By blood, by thought. I would have been
The first to rock within my soul
Your skin.

And yet. Sometimes the fruits of our love don't fully mature.

It was his jealous movement in my somber flesh,
It was another part of him I come to lose.
And I had sobbed to find you, rejected crimson wreck,
Run from my body bitterly and leave it hollowed out.
To hold you in my lap, a tender newborn thing,
The dawn of your embraces, your childhood in my arms!
I'd wished – in case cruel fortune didn't hear my plea –
To die while I still had you cradled in my womb,
Caressing your minute and tender form in me;
Fiercely to descend into the freezing tomb
With the child of your desire.

Sometimes I have a temptation to shed this project. To give it up as half-finished. The quest for its final, perfect form eludes me. I do not know what the finished text will look like, am frustrated with the ways it has the potential to be anything. I am disappointed with having to lock a poem down into a specific shape. Translations are never completed, only abandoned.

Beloved, I am heavy with you,
Weigh down on my delicate arms, on my breast;
By you and your blood I am better possessed
Than any nubile bloom
Is had by a jealous wasp.

An arcane kiss desires to take
Its human shape within my blood; arcane embrace.
Let all your being and your blood take their place
In my being; let your skin impregnate
Intimately my skin.

Reynolds observes that erotic translation occurs when translators veer off into fantasy; when the source author's 'imagined control over [their] texts weakens as they become the occasion for self-indulgence on the part of the translator' (2011: 137). In this claim eroticism is a decadent thing, self-absorbed, disrespectful of the boundaries of the other corpus. Erotic translation becomes the playing out of one's own fantasies across the body of the text.

It could be that we sometimes overstep a boundary in our play.

Or is it a false boundary inscribed in play? What is permissible in play? For all the talk of the corpus and of the body of work, texts are not actual bodies. This white rectangular space I am operating in is blank at the outset. It requires *some* import of fantasy if *anything* is to happen here. Cécile's poems to Jean are, in their own right, fantasies inscribed upon a blank page, running away into play of page boys and the Princess of Clèves and the *Pietà*. The lover's body is multiplied over and over in various poses, settings, dress: a prop for the game of *the things I would do to you*. Why should Cécile get all the fantasizing?

Nobody shall see your mouth the way I have,
Tilting back your head between my hands.
You, young and pale; mouth, pink and thin,
Shy, trembling a little, feminine,
And lightly smiling, laughter in an eye
That grows overcast with wanting.
I kiss this mouth: a tender profanation.
Gently, I open you up with my pressure,
Hungry to give you my blood.

Profanation – probably. ‘Profanation’ here stands for *viol tendre*, amid all the things a *viol tendre* might be: a tender violation, a tender violence, even a tender rape. Profanation suggests a sacred body, a sacred corpus, and a mark that is overstepped. Transgression. A break-in at a temple – except, the supposed thief is not taking anything away, but instead sneaking over the threshold to leave something behind. Adding to what is. Tenderly. (Does that make it any less of a transgression?)

A foray into a text is, I think, like a targeted incursion rather than a general battering. There is no vagueness of generalized violence to it. It is often enthusiastic, often a plunge, a desire to leave a little bit of oneself in the spot of the text identified as having the greatest give.

To chew something over, after all, implies the use of teeth.

And yet. There is the possibility of precisely *overstepping one’s mark* – of transforming an author one is translating ‘into someone less respected than a friend, someone like a familiar servant who can be toyed with. Written texts, after all, cannot answer back’ (Reynolds 2011: 134).

Perhaps what is needed is the definition of a loving liberty.

In the bed that smells of you
I'll sleep as if within your arms
And press your body to me, nude,
And feel your forms upon my forms,
Relive your touch and your desire
That trembles, heavy, on my flank.
I'll hunger for your living flesh,
I'll have your life between my hands.

Perhaps I am optimistic in believing experiments such as this one can be testaments to curiosity, rather than excused thefts and abuses. I want to believe in the idea that love, as Hanif Abdurraqib writes, 'is the great equalizer'; that 'a closeness for [...] a culture [or a text] puts you so far into it that you can embody all aspects without harm' (2017: 38) That, as Cécile believes, a proximity approaching total fusion – or intent on being total fusion – is amalgam, and amalgam is transformation, and transformation is change, and change is adaption, and adaptation is divine. The pleasure of your forms upon my forms: see where we align, see how we slip into one another.

And yet. I confess to cranking it up. 'I would have your life between my hands' is not quite 'J'aurai ta vie entre mes bras', which should rather be 'I would have your life in my arms'. Think baby in a lap or lover in an embrace. The awareness of my own position (perhaps even a sense of my own guilt) bleeds into my translation. *I would have your life between my hands*. There is no linguistic reason for changing arms to hands in this sentence. There is only a greater shade of the ominous in the English phrase.

'We read like detectives,' Felski observes (2015: 87). We are determined to make a text confess its secrets and its guilt. If I am playing a detective, then this little experiment has been a film noir. The seduction of this representative of the heavy arm of the law has been absolute. I have discovered the secrets of the object of my affection and I have decided to keep them to myself.

I have exaggerated in my reports. Understated, too. Did a lot of things off-record. You've got no idea what I did to some of these poetic shapes – what lines were split, what verses broken.

A shiver runs through me. It is the weight of all my responsibilities, all the people and institutions I am answerable to. All those things I've covered up, the many ways I haven't played by the book.

What possibility for abuse of power, this ability to decide whether someone endures or ends. Having a whole life's work in one's arms. Having an entire afterlife, right here, underneath my fingers.

Or at least up to the point where the detective slips up, three quarters of the way through the film, and it all flies out of control...

You've departed from your nook,
Little bee of my flesh made;
Now I am the silent hive
Whose colony has flown away.

I am no longer mother-bird
Who nourishes with her own blood;
I am the house from which the dead
Have been retrieved, and now is shut.

In vain I worked all day among
The flowers where kneads the gleeful fly,
To bring you on my lips the pollen
And the spicy scent of thyme.

In vain I gathered for your den
The branches with their bits of sky,
And nests where eggs were laid, and rocks
Where lizards loitered on the sly.

I gave you nothing but the flashes
Come from a world containing light;
And then you opened wide your lashes,
And then the shutters pushed aside.

You've departed from your nook,
Little bee of my flesh made;
Now I am the silent hive
Whose colony has flown away.

See, I spin like an empty boat,
Its helm uncrewed by any mate;
In spirit I'm the mother-hen
Whose duckling to the water takes.

Must I be like the mother-plant
Whose seed is snatched up by the wind,
And who remains, all cracked and dry,
And to the earth by her roots pinned?

You are no longer mine: your head
By now reflects on other skies,
And it's the shadow of a storm
That slowly rises in your eyes.

CHANT

I have been imagining text as a body to be played with, a participant in the quest for a complete kind of merging and having. But translation may also be imagined as a song that catches. Translation – and that which spills out beyond the boundaries of the translated poem, into commentary, into *more* text, into polyphony and abundance – is like the desire to lend one's voice to a chorus. *Chant* is about contagion. It is also – conversely to all the talk of bodily possession – an expelling of something. A song flies away, Sauvage writes. Out of your throat once you sing it, it takes off to settle on other people.

I sing. Without regard for me
Or for my fate, the days will pass,
While nascent flowers come to bloom
Each year among the leaves of grass.

But my voice will not drown out
The universal melody,
Like the lark who sees her season
Return into its greenery.

Why write a lyric? To exalt. To complain. To issue something. The lyric (the text?) is a product of Baudelaire's *recueillement*. The world is observed, processed, and then something emerges out of all that gathering. Thus *there are no originals*, as Marjorie Perloff observes. All poets are responding to some kind of source (2010).

'that element is the song –
first music
from the first voice of love'
(Cixous 1976: 881, English translation by Keith Cohen
and Paul Cohen)

I would like in suave complaint
To breathe my pain up to the sun,
And let my song be pure and grave
Like the country fields at dawn.

The solitary fields of rye
That, velveteen, shimmer and play,
The light and liquid mountainside
That cups the still air of the day.

So, my little skylark, fly,
Your eggs are laid among the grain,
And the quaking dewdrops lie
On grass that into gold was changed.

'But "why then publish?" There are no rewards
Of fame or profit when the world grows weary.
I ask in turn, – why do you play at cards?
Why drink? Why read? – To make some hour less dreary.
It occupies me to turn back regards
On what I've seen or ponder'd, sad or cheery;
And what I write I cast upon the stream
To swim or sink – I have had at least my dream.'
(Byron 1837: 14.11)

Pale terror, pallid love,
Two things beneath a somber sky
Conjoined and distant from my heart –
Hear the rumor of my song,
Bee that vaguely flies,
Over the fields, through the dark.

'Hear' (*entendre*, which could also be translated as 'to understand') is an ambiguous directive in the above poem. It could be directed at the two things – joint terror and love – or at the bee, or at someone else entirely (the reader?). The bee could be the shape the song takes. A poem is a thing that flies, travels. Skylark and bumblebee, it ends up elsewhere from where it started.

Is it *chant*, rather than *mystère*, that is the afterlife?

O my soul, o my light song,
The hillside which you float along,
For the sadness of the shepherd
 In the dusk;
In the silence of the valley,
For the hearts of those whose bodies
 Have been bruised;
In the town, over roofs slinking,
 For folly, for the melancholy,
 For the thinking.

In the above poem, the penultimate line reads, ‘*Pour l’ennui, pour la déraison*’. Certainly, *ennui* may be translated by something other than melancholy – but melancholy is more keeping with our themes, is it not?

Forgive me for the addition of ‘slinking’, Cécile. I was too tempted to make a rhyme, with the end result that your light song is now more like Eliot’s *yellow fog rubbing its back upon the window-panes* (2023).

This poem seems to suggest that song can offer relief – from sadness, from pain, even from madness. Is it because these things exist that songs have virtue? I believe, as we get to the final line, the poem’s causality becomes more ambiguous. Is it the song that causes reflection? ‘*La pensée*’, the thinking, can of course also be *recueillement*.

‘to admit that writing is precisely working (in) the in-between,

inspecting the process of the same and of the other

without which nothing can live,

undoing the work of death’

(Cixous 1976:883 English translation by Keith Cohen and Paul Cohen)

Despite the melancholy – despite the existence of the sad and the broken-bodied in the world – my conclusion is that Sauvage finds the world very, very interesting, contagious, generative.

Nature's ever-shifting dream
Slumbers in my silence.
The rocking, the harmonious
Murmur of an immense world.
World of imponderable air,
You who subsist, pale and blue,
With your hollow undulations,
Mankind, ferns, waters, birds
Asleep between them.

Undulations (*vallonnements*) takes me towards the Whitmanesque. So does imponderable (*impondérable*), the use of the second person to address the world, the list in the penultimate line (as we have seen, Sauvage enjoys making lists of natural objects) – all this carries, in its mystical, inquisitive, and cataloguing nature the touch of Whitman to my ears. It tempts me to break from Sauvage's usual form, drop the rhymes, and write out something long and exalting that would not be out of place in *Leaves of Grass* –

World of imponderable air, you who subsist pale and blue
with your hollow undulations
Ferns, birds, mankind and the waters sleeping between
them

Hidden behind the apparent cover of melancholy (which, I have argued, is not depression but reflection), Sauvage's poetry brims with a writer's love of life, of interest in the world's workings, of joyous curiosity about the space where the hale, material body intersects with an inquisitiveness about the mystical.

The ash sways and the hazel creeps
Across the grass, half-seen;
The plants of summer stir at the feet
Of the birches, pale and thin;
The bluebell shakes in the mute wind
Its violet gleam.

Here comes the little child,
Pink-cheeked, white-necked, bare-calved.
Upon the path lined with flowers
He gives his father his hand.
The flower touches the child's forehead.
The father ponders the land,
Eyeing the way the valley unfurls
Amid silence. O sweet day,
Beneath your pallor, the child is joyful.
He picks up a stick from the ground,
He beats the pollen from the flowers,
The pollen swirls around him,
Dissipates into thin light.
The child belongs to this air;
He himself is a flower, and the bird
Sings from the branches to see the child.
The child knows nothing of destiny,
He has neither desire nor vain thoughts.
The wind chases him,
He chases the wind,
O little child,
Grace of the valley, game in the light,
Game of fern and butterfly,
Sleep of the moss where you lie
To sleep, like a limpid dream
Where the shadow gains color
With a sigh cooler than the breeze,
And sweeter still.

Walk on, little child, nude
Beneath the trees,
Your graces pure,
Run silently
With the dragonflies
Through the bellflowers.

Follow my mute dances,
Crush not the bluebells,
Catch the white butterfly
That gently soars and slides;
Place it on my shoulder –
But away it flies.

Are you not my little brother,
Serene among the ferns,
Your milky gaze tinted with blue?

I am your sister because I love
The beasts, the grass; like you
I sow my hair in the wind.
And because in my silence –
That long ley
Where thin birches sway –
Floats youth eternal,
And the shadow and happy harmony
Of nebulous childhood.

'The sound of the belch'd words of my voice loos'd to the
eddies of the wind' (Whitman 2009: 30).

Why do you fear me, savage girl,
As I walk naked through the blooms?
Go place a rose upon your mouth
And do not redden when you laugh;
Do you not know your dress is sheer,
And that I see with clarity
The slenderness you seek to hide?
You wistful ghost of modesty,
Would that you'd been born with the head
Of a white lily in your hair,
A finger on your untouched breast.

'Undrape! You are not guilty to me, nor stale nor
discarded,
I see through the broadcloth and gingham whether or no,
And am around, tenacious, acquisitive, tireless, and
cannot be shaken away.' (Whitman 2009: 34)

I, too, am around, tenacious, acquisitive, tireless, and cannot be shaken away. As critic and translator I keep circling, wishing to see through, commanding the text, undrape, undrape.

Yes, Sauvage reveals an interest in the world – but perhaps also a wariness of expression? As with *mystère*, there is often in her poetry an awareness of the limits of our expression. A hesitancy about certain printed repositories of knowledge and truth.

Lady in black holding a book
Gold-stamped and bound in fine cow-hide,
In those pages there is much pride
And little sureness. Are you good?
One gesture pleased me: you smiled
As you went, at a naked child
Capering across the moss
And a sort of tremor grabbed you
When the blue and spectral shadow
Fell across the edge of the wood.

And yet.

The desire to put down the felt into words,
Driving force of the lyric,
Driving force of song,
Driving force to make a book.

'Trippers and askers surround me,
People I meet, the effect upon me of my early life or the
ward and city I live in, or the nation,
The latest dates, discoveries, inventions, societies,
authors old and new' (Whitman 2009: 31).

A man laden, look,
With a great, softcover book;
It is assured, astute.

How variegated is the world, how original, how moving,
How atmospheric compared to these pages
That aspire to bloom for all eternity,
And yet will go the way of sand and cloud.
Higher than reason rises the silence
Of the melodious valley; here the soul rocks,
Here among the leaves, before naked Beauty,
Parades humanity, moving like a stranger
In the heart of its own divinity.

'Backward I see in my own days where I sweated through
fog with linguists and contenders.
I have no mockings or arguments, I witness and wait.'
(Whitman 2009: 32)

I realize now the desire to make a book or a *Reader* is not altogether the same as the desire to sing. Sauvage, imagining herself solitary in her own corner, would have felt, I suspect – and despite the classical strictness of some of her verse – a wariness of codification (which is wariness of code, of *codex*). I like to think she would have appreciated the pleasures of impermanence. Her poems are full of images that are, though often repeated, never the same twice. The position and fatness of the moon in the sky; the dart of a bird at dusk; the way the mist curls over the hill. Natural, rhythmic, idiosyncratic phenomena.

A good poem, too, shows us the pleasure of circularity and rhythm. A good poem is not predictable, but it is inevitable.

There are two types of joy available to humankind: pleasure for the eyes and peace of the heart. A beautiful landscape, a beautiful figure transport the soul just as well as a beautiful deed.

There are two evils on this earth: lies and solitude. Our nature forces us to lie. Our eternal lie should rather be called the impossibility of expression. Our hearts wished well enough to be sincere, but our mouths betrayed them.

Will the sign never line up with the signified? Will we, in translation, ever be content with those words that do not express exactly what we would like for them to say?

We have but one word to express love. I love you. And we accompany that word with a type of touch we call a kiss. Is it only to myself that I can express the grace I receive from a flower, the suavity of the scent it pours out to me? Sad mirage, the joy of the eyes only.

Writing as desire to share a sense of exaltation or
sadness,

Writing as a desire to sing and praise the object of one's
love,

Frustration when language falls short.

And writing as desire to act upon the world, to move the
already-quivering world.

To *make* something.

If not meaning, then music.

If not music, then mortar.

Let us, my double flute, unheard-of music play;
June lifts her ambered arms, blinded by the sun,
The wasp clatters and clicks her yellow castanets,
And bits of heady pollen on the air disperse.
The gardens are of roses and of honey fashioned,
The water flows, its scarf the color of the sky.
The stables are abuzz, for there are lambing ewes,
The farmer's filled the jug that steams with jumping milk.
The stables are abuzz. The hulking bull now mulls
Over the massive labor in a corner, eyes
The lambing ewes. A whole field's worth of hay
Is put out for the horses, who, with snuffing muzzles
Snort and whinny, dream of wide and blue horizons.
The skylight turns the sky into a single plum,
Announcing that the day now spills across the land,
That it will be good to turn over the clods
Of earth beneath our feet, and that the cat now sits
Giving himself a bath upon the stairs. Beyond,
The russet fields of wheat observe the season,
The sickle being polished with new care. The bee
Has guessed this slashing of the golden crop, and sends
A kiss or two in brushing past the ears of grain.

Let us hang beads of dew upon the spider's web,
And then along the branch that is in sunlight bathed,
Let us wed the skylark to the dawn and sing,
While on the corset buttons crack, while on his nest
The bird a hymn unfurls, plucking the string of pearls
Within his throat, and while a butterfly laid low
By love rebounds, going along, sowing his down.

Let us come upon the hornet's shuffling pace
Along the lilac teat of the wisteria plant,
And let us note the rustle of the sleepy trees.
The night will slumber on in a golden silence;
We'll hear the sound of wagons sticking in their tracks,
The sun that jolts its blazing windmill into motion,
The patter of the birches, the whisper of the gorse,
The chestnuts with a thump plunking from the tree
When, like any greenfinch, the tufts upon the meadow
Are dampened and disheveled after torrential rain.
The earth, which sees the moon and daybreak playing over
The flowers in its gardens – she'll take us in the air
Where she spins out into her waltz; and living arms
Will rounder grow, with firmness in their curves, and love
Will drench each meeting of the skin. The peach shall own
Its contours, liquid, velvet, and the quivering
That rocks it in its leafy cradle. In our hand,
The poem will feel as if a grape plucked from the vine.

And so I wake when grasses and the songbirds do,
So that my summer song can be that of the boughs;
The rose will split apart its petalled shell, and I
Desire to catch its burst of youth as day unfolds,
Desire to know what lives inside the hollow dens.
Though time might break apart beneath the stomping clog,
I, with a questing hand, its particles collect,
And mix it with the tears my eye knows how to shed,
And make some useful mortar hardened by the sun.

I sing and buds emerge out of their slumbering.

CONCLUSION

Taking stock from here, in this final month of writing where at last I handle the thesis as a whole, I reflect on what I have achieved in this expansive piece. My intentions had been to raise Sauvage's profile; to exhibit a range of tone and writing style within a piece destined for an academic audience; and to convince the reader of my love for my subject while demonstrating sufficient disciplinary rigor. But as Ingold argues with his phrase 'amateur rigour' (2021: 14), rigor is the corollary of love, a quality internal to the scholar, the critic, or the translator who is animated by the amateur's zeal, rather than a professional standard imposed from outside.

This thesis has attempted to sufficiently convey Ingold's type of rigor, one 'flexible and in love with life' (ibid). It may also be argued that this work, and especially *A Sauvage Reader*, has rigor in the obsolete sense of the word, meaning 'stiffness'. Although I have tried as much as possible to give a sense of my thinking and reasoning process in *A Sauvage Reader*, my translations of Sauvage are presented in their 'final forms', in the latest possible versions into which I've worked them before the deadline. In Piasecki's words, *A Sauvage Reader* is the culmination of research, the culmination of thought, trial, and error, rather than unfiltered access to the entirety of the process that lead to the *Reader's* coming into shape (2018: 213). Access to the process would perhaps instead look like the reproduction of every single scrap of paper on which I ever scrawled a translated line of a poem. This would amount to the textual genesis of the translator's text, which would, as Farge argues, require a reader to come along and shape such material into a meaningful narrative (1989: 19).

As I think of the type of writing I performed across notepads, Word documents, and – my father having instilled in me a reverence for scrap paper from an early age, lest a useful and usable thing go to waste – too many loose papers that I will probably never track down again, I reflect on how the process of working out a translation failed to truly differ from the process of working out a paragraph for a chapter. Doing this PhD furnished practical evidence of the absence of the ontological distinction between authorship and translatorship, an absence defended by Lefevere (1992b), Bassnett (2011), and others surveyed in the beginning of Chapter 4. And yet, if Translation Studies and genetic criticism have found fruitful

common ground in a general attitude of treating a literary text as a potentially infinite series of drafts, as event rather than an object (Cordingley 2023), it is curious that academic practice should maintain a similar distinction between different types of writing. My inclusion of *A Sauvage Reader* marked out this thesis to be referred to as a 'PhD by practice', as if doing translations were 'practice' and doing conventional academic chapters were something else. This is a false and unhelpful distinction that the creative critical agenda attempts to pick apart. Creative criticism would therefore benefit from being brought into greater conversation with Translation Studies and directions in editorial scholarship and genetic criticism. My dissertation has demonstrated this to a degree, arguing on behalf of the significant overlap between the treatment of writing by all three branches of textual knowledge.

A Sauvage Reader, 'fixed' though it is in the version encountered here, is nonetheless intended as an iteration in the series of drafts that is Sauvage's poetry across time and languages. It is different from previous versions of her work, inspired by my concerns and observations as a reader. In the *Reader*, I answer the questions I raised in Chapters 2 and 3 about whether Sauvage can and should be made more feminist; by changing the pronouns in my English translations (for example, 'And there she was, her shining form that seemed / To chase away the darkness in the house' in '*Correspondance*'), I introduce new addressees into Sauvage's poetry. In the *Reader*, Sauvage is less defined by an unnamed male lover, or a son, or motherhood, or melancholy, especially as these subjects have been transformed into metaphors for writing and translation. But such decisions would not have taken place without rigorous investigation of Sauvage's manuscripts, as described in Chapter 5. This is not to say that I needed 'permission' for my creative departures in translation, although the pronoun shifts were certainly inspired by the possibility that Sauvage herself makes materially visible in her manuscripts. Rather, I point out that *A Sauvage Reader* does not stand alone in its current incarnation and likely would not have taken its existing shape were it not for the conventionally framed scholarship of the chapters that precede the *Reader*. Thus the chapters anticipate and support the *Reader* in the manner of a very long translator's preface. The mutual reliance of *Reader* and chapters points to the unhelpfulness of distinguishing between the creative and the critical.

This 'PhD by practice' understands practice to encompass all aspects of its composition. It is also practice in the preparative meaning of the word: practice for

further academic work, practice in translation from French, practice in writing poetry. Perhaps it is also practice for Sauvage's future incarnations – a rehearsal for the versions, translations, and readings of her work that will come to be.

I return to the question posed by Dayan as to Sauvage's importance and impact. Dayan concluded that Sauvage had none that can be measured by modern, conventional research standards (2021: 163). Creative criticism practitioners would say this means that a redefinition of standards is necessary (Hilevaara and Orley 2021). Irina Dumitrescu, in speaking of intellectuals imprisoned by Communist regimes and the role that reading and writing play in the survival of individuals, distinguishes between 'work done to please institutions' and 'work done in the face of death' (Flynn and Karshan 2022). Without making grandiose claims that literature will save its readers, give their lives meaning, or turn them into ethical individuals, I believe it is always worth considering a text's apparently outsized importance in the life of a reader – and, more importantly, what the reader goes on to do about it. This is why fan scholarship has a lot to offer to ongoing explorations of how academic professionals relate to their subjects of study. In my case, I return to Sauvage because I find wisdom and kinship in her work. Her poems startle me anew with every re-reading. In their ability to be contagious – to prompt translation, to prompt joining in existing song – her poems are death-resisting. They resist not merely their own oblivion, but also death as a general concept that spells the end of the making of relation. Perhaps what Benjamin calls a text's translatability (2012: 76) is the text's capacity to resist such death. It is an inherent quality of Sauvage's work, this death-resistance. Sauvage, who wrote so much of tendrils and fibers, of embraces and enmeshments, was profoundly interested in the relations that connect objects, plants, animals, people, and ideas. The making of this lattice of lives does not, however, occur without a type of work. It is a continuous practice, that which joins us together, the practice of making *nœuds recueillis*.

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APPENDIX A

The following is a list of known works by Sauvage, assembled to the best of my knowledge. I include it as a guide for the reader, in hopes that it may clarify what is a tortuous publishing and editing history. For much of this information I am indebted to work already done by Marchal (Sauvage 2009: 52-53). Many of the following publications are reprints. Given that Sauvage died in 1927, anything published after that date was presumably done so upon the initiative of Pierre Messiaen or other family, friends, or rigorous amateurs. I include the works' date of publication or, in the case of manuscript material, composition, as well as publisher or location. This information is given in parentheses. All classification numbers refer to the Fonds Olivier Messiaen et Yvonne Loriod at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF). Poem titles are given in quotation marks. Subcollections that were printed in books are given in italics and listed under the books in question by bullet point. Book titles and journal names are given in italics. Publishing house names are unitalicized. My own annotations are in brackets.

Works by Cécile Sauvage

'Les trois Muses' (*La Revue forézienne*, also known as *La Revue de Lyon et du Sud-Est illustrée*, 1905)

'Vers l'azur', 'L'âme universelle', 'Clairs de lune', 'Trêve', 'Le cœur sensible', 'Conformités', 'Chansons crépusculaires', 'Impressions', 'Inanition', 'Crépuscule', 'L'idole', 'Les phalènes', 'Le pâtre', 'Soirées d'automne', 'Angoisses' (*La Revue forézienne / La Revue de Lyon et du Sud-Est illustrée*, 1906)

'La vache', 'La nonne', 'Et ego in Arcadia' (*Mercure de France*, 1907)

'Thyrsis et Gorgo' (*Le Feu*, 1908)

Tandis que la terre tourne (*Mercure de France*, 1910)

- *Pleine lune ou croissant*
- *L'arc-en-ciel*

- *La mort en croupe*
- *L'Âme en bourgeon*

Le Vallon (Mercure de France, 1913)

- *Fumées*
- *Fuites légères*
- *Le Vallon*
- *Mélancolie*

L'Étreinte mystique (RES VMC MS-241 (1-3), Fonds Olivier Messiaen et Yvonne Loriod, Archives et manuscrits, Bibliothèque nationale de France. Composed 1915.)

L'Aile et la rose (RES VMC MS-241 (4). Composed 1914-1915?)

Prière (RES VMC MS-241 (5). Composed 1914-1915?)

'Le jour qui meurt' (RES VMC MS-241 (6). Composed ?)

'Ô mon père' (VM FONDS 30 MES-10 (27). Composed ?)

Hémérocalle et la guerre and *Hémérocalle et l'amour* (composed 1916-1919)

[Drama in verse, lost except for Tableau V, which is locatable in VM FONDS 30 MES-10 (28) and VM FONDS MES 30-10 (15).]

Aimer après la mort (VM FONDS 30 MES-10 (29). Composed 1925-1926)

[Drama in verse. Also transcribed in Marchal 1995.]

Cécile Sauvage : Etudes et souvenirs (Amitiés, 1928)

[Contains a variant of *Primevère* and of *Fragments, pensées et extraits de lettres*. See below.]

'Pour Olivier qui dort' (*Mercure de France*, 1929)

'Scènes de printemps' (*Latinité*, 1929)

[Marchal suggests this is an extract of *Hémérocalle et l'amour* (Sauvage 2009: 53).]

Œuvres de Cécile Sauvage (Mercure de France, 1929)

- *Tandis que la terre tourne*
- *L'Âme en bourgeon*
- *Mélancolie*
- *Fumées*
- *Le Vallon*
- *Primevère*
- *Fragments, pensées et extraits de lettres*

[The subcollections reproduced in this edition are incomplete: they are missing many poems that previously appeared in *Tandis que la terre tourne* (1910) and *Le Vallon* (1913). *Primevère* is a version of *Prière* and *L'Étreinte mystique*, presumably reworked by Pierre Messiaen. Extracts of the following poems appear in *Fragments, pensées et extraits de lettres*: 'Muse rêvée', 'Printemps', 'Printemps en Livradois', 'Maternité', 'En relisant Villon', 'Souvenirs de Digne', 'Destin', 'Sainte Marie l'Égyptienne', as well as an extract from *Aimer après la mort*.]

Lettres à Pierre Messiaen (Amitiés, 1930)

L'Âme en bourgeon (Steff, 1955)

L'Âme en bourgeon (Séguier Archimbaud, 1987)

[Contains a preface by Olivier Messiaen.]

Tandis que la terre tourne (Séguier Archimbaud, 1991)

Œuvres complètes (Table Ronde, 2002)

[The title is misleading: this is a reproduction of *Œuvres de Cécile Sauvage* (1929) and as such is *not* the complete works.]

Écrits d'amour (Cerf, 2009)

[Marchal's reproduction of *L'Étreinte mystique*, *L'Aile et la rose*, and *Prière*, with introduction and notes.]

APPENDIX B

Source Text

Je me souviens : l'instant étreint l'âme des plantes,
Des flottes d'or s'en vont sur le lac de l'éther,
Des cloches de moutons versent leurs eaux dolentes,
La corne du bélier lunaire perce l'air.
Je suis seule. Les monts se colorent d'extase,
Les fleurs et les maisons se ferment. C'est le soir.
Un ver luisant béat qui gîte dans un vase
S'argente comme un pleur au velours d'un œil noir ;
Le fenouil écrasé jette une odeur farouche,
Comme la sauterelle au contact de nos doigts
Salive une liqueur sur sa petite bouche.
J'écoute dans le calme un murmure de voix :
Peut-être que j'entends bruissier les planètes
Dans la brise qui vient du large des moissons,
Peut-être qu'en rentrant les abeilles proprettes
Ont laissé leur musique errer dans les buissons.
Les branches d'un tilleul disent des messes basses
A quelque Pansylvain, impalpable et muet,
Les courtilières font ronfler leurs notes grasses,
La grande Ourse paraît danser un menuet.
Quelle étrange fraîcheur glace mon front de rêve
Et tombe sur mes mains ? Je n'ai pas froid. J'attends.
Un malaise confus dans ma poitrine crève.
N'est-ce pas le moment espéré si longtemps
D'un bonheur incertain, si fort qu'on en succombe ?
Une brume s'étend. Nul dieu trouant l'azur
Ne descend vers mon cœur sous forme de colombe
Et mon pied indécis dans l'ombre heurte un mur.
(1910: 49-50)

Je me souviens de mon enfance
Et du silence où j'avais froid ;
J'ai tant senti peser sur moi
Le regard de l'indifférence.

Ô jeunesse, je te revois
Toute petite et repliée,
Assise et recueillant les voix
De ton âme presque oubliée.
(1913: 139)

Je me suis dit les mots câlins
Que personne ne peut me dire,
Ceux qui ne parlent pas en vain
Au cœur qui se ronge et soupire.

Target Text

I recall
The instant wrapped around the soul of plants,
A golden fleet sailing through space, the bells
Of sheep that in a mournful stream cascade,
While Aries' horn impales the atmosphere.
I am alone. The hills flush in ecstasy,
The flowers and houses close. The evening comes.
A blissful glow-worm living in a jar
Gleams like a tear in a dark and velvet eye;
The trampled fennel gives off a fierce scent,
As a grasshopper its cordial drools
When it butts its mouth against a finger.
I hear a voice's murmur in the quiet – perhaps
It is the sound of planets shuffling, borne
On the wind that tears from open crop-fields;
Perhaps the tidy bees have gone to sleep
And left their music wandering in the bushes;
The boughs of linden trees are whispering
To some abstract and silent, sylvan Pan;
Meanwhile the crickets snore their fat notes,
The astral she-bear whirls a minuet.
What odd chill coats my forehead,
Spreads to my hands? I am not cold. I wait.
An indistinct malaise roils beneath my ribs:
Is this not the long-awaited moment
Of elusive happiness? So strong, it overcomes?
A mist unfurls. No god tears apart the sky
To come down to me in dove form. In the darkness,
My uncertain step knocks against a wall.

I remember being little,
In the silence being cold.
The weight of an indifferent stare
Was hard to bear, heavy to hold.

O my withdrawn youth, I see you
Small and scrunched into a ball –
Sitting gathering the voices
Of your near-forgotten soul.

I've told myself such tender words
As nobody can say to me;
They do not miss their mark, and soothe
A heart that wastes away and bleeds.

Allez, je me suis bien aimée,
J'ai si bien caressé mes mains
Pour la misère désolée
Des petits doigts maigres de faim ;

J'ai si bien serré mon visage
Sur le sein de mon âme molle
Que nul amoureux entourage
Ne m'eût fait étreinte plus folle.
(1913: 142)

Le soir, au soleil, je m'assieds
Devant ma porte ;
Le jardin, les arbres fruitiers,
La brise forte
Soufflent jusqu'à moi la rumeur
Des tièdes feuilles
Sans que mon immobile cœur
En lui l'accueille.
Je devine les coteaux mous
Qui se prolongent.
Sur l'étoffe de mes genoux
Mes mains s'allongent
Et je m'abîme à regarder
Ces deux mains frêles
Comme si mon corps tout entier
Était en elles.
(1903: 208)

Je suis dans ma maison chérie
D'où je vois les jours s'écouler ;
Tour à tour soleil, brume, pluie
Vont rire, fondre, et s'envoler.
Ah ! que de soirs dont je recueille
Le dernier soupir plein d'azur
Et que d'abeilles, que de feuilles
Tombent mortes le long du mur.
(1913: 198)

Pourtant, je veux chanter aussi
Comme une abeille sans souci
Et rire aussi comme une abeille
Sur un rosier qui s'ensoleille.

Je suis triste comme la plaine
Et joyeuse comme l'abeille
Dans le jour qui souffle une haline
Embuée autant que vermeille.
(1913: 157)

Come, I have loved myself so well –
I've stroked so well my own two hands

With little fingers thin with wanting,
For all the lack that ravaged them.

I've pressed my face into the breast
Of my soft spirit, held me tight.
I wrapped myself around myself
As in the way no lover might.

I sit before my door
In the evening sun;
From the breeze, the garden
And the orchard come
Rumors breathing of
The tepid foliage,
But my unmoving heart
To such news is strange.
I notice the soft hills
That roll on as they please,
My hands lie on the cloth
Covering my knees,
I sink as I observe
These frail and slender hands,
As if all of my body
Were contained in them.

From within my cherished house
I watch the days that trickle by:
The sun, the rain, the mist by turns
Will laugh, then melt, and then take flight.
Naught but the evenings, where I gather
The final inhale full of sky;
Naught but the bees, naught but the leaves
That by the wall in death do lie.

And yet, I also want to sing
Like the buoyant bumblebee,
And also laugh just like the bee
Upon the sunning rose in spring.

Though I am blue like open fields,
Like joyous bee I chase the gloom,
In the day that breathes in turns
Both vermilion and brume.

Au fond du jardin
Sur un gazon fin
La table est servie :
Mouvement du vin,
Soleil dans les verres,
Pêches et raisins
Avec grains de pluie
Et fleur de poussière.
Je veux boire et ma main tremble.
N'ayons pas l'air de boire ensemble.
Une poire d'or où loge une abeille
Tombe du poirier ;
Nos amis sont gais,
La brise sommeille.
J'adore ta main,
Ton verre et ton pain ;
J'aurai tant d'amour à manger ton pain.
(2009: 145-146)

Mélancolie, ô ma colombe
À l'œil tendre, à la plume grise,
Toi qui me suis quand le jour tombe
Vers l'étang que la lune irise ;

Toi qui becquêtes mon bras frêle
Comme une sœur encor mutine
Et dont le baiser me rappelle
L'ongle pointu d'une main fine.
(1913: 203)

Que serais-je, ô triste pensée,
Sans ta aile grise à mon dos,
Dont je me sens plus caressée
Que d'un voluptueux manteau ?
(1913: 202)

Petites violettes blanches,
J'aime ce cadre de printemps
Que vous me faites quand je penche
Mon visage sur les étangs.

Voyez, ma robe humble et fanée
Comme elle s'allonge dans l'eau
Et par une algue enrubannée
Devient légère avec le flot ;

Voyez comme l'ombre mouvante
Qui tombe du bouleau pleureur
Fait une délicate mante
De dentelle autour de mon cœur.
(1913: 149)

In lush grass
A table stands
Wine glasses pass
From hand to hand
Sun-spotted; grapes
And peaches dusted
With specks of rain,
Abundant blossoms.
I want to drink and my hand trembles.
Let's not appear to drink together.
A golden pear, where hums a bee
Falls from its tree
On merry friends.
The soft wind lulls.
I love your hand,
Your glass, and your bread.
I will eat your bread with such adoration.

My dove Melancholy,
You've tender eyes and grey plumes,
At day's end you follow me
To the pond under the moon;

Like a wordless little sister
You peck at my thin arm,
Your kiss a pointy fingernail
Upon a slender hand.

What shall I be, o mournful thought,
Without your grey wing at my back
By which, more so than any luscious coat
I feel caressed?

I like, little white violets,
How you frame my face,
Setting me in springtime
As I lean over the pond.

See how my poor and faded dress
Spreads out across the water, and,
Beribboned by the weeds,
Is buoyed by the swell.

See how the weeping birch
Sheds its shifting darkness,
That settles like a mantle
Of fine lace around my heart.

Ah, ne me croyez pas pleureuse,
Je suis sereine sous le jour
Comme dans l'herbe qu'elle creuse
Une source à l'eau de velours.

Je reflète avec un temps sombre
Les nuages et l'arbre noir,
Mais j'aime mon silence et l'ombre
Qui s'incline sur mon miroir.
(1913: 201)

Femme pensive, nue et qui flottes sur l'eau
Entre les pales lis et les grêles bouleaux,
Les deux bras repliés, les jambes allongées
Et toute ta beauté vaguement émergée ;
Que regardent tes yeux dans le ciel bas et gris ?
Ne te sens-tu pas fuir sur ce fleuve endormi
Et dont le mouvement invisible et tranquille
T'entraîne abandonnant les rives immobiles ?
(1913: 44)

Ma tête, penche-toi sur l'eau blanche et dénoue
Dedans tes longs cheveux et que l'eau passe et joue
Au travers, les emporte au mouvement des vagues
Dans le sommeil flottant et végétal de l'algue.
Que le glissement calme et murmurant de l'eau
Entraîne hors de ton front cet impalpable flot
De pensée et de rêve avec tes longues tresses
Qui mêlent au courant leur fuyante souplesse.
(1913: 90)

Lorsque l'eau voudra, lasse d'être morte,
Tordre ses cheveux d'algues au soleil,
Le vent du printemps poussera ma porte
Et me tirera de mon long sommeil.
Il me dira : Viens, prends ma main légère,
La neige a fondu, les toits vont fleurir,
Une jeune mousse a caché sous terre
Avec son tapis le vieux souvenir.
L'ombre est transparente entre les ramures,
Ton cœur doit souffrir d'un hiver si long,
Entends l'eau chanter argentine et pure
Comme un rossignol. –Je dirai : Allons.
Et peut-être alors en mon cœur qui pleure
J'entendrai piailler des petits oiseaux
Qui ne veulent pas que le printemps meure
Dans ma chair trop jeune et seront éclos.
(1913: 174)

Oh, do not think I am too weepy:
I am serene during the day,
Like the velvet mountain stream
That through the long leaves winds its way.

I reflect with somber rhythm
Clouds, black tree, and parted grass;
But I like silence, and the shadow
That leans over my looking glass.

You nude, reflecting woman, floating on the water,
As white lilies and thin birches pass on either side,
Your arms are crossed, your legs stretched out
before you,
With all your beauty vaguely to the surface rising,
What is it that you eye in the low and grey sky?
Can you feel you are flowing down this somnolent
river,
Which, with its calm and invisible motion,
Carries you off, leaving fixed banks behind?

My head, lean over the white water, untangle
Your long hair in it; let the water pass and play
Through it, bearing your locks away upon the tide
In the vegetal and floating sleep of algae.
Let the water's sedate and murmuring sweep
Carry out of your mind this impalpable swell
Of thoughts, mirages, along with your tresses
That mix their flowing liveness with the current.

Soon as the water wishes, tired of being still,
To shake out its weedy tresses underneath the sun,
The springtime wind will push open my door, and
pull
Me from my slumber, saying, Come:
Take my airy hand, the snow is melted now,
The rooftops will be budding. The young moss,
Rug-like, has hidden in the earth old memories.
The darkness hanging in the trees is thinner.
Your heart is surely breaking from so long a winter –
Listen to the water as it sings like silver,
Like a nightingale.

I'll answer: Let us go.
And perhaps in my heart that was aching
There will be little birds chirping,
Who, for fear the springtime might die
Before its time in my body,
Will have hatched from their eggs.

Les corbeaux qui suivront de près
Ma marche indolente et menue,
Assis en cercle dans les prés
Sous un ciel de brume chenue,
Auront l'air d'un peuple étranger
Qui complot de me manger
Quand la lune sera venue.
(1913: 165)

Je verrai s'éloigner la lune
Comme un oiseau dans le brouillard.
A l'heure où la blême infortune
Me pressera pour le départ.
Et l'arbre me dira : Demeure,
Pourquoi partir ? Rien n'est plus doux
Que l'automne blonde qui pleure
Ave ses feuilles dans ton cou.
(1913: 167)

Parfois dans mon miroir où tarde l'indolence
Je m'apparais songeant sur un fond de silence ;
La fenêtre d'en face y fait danser sans bruit
Son feuillage d'été que la brise conduit ;
Une bruine d'or s'effrite sur mes tempes,
J'ai le cadre fumeux et léger des estampes.
Alors de ce tableau de rêve où peu à peu
Les formes et le jour s'accusent moins ombreux,
Je palpe en hésitant la prochaine atmosphère
Comme un pan d'horizon détaché de la terre ;
Et mon âme indécise et qui se débattait
Entre mon être morne et mon pâle reflet
Me fuit. Je sens soudain que sa chaleur me quitte
Et que c'est le reflet seulement qu'elle habite.
(1903: 207)

Ce soir j'ai ri, vois-tu, d'un rire qui s'écoute
Pour rire, pour sentir entre mes froides dents
Cette gaieté qui tombe en perles goutte à goutte
Avec un tremblement.
(1913: 204)

Un long silence autour de nous.
Cette tête sur mes genoux
Blanche et sévère
Rejoint le calme de la terre.
Les yeux sont clos sur un rire effacé,

The crows who closely follow
My small and languid strides
Perched in a circle in a field
Beneath the hoary sky –
They have the look of enemies
Conspiring all to swallow me
Alive, soon as the moon is out.

I shall see the moon draw away
Like bird into mist, at the hour
When misery in its pallor
Would compel my escape.
And the tree will say to me: stay,
Why leave? There is nothing as sweet
As the flaxen autumn who weeps
With her leaves onto your nape.

Sometimes in my mirror, where indolence resides,
I spy myself a dream, with silence at my back,
And in there is the window, where summer leaves
are led
By the gentle wind in their noiseless dance,
While atoms of a golden mist against my head
Disintegrate. My frame is light and wispy, like
A print that's poorly pressed. And when within this
scene
The shapes, the day, at last more tangible appear,
I hesitantly touch the coming atmosphere
As if a slice of sky carved away from earth.
Then my uncertain soul, which hovered in between
My mournful being and my pale, reflected twin,
Takes off. At once, I feel its warmth abandon me
And sense that now it lives but in my reflection.

This eve I laughed, you see – a ringing laugh
For laughter's sake; to feel between my icy teeth
This gaiety that falls in pearls, trembling,
Drop by drop.

Protracted silence around us.
This head in my lap, harsh and white
Rejoins the stillness of the earth.
The eyes are closed over a smile
That is no more, lips sealed, the nose

Les lèvres sont closes, le nez
Est sans souffle. Dans l'air muet
Parfois un soupir monte et s'achève.
Plus je tiens ce visage de près,
Plus je vois qu'il était fait d'un rêve.
(1913: 100)

Unbreathing. In the silent air
The odd sigh rises, peters out.
The longer I hold your face close,
The more I see it was made of dream-stuff.

L'homme et son fils menant leur vache d'un pas lourd
S'en vont sur le chemin luisant encor de pluie.
Un soleil velouteux et gris de petit jour
Enveloppe en rêvant la montagne endormie.
La vache dit adieu à son dernier matin :
Plus jamais le pré vert où sautait sa mamelle
 Lourde et riche à plaisir d'un printanier butin.
Pourtant, que cette aurore a l'air d'être éternelle !
(1913: 20)

Heavy steps: man and son lead on their cow
Along the road that gleams after the rain.
The sun at daybreak's velveteen and grey
And blankets sleepily the dreaming hills. The cow
Now bids farewell to her last daybreak; never
Again the green field where she swung her udder,
Heavy, rich with the pleasure of spring plunder.
And yet how this dawn seems to go on forever!

Là-bas dans un pré des vaches s'avancent
Le soir ; leur pelage a l'air d'être froid ;
Le vallon bleuit, la bergère chante,
Le calme est troublé par sa rude voix
Qui paraît venir d'ailleurs ou qui semble
Le cri d'un farouche et simple animal.
Puis elle se tait quand le bouleau tremble
Au vent de la nuit et d'un pas égal
Une à une alors les vaches reviennent
Se suivant de près sur l'horizon gris,
Avec la bergère encor plus lointaine
Dans l'ombre qui prend ses vagues habits.
(1913: 92)

Just there, in a field, cows walk on ahead.
It's evening and their hides are looking cold.
The valley's bluer, the peasant girl is singing,
The quiet broken by her guttural voice,
Which seems to come from elsewhere or to be
A call made by a wild and simple beast.
Then she falls quiet as the birches shake
Beneath the night-time wind; and so the cows
Return through greying space with even step,
Their noses huddled to each other's tails,
The peasant girl is farther still, within
The darkness pulling on its shapeless dress.

Deux hommes comme vêtus d'ombre
Marchent sur la pelouse sombre
Et s'enfoncent dans le feuillage
Où s'évaporent les nuages ;
Un chien à peine dessiné
Les suit, tête basse, en silence.
On ne sait ce que le chien pense
Ni pourquoi ces gens embrumés
Marchent dans l'ombre avec cadence.
(1913: 86)

Two men as if clothed in shade
Walk across the murky ley,
Vanishing into the chase
Where the clouds evaporate.
The bare outline of a dog
Follows them, head low and mute.
We don't know what thinks the brute,
Nor why these men wrapped in fog
March through the dark.

Une cloche sonne
Sur la terre des morts ;
Sa note résonne,
S'élevé, tremble, s'endort.
Un long cercueil s'achemine
Dans le silence des collines
Porte par des femmes en pleurs.
Et souriant sur la fraîcheur

Over the land of the dead
Rings a bell
Its note quakes
Rises, trembles, and fades.
In the silence of the fell
A long coffin winds its way
By keening women borne.
And we go smiling upon

De notre pelouse immortelle
Nous marchons entre les fleurs,
Calices d'azur, ombelles.
Balancez-vous, rameaux,
Balancez-vous, clochettes,
 O brises et repos,
 Libellules muettes.
L'entre-croisement souple des ramures
Retombe et s'agite avec un murmure
Et les doux oiseaux dont l'aile frissonne
Volent mollement du bouleau à l'aulne.
 La brise porte nos bras blancs
 Dans leurs suaves mouvements,
 Et nos jambes fines s'élancent
 Comme des tiges. L'air balance
 Autour de nous nos longs cheveux,
 L'air pale et bleu.
(1913: 88-89)

Regarde sous ces rameaux
Où murmurent les oiseaux
Toutes ces croix alignées :
Ce sont les tristes épées
Qui nous fixeront au sol ;
Et pourtant, ce rossignol...
(1913: 28)

Enfant, pâle embryon, toi qui dors dans les eaux
Comme un petit dieu mort dans un cercueil de verre,
Tu goûtes maintenant l'existence légère
Du poisson qui somnole au-dessous des roseaux.

Tu vis comme la plante, et ton inconscience
Est un lis entr'ouvert qui n'a que sa candeur
Et qui ne sait pas même à quelle profondeur
Dans le sein de la terre il puise sa substance.

Douce fleur sans abeille et sans rosée au front,
Ma sève te parcourt et te prête son âme ;
Cependant l'étendue avare te réclame
Et te fait tressaillir dans mon petit giron.

Tu ne sais pas combien ta chair a mis de fibres
Dans le sol maternel et jeune de ma chair
Et jamais ton regard que je pressens si clair
N'apprendra ce mystère innocent dans les livres.

Qui peut dire comment je te serre de près ?
Tu m'appartiens ainsi que l'aurore à la plaine,
Atour de toi ma vie est une chaude laine
Où tes membres frileux poussent dans le secret.

The dew of our immortal turf.
Walking in between the blossoms,
Azure chalices and clusters.
Sway, you treetops
Sway, bellflowers
 O light wind and peace
 Mute common darters.
The lithe tendrils of the trees
With a murmur fuse and heave
Downy birds with trembling wings
Fly torpidly from birch to alder.
 The breeze shoulders
 The smooth motions of our arms
 Our slender legs
 Tossed up like twigs.
 The air lifts
 Around our faces
 Our long hair,
 The pale, blue air.

Look there, where songbirds murmur
Beneath the tree boughs in the vale:
All those crosses in a line
Are mournful blades that, in our time,
Will fix us to the ground.
And yet – that nightingale...

My child, pale embryo, you who sleep
As a little god sleeps dead within a casket
Of glass; who, like a fish beneath the reeds
Existence brushes in its dreaming state.

You live as flowers live, unconscious as
The lily with its candor half-unfurled,
Unknowing of what depths its roots attain
When drawing from the earth its nourishment.

Sweet bloom, you have no dew, no buzzing bee;
It is my sap which courses through your veins
And gives you life and soul. You quake within
My core, your greedy contours taking shape.

You know not of your body's countless tendrils
Sunk deep into my young, maternal soil;
This is a secret knowledge, innocent,
Your eyes will never learn it from a book.

Who could describe the closeness of our union?
You're mine, as daybreak to the earth belongs,
My life is spun around you, warm as wool,
Your small limbs sprout in mystery.

Je suis autour de toi comme l'amande verte
Qui ferme son écrin sur l'amandon laiteux,
Comme la cosse molle aux replis cotonneux
Dont la graine enfantine et soyeuse est couverte.

La larme qui me monte aux yeux, tu la connais,
Elle a le goût profond de mon sang sur tes lèvres,
Tu sais quelles ferveurs, quelles brûlantes fièvres
Déchainent dans ma veine un torrent acharné.

Je vois tes bras monter jusqu'à ma nuit obscure
Comme pour caresser ce que j'ai d'ignoré,
Ce point si douloureux où l'être resserré
Sent qu'il est étranger à toute la nature.

Écoute, maintenant que tu m'entends encor,
Imprime dans mon sein ta bouche puérile,
Réponds à mon amour avec ta chair docile :
Quel autre enlacement me paraîtra plus fort ?

Les jours que je vivais isolée et sans flamme,
Quand tu seras un homme et moins vivant pour moi,
Je reverrai les temps où j'étais avec toi,
Lorsque nous étions deux à jouer dans mon âme.

Car nous jouons parfois. Je te donne mon cœur
Comme un joyau vibrant qui contient des chimères,
Je te donne mes yeux où des images claires
Rament languissamment sur un lac de fraîcheur.

Ce sont des cygnes d'or qui semblent des navires,
Des nymphes de la nuit qui se posent sur l'eau.
La lune sur leur front incline son chapeau
Et ce n'est que pour toi qu'elles ont des sourires.

Aussi, quand tu feras plus tard tes premiers pas,
La rose, le soleil, l'arbre, la tourterelle,
Auront pour le regard de ta grâce nouvelle
Des gestes familiers que tu reconnaitras.

Mais tu ne sauras plus sur quelles blondes rives
De gros poissons d'argent t'apportaient des anneaux
Ni sur quelle prairie intime des agneaux
Faisaient bondir l'ardeur de leurs pattes naïves.

Car jamais plus mon cœur qui parle avec le tien
Cette langue muette et chaude des pensées
Ne pourra renouer l'étreinte délacée :
L'aurore ne sait pas de quelle ombre elle vient.

Non, tu ne sauras pas quelle Venus candide
Déposa dans ton sang la flamme du baiser,
L'angoisse du mystère ou l'art va se briser,
Et ce goût de nourrir un désespoir timide.

My life encloses you like the green husk
That hides the milky almond; like a pod
All soft and lined with wrinkles, I contain
The silky infant seed within my flank.

And yet, you are acquainted with the tear
That wells up in my eye. It has the taste
Of my blood on your lips. You know firsthand
What passions and what fevers course through me.

I see you reach your arms towards my darkness,
As if to cradle that unknown in me,
That painful spot in which a human being,
Reduced, a stranger to all nature feels.

So listen, while you still understand me,
Imprint your childish mouth upon my breast,
Respond to my love with your docile flesh:
Who else's grasp could feel as strong as this?

When I will live alone and without fire,
You grown a man and living less for me,
I'll think back on the days we were together
And playing side by side within my soul.

Because we play, sometimes. I give to you
My heart, a trembling jewel, its wildest dreams,
I give to you my eyes, full of clear sights
That row across a cool lake languidly.

They may be golden swans, sailing ahead
Like ships; or they may be nocturnal nymphs,
Alighting on the water. They smile for you
Beneath the crowns of moonlight that they wear.

And when you take the first steps of your life,
The rose, the sun, the tree, the turtle dove
Will seem to you familiar in their motions;
You'll recognize them in your newfound grace.

But you will not recall those flaxen shores
Where fat, argentine fish did bring you rings,
And privy fields where tender-footed lambs
The ardor in their hooves kicked to the sky.

My heart will cease to talk like this to yours,
In the warm, unspoken language of pure thought;
Our knot, undone, will never be retied;
The dawn knows not from what darkness it came.

And you will never know the shameless Venus
Who placed a fiery kiss within your blood,
Nor art imploding in the wretched mystery,
Nor how it feels to nurture faint despair.

Tu ne sauras plus rien de moi, le jour fatal
Ou tu t'élanceras dans l'existence rude,
Ô mon petit miroir qui vois ma solitude
Se pencher anxieuse au bord de ton cristal.
(1910: 129-133)

On te mit à côté de moi dans le grand lit,
La veilleuse jetait son rayon affaibli,
La garde s'endormait devant le feu de chêne.
Entre mon être et toi tremblait encor la chaîne
De notre intimité farouche des longs mois ;
Je te sentais encor bouger du pied en moi
Et je craignais de voir cette petite chose
Dont le souffle était bas comme un soupir de rose.
Mais l'instinct fut plus fort que le rêve. Je vis
Ta forme de momie-enfant au creux du lit.
Tes yeux de couleur trouble étaient dans la pénombre
Grands ouverts, tes deux yeux encor pleins de mon
ombre.
Ton air était sévère et triste. Suivais-tu
Dans l'espace l'essor de ton destin têtue ?
Peut-être ton esprit tâtonnant sur la vie
Voulait-il retrouver mon étreinte ravie ;
Peut-être éprouvais-tu dans ce premier éveil
L'étonnement d'un dieu qui sort de son sommeil,
Ou bien, simple animal éclos pour l'aventure,
Contemplais-tu l'orgueil muet de la nature ?
Si frêle, si menu, tout l'humain rabougri
Se ridait sur ta face où songeaient tes yeux gris ;
Ta bouche avait ces plis amers d'expérience
Et ce dédain railleur qu'offre la connaissance.
Petit vieux insensible au feu de mon regard,
Tu ressemblais à ceux qui sentent le départ
Très proche, ceux qui vont penchés et solitaires
Avec l'air de rentre déjà dans le mystère.
Je te voyais sorti de l'ancre nébuleux
Et pour toi j'avais froid, ô mon secret frileux,
Toi sur qui mes regards intérieurs pleurèrent,
Toi qui courbais mon ciel sur ta petite sphère ;
Les bras évanouis, qui t'avaient caressé
Dans mon sein, renaissaient en moi pour t'enlacer,
Puis ces bras lentement dans l'ombre retombèrent
Sentant que tu venais d'éclorre pour la terre.
(1910: 158-160)

Ai-je pu t'appeler de l'ombre vers le jour,
Sachant qu'il est si peu d'allégresse et d'amour,
Que le soleil qui luit sur l'azur n'a pas d'âme
Et que sous son regard dévoré par la flamme
Dort l'éternelle nuit ?

You will not know me on that fatal day
You burst into the harshness of existence;
My little mirror, you watch my loneliness
Lean anxiously over your glass's edge.

They put you by my side in the vast bed.
The night-light was throwing its weak glow,
The watchwoman sleeping in front of the fire.
The cord of our ferocious intimacy,
Months-long, still trembled between us.
I still felt you move in me, a phantom kick,
And I was afraid to see this tiny thing
Breathing as faintly as flowers open
And close. But instinct was stronger than reverie.
I saw you, mummy-child, in a fold of the sheets,
Your eyes were a muddled color –
Or maybe it was just the half-light –
Two eyes, open wide, clouded
With the remains of my shadow.
You looked austere. In mourning. Were you
Tracing out the course of your stubborn destiny
In the air? Perhaps, tentatively fumbling life,
You sought to find my thrilled embrace again.
Maybe you were, on this your first waking,
As stunned as a god who emerges from slumber,
Or were you a hatchling made for adventure,
Weighing the mute hubris of the natural world?
So frail and so small: a whole shriveled human
Lay in the wrinkles of your face, between
Your dreaming grey eyes. Your mouth was
puckered
By bitter experience, your lips curled
In the flippant disdain of the all-knowing.
Little old man unaware of my intense gaze,
You looked like those who sense the end
As very nigh, who walk alone and bent
Beneath the weight of that mystery.
My shivering secret, I saw you emerged
From the murk of your lair, and I felt cold for you,
You, upon whom fell the shower of my
introspections,
You, who curved my heavens to your little sphere.
These spent arms, that had caressed you within,
Revive to envelop you once more. Then,
These arms will slowly fall back, into obscurity,
Sensing that you are come onto this earth.

Could I have called you out of darkness to the light,
Knowing there is so little love and joy out here,
Knowing the sun that gleams up in the sky has not
Its soul, and that beneath its fire-drenched eye
Sleeps eternal night?

Ai-je pu désirer pétrir une chair frêle
Et lui communiquer la fureur de mon aile
Quand je me tords le bras dans l'horizon réduit
Et quand la mort est la cachant derrière l'huis
Ses nudités amères ?

Tu devras tout apprendre, et tes yeux étonnés,
Pleins d'ivresse d'abord de voir et d'être nés
Comme des fleurs de mars aux doigts de la lumière,
Tes yeux s'émerveillant de la douceur première
Riront à l'infini.

Tu croiras que l'oiseau qui pille les cerises
Poursuit pour ton bonheur le pas glissant des brises
Dans le ciel glacé d'or où l'astre pend son nid,
Tu croiras que la lune est un galet poli
Pour servir d'amulette.

Mais de l'ordre apparent bientôt tu comprendras
Le triste agencement, les vernis, les plâtras.
En son lustre la fleur te paraîtra moins nette,
Tu connaîtras que l'être est pris par la tempête
Comme un grain dans le vent.

Alors tu me diras : - Qu'avez-vous fait, ma mère
J'inclinai au repos, l'obscurité légère
Recueillait sans savoir mon germe inconscient
Et pour moi vous avez éclairé le néant...
- Qu'ai-je fait, mon enfant ?
(1910: 124-126)

Il paraît que ces bons russes trouvent "L'âme
en bourgeon" [sic] tout à fait de leur goût. Ils
disent que c'est plein d'inquiétude mystique ils
ont été très frappés par des pièces telles que :
"la tête – ... ai-je pu t'appeler de l'ombre etc."
Personne en France n'a si bien su lire en moi.
[...] Je riais et je disais à Pierre, "On ne se f...
pas de moi à St Pétersbourg..."
(Sauvage 1914: f.48r-f.48v).

Could I have wished to shape such frail and yielding
flesh,
And demonstrate the fury of my beating wing
As I twist my arms inside the shrunken sphere,
As death meanwhile outside the portal stands, and
hides
His bitter nakedness?

You'll have to learn it all: your astounded eyes,
While giddy now with your arrival and with sight,
Like flowers in March caressed by tender rays will
grow
Wide with astonishment at this first tenderness,
And infinitely laugh.

You'll think it's for your glee the cherry-plucking bird
Gives chase after the fleet footsteps of the wind
Across the aureate sky where the stars hang their
nests;
And you will think the moon is a burnished pebble
To play with as a toy.

But soon enough you'll understand the way things
are,
Their sad design, the surface varnish and the paste;
The gloss upon the flower will seem to you less
clear;
You'll know then how a human is taken by the
storm,
A grain upon the wind.

So you will say, 'O mother, what have you done to
me?
I tended towards rest and lithe obscurity,
Unknowingly I gathered my unconscious germ –
And now for me you have lit up oblivion.'
My child, what have I done?

'It appears,' wrote Sauvage in a letter to her parents
on 1 May 1914 (one hundred and nine years later,
my eyes fall on this letter), 'that these good
Russians find *L'Âme en bourgeon* quite to their
liking. They say it is full of mystical angst and that
they were struck by compositions such as 'My son,
I'll hold your head upon my hand' and 'Could I have
called you out of darkness to the light', etc. No one
in France has read me so well. [...] I laughed as I
said to Pierre, "They give a shit about me in Saint
Petersburg.'" (Sauvage 1914: f.48r-f.48v).

Ô mon fils, je tiendrai ta tête dans ma main,
Je dirai : j'ai pétri ce petit monde humain ;
Sous ce front dont la courbe est une aurore étroite
J'ai logé l'univers rajeuni qui miroite
Et qui lave d'azur les chagrins pluvieux.
Je dirai : j'ai donné cette flamme à ces yeux,
J'ai tiré du sourire ambigu de la lune,
Des reflets de la mer, du velours de la prune
Ces deux astres naïfs ouverts sur l'infini.
Je dirai : j'ai formé cette joue et ce nid
De la bouche où l'oiseau de la voix se démène ;
C'est mon œuvre, ce monde avec sa face humaine.

Ô mon fils, je tiendrai ta tête dans ma main
Et, songeant que le jour monte, brille et s'éteint,
Je verrai sous tes chairs soyeuses et vermeilles
Couvertes d'un pétale à tromper les abeilles,
Je verrai s'enfoncer les orbites en creux,
L'ossature du nez offrir ses trous ombreux,
Les dents rire sur la mâchoire dévastée

Et ta tête de mort, c'est moi qui l'ai sculptée.
(1910: 127-128)

Ô fruit sauvage et vert éclos de ma saison,
Quand ta jeunesse était chaude encor de mon âme,
Ma pudeur s'est émue en voyant d'autres femmes
Serrer tes membres nus dans un moelleux coton
Et fixer leur regard sur tes chairs dénichées
Comme dans le ruisseau de mes larmes cachées.
(1910: 167)

Je te berce dans mes genoux,
Endors-toi, enfant d'amour,
De toute la douleur humaine.

Si fort mes bras sont resserrés
Sur ton être désespéré,
Endors-toi de toutes les peines,
Endors-toi de toutes les craintes,
De la peur et des heures tristes,
Je suis ta mère, je souris
A ton sourire plein de larmes.

Ecoute, au-dehors le vent souffle.
Blottissons-nous dans la tiédeur
De nos corps doucement mêlés.
O douce chair, quelle douceur
De chair à mon âme exilée.
(2009: 94-95)

My son, I'll hold your head upon my hand,
I'll say I've shaped this little human world;
Beneath this brow, its curve a narrow dawn,
I've placed a fledgling universe that shines
And stormy sorrows clears with heaven's blue.
I'll say I've lit the flame inside those eyes:
I've drawn upon the moon's ambiguous smile,
The gleaming sea, the smoothness of the plum
To make this pair of stars, naïve, that gaze
Out to infinity. I've formed this cheek,
This mouth, a nest where flails the voice-bird.
This is my work, this world with human face.

My son, I'll hold your head upon my hand,
The day will rise, will shine and then descend;
I'll see beneath the pink flush of your skin,
Whose silk a bee would mistake for a rose –
I'll watch the eyes into their orbits sink,
Reveal the gaping darkness of the nose,
The teeth grinning atop the naked jaw;

Your deathly skull is equally my work.

O green and savage fruit blossomed of my season,
When your newness was still warm from contact
with my soul,
I, sensitive, was shocked in seeing other women
Bind your naked limbs in soft cotton, and stare
At your ousted flesh, now plucked into being,
As if they'd found the stream of my hidden tears.

I rock you in my lap to sleep,
My child of love, so I can keep
You safe from all of human pain.

You are despaired; I hold you tight
Within my arms so that you might
Sleep, away from all the pain,
Sleep, away from all the fear,
From the sadness of the hours.

I am mother; at your tears
And your tearful smile, I smile.

Outside the room the wind blows,
But we press into the glow
Of our bodies' tender folds;

O flesh, what consolation
Is flesh to my exiled soul.

Divine adaptation qui s'étend à l'être tout entier : les jambes enferment dans les jambes comme les ailes se glissent et s'allongent dans l'étui ; ton corps se marie au mien purement, abeille qui loge un lis ; et pour toutes ces fines, profondes et si naturelles correspondances je suis à toi et il ne peut y avoir sur terre un autre baiser que le tien pour moi.
(2009: 69-70)

Mon amour recueilli ressemble à la prière,
Ma chair prie et sanglote et rêve devant toi,
Elle tombe à genoux. J'offre ma vie entière
Fait de chair et d'âme et de sang à la fois.
Prends mon amour pieux et chaste jusqu'aux veines,
Ma fièvre, ma douleur, cette tendresse humaine
Qui me conduit vers toi pure dans sa folie
Mon amour, quel élan d'ivresse vers ta vie.
(2009: 106)

Alangui et suant, beau comme un jeune mort,
Te voilà dans mes bras si pâle si candide,
Tes cheveux sont collés à tes tempes humides
Tes yeux se sont fermés et ton corps est plus lourd.
Te voilà dans mes bras tout endormi d'amour,
Elle s'est endormie aussi ta main inerte,
Vide de tout désir elle demeure ouverte
Et je retiens sur moi ta jeunesse embaumée,
Amour, ta chair suante et si abandonnée.
(2009: 107)

Mon divin bien-aimé, que cherchez-vous encor ?
Votre tête s'agite et votre bouche mord,
N'ai-je pas tout donné de mon sang, de ma vie ?
Mais buvez jusqu'au fond, dans toute la folie,
Mon âme, ma tendresse, ami, nourrissez-vous,
Votre faim me tourmente et ce mal est si doux.
(2009: 106-107)

Ah ! Soulever avec mes lèvres
Ta moustache tombant à peine
Et trouver ce moelleux dessin
À la fois pervers et câlin
De bouche au retroussis mutin
Qui te donne avec tes yeux clairs,
Ton nez busqué, ton frêle ovale
L'air d'un jeune prince un peu pâle
Sous Louis quinze. Ô bouche fine
Légère, ambiguë, et câline,
D'un rose tendre de pastel.
Et je te vois dans les dentelles

A divine adaptation occurs, spreading the length of the body. Legs close around legs as wings slide into their sheaths, coming to rest within. Your body marries my body simply, bee nestling in a lily. And for all these pure, profound, and natural correspondences I am yours – I am you – you, whose embrace is the only one for me. On this earth I can have no other.

My contemplative love is like a prayer;
My flesh before thee prays and sobs and dreams
Falls to its knees; all that is present there
Of skin, soul, blood, I offer up
My life, my chaste and pious love, my pain
And fever, this human sweetness flowing to thy
veins
Which, on its torrent, purely carries me,
My love, in wild and heady rush to thee.

You lie in my arms like a beautiful corpse, pale
And slick and frank and languid. Your hair
Sticks to your wet temples, your eyes are closed
Your body heavier than it had been before
And felled by love you lie in my embrace
Asleep. Your hand, too, lies dreaming, quiet,
Half-open it rests empty of desire.
I hold your embalmed youth atop of me,
O love, the flesh that you so freely cede.

O my beloved, what else do you seek?
Restless you sink your teeth into my cheek.
Have I not proffered my life and my blood?
But drink, in your maddening way, drain my cup
Of my soul and my sweetness, beloved; have your
fill.
Your hunger is baiting and this tenderness kills.

Ah, to lift
The trim of your moustache with my lips
And find there the soft outline
Of your sweet, wicked mouth,
Your lips turned up mischievously.
(O light slight mouth of pastel pink,
Cryptic and coy!)
You know, with your frail face,
Curved nose, bright eyes, you seem to me
A pale prince at the court of some Louis.
I see you in a lace cravat
And satin breeches. You blithely stand

En des culottes de satin,
Nonchalant, jouant de la main
Avec une rose royale.
(2009: 102-103)

Il était là avec sa forme lumineuse
Qui semblait éclairer la nuit de la maison
Et celle de mon cœur ; mes mains étaient heureuses
De le servir, d'errer légères devant lui,
De lui donner le vin et le pain en silence.
J'allais, mes pieds discrets marchaient avec amour,
Tout mon être était un baiser suave et sourd.
(2009: 104)

Ne vous détournes pas, je l'aime entre les hommes
Et dans son cœur chéri j'adore tous les hommes,
J'ai les flancs d'une mère aimante pour ses flancs,
Ma chair tressaille autour de ses membres tremblants.
Il est mon fils, hélas ! Et moi, je suis la mère.
Sa tête est lourde et triste entre mes petits seins,
Sa main un peu plus grande a besoin de ma main,
Il est grand, il est fort et si plein de faiblesse.
Ne vous détournes pas de ma ferveur céleste,
Je dois servir mon Dieu, m'attacher à sa chair,
Garder son sang brulant et fou dans mon sang clair,
Nourrir sa chair féconde et lourde dans la mienne.
Il est mon fils, ses reins sont tristes dans mes mains,
C'est pour l'aimer plus près encor que je l'étreins,
C'est pour donner mon sang que je cherche ses
veines.
(2009: 106)

D'un pied négligent et nu tu repoussas vers le foyer
cette bûche de braise et je songeais aux insectes du
ciel qu'un choc déplace et qui changent de branche
sans rompre cependant le nœud recueilli de leurs
profondes confidences...

[Variant:] D'un pied négligent et nu tu repoussas vers
le foyer cette bûche de braise et je songeais à ces
carabes verts des jardins qui s'attablent à quelque fruit
tombé et déjeunent sans cependant interrompre leurs
intimes confidences....
(2009: 67-68)

Je sais maintenant que saints, poètes, amants sont
tous frères d'une même famille fervente.
(2009: 86)

Playing with a royal rose in one hand.

And there she was, her shining form that seemed
To chase away the darkness in the house
And in my heart. My hands were light and glad
To serve her, move before her, bring her bread
And wine in silence. As I went, my feet
Discreetly walked with love,
My being all a sweet and muted kiss.

Do not avert your eyes: I love him among men
And in his treasured heart I adore all men
I am shaped like mother to better fit his skin
It is my flesh that quakes around his trembling
limbs.
He is my son, o God, and I to him am mother!
His heavy head lies sadly on my little breast,
His slightly larger hand has restless need of mine.
And though he has grown big, he is feeble still.
Do not avert your eyes from my celestial zeal
For I must serve my God, cleaving to his skin,
And host his burning blood within mine that runs
clear.
He is my son: his hips are mournful in my hands
My flesh will feed his flesh, that fat and fertile is.
It is to better love him that I hold him like this
It is to give him my blood that I reach for his.

With a careless, naked foot you pushed that
smoldering log back into the fireplace. And I thought
of those insects who live in the sky and, when
knocked aside, alight on a different branch without
interrupting the absorbed tangle of their intimate
exchanges...

I know now that saints, poets, lovers are all kin in
one fervent family.

Dans une si étroite union, chaque geste donne un sentiment de plénitude, de joie, de possession.

[Variant:] Quand on est si liés, si confondus, chaque geste donne un sentiment de plénitude, de joie, de possession absolue.

(2009: 70)

Assise près de toi, ma tempe contre ta tête, toute la joie ardente de la plus absolue possession était en moi : tu me touchais de toutes tes fibres et tu sentais que toutes les miennes te caressaient.

(2009: 70)

Sous la lampe illuminées
Les têtes. Quelqu'un lisait.
Te souvient-il de ces veillées
Lentes où le temps passait
Comme une longue nuit d'étreintes
Silencieuses et sans plaintes ?
J'étais assise près de toi
Et jamais tu n'osais vers moi
Lever les yeux. Sur quelque ouvrage
Je goûtais le long mariage
De ton cœur, de ta présence.
Un chant montait de son silence,
Nous touchions presque nos pensées,
Et nos deux âmes ignorées
Hors de nos corps étaient penchées
L'une vers l'autre et se berçaient
Dans un invisible baiser.

(2009: 151)

Un fin parfum monté des lettres conservées
Me frôle comme un souffle.
Même j'entends sa voix, son rire, son silence.

(2009: 151)

J'aime prendre dans ma main
Le livre que tu abandonnes.
C'est ton âme que je feuillette
En tournant les pages tremblantes
Dont le froissement répète
L'aveu des lèvres aimantes.

(2009: 151)

In such an intimate union,
In such a close embrace,

When we are so connected, so fused,
When we are so much a part of one another,
Every gesture gives the feeling of plenitude, of joy, of possession.

Every movement has the sensation of possession, of plenty, of joy.

Of absolute possession.
Absolute.

Sitting next to you, my temple against your head, all the ardent joy of the most absolute possession was in me. You touched me with every fiber of your being. You felt every one of mine touch you in return.

Under the lamp, heads
Illuminated. Somebody read.
Remember how time crawled
Those evenings? How they felt
A soundless, single night
In which to hold you, and you me.
You were afraid to lift your eyes
To where I sat beside you. Bent
Over some work, I tasted how
Your presence wed itself to me.
Your silence sang. And thought to thought
We almost touched, as our two souls
Without our knowing elsewhere soared,
Leaned towards each other, face to face,
In an invisible embrace.

A faint perfume rises out of the preserved letters. It brushes me like breath.

I even hear your voice, your laugh, your silence.

I like to pick up in my hand
The book you with abandonment
Have cast aside, and thumb it through.
The pages' shivering repeats
(It is your soul that I pursue)
Confessions of adoring lips.

Tu parlais : ta voix prenait mes épaules
Comme un tendre bras.
Tu me regardais.
Je ne pouvais pas quitter mon ouvrage
Ni le petit banc où j'étais assise,
Tant je me trouvais par ton regard prise.
(2009: 150)

Quand je suis seule, je dis ton nom à haute voix pour
m'entourer d'un peu d'amour palpable.
(2009: 15)

Sur cette lettre où je penche
Mon visage plein de tendresse,
Tu trouveras la caresse
Pensive de ma main blanche,
Le mouvement de mes yeux
Aimants et silencieux ;
Car je laisse trainer mes yeux
Sur ce papier si lentement
Que tu les verras caressants
Se lever sur toi en lisant.
(2009: 161)

Dans la poussière d'un sentier
J'ai vu l'empreinte de tes pieds ;
Doucement je suis retournée
Et de ma main l'ai effacée,
Car je ne voulais pas, jalouse,
Qu'une empreinte étrangère épouse
Ce passage de ton amour.
(2009: 162)

Ce soir, comme une voleuse,
Parmi l'ombre velouteuse,
J'irai boire dans ton verre
Une goutte au fond restée.
Cher instant, volupté chère...
(2009: 146)

La boîte aux lettres est un tabernacle malicieux qui
contient encore pour moi tant de bonheurs ou de
désillusions. Je descends comme une voleuse prendre
cette lettre.
(2009: 79)

You spoke: your voice slipped around my
shoulders, like a gentle arm.

You looked at me.

I could not quit my work,
Nor the little bench where I sat,
Feeling pinned down by your gaze.

When I am alone, I like to say your name out loud,
to surround myself with a little bit of tangible love.

I pore over these letters tenderly;
Here you will find the contemplative touch
Of my pale hand, the movement of my eyes,
Loving and silent.
I let my eyes so slowly drift
Over these pages that you'll see
Them raised at you, running you over,
Roving as you read.

In the dust of a small lane,
I saw the imprint of your step;
Softly to the spot I crept
And with my hand brushed it away.
I did not want, from jealousy,
For a stranger's print to wed
This passage of your love.

Tonight, slinking like a thief
Through velvet darkness,
I will go to drink the drop
From the bottom of your cup.
Precious instant –
Precious desire...

The letterbox is a malicious tabernacle that holds as
much joy as disillusionment for me. I descend, like a
thief, to take this letter.

J'aillais, je venais. Je me sentais réellement, en petite culotte de soie, mince, mignonne, mignotant, ma houppette à la main devant la glace, un petit double de toi.

(2009: 69)

Cette sensation de te ressembler, d'être toi, le petit envers féminin de ton être, un autre toi-même vers qui si simplement tu te penches dans l'ombre pour trouver une petite bouche si adaptée à ton baiser...

(2009: 69)

Moi qui étais si indolente,
Me vois-tu, vive, remuante,
Parcourant toute la maison,
Rangeant, furetant, enflammée,
Et partant sur la moindre idée,
La tête pleine de chansons ?

(2009: 163)

Hélas ! Tes petits pieds sont sortis de la ville,
Ton souffle lentement s'est retiré d'ici,
Je cherche autour de moi ta forme recueillie,
Je cherche ta chaleur et l'odeur de ta vie.
Partout dans l'air me frôle encor ton être épars,
Un divin flottement de toi est sur les choses
Et je n'ose toucher ces murs, ces vieilles roses,
Ces livres entr'ouverts où rêva ton regard.

(2009: 90)

Je prie en toi, divin calice, je te touche,
Voici pieusement en toi, douceur intense,
Tout mon être ; et ton être en un sanglot d'amour
Dans mon sein ; mon visage incliné sur ta joue.
Long baiser d'une ardeur à ce point pénétrante
Que le souffle, la chair et l'âme se confondent
En un parfum unique et défaillant d'extase,
En un feu plus secret que celui qui se pâme
Et lentement découle aux mains des bienheureuses.
Long parfum dans le calme et la ferveur intime
Du lis qui s'entremêle et se noue à la rose,
Long sommeil, ton sommeil et le mien l'un dans l'autre,
Goutte à goutte ton sang dans ma douceur tremblante
Durant la pure nuit, tes lèvres sur mes lèvres,
Ta main contre mon cœur et là, l'aile apaisée
Vers l'ombre, faiblement, sous cette ombre couchée,

I came, I went. In my little silk slip I felt genuinely lithe, luscious, indulgent, holding my powder puff before the mirror. Your little double.

Sensation of resembling you. Of being you. Of being the little feminine inverse of your person. An other yourself towards whom you lean so simply through the darkness and find a small mouth most suited to your kiss.

I, who was resigned to indolence –
See me now, incandescent,
Running up and down the house,
Arranging, rummaging, aroused,
Going off on the slightest thought,
Head full of song?

Alas, your little feet have walked out of this town,
Your breath has slowly left, retreating from this place.

But still I search for your collected form around me.

Or I collect, through seeking, your scattered form around me?

Or do I look and find your gathered form is here?

I seek the warmth and scent your life has left behind,

And you who are in pieces brush past me in the air.
Divinely you do float across the smallest object.

I do not dare to touch the walls and these old roses,
These books that lie-half open where your gaze had sometime dreamed.

I pray through you, my divine chalice, by my touch,
And piously inside of you, fierce tenderness,
Is all of me; and all of you, inside my core,
Are but a sob of love, my face against your cheek.
Prolonged embrace so piercing that the breath, the flesh,

The soul all meld within a heady scent, within
A fire more secret than the ravished fire that drips
With slowness into palms held up by happy women.
Long burn of incense, lily tangling with the rose
Within the quiet and the privy fervency;
Long sleep: your sleep and mine, one in the other held,

And drop by drop your blood comes to my tenderness

Throughout the night, its purity, your lips

Tout ton être plus près de moi que ma pensée
Dans l'oraison muette où je suis endormie.

Ayez pitié de nous, que les anges m'entendent.
(2009: 124-125)

Je voulais être ta mère ;
La plus forte parenté
Humaine nous unirait
Par le sang, par la pensée ;
Ta chair, je l'aurais bercée
Dans mon âme la première.
(2009: 165)

C'était son mouvement jaloux dans ma chair grave,
C'était un peu de lui que je vais perdre encor ;
J'ai sangloté de te retrouver, rouge épave,
Amèrement tu fais le vide dans mon corps.
Tenir sur mes genoux ce nouveau-né fragile,
L'aube de tes baisers, ton enfance dans mes bras,
Et ce vœu si le sort cruel ne l'entend pas,
Puissé-je hélas ! mourir enceinte, oui mourir,
Ta forme dans mon sein réduite et caressée.
Farouche m'en aller dans la terre glacée
Avec l'enfant de ton désir.
(2009: 124)

Je suis lourde de toi, mon amant adoré,
Pèse encore à mon sein, pèse à mes bas fragiles,
De ton sang, de tout toi, je suis plus possédée
Que ne l'est du frelon jaloux la fleur nubile.
Mystérieux baiser qui veut avoir sa forme
Humaine dans mon sang, mystérieuse étreinte,
Que ton être et ton sang en mon être s'endorment :
Ma chair intimement de ta chair est enceinte.
(2009: 118)

Personne n'aura vu ta bouche comme moi
Quand je renverse un peu ta tête dans mes bras
Et que tu es si jeune et si pâle. Elle est rose,
Elle sourit à peine et fine, et féminine
Elle a des tremblements légers, une pudeur,
Ton œil se trouble un peu mais demeure rieur.
Je baise cette bouche et c'est un viol tendre,

Upon my lips, your hand upon my heart and there,
Your sheathed desire, tranquil in its shadow, rests;
Inside this wordless prayer that rocks me to my
sleep
You closer lie than my own mind to what I am.

Have mercy on us; may the angels hear my plea.

I would have liked to be your mother:
The strongest bond of human kinship
Would have bound us one unto the other
By blood, by thought. I would have been
The first to rock within my soul
Your skin.

It was his jealous movement in my somber flesh,
It was another part of him I come to lose.
And I had sobbed to find you, rejected crimson
wreck,
Run from my body bitterly and leave it hollowed out.
To hold you in my lap, a tender newborn thing,
The dawn of your embraces, your childhood in my
arms!
I'd wished – in case cruel fortune didn't hear my
plea –
To die while I still had you cradled in my womb,
Caressing your minute and tender form in me;
Fiercely to descend into the freezing tomb
With the child of your desire.

Beloved, I am heavy with you,
Weigh down on my delicate arms, on my breast;
By you and your blood I am better possessed
Than any nubile bloom
Is had by a jealous wasp.

An arcane kiss desires to take
Its human shape within my blood; arcane embrace.
Let all your being and your blood take their place
In my being; let your skin impregnate
Intimately my skin.

Nobody shall see your mouth the way I have,
Tilting back your head between my hands.
You, young and pale; mouth, pink and thin,
Shy, trembling a little, feminine,
And lightly smiling, laughter in an eye
That grows overcast with wanting.
I kiss this mouth: a tender profanation.

Ma bouche doucement l'entr'ouvre en la pressant
Et pour te le donner elle est lourde de sang.
(2009: 127)

Sur le lit plein de ton parfum
Je vais dormir comme en tes bras
Et revivre encor tes caresses,
Te retenir nu contre moi,
Sentir tes formes sur les miennes
Et ton désir lourd et tremblant
Grelotter de fièvre à mon flanc.
J'aurai faim de ta chair vivante,
J'aurai ta vie entre mes bras.
(2009: 104)

Te voilà hors de l'alvéole,
Petite abeille de ma chair,
Je suis la ruche sans parole
Dont l'essaim est parti dans l'air.

Je n'apporte plus la becquée
De mon sang à ton frêle corps ;
Mon être est la maison fermée
Dont on vient d'enlever un mort.

J'eus beau te donner sur ma bouche,
Butineuse dès le matin,
Le pollen où pétrit la mouche
Et l'odeur piquante du thym ;

J'eus beau cueillir pour ta retraite
Des rameaux avec leur azur,
Des nids où la ponte était faite,
Des lézards sur leur pan de mur.

Du monde où passe la lumière
Je ne t'offrais que les reflets ;
Et ton œil ouvrit sa paupière
Et ta main poussa le volet.

Te voilà hors de l'alvéole,
Petite abeille de ma chair,
Je suis la ruche sans parole
Dont l'essaim est parti dans l'air.

Vois-tu, je suis vide et suis soûle,
Comme une jonque sans rameur ;
J'ai l'âme de la mère-poule
Dont fuit le caneton nageur.

Fallait-il que je sois la plante
Qui voit le vent ravir son grain
Et qui reste sèche et craquante,

Gently, I open you up with my pressure,
Hungry to give you my blood.

In the bed that smells of you
I'll sleep as if within your arms
And press your body to me, nude,
And feel your forms upon my forms,
Relive your touch and your desire
That trembles, heavy, on my flank.
I'll hunger for your living flesh,
I'll have your life between my hands.

You've departed from your nook,
Little bee of my flesh made;
Now I am the silent hive
Whose colony has flown away.

I am no longer mother-bird
Who nourishes with her own blood;
I am the house from which the dead
Have been retrieved, and now is shut.

In vain I worked all day among
The flowers where kneads the gleeful fly,
To bring you on my lips the pollen
And the spicy scent of thyme.

In vain I gathered for your den
The branches with their bits of sky,
And nests where eggs were laid, and rocks
Where lizards loitered on the sly.

I gave you nothing but the flashes
Come from a world containing light;
And then you opened wide your lashes,
And then the shutters pushed aside.

You've departed from your nook,
Little bee of my flesh made;
Now I am the silent hive
Whose colony has flown away.

See, I spin like an empty boat,
Its helm uncrewed by any mate;
In spirit I'm the mother-hen
Whose duckling to the water takes.

Must I be like the mother-plant
Whose seed is snatched up by the wind,
And who remains, all cracked and dry,

Les pieds enchaînés au terrain ?

Tu n'es plus tout à moi. Ta tête
Réfléchit déjà d'autres cieux
Et c'est l'ombre de la tempête
Qui déjà monte dans tes yeux.
(1910:155-157)

Je chante. Les jours passeront
Sans égard à ma destinée ;
De jeunes fleurs s'éveilleront
Entre les herbes chaque année ;

Mais ma voix n'aura pas couvert
L'universelle mélodie
Comme l'alouette de l'air
Qui voit sa saison reverdie.
(1913: 151)

Je veux d'une plainte suave
Exhaler ma peine au soleil
Et que mon chant soit pur et grave
Comme une campagne au réveil :

Une campagne solitaire
Où le seigle étend son velours,
La montagne moite et légère
Entourant l'air calme du jour.

Elancez-vous, jeune alouette,
Vos œufs sont pondus dans les blés,
Et la rosée en gouttelettes
Tremble sur les gazons dorés.
(1913: 148)

Pâle amour et pâle terreur,
Couple enlacé loin de mon cœur
 Sous un ciel sombre,
Etends la rumeur de mon chant,
Vague abeille au-dessus des champs
 À travers l'ombre.
(1913: 242)

Ô mon âme, ô mon chant léger,
Tu flotteras sur la colline
Pour la tristesse du berger
 Dans l'ombre fine ;
Dans le silence du vallon
Pour le cœur de celles qui vont
 La chair blessée ;
Sur la ville et sur la maison

And to the earth by her roots pinned?

You are no longer mine: your head
By now reflects on other skies,
And it's the shadow of a storm
That slowly rises in your eyes.

I sing. Without regard for me
Or for my fate, the days will pass,
While nascent flowers come to bloom
Each year among the leaves of grass.

But my voice will not drown out
The universal melody,
Like the lark who sees her season
Return into its greenery.

I would like in suave complaint
To breathe my pain up to the sun,
And let my song be pure and grave
Like the country fields at dawn.

The solitary fields of rye
That, velveteen, shimmer and play,
The light and liquid mountainside
That cups the still air of the day.

So, my little skylark, fly,
Your eggs are laid among the grain,
And the quaking dewdrops lie
On grass that into gold was changed.

Pale terror, pallid love,
Two things beneath a somber sky
Conjoined and distant from my heart –
Hear the rumor of my song,
Bee that vaguely flies,
Over the fields, through the dark.

O my soul, o my light song,
The hillside which you float along,
For the sadness of the shepherd
 In the dusk;
In the silence of the valley,
For the hearts of those whose bodies
 Have been bruised;
In the town, over roofs slinking,

Pour l'ennui, pour la déraison,
Pour la pensée.
(1913: 243)

Le long rêve de la nature
Mouvante dort dans mon silence,
Le bercement et le murmure
Harmonieux du monde immense.
Monde de l'air impondérable,
Toi qui subsistes pâle et bleu
Avec tes vallonements creux
Où les fougères, les oiseaux,
L'homme, les eaux
Dorment entre eux.
(1913: 96)

Le frêne se balance et les bas noisetiers
Trainent sombres sur l'herbe nette ;
Les plantes de l'été se réveillent au pied
De bouleaux élancés et pales ; la clochette
Secoue au vent muet sa lueur violette ;

Voici venir le petit enfant
Avec sa tête rose et son col blanc
Et ses mollets nus. Il donne la main
À son père dans les fleurs du chemin.
La fleur touche au front la tête enfantine,
Le père médite en suivant des yeux
Le déroulement de cette vallée
Entre le silence. Ô douce journée,
Sous votre pâleur l'enfant et joyeux ;
Avec un bâton ramassé par terre
Il chasse des fleurs le pollen léger
Qui paraît autour de lui voltiger
Et s'évanouir en fine lumière.
L'enfant appartient à cette atmosphère,
Il est une fleur lui-même et l'oiseau
Chante de le voir entre les rameaux.
Ignorant encor de la destinée,
Il va sans désir ni vaines pensées ;
Le vent le poursuit, il poursuit le vent ;
Ô petit enfant,
Grâce du vallon, jeu dans la lumière,
Jeu du papillon et de la fougère,
Sommeil de la mousse où calme tu dors
Comme un rêve clair dont l'ombre s'irise
Avec un soupir plus frais que la brise
Et plus doux encor.

Avance nu sous la ramure,
Jeune enfant aux grâces pures,
Cours en silence avec les libellules
Dans les campanules ;

For folly, for the melancholy,
For the thinking.

Nature's ever-shifting dream
Slumbers in my silence.
The rocking, the harmonious
Murmur of an immense world.
World of imponderable air,
You who subsist, pale and blue,
With your hollow undulations,
Mankind, ferns, waters, birds
Asleep between them.

The ash sways and the hazel creeps
Across the grass, half-seen;
The plants of summer stir at the feet
Of the birches, pale and thin;
The bluebell shakes in the mute wind
Its violet gleam.

Here comes the little child,
Pink-cheeked, white-necked, bare-calved.
Upon the path lined with flowers
He gives his father his hand.
The flower touches the child's forehead.
The father ponders the land,
Eyeing the way the valley unfurls
Amid silence. O sweet day,
Beneath your pallor, the child is joyful.
He picks up a stick from the ground,
He beats the pollen from the flowers,
The pollen swirls around him,
Dissipates into thin light.
The child belongs to this air;
He himself is a flower, and the bird
Sings from the branches to see the child.
The child knows nothing of destiny,
He has neither desire nor vain thoughts.
The wind chases him,
He chases the wind,
O little child,
Grace of the valley, game in the light,
Game of fern and butterfly,
Sleep of the moss where you lie
To sleep, like a limpid dream
Where the shadow gains color
With a sigh cooler than the breeze,
And sweeter still.

Walk on, little child, nude

Imite mes danses muettes
Et sans écraser les clochettes
Attrape ce papillon blanc
Qui flâne et glisse mollement
Et pose-le sur mon épaule,
Mais il s'envole.

N'es-tu pas mon jeune frère
Serein parmi les fougères
Avec ton beau regard laiteux
Teinté de bleu ?
Je suis ta sœur parce que j'aime
Les bêtes, l'herbe et que je sème
Au vent comme toi mes cheveux,
Et parce que dans mon silence,
Longue pelouse où se balancent
Les bouleaux grêles,
Flottent la jeunesse éternelle
Et l'ombre et l'harmonie heureuse
De l'enfance nébuleuse.
(1913:93-95)

Pourquoi crains-tu, fille farouche,
De me voir nue entre les fleurs ?
Mets une rose sur ta bouche
Et ris avec moins de rougeur.
Ne sais-tu pas comme ta robe
Et transparente autour de toi
Et que d'un clair regard je vois
Ta sveltesse qui se dérobe ?
Triste fantôme de pudeur,
Que n'es-tu nue avec la fleur
D'un lis blanc dans ta chevelure,
Un doigt sur ta mamelle pure.
(1913: 102)

Dame en robe noire ayant aux mains
Un livre doré et de cuir fin,
Il y a beaucoup d'orgueil en ces pages
Et peu de certitude : Êtes-vous sage ?
Un geste me plut : en venant
Vous avez souri au petit enfant
Qui, nu, s'élançait à travers la mousse
Et vous avez eu comme une secousse
De peur lorsque l'ombre est tombée
Bleu et spectrale sur l'orée.
(1913: 101)

Beneath the trees,
Your graces pure,
Run silently
With the dragonflies
Through the bellflowers.

Follow my mute dances,
Crush not the bluebells,
Catch the white butterfly
That gently soars and slides;
Place it on my shoulder –
But away it flies.

Are you not my little brother,
Serene among the ferns,
Your milky gaze tinted with blue?

I am your sister because I love
The beasts, the grass; like you
I sow my hair in the wind.
And because in my silence –
That long ley
Where thin birches sway –
Floats youth eternal,
And the shadow and happy harmony
Of nebulous childhood.

Why do you fear me, savage girl,
As I walk naked through the blooms?
Go place a rose upon your mouth
And do not redden when you laugh;
Do you not know your dress is sheer,
And that I see with clarity
The slenderness you seek to hide?
You wistful ghost of modesty,
Would that you'd been born with the head
Of a white lily in your hair,
A finger on your untouched breast.

Lady in black holding a book
Gold-stamped and bound in fine cow-hide,
In those pages there is much pride
And little sureness. Are you good?
One gesture pleased me: you smiled
As you went, at a naked child
Capering across the moss
And a sort of tremor grabbed you
When the blue and spectral shadow
Fell across the edge of the wood.

Voici l'homme chargé
D'un gros livre broché
Plein d'assurance et sage.

Que le monde est divers, mouvant, originel,
Qu'il est atmosphérique en regard de ces pages
Qui prétendent fleurir dans le temps éternel
Et suivront le destin du sable et du nuage.
Plus haut que la raison s'élève le silence
Du vallon mélodique où l'âme se balance,
Où devant la Baute nue entre les fougères
L'humanité défile ainsi qu'une étrangère
Dans le sein de sa propre et divine ambiance.
(1913: 120)

Il est donné deux joies à l'homme ; le plaisir des yeux
et la paix du cœur. Un beau paysage, une belle figure
transportent l'âme autant qu'une belle action.
(2002: 261)

Il y a deux maux sur la terre : le mensonge et la
solitude. Notre nature nous force de mentir. Notre
mensonge éternel devrait surtout s'appeler :
impossibilité d'expression. Notre cœur a bon vouloir
d'être sincère, il est trahi par notre bouche.
(2002: 261)

Nous n'avons qu'un mot pour exprimer l'amour : je
t'aime, et nous accompagnons ce mot d'attouchements
que nous nommons baisers. Puis-je seulement
m'exprimer à moi-même la grâce que je ressens d'une
fleur et la suavité des parfums qu'elle me verse ?
Triste mirage que la joie des yeux !
(2002: 261)

Donnons, ma double flûte, un concert inouï,
Juin tend ses bras d'ambre au soleil ébloui,
La guêpe fait vibrer ses blondes castagnettes,
Les pollens odorants parsèment leurs miettes,
Les jardins sont pétris de roses et de miel
Et l'eau dans son écharpe a la couleur du ciel.
L'étable est en rumeur, car la brebis agnelle,
La fermière a rempli la brûlante écuelle
Où palpite le lait. L'étable est en rumeur.
Le bœuf massif rumine un énorme labeur
En un coin et son œil surveille l'agnelage.
Tout un pré desséché compose le fourrage
Des chevaux hennissants aux naseaux onctueux
Qui piaffent, rêveurs des grands horizons bleus.
La lucarne arrondit l'azur de sa prunelle
Annonçant que le jour sur la terre ruisselle,
Qu'il fera bon fouler des mottes sous son pied

A man laden, look,
With a great, softcover book;
It is assured, astute.

How variegated is the world, how original, how
moving,
How atmospheric compared to these pages,
That aspire to bloom for all eternity,
And yet will go the way of sand and cloud.
Higher than reason rises the silence
Of the melodious valley; here the soul rocks,
Here among the leaves, before naked Beauty,
Parades humanity, moving like a stranger
In the heart of its own divinity.

There are two types of joy available to humankind:
pleasure for the eyes and peace of the heart. A
beautiful landscape, a beautiful figure transport the
soul just as well as a beautiful deed.

There are two evils on this earth: lies and solitude.
Our nature forces us to lie. Our eternal lie should
rather be called the impossibility of expression. Our
hearts wished well enough to be sincere, but our
mouths betrayed them.

We have but one word to express love. I love you.
And we accompany that word with a type of touch
we call a kiss. Is it only to myself that I can express
the grace I receive from a flower, the suavity of the
scent it pours out to me? Sad mirage, the joy of the
eyes only.

Let us, my double flute, unheard-of music play;
June lifts her ambered arms, blinded by the sun,
The wasp clatters and clicks her yellow castanets,
And bits of heady pollen on the air disperse.
The gardens are of roses and of honey fashioned,
The water flows, its scarf the color of the sky.
The stables are abuzz, for there are lambing ewes,
The farmer's filled the jug that steams with jumping
milk.
The stables are abuzz. The hulking bull now mulls
Over the massive labor in a corner, eyes
The lambing ewes. A whole field's worth of hay
Is put out for the horses, who, with snuffing muzzles
Snort and whinny, dream of wide and blue horizons.
The skylight turns the sky into a single plum,
Announcing that the day now spills across the land,
That it will be good to turn over the clods

Et que le chat se lave assis sur l'escalier.
Au dehors, c'est le temps que le blé roux épie,
Avec un soin nouveau la faucille est fourbie,
L'abeille a deviné ce massacre des blés
Et les frôle en passant de baisers envolés.

Suspendons la rosée au fil de l'araignée,
À la branche nombreuse et de rayons baignée,
Marions l'alouette au matin et chantons
Tandis que va craquer le corset des boutons,
Tandis que sur son nid pour l'hymne qu'il déferle
Dans sa gorge un oiseau fait trépigner des perles
Et qu'un lourd papillon par l'amour affalé
Rebondit sur le sol en semant son duvet.

Qu'on surprenne le pas d'un frelon qui piétine
Sur la mamelle longue et mauve des glycines
Et le doux froissement de l'arbre qui s'endort.
La nuit somnolera dans un silence d'or ;
On entendra les chars s'engluer dans l'ornière,
Le soleil ébranler son moulin de lumière,
Bruiner les bouleaux, chuchoter les ajoncs
Et sous les marronniers tomber mat les marrons
Quand, pareille au verdier, la touffe de prairie
S'ébouriffe et s'égoutte après un temps de pluie.
La terre qui regarde aux fleurs de ses jardins
Jouer la lune blanche et le petit matin
Nous conduira dans l'air où sa valse s'élançe.
Les bras arrondiront, vivants, leur fermes anses,
Les baisers de la chair se mouilleront d'amour,
La pêche aura son eau, sa courbe, son velours
Et le frémissement qui la berce en sa feuille :
On palpera le vers comme un raisin qu'on cueille.

Ainsi je me réveille avec l'herbe et l'oiseau
Pour que mon chant d'été soit celui des rameaux ;
La rose va crever sa coque de feuillage,
Je veux surprendre au jour l'éclat de son jeune âge
Et savoir ce qui gîte aux creux de bons terriers.
Le temps peut s'effriter au choc des sabliers,
D'une quêteuse main je recueille sa cendre
Et j'en fais sous les pleurs que mon œil sait répandre
Quelque utile mortier que sèche le soleil.

Je chante et les bourgeons sortent de leur sommeil.
(1910: 9-12)

Of earth beneath our feet, and that the cat now sits
Giving himself a bath upon the stairs. Beyond,
The russet fields of wheat observe the season,
The sickle being polished with new care. The bee
Has guessed this slashing of the golden crop, and
sends
A kiss or two in brushing past the ears of grain.

Let us hang beads of dew upon the spider's web,
And then along the branch that is in sunlight bathed,
Let us wed the skylark to the dawn and sing,
While on the corset buttons crack, while on his nest
The bird a hymn unfurls, plucking the string of
pearls
Within his throat, and while a butterfly laid low
By love rebounds, going along, sowing his down.

Let us come upon the hornet's shuffling pace
Along the lilac teat of the wisteria plant,
And let us note the rustle of the sleepy trees.
The night will slumber on in a golden silence;
We'll hear the sound of wagons sticking in their
tracks,
The sun that jolts its blazing windmill into motion,
The patter of the birches, the whisper of the gorse,
The chestnuts with a thump plunking from the tree
When, like any greenfinch, the tufts upon the
meadow
Are dampened and disheveled after torrential rain.
The earth, which sees the moon and daybreak
playing over
The flowers in its gardens – she'll take us in the air
Where she spins out into her waltz; and living arms
Will rounder grow, with firmness in their curves, and
love
Will drench each meeting of the skin. The peach
shall own
Its contours, liquid, velvet, and the quivering
That rocks it in its leafy cradle. In our hand,
The poem will feel as if a grape plucked from the
vine.

And so I wake when grasses and the songbirds do,
So that my summer song can be that of the boughs;
The rose will split apart its petalled shell, and I
Desire to catch its burst of youth as day unfolds,
Desire to know what lives inside the hollow dens.
Though time might break apart beneath the
stomping clog,
I, with a questing hand, its particles collect,
And mix it with the tears my eye knows how to shed,
And make some useful mortar hardened by the sun.

I sing and buds emerge out of their slumbering.